

Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Richard Doyle
City Attorney

**SUBJECT: HUMAN SERVICES
COMMISSION APPLICANTS**

DATE: May 17, 2019

BACKGROUND

This Office routinely reviews applications to City boards and commissions. The applications generally 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 which are disclosed by the applications.

COMMISSION DUTIES

The Human Services Commission was formed to study, review and evaluate, and make recommendations to the City Council regarding programs and matters affecting human rights. The membership of the Commission is to be representative of the entire community and is to be comprised of persons with human rights concerns. At least one (1) member of the Commission is required to be a disability service provider or representative of the disabled community. At least one (1) other Commissioner is required to be a domestic violence service provider or survivor.

APPLICANTS

Applications from the applicants listed below were reviewed by our office. This review was limited to the information provided on the applications and was not intended to be comprehensive investigation of potential conflicts involving the applicants. Unless otherwise indicated, no application discloses incompatible offices or apparent conflicts of interest that would substantially impair the functioning of the commission.

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, however 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.

LEGAL REVIEW OF APPLICANTS

Set forth below are the applicants and any apparent legal conflicts of interest and/or appearance of bias related to entities that are likely to come before the Commission in some manner, as identified in their applications.

Bill Strahm – Mr. Strahm’s application indicates he is employed as a SAE at Xilinx. The application does not indicate a spouse. His application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Hassan Sabbagh - Mr. Sabbagh's application indicates he is employed by Home Net 123 as Owner. The application does not indicate a spouse. His application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Adrian Rafizadeh – Mr. Rafizadeh's application indicates he is an intern with the office of the City Clerk for the City of San Jose. [There is no issue with respect to this internship because it was completed on or about August 3, 2018.] The application indicates no spouse. His application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Cherise Orange – Ms. Orange's application indicates she is employed by the County of Santa Clara as an Associate Planner. The application does not indicate a spouse. The application indicates she is Chair of the Board for the African American Community Service Agency in San Jose. If Ms. Orange is appointed to the Commission, there could be a conflict of interest necessitating recusal of Ms. Orange, or potentially of the Commission, if an item comes before the Commission that involves the African American Community Service Agency. Other than that, her application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Adaeze Nduaguba – Ms. Nduaguba's application indicates she is employed by Google LLC as a Legal Assistant. The application does not indicate a spouse. Her application indicates she is a Board member for Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence; About Face; and Silicon Valley Young Democrats. If Ms. Nduaguba is appointed to the Commission, there could be a conflict of interest necessitating recusal of Ms. Nduaguba, or potentially of the Commission, if an item comes before the Commission that involves Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence, About Face, or Silicon Valley Young Democrats. Other than that, her application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Peter Nanopoulos - Mr. Nanopoulos' application indicates he is employed by Planned Parenthood as a NextGen Technical Specialist/Trainer. The application indicates his spouse is employed by GNC as a sales representative. His application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Ashley Johnston – Ms. Johnston's application indicates she is employed by Creative Blue as a Project Manager. The application does not indicate a spouse. The application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Tracy Jacobs – Ms. Jacobs' application indicates she is a retired from the City of San Jose where she was employed as a receptionist. The application does not indicate a spouse. Her application indicates she is an Ambassador for Atria (registers new residents to vote). The application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Christine Fitzgerald – Ms. Fitzgerald's application indicates she is employed by Silicon Valley Independent Living Center as a Community Advocate. The application does not indicate a spouse. Her application indicates she is vice-chair for VTA's Committee on Transportation and Mobility Access. The application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

Mohua Chatterjee – Ms. Chatterjee's application indicates she is unemployed and her spouse is employed by Snaproute as a software engineer. Her application discloses neither incompatible offices nor apparent conflicts of interest.

CONCLUSION

The applicants do not appear to have any incompatible offices or pervasive conflicts which would prevent them from serving on the Commission; although two applicants may be precluded from participating in matters involving entities on which they serve as board members. You may wish to consider the above comments in appointing the applicants to serve on the Human Services Commission.

RICHARD DOYLE
City Attorney

By: _____



Terra Chaffee
Senior Deputy City Attorney

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