

Recreation and Parks Commission Applicant

Steven W. Johnson

Application Date: 05/28/21

Reside in Santa Monica: yes

If yes, number of years: 23

Hold an elected position: no

If yes, please specify:

INTERESTS AND EXPERIENCE

Current or prior service on city boards/commissions:

Current member of the Field Sports Advisory Committee

Community activities:

Current President, Santa Monica Rugby Club (youth, women's and men's teams)

4-year member of Samohi Choir Steering Committee

4-year online auction co-chair Samohi Sweet Serenade fundraiser concert

Past parent volunteer JAMS Theatre and Samohi Theatre

Past coach for several seasons of AYSO girls soccer

Past coach for several seasons of Santa Monica Girls Fastpitch Softball

Past adult participant in adult soccer and adult softball leagues

Past member of Church Council, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Santa Monica

Recent Choir Director Search Committee member, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Santa Monica

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

I have played, coached or been a club leader with Santa Monica Rugby since moving to Santa Monica in 1995. I was a player when the men's team won back-to-back national championships in 2005 and 2006. I am currently president of the Club, which includes youth boys and girls teams ages 8-18, plus men's and women's teams that play at a national level. Rugby is now an Olympic sport in which the US is competitive for both women and men, and is among the most diverse and inclusive sports played in the world (race, class, gender, sexual orientation).

Working for a company in Santa Monica for many years, I have also played in adult sports leagues including co-ed adult soccer and co-ed adult softball.

I am a lap swimmer at the SMC Swim Center 3-5 days a week.

I am a 12-year SMMUSD parent whose child played AYSO soccer and SMGFP softball, before running cross country and track at Santa Monica High School. As a coach, parent and athlete, I am committed to growing recreational sport opportunities in Santa Monica for children and young adults in a fair and equitable way.

Lastly, through my involvement with my church, I am also concerned about Senior issues -- access to parks, safety, well-being.

My technical and professional background includes close work with finance systems and program management, so I can bring some business insight and project skills to the table. I have worked with non-profits both in sports and the arts.

Goals:

Safety/Health concerns in the parks is #1. Equitable field access and expanded opportunities for play would be my #2. And, as a taxpayer, and I would like to see our parks money well-spent, so fiscal accountability is my #3 priority.

Vision:

First and foremost, I see the Rec & Parks commission as an advocate for the health and well-being of the citizens of Santa Monica. I want us to take on the issues big and small. Though I will tend to prioritize residents' needs over other concerns, I do feel we have the opportunity to grow to also become a destination to host regional events such as softball tournaments, soccer, rugby and lacrosse, as a means up boosting the local economy and civic profile.

Personal Qualities:

I am a consensus builder. I like to set achievable goals -- short, medium -- while keeping long term goals in sight. For example, my leadership of the rugby club has been to focus on widening our base and supporting diversity both at the youth and adult level. Fundraising and our relationship with inner city and school programs allows us to open up to include youth of all socioeconomic backgrounds. The men's team, founded in 1972, has always reflected the diversity that is rugby, but it is the recent growth of our women's program, notable for its inclusivity, that I am most proud.

Field space is an existential matter for any club sport, and I have valued the partnership I've had with both the City and the District to find a home for rugby in Santa Monica. That comes from patience and persistence, but also a willingness to collaborate with other groups. I feel like balance is possible, even as new sports (field hockey, ultimate frisbee) and I've noticed an even greater sense of community among the FSAC members as we rally to promote not just field space, but safety and health issues in our parks.

How you see yourself working with staff and your fellow Commissioners to advance arts and/or recreation goals in a broad way:

I've attended Commission meetings. I feel like there are some great members who take their work seriously and make a difference. I'd like to work alongside my fellow Commissioners to be a voice for more sensible Parks and Rec ambitions. Not every park needs to cost tens of millions of dollars; not every bathroom remodel needs to break the bank. There are modest endeavors that can improve the health and well-being of Santa Monicans right now, without waiting for some long-distant airport closure, or waiting as long as it took to get the Civic Center field approved.

I realize that staffing and resources have shifted a great deal these past 14 months. In some ways, I hope it means we can work to achieve more with less, and set some new expectations for what's possible. And in these tumultuous times, where other forces continue to try to shortcut the mechanisms of local government, I was proud to see the stand the Commission took on The Plaza vote. Frankly, that's what pushed me the extra inch to want to apply when I first submitted my application in 2020.

Lastly, the conversion of the Airport to a Great Park is far from a done deal. Consistent advocacy is needed from here until the project is complete. I have the energy, the time and the resources to support this effort through to completion.

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: Data Analytics and Business Operations Consultant

Business name: swjohnsonla Consulting

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Business phone: 310-429-0475