

# ***MEMORANDUM***

***Office of the Mayor***

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**To: City Council**

**cc: Mary Lavelle**

**From: Mayor Bob Livengood**

**Subject: Planning Commission Appointments**

**Date: November 23, 2009**

**I am submitting for your approval the following Planning Commission Appointments:**

**Re-appoint Gurdev “Dave” Sandhu for a term ending December 2012**

**Appoint Mark Tiernan for a term ending December 2012**

**Appoint Steve Tao for a term ending December 2012**

**Appoint Erik Larsen as an Alternate for a term ending December 2012**

**Attached are the applications for the newly appointed members.**

NOV 13 2009



# CITY OF MILPITAS PLANNING COMMISSION APPLICATION

RECEIVED

NOTE: Milpitas Municipal Code, Title I Chapter 500, requires "at all times during the term of office, a Planning Commissioner shall be a registered voter of the City of Milpitas and a resident of the City of Milpitas." Also, all applicants are required to complete a **SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE** in addition to this application form.

PLEASE PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION (in black ink)

Name: STEVE First CHI-RU Middle TAO Last

Address: 1065 Number EAGLE RIDGE WAY Street Apt. #

Telephone Number(s) [Redacted] e-mail address [Redacted]

Are you a registered voter in the City of Milpitas? YES How long have you lived in Milpitas? 2 1/2 YRS

Present Employer: PRUDENTIAL COMMERCIAL SERVICES Business Telephone: 510-249-0844

Address: 43430 MISSION BLVD. STE 100 FREMONT Occupation: COMM RE AGENT

Education:

College, Professional, Vocational, or other schools attended	Major Subject	Date	Degree
<u>UNIV OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY</u>	<u>ARCHITECTURE</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>BA</u>

List community organizations to which you belong or have belonged (additional information may be attached):

Date	Name of Organization	Officer / Member
<u>03/2005-PRESENT</u>	<u>TERRACE GARDEN</u>	<u>B.O.D.</u>
<u>04/2009-PRESENT</u>	<u>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMM.</u>	<u>MEMBER</u>

Briefly describe your personal qualifications that you believe would be an asset (additional information may be attached):

I BELIEVE MY EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND IN ARCHITECTURE, PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES IN REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT, CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT, AND COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE BROKERAGE CAN BE AN ASSET TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION.

I have sufficient time to devote to this responsibility and will attend the required meetings if I am appointed to fill a future vacancy. I hereby certify that all statements contained in this application are true.

[Signature]  
Signature

11/10/2009  
Date

Applications not acted upon will expire after one year from the date submitted unless renewed by the applicant.

**NOTE: ALL COMMISSION APPLICATIONS ARE PUBLIC RECORD**  
Mail or drop off your completed application to the City Clerk, 455 E. Calaveras Blvd., Milpitas, CA 95035

# **CITY OF MILPITAS PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

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Please type or print responses to the following questions. Additional sheets may be attached. Submit responses with Application form to: City Clerk, Milpitas City Hall, 455 E Calaveras Blvd., Milpitas CA 95035.

1. Why are you interested in serving on the Planning Commission?
  
2. Describe your understanding of how the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, and planning procedures affecting the development of the community.
  
3. In what way will your personal or work experience contribute to your role as a Planning Commissioner?
  
4. What do you feel are the most pressing planning problems or issues in Milpitas? How do you think they should best be resolved?
  
5. Do you have a long-term vision of how you think the City should develop?
  
6. A major planning problem facing the entire Bay Area is the shortage of affordable housing. Do you have any thoughts on how the City should address this issue?
  
