

Date: June 2, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: April Walker, Administrative Deputy City Manager 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Ethics Commission Letter on Recommendations for the Independent Redistricting Commission Selection Process**

On April 13, 2022, the Ethics Commission approved a recommendation to receive and file the Ethics Commission Letter (Letter) on recommendations for the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission (Redistricting Commission) selection process.

Per City Charter Article XXV, the Ethics Commission serves as the screening panel responsible for creating a sub-pool of applicants most qualified to perform the duties required as a Commissioner of the Redistricting Commission. Based on their experience selecting the inaugural Redistricting Commission, the Ethics Commission has provided the following recommendations to improve the process for the selection of future Commissioners of the Redistricting Commissions:

1. Timing considerations for applicant solicitation and application review process.
2. Including additional questions to better evaluate applicants' skills.
3. Application software alternatives.
4. Commission involvement during the application recruitment process.

For complete recommendations, please see the attached Letter.

If you would like further information please contact April Walker, Administrative Deputy City Manager, at (562) 570-6561 or via email at April.Walker@longbeach.gov.

ATTACHMENT

CC: CHARLES PARKIN, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
LINDA F. TATUM, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
APRIL WALKER, ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK
DEPARTMENT HEADS

**CITY OF LONG BEACH
ETHICS COMMISSION**

**Susan Wise, Chair
Margo Morales, Vice Chair
Lani De Benedictis, Commissioner
Luke Fiedler, Commissioner**



**Kimmy Maniquis, Commissioner
Barbara A. Pollack, Commissioner
J.P. Shotwell, Commissioner**

April 13, 2022

Dear Ethics Commission:

Redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral district boundaries which occurs every ten years following the decennial census at the Federal, State, and local levels and is important as it shapes the community's ability to elect representatives of their choice. The City of Long Beach (City) Charter designates the Ethics Commission as the screening panel to narrow down applicants for selection to the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission (Commission) and randomly select the initial nine members of the Commission. The selection process and recommendations from the 2020 Ethics Commission are outlined in this letter. We hope these recommendations assist your important decisions which will contribute to the process of redistricting our City for the next decade.

Background

The Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission was established by ballot initiative Measure DDD in 2018. The measure amended the City Charter to create an independent body with the exclusive authority to redraw the Council District boundaries every ten years following the national decennial census through an open and transparent process.

Recruitment

Per the City Charter Article XXV, the application period for the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission was open for three months from April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2020. Recruitment efforts yielded a diverse applicant pool due to targeted outreach to Council Districts 1, 7, and 9, along with the Asian and Pacific Islander, Black and African American, Latino, and LGBTQ+ communities. As a result, a total of 400 applications were submitted.

After an initial review of the applications, 353 applicants were determined eligible to be included in the subpool of 20-30 applicants selected by the Ethics Commission. There were 14 applicants who withdrew their name from consideration, six duplicated applications, and 27 applicants who were deemed ineligible due to their responses on the application.

Ethics Commission Selection Process

City Charter Article XXV designates the Ethics Commission as the screening panel responsible for creating a subpool of 20 to 30 applicants most qualified to perform the duties of the Commission. The Ethics Commission made each assignment to the subpool on the basis of the applicant's relevant analytical skills, familiarity with Long Beach neighborhoods and communities, ability to be impartial, and apparent ability to work cooperatively with other potential Commissioners. Following the selection of the subpool, the Ethics Commission Chair randomly selected nine individuals, one from each existing Council District to appoint to the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission.

On August 12, 2020, the Ethics Commissioners adopted the following selection process:

- The Ethics Commission was randomly divided into three ad hoc committees to evaluate applications by Council District. Using a selection process similar to the process used to select the three final commissioners appointed to the Ethics Commission, the City Clerk's Office assigned each ad hoc committee approximately one-third of the applications for review and ranking. Assignments to the ad hoc committees were made to ensure Ethics Commissioners reviewed applicants from Council Districts other than the one in which the Commissioners resided. The names and personal information of applicants on the applications were redacted to increase the anonymity of the applicants and minimize any potential bias.
- City staff created an Evaluation Guide for the Ethics Commission ad hoc committees to rank applicants based on their responses in the interest statement on the application, as well as information provided on the application and resume (if submitted). The three ad hoc committees met on September 3 and 4, 2020 to produce a list of five applicants from each Council District for a total of 45 applicants to be interviewed by the entire Ethics Commission.
- The interview process and the applications selected to move onto the interview process were adopted at the Ethics Commission meeting on September 9, 2020.
- Applicants were provided with three (see below) questions in advance of the interviews, which were conducted by Zoom meeting, consistent with the City's COVID-19 protocols.
- Interviews of the selected applicants were conducted by the Ethics Commission on October 7, 8, 9, and 14, 2020.
- Final selections to the subpool were made by the Ethics Commission at its Special Meeting on October 14, 2020.
- At the same meeting, the Chair randomly selected the first nine Independent Redistricting Commissioners from the subpool.

Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission Selection Process

City Charter Article XXV tasks the nine Long Beach Independent Commission members selected by the Ethics Commission to select four members and two alternates from the remaining applicants in the subpool. The Commission must make each selection on the basis of the applicant's relevant analytical skills, familiarity with the city's neighborhoods and communities, ability to be impartial, and apparent ability to work cooperatively with other Commissioners.

On November 11, 2020 the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commissioners adopted the following process:

- The Commissioners would review the application, resume (if submitted), and Ethics Commission interview of each remaining applicant in the subpool.
- The Commissioners ranked the remaining applicants based on the criteria outlined by the City Charter using the same Evaluation Guide created by staff for the Ethics Commissioners.
- The discussion and appointment of the remaining four members and two alternates were scheduled at the November 20, 2020 Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission meeting.

Thoughts and Recommendations from the 2020 Ethics Commission

Timing Considerations

The Ethics Commission recommends the solicitation, application and selection process for the 2031 Commission begin earlier to allow for additional time for application reviews and interviews. COVID-19 delayed the onboarding of the final three Ethics Commissioners. That, as well as the close of the application period for the Commission (June 30, 2020), compressed the time remaining for the selection process of the Commission members by the Ethics Commissioners.

Applicant Questions

The Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commissioner application requested applicants to provide a statement to describe why they wish to serve on the Independent Redistricting Commission and share any additional experience, community activities, or other qualifications that makes them a strong candidate for the Commission, including, but not limited to: analytical skills, familiarity with the City's neighborhoods and communities, ability to be impartial, and ability to work cooperatively with other potential commissioners.

Additionally, applicants who were selected to be interviewed by the Ethics Commission were asked to respond to the following questions in a five-minute statement during their interview.

1. What specific qualities do you have that you feel will make you a good Independent Redistricting Commission member?
2. If you are selected, you will be one of 13 members and two alternates of the Commission which is charged with working together to create maps of the new districts. Please describe a situation where you had to work collaboratively with others on a project to achieve a common goal.
 - a. Tell us the goal of the project, what your role in the group was, and how the group worked through any conflicts that arose.
 - b. What lessons would you take from this group experience to the Commission if selected?
3. What is the greatest problem the Independent Redistricting Commission could encounter, and what actions would you take to avoid or respond to this problem?

The Ethics Commission recommends adding a question or assessment for applicants to demonstrate their analytical skills to allow for the Commission to better evaluate the applicant's skills. The Ethics Commission also recommends adding a question that would request applicants provide any affiliations with community and/or political organizations. These questions would promote a more thorough and transparent process.

Application Software

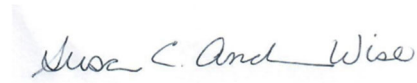
Applicants for the Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission submitted their application through the Redistricting website, which was managed by the City. City staff created the online application through the SurveyMonkey online platform. A printed version of the application was also available in Khmer, Spanish, and Tagalog. The Ethics Commission recommends City staff consider alternate application software to allow for the posting of applications online during the process similar to what the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission utilized.

Application Recruitment Outreach

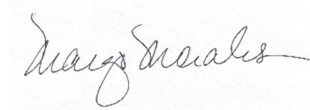
City staff began outreach for the application and selection process in August 2019 and continued through the close of the application period in June 2020. Outreach during this period included: utility bill inserts, social media ads and posts, Community Based Organizations, email newsletters, online media ads, freeway billboards ads, LB Transit ads, LB Airport ads, community presentations, and local news publications and radio. The Ethics

Commission recommends that in 2030, it be included in developing the outreach efforts, recruitment process and encouragement of community members to apply for the 2031 Long Beach Independent Redistricting Commission.

Sincerely,



Susan Wise, Chair



Margo Morales, Vice Chair



Lani De Benedictis, Commissioner



Luke Fiedler, Commissioner



Kimmy Maniquis, Commissioner



Barbara A. Pollack, Commissioner



J.P. Shotwell, Commissioner