


Agenda Report Reviewed by:  
 City Manager: 

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
 CITY COUNCIL  
 AGEND ITEM**

**Meeting Date:** June 7, 2022  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** Planning Department / City Administration  
**Subject:** Interview for Vacancy (one) Category C on the Design Review Board  
**Recommendation :** That the City Council Interview for the Opening on the Design Review Board  
**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  X  N/A  
 Net General Fund Cost: N/A  
 Amount: \$0

Account Code/Costs authorized in City Approved Budget (if applicable)  AK  (verified by Administrative Services Department)

**INTRODUCTION:**

This item is to request that the Mayor and City Council Conduct the interview for an opening on the Design Review Board in Category “C” and make an appointment later in the agenda.

**BACKGROUND:**

**Design Review Board - 2 YEAR TERM**

The Design Review Board meets the first and third Wednesday of each month at 4:00 p.m. at the Sebastopol City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, CA.

The City of Sebastopol Design Review Board consists of five voting members and one alternate with the criteria for a City of Sebastopol Design Review Board as listed below.

The Board members shall serve a term of two (2) years or until their successors are appointed. In making the appointments the City Council shall select, insofar as possible, the following;

- a) Two (2) persons, at least one of whom shall be a licensed architect and at least one of whom shall be a licensed landscape architect.
- b) One (1) person who may be any of the following: architect, landscape architect, building designer, building contractor, landscape contractor.
- c) Two (2) persons not in Sections (a) or (b)
- d) One (1) alternate who may be in Section (a) or who possesses a particular expertise in the area of design, land use patterns, urban development or other related fields to serve at any meeting or on any matter in the absence of a Board member, or in the event a member has a conflict of interest. (e) In the event suitable candidates satisfactory to the City Council in the above categories are not available to serve, the

City Council may then select any person or persons in their discretion. All terms of office shall terminate December 31 of the last year of the term of appointment.

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The current Design Review Board Members are as follows:

DRB MEMBER	TERM ENDING DATE	CATEGORY
TED LUTHIN, <i>CHAIR</i>	12/31/2022	B
LARS LANGBERG, <i>VICE CHAIR</i>	12/31/2023	A
CARY BUSH	12/31/2022	A
CHRISTINE LEVEL	12/31/2023	C
VACANT	12/31/2023	C
MARSHALL BALFE (alternate)	12/31/2022	D

**DISCUSSION:**

The interviews are to be conducted tonight to fill the Category C position. As noted in yellow highlight above, the current opening would be until December 31, 2023.

The City Clerk noticed the vacancy in the Sonoma West Time and News, City Hall Bulletin Board and various other media outlets and received one applications.

15-minute interview for the applicant is scheduled as follows:

<i>Interview time</i>	<i>Name of Applicant</i>	<i>Category Applied For</i>
5:30 pm	Melissa Hanley	Category A (for position C)

**GOALS:**

This item relates to City Council Goal 5: Provide open and responsive Municipal Government Leadership, as it communicates the CAC’s work to the Council and general community. It also relates to General Plan Goal CSF 6, policy SCF 6-1, Continue to maximize public participation in local government actions and maintain excellent levels of City government services.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

As of the writing of this staff report, the City has not received any public comment. However, if staff receives public comment from interested parties following the publication and distribution of this staff report such comments will be provided to the City Council as supplemental materials before or at the meeting. In addition, public comments may be offered during the public comment portion of the agenda item.

**PUBLIC NOTICE:**

This item was noticed in accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act and was available for public viewing and review at least 72 hours prior to scheduled meeting date.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is no direct fiscal impact associated with the recommended action tonight.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council conduct the interview(s) and consider appointment later in the agenda.

**Attachments:**

Application

**City Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

The City Council appoints members to various boards, committees, and commissions as listed below:

- Planning Commission
- Design Review Board
- Public Arts Committee
- Other Miscellaneous Boards/Committees/Commission as Approved by the City Council

The bodies are comprised of community members who volunteer for service and are appointed by the City Council. All committee members serve at the pleasure of the City Council. The primary responsibility of the committees is to implement adopted City policy, and advise and make recommendations to the City Council. The adoption of policies, the issuance of proclamations, and the approval of agreements and other official acts of the City are the responsibility of the City Council. The City Manager designates as official staff liaison to each committee.

**Application Process**

When a vacancy on a board, committee or commission occurs, the City Clerk prepares a press release that is distributed to local media, including the Sonoma West County Times and News. The vacancy is also announced at City Hall and on the City of Sebastopol's web site <http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/>

Applications for vacancies are obtained from the City Clerk's office and completed applications are submitted to the City Clerk's office. Three to four weeks after the vacancy announcement, the completed applications are forwarded to the City Council in a regular agenda packet for public review. The City Council interviews all applicants at a meeting open to the public. The official appointment of Commission, Board or Committee members is made at a City Council meeting.

**Terms of Office**

Board, commission, and committee members generally serve two, three, or four-year overlapping terms. There is no monetary compensation or benefits for board, commission, or committee members.

The City Council may reappoint incumbent members or fill vacancies with new appointees. Some bodies limit the number of consecutive terms an individual may serve.

Members are expected to serve their full terms of office; however, when a member must resign, due to personal or professional circumstances, he/she should send a letter to the City Council stating the effective date of the resignation. A member shall be removed from office upon three affirmative votes of the City Council, based on one of the following grounds:

- At the pleasure of the City Council, without cause:
- If he/she is absent from three consecutive meetings, unless permission by a majority vote of the board, committee or commission had been granted as reflected in the official minutes of the body.
- Or by operation of the City Code if:
- If he/she is convicted of a crime of moral turpitude.
- If he/she ceases to be a qualified board, commission or committee member per the City of Sebastopol Municipal Code.

*General Responsibilities of Boards, Commissions, and Committees*

City boards, commissions, and committees shall have the following general powers, duties and responsibilities in addition to those set forth in the Sebastopol Municipal Code and various Resolutions:

- To establish rules and regulations governing the election of their officers, the holding of meetings and the conduct of business for these meetings.
- To use all appropriate techniques in crystallizing and testing public sentiment on major public issues in their respective fields.
- To hold official hearings as required by law or requested by the City Council.

- To advise and recommend on City policies and procedures pertinent to their respective activities and functions.
- To support and adhere to all City policies promulgated by the City Council and to establish needed interim policies in the absence of the same.
- To provide information and promote good public relations between the City and the general public.
- To perform such other related functions as may be assigned to them by the City Council.

*Desirable Characteristics in Applicants for Boards, Commissions, and Committees*

While membership on City boards, committees and commissions requires no specific qualifications, with the exception of some seats on the Design Review Board and the Public Arts Committee, there are desirable characteristics for which the Council will be looking as they review applications:

- Familiarity with Community

The Council would require appointees to be familiar with the physical, social, and economic make-up of the City. Applicants should have demonstrated an active interest and involvement in the community.

*Familiarity with Major Issues*

While it will be assumed that applicants are familiar with the specific issues that are being addressed by the board, committee or commission for which they are applying, it is also expected that applicants be aware of issues which will impact all sectors of City programs and services.

*Knowledge of the Board, Commission or Committee*

During the application process, applicants should become familiar with the responsibilities and role in the City's policy-making structure of the board, committee or commission for which they are applying.

*Commitment to Serve*

When appointed, members are expected to serve their term of office. While personal or professional circumstances might prompt an unexpected resignation, applicants who are aware of any reasons why they may not be able to complete a full term or attend regularly scheduled meetings, should indicate this on the application. While time commitments will vary depending upon schedules and workload, members are expected to attend all scheduled meetings. In addition to attending scheduled meetings, members may be expected to participate in study sessions or serve on subcommittees.

*Relationship with the Community*

As a member of a City board, committee or commission, your actions will reflect on the City of Sebastopol and you are required to relate to the community with impartiality and courtesy.

*Commitment to City Policy:*

The City Council has adopted ordinances and policies following an appropriate public process. As an appointed board, committee or commission member, your duty is to abide by such policies rather than implement personal preferences.

**Tips for Applying for a City Board, Commission, or Committee**

Type or neatly print your application. Due to the quantity of applications the Council must review, a neat application is appreciated.

Answer all questions on the application. Council reviews your application to gain an understanding of your background and experience, and what skills and talents you believe you could bring to a particular board, committee or commission. Don't forget to sign and date your application.

Attend one or two meetings of the board, committee or commission for which you are applying. Find out what the current issues are, and what issues may be coming in the future. Review the minutes of past meetings, available on the City web site or at City Hall depending on the appointment being applied for.

Talk to a current member. Current members can share with you their experience, they can give you an estimate of the time commitment involved, and they can discuss with you what they see as current and future issues for the City.

If you have questions about the function and role of members, talk with the City staff liaison to the board, committee or commission you are applying for. The City Clerk can provide contact information for City staff members who are assigned to work with the boards, committees and commissions. It is important to note that City staff members cannot and do not recommend or lobby for any applicant.