7. What do you see as the different roles of City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council?
  
8. What do you believe should be the focus of the Milpitas Redevelopment Agency and program?

Responses to City of Milpitas Planning Commission Supplemental Questionnaire

1. I feel it is the responsibility of residents of a city to be involved in the community at large. I am interested in serving on the Planning Commission for several reasons: a) for the directions of current and long term growth of the city b) at a time of critical growth cycle with the Midtown and TASP implementation c) promote general neighborhood wellness and d) bringing my experience and educational background to a topic I am passionate about.
2. The General Plan provides the broad vision of land use for the city and serves as the guideline and basis for the direction of future growth while providing a balanced approach to a sustaining community. Zoning Ordinance, while consistent with the General Plan, provides the mid-level guidelines for the specific intended usage at a location. Planning procedures provides the precise guidance to the applicant of the means and path to accomplish the intended usage. Together the three documents provide the linear path to the shape, massing, density, intensity, color, sound, textures, air quality among many other elements of the community we call home.
3. I strongly believe my educational background from a design oriented architectural program at UC Berkeley provides me with the fundamentals of perceiving project design and context. My 12 years of work experience in the real estate development and construction management arena allows me to better understand and appreciate the appropriateness of the design, methods of application and quality. The 7 years of ownership position of a thriving small business allows me to better appreciate the needs of the business community and how the city may better assist the future success of businesses through the planning process. The ongoing 10+ years of daily professional contact in the commercial real estate, the development community, businesses and people who are interested in Milpitas as the preferred home and/or business address allows me the appreciation and reality check of real time, right now issues and difficulties facing the people and firms who are interested in investing in the Milpitas community.
4. The City of Milpitas, City Council and the RDA have over the past few years completed two specific plans aimed at transforming and mapping of growth of Milpitas into a new century. Implementing the visions and purposes of these Plans together with maintaining the feel and texture of the community over the coming years will be a very important goal. I also believe in looking at the compatibility of neighboring uses, and maintaining and improving existing appearances of neighborhoods via city initiated measures and education of property owners.
5. I see the city as a vibrant town comprised of diverse demographic population groups, a city with varied housing stock, a city with viable and desired retail and entertainment destinations, a city with job base so residents can work within the boundaries and create the additional tax base. The long term vision I see for Milpitas is to remain appropriately flexible in land use policy to respond to the changing needs and demands of residents and industries. Any

changes in our employment pattern/base, retail and industrial capacity is shadowed in part by the speed, numerical count/type of housing units being implemented in the Specific Plan Areas. I foresee the appropriate flexibility requirements being paramount in completing the plans in place.

6. The Inclusionary Housing policy currently provides the means to create a threshold of affordable housing units to be introduced into the community. The current housing crisis provides a window of opportunity to possibly creatively insert affordable units into the community at large. As evidenced at Centria project, a pricing inversion process has occurred arising from the slumping housing prices. While we are placing BMR's into the new developments, we as policy body should be firmly aware the subsidy of the costs are primarily shared amongst the new home buyers and property sellers.
7. I believe the City staff is the implementation body of the policies. The Planning Commission is the recommending body appointed by the elected council to see to the implementation and make sound judgment calls on discretionary approvals based on the council adopted policies. The Council is the policy making body who are elected by the people to represent them.
8. I believe the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) is an integral part of the overall implementational tool to guide and foster the transformation of the long term land uses in specific areas. It provides the ability to create the desired tax base/increments. I believe the focus should be on regions and sub-areas where current uses only bring about long term degradation of the community standards and characters. As well, RDA should focus on the rehabilitation of the properties and sub-area to create distinctive characters.

**CITY OF MILPITAS  
COMMISSION/COMMITTEE APPLICATION**

*Planning Commission*

PROVIDE COMPLETE INFORMATION (in black ink)

COMMISSION APPLYING FOR ↑

Senior Advisory Commission applicants only: are you a member of Milpitas Senior Center? **YES/NO**

City Clerk's Office

Mr.  Mrs./Ms. Erik First Larsen Middle Last NOV - 4 2009

Address: 753 Kizer Street Number Street Apt. # **RECEIVED**

Telephone Number(s) [Redacted] e-mail address [Redacted]

Present Employer City of San Jose Business Telephone 408-723-4114

Address 1601 Foxworthy, San Jose, CA Occupation Neighborhood Organizer

Education: If Youth Advisory Commission applicant, indicate your grade/school: \_\_\_\_\_

College, Professional, Vocational, or other schools attended	Major Subject	Date	Degree
<u>National Labor College</u>	<u>Leadership and Union Administration</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>BA</u>
<u>Chabot Community College</u>	<u>Liberal Studies</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>AA</u>

List community organizations to which you belong or have belonged (additional information may be attached):

Date	Name of Organization	Officer / Member
<u>11/12/09</u>	<u>AFSCME Local 101, MEF Chapter</u>	<u>Chief Steward</u>
<u>present</u>	<u>VTA Community Advisory Committee Board</u>	<u>Member</u>
<u>present</u>	<u>San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau, TSV</u>	<u>Board Member</u>
<u>present</u>	<u>Sunnyhills United Methodist Church</u>	<u>Chairperson</u>
	<u>Milpitas Community Breakfast Committee</u>	

Briefly describe the personal qualifications you possess which you believe would be an asset (additional information may be attached):

*I have fifteen years of experience in neighborhood and resident led planning. I have reviewed conditional use permits for alcohol licenses. I have facilitated community meetings. I have worked with tenants, apartment owners, and residents on multi-family housing projects. I have worked with city staff and consultants to shape complex redevelopment projects. I would be an asset to the Milpitas Planning Commission.*

I have sufficient time to devote to this responsibility and will attend the required meetings if I am appointed to fill a future vacancy. I hereby certify that all statements contained in this application are true.

Erik Larsen  
Signature

11/1/09  
Date

Appointments to Commissions or Committees are made by the Mayor with the concurrence of the City Council. Applications not acted upon will expire after one year from the date submitted unless renewed by the applicant.

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Mail or drop off your completed application to the City Clerk, 455 E. Calaveras Blvd., Milpitas, CA 95035

CITY OF MILPITAS  
INFORMATION DESK  
NOV - 4 2009  
**RECEIVED**  
July 7, 2008

# PLANNING COMMISSION SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Erik Larsen, 753 Kizer Street, Milpitas, CA, 95035



INFORMATION

NOV 10 2009  
8:20 AM

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1. **Why are you interested in serving on the Planning Commission?**

I am interested in serving on the Planning Commission because I want to make a positive contribution to the City of Milpitas. My work and leadership experience would give the Planning Commission a different perspective -- one that is rooted in the appreciation of strong vital neighborhoods.

2. **Describe your understanding of how the City's General Plan, Zoning Ordinances, and Planning procedures affect the development of the community.**

The General Plan provides an overall frame work for how a city develops. It is a sort of vision or mission statement. Zoning Ordinances are on the ground guidelines for how the General Plan is implemented. Planning procedures could be interpreted as the manner in which changes or amendments to ordinances or plans are brought through a public process.

All three can play a critical role in how communities and neighborhoods grow or even decline. For example, a General Plan that allows for mixed use business development near schools that doesn't also have specific Zoning Ordinances that govern alcohol outlets, tattoo stores, massage parlors or other similar businesses could lead to a proliferation of such businesses that could negatively impact the quality of schools and neighborhoods. The State of California regulates alcohol licenses, but cities can go further to address issues of loitering, graffiti, trash and litter, hours of operation, and even certain types of marketing of alcohol and tobacco products.

However, it is important that what ever rules or ordinances are passed by a City Council, that there is a process that is fair, transparent, and open, and enforcement is evenly applied to everyone. Local government should not use planning and enforcement to unjustly target individuals for personal gain or punishment. Milpitas has an excellent reputation of being a community that has a proud tradition of fairness and respect for cultural diversity.

3. **In what way will your personal or work experience contribute to your role as a Planning Commissioner?**

I have fifteen years of experience in neighborhood and resident led planning projects. I have worked as a neighborhood organizer in many neighborhoods impacted by street crime and violence. My job has been to work with community members to create specific plans and to assist them in implementing their goals and objectives for neighborhood change. I will bring an enthusiasm and energy for community service to the Planning Commission.

Additionally, my service on various boards and as a leader in my union has prepared me to chair and participate in public meetings. I understand the proper decorum and professionalism needed serve on a public commission. I believe in listening and engaging in meaningful conversation with both community residents and city staff. They are both experts in their own right. I understand that I will need to be prepared and ready to participate in every Planning Commission meeting.

4. **What do you feel are the most pressing planning problems or issues in Milpitas? How do you think they should best be resolved?**

Milpitas is a city that is largely built out. The major planning questions for the city include in-fill projects and how much to build up. Below are some examples of planning issues that face Milpitas:

- A new BART station that makes a statement about Milpitas

- Consolidation of parcels on Main Street between the new library and the fire station to promote the development of a lively "downtown" area for small business supported by housing units
- Attracting businesses to complete the "auto row" that now includes Toyota and Honda
- Development of south Main Street near the Pines to encourage more pedestrian friendly design that links the street to the adjacent neighborhood area
- SMART growth design principles for housing in the transportation hub that includes the Great Mall light rail station and the future BART station
- Completion of the bicycle master plan to encourage a seamless avenue for bicycles from Landes to Warm Springs and to create more East to West avenues for bicycles and pedestrians
- Supporting the diversity of small businesses that reflect the multi-cultural "minority" community that has developed in Milpitas and has made this an excellent community to conduct business
- Building affordable housing units in the urban core area of Milpitas
- Protecting the Milpitas hillsides from tract home development

**5. Do you have a long-term vision of how you think the City should develop?**

Milpitas really is a wonderful place to live. The early founders of the City and early leaders put a lot of thought into developing the area. It has good mix of shopping and retail, housing, neighborhood parks, city and county services, transportation, places of worship, schools, social and recreational organizations and more. These strengths should be preserved and enhanced.

When I think into the future, and my children's future, there are a number of issues that jump out as requiring long term planning and attention. I do not support development of our hillsides. I am a strong supporter of infill development and I am a SMART growth advocate for developing within a defined urban limit. That said, below are a few long term issues that are going to require a great deal of planning. I don't have ready made solutions. But I do have an interest in working through these issues and involving community stake holders in appropriate conversations about these issues.

At some point there will be a major earthquake on the fault line that runs through Milpitas. We need to prepare for this eventuality. What is the overall condition of our bridges and over passes? Will the Hetch Hetchy water source and the San Jose Water Company water lines be able to withstand a quake?

The much maligned source of odor, the Milpitas dump, is going to reach its limit. The landfill is very popular with city residents as noted by the stream of cars and trucks that make their way to the dump on a weekly basis. But when it reaches its capacity what are we going to do with our waste? What opportunities exist for maintaining a waste and recycling site? Are there opportunities for capping the landfill and developing the surrounding area for green or open space?

There are some community residents that would like to see Elmwood disappear. Like it or not it is a part of our city. At some point, though, Santa Clara County needs to begin looking at upgrading or re-designing the facility. How will the City of Milpitas be involved in the discussion?

**6. A major planning problem facing the entire Bay Area is the shortage of affordable housing. Do you have any thoughts on how the City should address this issue?**

Affordable housing is a difficult issue. I think about the issue in terms of trying to first answer the question - - affordable for whom?

My wife is a school teacher. I am a neighborhood organizer. We make a combined income of roughly \$120,000 per year. We have two kids. The house we bought a house on Kizer Street near Milpitas High School in 2002 for \$450,000 with \$100,000 down was barely "affordable" to us. With our credit cards maxed out and two car loans, we really had to stretch every dollar. With the economic downturn and the bursting of the housing bubble we are lucky not to be under water like so many friends and neighbors. My wife and I are considered "moderate" income

There are many people who live in Milpitas that have smaller incomes. A family of four with a combined income of \$60,000 is considered "low income". A family of six with a combined income of \$85,000 is "low income". These low income families include janitors, mechanics, teacher aides, office secretaries, bank tellers, grocery store clerks, skilled trades workers, and more. These are jobs that were once considered solid middle class jobs.

There is a shortage of housing that is "affordable" to the vast majority of people who more and more are classified as "low to moderate" income. Milpitas ought to encourage the construction of "affordable" housing that meets the needs of "low and moderate" income residents. The difficulties with building affordable housing for "low and moderate" income families usually involve two issues: density and height.

The rule of thumb is the higher and more dense the housing development, the more affordable the units. Milpitas needs to have a conversation about in-fill projects. Where do we build them? The current plan seems to encourage this type of development in the city core, the Great Mall area around the transit hub that will include light rail, bus, and BART. We may want to look at other transit hubs such as the high rider ship hubs for VTA bus lines. Are there opportunities for "affordable" housing sites in those areas as well?

Lastly, the City of Milpitas ought to support "affordable" housing along the Main Street corridor. The small businesses on Main Street between the Library and the Fire Station could benefit from a Main Street plan that encourages housing above and retail space below. There are many communities that have successfully implemented this model and have turned downtown areas into thriving pedestrian friendly environments where small businesses are supported and thrive.

**7. What do you see as the different roles of City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council?**

I have a great deal of respect for the professionalism and dedication of City staff. They play a key role in helping Planning Commissioners understand complex issues. Staff prepares reports and memos on specific issues. They share the information with Commissioners who review and provide feedback on the general direction of a project. Planning Commissioners could ask staff to provide additional information or even revise reports. The Planning Commission then makes recommendations and may even vote on a variety of issues. The Planning Commission informs the City Council who in turn has the final say on a project or issue.

**8. What do you believe should be the focus of the Milpitas Redevelopment Agency and program?**

We are living in a time of limited resources. The Milpitas Redevelopment Agency can and has played an important role in helping grow City resources. Economic development, eradication of blight, and affordable housing are three general areas that seem to be a focus for the Agency and should continue to be a focus for the Agency.

I am most excited about the expanded Redevelopment area that now includes the apartments on Calaveras and Dempsey. That area needs some extra attention. The area reminds me of some of the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative zones where I work in the City of San Jose. I believe the Agency can provide incentives to improve the housing stock while also holding owners of multi-family units accountable to a higher standard of upkeep and maintenance.

Additionally, the shopping area that includes Savers is in need of some help. Façade improvements, a resurfaced parking lot, lighting, and other minor improvements may not be enough. This blighted neighborhood area in some respects is closed off from the main traffic circulation of Park Victoria. How to encourage a better business environment in that area is a question that the Agency should continue to wrestle with.

I firmly believe that an improved business and neighborhood environment in the expanded Redevelopment area will have an added effect of making an impact on street crime and violence. The presence of gang graffiti, litter and trash, vacant lots with weeds and discarded furniture, all create an environment that encourages negative social activity. I adhere to something called the "broken window" theory, and I endorse the creation of stronger social ties or "social capital" as a means to improve Redevelopment areas. The cross cooperation between City staff in the Agency, Planning, Police Department, Fire Department, Code Enforcement, Public Works, City Attorney and other silos is essential to successful neighborhood and business redevelopment projects.