

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Richard Doyle  
City Attorney

**SUBJECT:** Conflicts Review – Council  
Appointment Advisory  
Commission Applicants

**DATE:** May 18, 2018

## **BACKGROUND**

This office routinely reviews applications to City Boards, Commissions and Committees. The applications do not provide complete information; however, they do occasionally disclose potential conflicts of interest or incompatible offices. The purpose of this memorandum is to highlight major areas of potential conflict that are disclosed by the applications. In order to analyze potential conflicts it is necessary to consider the duties of the particular commission or committee to which the applicant is seeking appointment. This review is limited to the information provided on the applications and is not intended to be a comprehensive investigation of potential conflicts involving applicants.

## **COMMISSION DUTIES**

The Council Appointment Advisory Commission consists of eleven (11) members and its functions, duties and powers include: (1) Review applications, interview applicants and maintain a pool of screened applicants for all City commissions; (2) Review applications, interview applicants and nominate for appointment by the City Council, persons to those commission seats that have special eligibility requirements, or otherwise set forth in the Municipal Code; and (3) Such other related duties as may be directed by the City Council.

The Council Appointment Advisory Commission assumed the role of the former commission, Project Diversity Screening Committee which was established by Council action in 1991.

## **LEGAL CONFLICTS THAT MAY PRECLUDE VOTE OR PARTICIPATION**

Certain positions may preclude a commissioner from participating in a commission discussion or from voting if a matter involving the entity comes before the commission.

While this list is not complete, these types of conflicts generally fall within one or more of the following situations:

- An application shows entities that are “sources of income” to a potential commissioner within the 12 months preceding the start of the commission term, as defined under the Political Reform Act.
- An application shows sources of income to a Spouse or Domestic Partner of a potential commissioner within the 12 months preceding the start of the commission term.
- An applicant or the Spouse or Domestic Partner of an applicant is an Officer or Board Member of an entity and it is foreseeable that the entity could be involved in a matter coming before the commission.

### **APPEARANCE OF BIAS**

There may be facts which would not amount to a legal conflict of interest requiring a commissioner to recuse him or herself from a commission vote or discussion but the relationship could create an appearance of bias on the part of the commissioner. City Council policy requires commissions to be free from bias in their decision making and may require a commissioner to recuse him or herself if the facts could reasonably lead one to conclude that the applicant would be biased for or against an entity or entities.

### **APPLICANTS**

Applications from the applicants listed below were reviewed by our office. Unless otherwise indicated, no application discloses incompatible offices or apparent conflicts of interest that would substantially impair the functioning of the Council Appointment Advisory Commission.

#### **1. Malik Brown**

Mr. Brown is a teacher in the East Side Union High School District. His spouse is translator with Trion World in Redwood City. The application discloses no incompatible offices or apparent conflicts of interest.

### **CONCLUSION**

The applicant does not appear to hold any incompatible offices or pervasive conflicts which would prevent him from serving on the Council Appointment Advisory Commission, although applicants may be precluded from participating in matters involving the entities of which they are an officer or member. Where this may be the

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case, they must abstain from participating in that commission recruitment. The City Council may wish to consider the above comments in making its appointments to the Commission.

RICHARD DOYLE  
City Attorney

By: Neelam Naidu  
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Senior Deputy City Attorney

cc: David Sykes, City Manager  
Toni J. Taber CMC, City Clerk