Find out City Council’s priorities and interests. Attend City Council meetings and review meeting minutes. Council meeting videos are archived on the City’s website <http://ci.sebastopol.ca.us/> and are available for purchase on DVD from the City Clerk’s Office.

Review the Code of Ethics for Appointed and Elected Officials (the Brown Act), available by request from the City Clerk’s Office and understand that if you are appointed to a board, committee or commission, you will be required to abide by it.

Prepare for the interview. Although we do not know what specific questions Council will ask, we suggest that you clarify for yourself why you are applying for a specific board, committee or commission, understand its role and function, and be familiar with the current issues it is examining.

Treat the interview with City Council as a business or job interview. Understand that the City Council is not only considering what experience, skills and talents you bring, they are interested in how you will represent the City.

**APPLICATION FOR CITY OF SEBASTOPOL BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES**

Contact Information

Assistant City Manager/City Clerk, MMC  
Mary Gourley  
7120 Bodega Avenue  
P.O. Box 1776  
Sebastopol, CA 95473  
Mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org

phone: 707-823-1153  
fax: 707-823-1135

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday - 7:00 am - 5:30 pm (closed 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm for lunch)  
Closed every Friday

**Instructions:**

Use this form to apply to serve on any of the City of Sebastopol’s Boards, Committees or Commissions. Please complete the entire form and either print and mail it to the address above, or email your completed application to mgourley@cityofsebastopol.org. If a question does not apply, please note as not applicable. Please deliver completed form, by the date and time due, to the City Clerk. All applications will be reviewed by the City Council. If appointed, you have a choice whether you wish to have your contact information visible to the public; however, your information may be made public upon request by (a) member(s) of the public.

**Board, Commission, or Committee being applied for?** Design Review Board

Name: Melissa Benet Wallin Hanley

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 72

Home Phone Number: [redacted] \_\_\_\_\_

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?  
 Yes  No

Work Phone Number: [redacted] \_\_\_\_\_

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?  
 Yes  No

Facsimile Number: none \_\_\_\_\_

If appointed, do you want this number to be visible to the public?  
 Yes  No

E-Mail Address: [redacted]@\_\_\_\_\_ .com If

appointed, do you want this address to be visible to the public?  
 Yes  No

Are you a registered voter in Sebastopol?

Yes  No

If so, for how long? 16 years \_\_\_\_\_

Do you hold a current business license from the City of Sebastopol?

Yes  No

If so, for how long? \_\_\_\_\_

**For Design Review Board Applicants:  
Design Review Board Supplemental Questions:  
Which Category are you Applying For?**

Category A

- Licensed Architect
- Licensed Landscape Architect

Category B

- Licenses Architect
- Licensed Landscape Architect
- Unlicensed Building Designer
- Licensed Building Contractor
- Landscape Contractor

Category C

- Any Applicant Not in Category A or Category B

Category D

- Any Applicant from Category A or who possesses a particular expertise in the area of design, land use patterns, urban development or other related fields to serve at any meeting or on any matter in the absence of a Board member, or in the event a member has a conflict of interest.

Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?

Yes. Online zoom meetings in 2021.

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?

Yes       No

If so, when? \_\_\_\_\_

Present Employer: Design Blitz

Job Title: Founder, CEO, Architect

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies or held elected office? If so please list position held and dates:

No

Please list civic or charitable organization to which you belong or have belonged:

American Institute of Architects (AIA), International Institute of Interior Designers,  
American Society of Interior Designers

Have you been an officer in any of these organizations? If so, please list position held and dates:

Yes. AIA Board of Directors, Dir. of Chapter Affairs 2008-2012



What special interests, skills and talents would you bring to this board, commission, or committee?

As a architect, business owner and 6th generation Sebastopol local I can bring a unique blend of strong Sebastopol roots paired with modern economic insights. I established my firm with my now husband in 2009 and have grown it into a thriving concern with four locations nationally, having won over 100 design awards and having been published in over 400 periodicals both domestic and international. I have been named in the SF Business Times top 50 under 50 and lectured across the US on issues of design, women in design and business and the future of work in a post-pandemic world.

Please list any college, professional or vocational schools you have attended with major subject studied, dates and any earned degrees:

University of California, Berkeley 2006  
BA Architecture  
Minor City and Regional Planning

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

2019 ASID Women In Design Honoree  
2018 SF Business Times 50 under 50  
2018 IIDA National Leader in Design Honoree  
2017 Leadership San Francisco  
Architect's Newspaper Top 50 Firms 2017-2021  
Full list of design awards and publications available upon request.

Please state why you would like to become a member of this board, commission or Committee, including what specific objectives you would be working toward as a member of this body:

I am thrilled to be considered for this post. I am 6th generation Sebastopol / Bodega and my husband and I moved back to Sebastopol in 2014 as soon as finances would allow. We love it here and, while our business takes us to places all over the world, coming 'home' always means being here. I am particularly driven to create housing options for people who, like me, who grew up here but now find themselves priced out of the market as adults. I hate seeing my peers leave the town (and often the state!) for cheaper options that better support their financial goals. Sebastopol is a very special place and part of what makes it so special is the generations-deep commitment to the area and to the community. I want to work to make it possible for my peers to come back home and contribute to the next generation of Sebastopol.

Are you associated with any organization/employment that might be deemed a conflict of interest in performing your duties if appointed to this position?

Yes                    No

If yes, please state name of organization/employment: \_\_\_\_\_

City policy directs all appointed, advisory body members not to vote on matters where there exists a potential conflict of interest such as property ownership near a project, or a financial relationship with the applicant. Would you be willing to abstain from voting if such a conflict arises?

Yes                    No

How did you hear about this opening?

I noticed the vacancy and term past expiration while completing an online review of design review meeting minutes.

Is there any other information that you feel would be useful to the City Council in reviewing your application and materials provided with the application?

My husband and I are passionate about renewable energy. We have invested in solar and batteries for our home along with electrical vehicles and are evangelists for 'the electric life'.

We are (slowly) converting the family farm on Ferguson Rd to a hop farm from Christmas trees and are thrilled to have our hops in seasonal beers at Crooked Goat. Our connection to the agrarian part of Sonoma County is a wonderful counterpoint to the hustle and bustle of our corporate lives.

We love living on Florence Ave. We routinely describe ourselves as 'the Godzilla house'. We bought the house in 2017 and have finished a substantial renovation (apologies to our long-suffering neighbors). We love the property specifically because we were able to convert a garage to an ADU in the back for my mother-in-law. I am thrilled that Sebastopol has adopted much more owner-friendly ADU requirements to help with our housing requirements.

What do you think qualifies you to be appointed to this board/committee/commission?

My proven track record in starting and running a successful business gives me the perspective and knowledge to make logical, economically viable decisions. My portfolio of award winning projects demonstrates my capabilities in design. I have never had an administrative warning from CAB or any other legal concern with my license which demonstrates my technical capabilities and professional standard of care. My and my family's long-standing residency in Sebastopol and continued commitment and investment in / to the town.

Are there particular issues you think the board/committee/commission should concentrate on?

I think we all should be looking for ways to future-proof the city to ensure viability for the next generation. This means looking not just as housing but at business opportunities for local business, infrastructure to support the needs to support a growing population, improving opportunities for smart density while ensuring a responsible environmental footprint.

How should community comments be integrated into the board/committee/commission decision-making process?

I engage with public / community comments on projects regularly. I see these folks as the 'boots on the ground' for the project and their feedback / input as germane data points that would likely be difficult or impossible for us as the designers / committee to otherwise obtain. The ability to directly engage with those affected by the task is as important as how we engage with them. Respect, patience, and an inquisitive mind are fundamental. The beauty of our democratic process is that allows everyone an equal say which can, of course, be messy. The goal is to ensure we suss out the relevant information through a questioning dialog and leave everyone at least feeling heard (if not happy with the decision).


If appointed, how would you handle it if another board/committee/commission member vehemently disagrees with your comments on a regular basis?

The same way that I deal with any conflict as it arises in the complex projects that I undertake as a professional. Disagreement is a opportunity for refinement in opinion and solutions. I strongly align with the concept of re-thinking to ensure that ideas are never statically held in the face of new information. When someone disagrees with me my first question is to ask 'how' they would approach the issue differently to provide for a tactical solution. 'Why' can be subjective but 'how' gets to the nuts and bolts of problem solving. I routinely work on complex projects involving tens of millions of dollars for major international corporations. Conflict is inevitable with so many individuals involved in high-stakes projects. The fact that 65% of our work on an annual basis is for repeat clients and the largest source of new business referral is from contractors and project managers who like working with us serves as a strong testament to my / our ability to find resolutions.

How would you handle a situation where a proposal comes before your board/committee/commission that the City staff finds consistent with City policies and standards, but that you personally do not support?

It's hard to say without more specific information or context. I see the role as an advocate for Sebastopol's current and future citizens and not one of personal taste or objectives. However, the role of advocate requires a future-forward lens and that might mean questioning existing policies / standards if they are not consist with the future goals of the city.

I certify that I have thoroughly read and understand all material in this application.

Applicant's Signature :  \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): Melissa Benet Wallin Hanley

Date: 03/16/2022