

**REVIEWED**

By City Clerk's Office at 9:30 am, May 26, 2021

## Housing Commission Applicant

**Rene Jean Buchanan**

Application Date: 05/24/21

**Reside in Santa Monica:** yes

**If yes, number of years:** 17 1/2 years

**Hold an elected position:** no

**If yes, please specify:**

**Applying for the seat reserved for a Housing Authority Section 8 Program participant:** yes

**Applying for the seat reserved for a Housing Authority Section 8 Program participant who is over the age of 62:** no

### INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE

**Current or prior service on city boards/commissions:**

I currently serve on the Housing Commission and, as of June 30, 2021, I will have done so for ten years. This is the only City Commission on which I have served.

**Community activities:**

- 1) Volunteering for Perfect Pet Rescue which, pre-pandemic, held mobile adoptions at 15th and Montana in Santa Monica every Saturday and Sunday. We will resume once the City COVID-19 guidelines allow.
- 2) Volunteering for The St. Matthew's Thrift Shop on Main Street.
- 3) Serving on the Parish of St. Matthew Altar Guild.
- 4) Serving on The Community Corporation of Santa Monica Resident Council.
- 5) Participated on the the Homelessness Steering Committee — Public Safety Subcommittee
- 5) Participated on one of the 5-Year Plan task forces

**Qualifications, experience, education, and technical or professional requirements:**

I have been homeless three times in my life: once at 15 years old and twice as an adult. From these experiences, I gained knowledge which has proven valuable in my professional, public service, and personal lives. I have also lived with a psychiatric disability most of my life and, so, understand the difficulties those living with mental health issues face.

I graduated from OPCC's (now The People Concern) Daybreak Program in March 2003 and was subsequently hired by the agency. While there, I was asked to serve on The Jewish Federation of Los

Angeles Tel Aviv-Los Angeles Partnership Poverty Task Force, traveling to Israel to both teach and learn about effective strategies and best practices used in combating homelessness. It was during this trip that I realized that homelessness has no boundaries.

I was a longtime member of both the SAMHSA PATH Consumer-Provider Network and the SAMHSA PATH Administrative Workgroup, co-authoring the SAMHSA PATH Consumer-Provider Network Guidelines and the PATH Provider Manual. During my time with these groups, I presented my experiential knowledge at various local and national conferences.

All of these experiences made me the staunch advocate for people marginalized because of their housing, income, and mental health statuses. I am dedicated to minimizing hyperbole and gross generalizations surrounding our neighbors living on our streets by providing a balanced perspective and emphasizing the often-ignored fact that these people are first and foremost human beings.

As an 11/12-year CCSM resident, I have first-hand knowledge of the importance affordable housing plays in preserving diversity and preventing gentrification in our city. If appointed to a sixth two-year term, I will continue working with the other commissioners to further the attainment of both.

**Areas of demonstrated expertise:**

As a current Housing Commission member, I have become quite familiar with Santa Monica's zoning ordinances and building codes, although I must admit I still have much to learn.

I have studied the ADA and understand its local and national application.

As stated previously, I am very involved in community outreach and service, believing wholeheartedly in giving back to a city that has given me so much.

The challenges Santa Monica faces because of its size, density, location, and appeal must be navigated in a way that always keeps us focused on that which makes us who we are as a city. Even as we embrace and implement change, we must work to ensure we remain Santa Monica.

**Goals:**

- 1) To effect a more tolerant community.
- 2) To combat stigma by challenging myths.
- 3) To help bring affordable housing to scale through education, advocacy, and example.
- 4) To demonstrate that homelessness is an experience, not an identity.

5) To demonstrate that living in affordable housing speaks to one's income status, not to one's character or ability to be a contributing member of the community.

6) To help the Housing Commission stay focused on its vision and mission.

**Vision:**

1) That the Housing Commission continue to be recognized as vital to the preservation and development of extremely low-income, low-income, and affordable housing.

2) That the Housing Commission begin to embrace a more culturally diverse membership.

3) That the Housing Commission continue to incorporate public input in its recommendations to Council.

4) That the Housing Commission be creative and innovative in seeking to help mitigate the affordable housing crisis.

5) That the contributions of all commissioners always be respected and honored.

6) That each commissioner refrain from adopting a proprietary attitude.

**Personal Qualities:**

As the chair of the SAMHSA PATH Consumer-Provider Network, I facilitated monthly meetings, created agendas, solicited participation, and recruited new members. We built this group from the ground up after it was commissioned by then SAMHSA PATH Program Director, Dr. Mattie Cheek. We developed by-laws and leadership roles. The PATH Consumer-Provider Network Guidelines became a national standard and were integrated into the PATH Provider Manual.

While a part of the Network, I was asked by Dr. Cheek to participate in an expert panel tasked with developing meaningful data standards to be used by PATH Programs nationwide. Having meaningful national standards is critical to ensuring that best practices are used in every aspect of homeless services delivery, from initial outreach to eventual housing acquisition and maintenance.

**Will you be able to commit the necessary time to perform your duties if appointed to the board?**

yes

**How did you learn about the vacancy in this board or commission? (select all that apply)**

Word of Mouth- Council or Board/Commission member, City Staff, neighborhood groups, etc.

**BUSINESS INFORMATION**

Occupation: Disabled

Business name:

Business address:

Business phone:

