

Sharon Gustafson

As a member of the San Jose Arts Commission for the past five years, I have been privileged to participate on a city-wide committee which has, at its heart, the obligation to significantly impact the “quality of life” in our City. We have not concerned ourselves with the politics of City Government. Rather, we have tried to keep our focus on those things which provide cultural enrichment for all of us. With this body of experience, I do believe that I am both interested in and qualified to serve as Chairwoman of the Commission for the coming year. As requested, the following information addresses the question of specific qualifications:

1. Leadership Skills: I have held leadership positions with a number of organizations in this and other communities, including membership on the Board of Directors of several non-profits in San Jose. While on the Arts Commission I have served as Chair of the Programs Committee (current), Arts Commission representative to the Special Committee considering the Mexican Heritage Plaza’s circumstances and requests (current), member of the Executive Committee (current) and chair of Election Committee (2006).

2. Familiarity with...local cultural community: I served for several years on the Board of Directors of Ballet San Jose as well as the Children’s Foundation Silicon Valley, a recipient of grant funding for its children’s art program. Further I have a significant level current knowledge of the special circumstances surrounding the Mexican Heritage Plaza as a member of the special committee currently convened. In addition, I am currently serving as Arts Commission liaison to the Arts Council Silicon Valley so that I have significant knowledge of the issues and programs of other cultural organizations.

3. Commitment to Commission’s roles...: As noted above, I have almost 5 years of experience on this Commission, including several assignments to the Program Grant Panel as well as the Operating Grant and Appeals Panels. These experiences most assuredly have familiarized me with the Commission’s roles and responsibilities and are evidence of my commitment to them.

4. Ability to handle complex...situations...: My assignments on the Commission, as well as my professional experience and my leadership experience in other organizations serve as the clearest evidence of my ability to do those sometimes difficult tasks associated with effective leadership. I have served on voluntary Boards of Directors in this and other communities for over thirty years, a most significant body of experience, chairing committees and events both large and small. In every case, the “currency” to be managed is people and the situations to be handled generally complex and often volatile! The best evidence of my ability to navigate those particularly challenging situations is the fact that I was consistently asked to continue, to do more, to accept further leadership roles.

5. Commission experience: I believe I have clearly outlined my Commission experience in the foregoing paragraphs. The years have been instructive on many levels and have certainly brought me to my current belief that I am qualified, interested and appropriately experienced to lead the Commission in the year ahead.