

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL  
CITY COUNCIL  
STAFF REPORT**

**Meeting Date:** February 2, 2016  
**To:** Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers  
**From:** City Manager Larry McLaughlin  
City Clerk Mary Gourley  
**Subject:** Discussion and Action of Planning Commission Appointment Due to Resignation of Former Planning Commissioner Scot Stegeman  
**Recommendation :** That the City Council Discuss and Make Appointment to the Vacancy on the City of Sebastopol Planning Commission  
**Funding:** Currently Budgeted: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No XX N/A  
Net General Fund Cost:  
Amount: \$

**INTRODUCTION:** This item is to request that the City Council Discuss and Make Appointment to the Vacancy on the Planning Commission

**BACKGROUND:**  
The Planning Commission meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the Sebastopol Youth Annex, 425 Morris Street, Sebastopol, CA. The members of the Planning Commission shall be from among residents of the City of Sebastopol or shall be the owner of a business within the City of Sebastopol. The Planning Commission consists of seven members.

Of those seven members, three terms ended on December 31, 2015, and City staff advertised in the newspaper, posted to City media and emailed to distribution lists the notice of those vacancies. Five applications were received and the City Council at a special meeting of January 12, 2016 conducted interviews of those five applications and made appointments for Planning Commission terms for those three positions.

On January 8, 2016, City staff received an email from City Planning Commissioner Scot Stegeman advising the City that Mr. Stegeman was resigning from this position effective January 1, 2016. City staff notified the City Council as well as including this information in the City Staff Report for the Meeting of January 12, 2016. This item was discussed and in consistency with transparency and openness, City staff was directed to notice this vacancy per City procedures.

**DISCUSSION:**  
At the meeting of January 11, 2016, the City Council received five applications for three vacancies on the Planning Commission. Applicant Paul Fritz and Applicant Geoffrey Skinner were not successfully appointed to the Planning Commission but indicated their support for including their applications for this vacancy. The Council was in consensus that if no further applications were received, the two applicants would not need to be re-interviewed by the Council would consider their applications. The City Clerk noticed the vacancy in the Sonoma West Time and News, City Hall Bulletin Board and various other media outlets on several separate occasions and received no further applications.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the City Council Discuss the applications from Paul Fritz and Geoffrey Skinner and Make Appointment to the Vacancy on the Planning Commission

**Attachment:**

Applications

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

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. 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. Please note your information will not be made public unless otherwise indicated. If appointed, you have a choice whether you wish to have your contact information made public.

Name: Paul Fritz

Home Address (City, State and Zip Code)

[Redacted]  
Sebastopol, CA 95472

Home Phone Number: [Redacted]

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

Work Phone Number: [Redacted]

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

Cellular Number: [Redacted]

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

E-Mail Address: [Redacted]

If appointed, do you want this address to be available to the public?  
 Yes  No If appointed to the commission I would create a new email for commission correspondence.

Are you a registered voter in the jurisdiction?  
 Yes  No  
If Yes, please provide your address: [Redacted]

Do you have a current driver's license?  
 Yes  No  
If Yes, please provide your license number: [Redacted]

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

Board, Commission, or Committee being applied for? PLANNING COMMISSION

Have you attended a meeting of this body? When?

Yes, most recently about 3 years ago

Have you served on, interviewed for, or applied for this body previously?  
 Yes  No

If so, where: \_\_\_\_\_

Present Employer: Self-employed, Fritz Architecture & Design

Job Title: Principal

Have you previously served on any governmental bodies or their related offices? If so please list position held and dates:

No

Please list all other associations or organizations you are currently a member of:

- The Golf Club
- Barcelon Club
- Barcelon Golf Club
- Barcelon Golf Club
- Barcelon Golf Club
- Barcelon Golf Club

Please list all other associations or organizations you are currently a member of:

- Charter Foundation, 2003-2008
- The Golf Project, Treasurer, 2003-2008

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

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

I am a licensed architect and am familiar with the responsibilities of the Planning Commission and the part it plays in the entitlement process. In my architecture practice I have worked on many affordable housing projects which often require general plan amendments, density bonuses and/or zoning code variances. This experience has helped me understand the nuances of general plans, zoning codes and related planning documents.

I have a particular interest in urban design and planning issues and regularly read about current planning issues. I write a blog about urban design and planning issues as they relate to small towns. I am a member of an organization called Strong Towns that advocates for development that supports financially strong and resilient communities. I am interested in bringing this knowledge to the Commission. I am a good listener and try to consider all points of view when reviewing an issue. I have been involved with planning issues in Sebastopol for some time, most recently as a member of The Core Project.

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

Miami University, Bachelor of Environmental Design, 1990  
University of California, Berkeley, Master of Architecture, 1994

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

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:

Having served on the GFAC I am interested in continuing the work of the General Plan update process and crafting a General Plan that lays out goals, policies and actions to guide Sebastopol on a path to economic, social and environmental resiliency. I would like to see our downtown core develop into a vibrant, human-scaled, prosperous place that reflects our unique community. I would like to strengthen the linkages between our neighborhoods and emphasize modes of travel other than the private car. I think we need to protect our urban growth boundary and focus new development within this area in order to protect the open space and agricultural lands at our border. As the planning commission also oversees park development we have an opportunity and responsibility to support the development of Tomodachi Park and redevelopment of Ives Park to better serve our community in a way that balances our needs and the needs of the laguna ecosystem.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

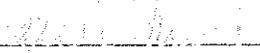
City policy directs all appointed, advisory body members not to vote on matters where there exists a potential conflict of interest such as property ownership near a project, or a financial relationship with the applicant. Would you be willing to abstain from voting if such a conflict arises?

Yes       No

How did you hear about this opening?

City email list

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

Applicant's Signature: 

Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): Paul Fritz

Date: November 26, 2015

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW AND SUBMIT WITH THE APPLICATION:

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

As an architect, I understand the mandate of the Planning Commission and its role in decision-making as it relates to the General Plan, Zoning Code, growth and development issues. One of the roles of the Planning Commission is to enforce General Plan policies. As a member of the GPAC, I am intimately familiar with the General Plan update and am in position to understand the goals and policies as outlined in the General Plan. The General Plan will set the stage for revisions to the Zoning Code and other city ordinances and policies.

I have been engaged in planning related issues for some years in Sebastopol as a private citizen and as a member of the grassroots organization, The Core Project. I regularly read about current urban design and planning issues and consider their application to my community. I am a good listener and considerate of other people's opinions.

I live in Sebastopol and have a business located downtown. I am committed to working to build on Sebastopol's assets in creating a strong and resilient community.

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

I think the Planning Commission should focus on creating a vibrant and safe environment for the community. I would like to bring some balance to planning decisions that have long prioritized the car at the expense of people. I think we are making progress, but have some way to go. I believe we need to improve the connections between our neighborhoods so that people feel safe leaving the car behind and walking and biking around town as much as possible.

I think we should focus development in our already developed areas and protect our urban growth boundary. There is a great deal of opportunity to develop at higher densities in town that will allow for a human scale while protecting our adjacent agricultural lands and natural ecosystems.

The Commission should be focused on policies and development proposals that support our existing businesses and allow them to thrive. Along with proposal that will allow the city and its residents to thrive as well. I am concerned that much of our development is 'low-value' and that we have an opportunity to increase the value of our community for long-term resiliency by crafting our zoning code and General Plan to encourage high-value development.

I would also like to focus on some of the planning ideas that were recommended through the SDAT process that I was part of several years ago. I think there were many great ideas recommended by the team that are not moving forward.

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

I believe it is important to hear from members of the community that have opinions about issues before the planning commission either through written or oral communication. However, I believe that planning commissioners have a responsibility to rely on their own expertise and knowledge and that of city staff when making decisions. I don't think the planning commission should necessarily make decisions on issues facing the board based solely on public sentiment expressed to the commission. The people that show up to express opinions to the commission do not necessarily represent all of the community. In my experience as an architect, I see that project opponents are much more likely to speak out than project advocates.

Name of Applicant: Paul Fritz

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

I would not expect all commission members to agree on all issues. I'm sure there will be disagreement. It may also follow that there may be consistent disagreement between members. It is a seven member board and decisions are made by a vote. I would try to explain my positions as clearly as possible in hopes of building agreement, but I would respect the decision of the majority even if I disagree.

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?

I would make my disagreement clear in the public hearing and ask staff to clarify their position. If I still disagree with staff's position I would vote as I see appropriate on the issue at hand.

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

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Name: Geoffrey Skinner

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

~~██████████~~, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Home Phone Number: ~~707-828-0446~~

If appointed, do you want this number to be available to the public?

Yes  No

Work Phone Number: ~~707-848-0001 x1524~~

If appointed, do you want this number to be available to the public?

Yes  No

Facsimile Number:

~~██████████-45~~

If appointed, do you want this number to be available to the public?

Yes  No

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

E-Mail Address:

~~geoffrey.skinner@gmail.com~~

If appointed, do you want this address to be available to the public?

Yes  No

Are you a-registered voter in Sebastopol?

Yes  No

If so, for how long?

**Since 2004**

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

Yes  No

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

Board, Commission, or Committee being applied for? **PLANNING COMMISSION**

Have you attended a meeting of this body? **Yes**

*When?*

**Most recently, the October 2015 meeting. I have attended a number of other Commission meetings over the years.**

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

**Yes**  No

*When?*

*How?*

Address: **Library - Sonoma County Library**

City: **Sebastopol**

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

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

- **Sebastopol General Plan Advisory Committee (2015)**
- **Sebastopol Complete Streets Advisory Committee, Member at large (2015/2016); Vice Chair (2012/2013-2014/2015)**
- **Sebastopol Downtown Streetscape Committee (2013)**
- **Sonoma County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Sebastopol Citizen Representative (2011 to present)**

