

Santa Monica Library Board Applicant

Abby H. Arnold

Application Date: 07/09/21

Reside in Santa Monica: yes

If yes, number of years: 37

Hold an elected position: no

If yes, please specify:

INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE

Current or prior service on city boards/commissions:

Served on Santa Monica Pier Corporation Board 1995-2002, 2015-2019

Community activities:

Board of Trustees, Unitarian Universalist Community Church of Santa Monica

Executive Committee, California Physicians Alliance

Co-Chair, Santa Monica Forward

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

I am a frequent user of the Santa Monica library and the County library system. I use the library's online system to reserve books that I want to read, and when the library is open I often browse the stacks and new acquisitions. I use the Main Library's meeting rooms and outdoor tables for work-related meetings. I attend community events at the library. I've participated in Santa Monica Reads each year since its inception with my 17-year Santa Monica-based book club. I often see people I know when I'm in the library, and feel that I am part of the Santa Monica library community.

Areas of demonstrated expertise:

Strategic planning: I both lead and participate in strategic planning in my professional life and volunteer service. I draft goals, objectives, action plans, and timelines for my clients. In 2018 and 2019 I produced Five-Year Plans to Address Homelessness for nine cities in Los Angeles County.

Performing arts production: Not applicable

Fundraising: My consulting work centers on obtaining public and private funding for social services. I am actively involved in fundraising for my church and for organizations on whose boards I serve.

Community outreach: The process of developing the Five-Year Plans to Address Homelessness involved meeting with elected officials, City employees, and a full range of community stakeholders, holding community meetings, and working toward community consensus. I am committed to meeting people where they are and to active listening as a practice of community outreach.

Policy development: I help develop policies in many aspects of my work and volunteer activities. I am always clear about who holds the ultimate authority for policy approval and who is charged with implementing the policy.

Performing arts operation: Not applicable.

Event management: Not applicable.

Hospitality: Our institutions need to make new people feel welcome through deliberate hospitality plans. I am often the person who approaches someone who is alone and probably new, introduces myself, and helps the person get acquainted. Refreshments and nametags help, too!

Fiduciary oversight: I have experience developing budgets, conducting oversight, and preparing reports on expenditures of funds that require accountability, including public funds and charitable donations. I have served as treasurer of several nonprofit organizations, and I served on the Oversight Committee for a SMMUSD school construction bond in the 1990s.

Real estate development: I am familiar with financing options and with some construction issues. I serve on the team managing major facilities repairs at my church.

Marketing: While this is not my area of expertise, I am familiar with principles of marketing through some of my clients and my service on the Pier Commission.

Knowledge of Santa Monica and the Civic/Pier/Arts: I have lived in Santa Monica for over 40 years and have been active in the community throughout that time, including volunteer service to City, sports leagues, schools, and my church. I served on the Pier Commission on two occasions. I regularly attend cultural events sponsored by the City, Santa Monica College, and nonprofit arts organizations.

Knowledge of the field of public librarianship and of the Santa Monica Public Library: I am a regular user of the Main Library and the Pico, Ocean Park, and Fairview branches. When I visit other cities I often go to their libraries to find out more about their community; for example, in 2017 I was in New Orleans and I went to the public library to find out biographical information about the City Librarian who integrated the New Orleans library system in the early 1960s. He ended up teaching Library Science at UCLA and was my neighbor in Ocean Park! It was exciting to find original source material about what he and the New Orleans Library Board accomplished in the Jim Crow era. One of the most interesting books I read in the last few years was about pack librarians during the Depression in rural Appalachia who took literacy and health information to the far reaches of our country. On the advice of a County librarian I read *The Librarian's Guide to Homelessness* as I was developing plans to address homelessness in cities throughout Los Angeles County. As part of that work project I met with library staff members at all levels, from security guards and pages to the lead librarian in each city to listen and document their needs, concerns, and solutions.

Goals:

After cutbacks during the economic recession of 2008, the Santa Monica Library system was able to expand its capacity and, due to strong community support, the Pico Branch Library was established and opened in 2014. The Santa Monica Public Library is facing similar challenges as we emerge from the COVID pandemic, which limited public funding for the library and required closure of in-person services

due to restrictions on physical interactions. Despite significant layoffs and furloughs, the library was able to provide materials to keep users educated and entertained while we were locked down in our homes for a full year. Thanks to the library, I did a lot of reading while isolated!

I want to support the library as it rebuilds after being closed. We must bring back our branch libraries to continue to serve neighborhoods for materials and as places to gather. This is a time when changes may be made that will update policies to better serve the community. New programs can be pilot-tested. There are opportunities for the library in each neighborhood.

Members of boards and commissions serve a dual role: they advise the City Council and the City staff about neighborhood and community issues, and at the same time they communicate with their neighbors about what is happening in City government and why. As an experienced City commissioner and member of several nonprofit boards, as well as an advisor and consultant to nonprofit organizations and local governments, I'm able to help sort out roles and responsibilities for the benefit of the City and the community.

Vision:

My vision for the Library Board is that it supports the Santa Monica Public Library in making knowledge, culture and enrichment more accessible by continuously increasing the diversity of library offerings in all media, formats, and languages. The role of the Library Board is to help the library staff identify and reach new library users and promote the resources the library has to offer.

Personal Qualities:

When I served on the Pier Commission in 2015-2019, we had a transition of both staff leadership and volunteer commissioner leadership. I helped commissioners, staff members, pier tenants, and City staff members clarify their roles so that pier staff members could do their jobs effectively, while helping to realign community expectations to the resources available and new programming objectives.

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: Grant writer

Business name: self-employed

Business address:

Business phone: