

**CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
STAFF REPORT**

Meeting Date: June 7, 2016
To: Honorable Mayor and Honorable City Councilmembers
From: City Manager Larry McLaughlin
 City Clerk Mary Gourley
Subject: Planning Commission Appointment
Recommendation : That the Mayor and City Council Conduct Make the Appointment to the Newly Created Position of Alternate on the City Planning Commission
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No XX N/A
 Net General Fund Cost: N/A
 Amount: \$0

INTRODUCTION: This item is to request that the City Council make the appointment to the Newly Created Position of Alternate on the City Planning Commission.

BACKGROUND:

As the Council is aware, the Planning Commission is the advisory body to the City Council and has such duties as:

- A. To recommend special studies and amendments to the General Plan
- B. To perform such duties and functions as prescribed by law.
- C. To perform such other functions and duties with respect to zoning and other matters as prescribed by City Ordinance or as may be directed by the City Council.
- D. To act in an advisory capacity to the City Council on public park regulatory issues, improvement needs, and on public park development projects; and to serve as a forum for members of the public to voice their comments regarding such matters.

In January 2016, the City Council approved an amendment to the Municipal Code to add an alternate position to the City Council. An alternate may also be appointed who may serve as a member in the absence of a regular member, or if there is a vacant member position.

The appointment tonight is to fill the newly created position with a term ending December 31, 2019.

DISCUSSION:

The City Clerk advertised the opening and posted the vacancy in the Sonoma West Times and News, City Hall Web Site, City Hall Bulletin Board, Sebastopol Library, Sebastopol Community Center, Face Book, and City Clerk Mailing List Serve. The City received 1 application from the advertisement. The application was received from Mr. Geoffrey Skinner. Mr. Skinner had previously applied for the Planning Commission openings in January 2016 and was interviewed at that time and has resubmitted an application for this opening.



City staff is recommending that the City Council accept the application of Mr. Skinner and appoint without re-interviewing.

RECOMMENDATION: City staff is recommending that the City Council review the application of Mr. Skinner and appoint Mr. Skinner to the Alternate Position of the City Planning Commission for a term expiration of December 31, 2019.

Attachment:
Application

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**

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: **_Geoffrey Skinner**

Home Address, City, State and Zip Code:

7231 Strout Street, Sebastopol, CA 95472

Home Phone Number: **707-823-0446**

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

Yes No

Work Phone Number: **707-545-0831 x1524**

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

Yes No

Facsimile Number: **_**

707-544-0845

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

Yes No

Name of Applicant **Geoffrey Skinner**
E-Mail Address:

skinnerbird@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

If so, when? .

Present Employer: **Sonoma County Library**

Job Title: **Cataloger**

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.