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

- **Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition (2012 to present)**
- **Sonoma County Land Trust (2013 to present)**
- **LANTERN (New Library for Sebastopol) (2013-2014)**
- **Sebastopol Creek Stewards (2012 to present)**
- **Sebastopol Library Advisory Board (2004-2007)**
- **Sonoma County Trails Council (2007-2013)**
- **The Trail Center (Palo Alto ) (1987-2003)**

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

- **LANTERN (New Library for Sebastopol): Board member (2013-2014)**
- **Sonoma County Trails Council: President, Vice-President and Board member (2007-2013)**
- **The Trail Center (Palo Alto): President, Board member (1991-2003)**

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

**I grew up in Sebastopol, and have both interest and knowledge of Sebastopol's history and development patterns. As an adult, I have had a long-time interest in planning issues, spurred in part by conversations with my sister who worked for the Sonoma County PRMD for many years. Since returning to Sebastopol in 2004, I have expanded my knowledge of both planning and historical issues in various ways -- through my role as a walk leader for Sebastopol Walks, through participating in numerous development, planning and land use public meetings, and this past year, as a member of the GPAC. I have good research skills that serve me well as librarian and walk leader -- and would be a strength that I would bring to the Commission. As a walk leader, I have also strengthened my public speaking skills.**

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

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

- **Stanford University, 1981-1985: B.A. in English and Music**
- **Foothill Junior College, 1993-1995: coursework in biology, statistics and chemistry**
- **San Jose State University, School of Library and Information Science: MLIS, 2003**

Please list any special awards or recognition you have received:

**Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition: Bicycle Commuter of the Year, 2013**

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 have served on the Complete Streets Advisory Committee for several years and would like the opportunity to contribute more directly to decision-making for land-use issues in the City, particularly as the GPAC comes to a close. The GP update process has been an invaluable experience in learning about the depth and breadth of planning issues that can come before the City.**

If appointed, I would be particularly interested in:

- **Opportunities for inclusionary/affordable housing**
- **Sustainable development**
- **Historic preservation**
- **Renewing and revising the Urban Growth Boundary and Sphere of Influence**
- **Opportunities to strengthen economic diversity both downtown/Barlow and outlying business districts**
- **Opportunities for increased public open space and improving existing parks and preserves**
- **Walkable development/neighborhoods**
- **Opportunities to expand use of non-single motorized transportation and non-single driver private vehicles**

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

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

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

**Sonoma County Library (in the unlikely event that plans for new library should be brought to the Commission during the upcoming term); also Sebastopol Creek Stewards (should issues relating to Sebastopol's creeks come up)**

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?

**Email from Kenyon Webster**

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

**I would be honored to serve as a Planning Commissioner for the City of Sebastopol. I realize we have had very little development over the past several years and my experience on the GPAC has provided me with a good understanding of the opportunities and barriers to additional development within the City. The slow rate of development and limitations make the issues that do come before the Commission even more important, as economy continues to improve, I believe the Commission will see a number of new proposals that help shape the City's future; I believe as a member of the Commission, I can play a valuable role in providing excellent guidance to the Council.**

Applicant's Signature



Applicant's Name (PLEASE PRINT): **Geoffrey Skinner**

Date: 11/25/15

Name of Applicant: Geoffrey Skinner

PLEASE ANSWER QUESTIONS BELOW AND SUBMIT WITH THE APPLICATION: What do you think qualifies you to be appointed to this board/committee/commission?

**As noted above, my knowledge of the City's history, my skills as a researcher, and my experience with planning issues both as a private citizen and as a member of Sonoma County-wide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Sebastopol Downtown Streetscape Committee, Sebastopol Complete Streets Advisory Committee, and GPAC.**

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

**Although I feel the areas noted above are all important, I would call out in particular the issue of affordable and inclusionary housing. The price of housing in the City is increasingly making it difficult, if not impossible, for lower to middle income residents to remain. If we want to avoid becoming an enclave only for the wealthy and have a business community serving only the very well-heeled, we will likely need to make a number of important and thoughtful decisions over the coming years.**

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

**Community comments should be considered, but not necessarily be the driver for decisions. Public comments are often a good way of expanding the scope of conversation, but may not represent the community at large; one of the important tasks of the Commission is to weigh those comments critically and come to well-considered decisions that may run contrary to public comments.**

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

**I would first seek to privately come to an understanding of the dynamic with the other member and seek ways of working better with her or him; I would also seek the advice of the Chair or others on the Commission. As a new member, I would expect to work with at least one mentor who could help guide me. I would also critically review my own comments to judge how much weight to give the other member's vehemence, particularly if my comments were not alone in receiving such strong disagreement.**

Name of Applicant: Geoffrey Skinner

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?

**As an appointed member of the Commission, my first and foremost duty would be to follow the City policies and standards. I believe that does leave room to question and propose changes to those policies and standards should an issue arise that runs counter to my understanding of the best course for the City. I would seek to oppose a proposal that I wouldn't personally support only after studied consideration.**