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432-2024

Report

Appoint Sarah Vaz and Thomas Eldridge to the Design Commission

Accepted

As Mayor, I request Council confirmation of the following appointments to the Design Commission.

The Design Commission provides leadership and expertise on urban design and architecture and advances the purpose of the Design overlay zone. The Design overlay zone ensures that Portland is both a city designed for people and a city in harmony with nature. The Design overlay zone supports the city's evolution within current and emerging centers of civic life. The overlay promotes design excellence in the built environment through the application of additional design standards and design guidelines. The Portland Design Commission hears Land Use applications for proposals within design districts (Type III applications and Type II appeal applications).

One action is currently needed. I am recommending two candidates for appointment on the Design Commission for 4-year terms. [One appointee will replace a member whose second term ends on 3/15/24 and the other who is stepping down from their 2nd term on 10/31/24]. Note securing this early appointment for November 1, 2024 helps this volunteer transition from other volunteer commitments.

Introduced by

[Mayor Ted Wheeler](#);
[Commissioner Carmen Rubio](#)

Bureau

[Development Services](#)

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Requested Agenda Type

Time Certain

Date and Time Information

Requested Council Date

May 29, 2024

Requested Start Time

10:45 am

Time Requested

15 minutes

Appointee Name	Action	Membership Category	1st Full Term
Sarah Vaz	Replacing [Jessica Molinar]	Architect	June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2028
Thomas Eldridge	Replacing [Sam Rodriguez]	Developer	November 1, 2024 – October 31, 2028

Sarah Vaz is a licensed architect in Oregon and a Senior Associate at Holst Architects, where she has positively contributed to dozens of projects in Portland over the course of 9 years. Sarah is committed to the open

exchange of ideas and understands that the best outcomes come from the tension of holding opposing views – this is a tension that requires a diversity of backgrounds and opinions. As a project architect and designer Sarah has facilitated stakeholder and community meetings and enjoys working collaboratively within the office. Sarah believes the best approach to navigating diverse backgrounds and viewpoints is holding curiosity while working to identify common goals. Sarah is thoughtful, collaborative, detail-oriented, and results-driven. She views her interactions and decisions through a lens of fairness, and she has an acute eye for design. Sarah will add value to the Design Commission with her dedication, positive energy, and wisdom.

Statement of interest from Sarah Vaz: *Living and working in Portland for the last ten years I have had the pleasure of experiencing the growth of an incredible city, and I am excited to serve my community by joining the continued efforts of the Design Commission in shaping that growth to the benefit of our shared public realm.*

I am an architect with a passion for sustainable design and recent experience working with trauma informed principles in the design of rehabilitation facilities. I am also an artist, working out of a printmaking studio in SE Portland. Some of the projects I'm most proud of have been collaboratively designed and public-facing art installations for the Portland Winter Lights festival, as well as exterior and interior murals for non-profit partners.

Experiencing the city as a renter, bike commuter, recreational runner, and most recently a paddle boarder, I am continually amazed by the integration of vibrant neighborhoods with natural beauty in our community. In the words of Robin Wall Kimmerer, all flourishing is mutual. This includes our interactions with each other as well as with our surroundings, and I hope to positively contribute to the mutual flourishing of this city.

Thomas Eldridge's experience working in affordable housing development started in his native London, UK and he now works as a Development Manager in Portland for an Affordable Housing Developer focused on the thoughtful planning and development of communities that enrich the quality of life of residents. Since first reading *Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000*, whilst studying for his Masters Degree in Real Estate Development at Portland State University, his experience has come full circle as he now works with local Community Based Organizations to develop affordable housing as part of Portland Housing Bureaus North/North East Preference Policy.

Thomas is passionate about how the built environment impacts us as humans, and sees serving on the Portland Design Commission as an opportunity to act as an ambassador for every member of the public who interacts with real estate.

Thomas is a member of Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) inaugural DEI Coalition and is a Portland State University Graduate Student Mentor.

Statement of interest from Thomas Eldridge:

I am seeking to be a member of the Portland Design Commission to help eliminate inequitable design which would otherwise negatively impact individuals and the broader community. I would like to encourage developers and designers to act with a more equitable lens and focus on how their projects can positively affect the public at large. Designers and developers are inherently focused on the occupants who are privileged enough to enter their buildings and can disregard how it will make individuals and communities feel who can only experience it from the outside; it is this distinct area of real estate design that I would like to focus my energy towards.

My unique qualities I can bring to the commission include:

- 1. My vast experience working in the City of London, UK: where planning commissions prioritize the protection and restoration of historic communities and buildings.*
- 2. My knowledge and empathy towards the harmful impacts the City of Portland has previously made through erroneous design and planning decisions. Predominantly those in North Portland (see Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000)*
- 3. My passion and enthusiasm for the built environment which has been cultivated through my own work as a Development Manager for a Portland based affordable housing developer, but most importantly, how buildings and streetscapes make me feel as a human.*

With these appointments, all vacancies on the Design Commission will be filled.

I recommend that Sarah Vaz – Architect, and Thomas Eldridge – Developer, be appointed to the Design Commission for first terms as noted above.

Impact Statement**Purpose of Proposed Legislation and Background Information**

The appointments of these Commissioners is required by Portland City Code [Title 33] to fulfill quorum requirements for Type 2 Appeals and Type 3 Land Use Reviews.

Financial and Budgetary Impacts

The Commissioner appointments are citizen-volunteer positions, so no revenue or expenses are incurred by these positions.

Community Impacts and Community Involvement

The Bureau of Development Services continually advertises positions for the Commission through its webpage, public phone calls to the Commission Clerk and Staff, and as needed media announcements of upcoming positions. These media announcements are widely circulated in the design, development, and neighborhood community news outlets and web pages.

100% Renewable Goal

This proposal is for appointments of individuals to a volunteer commission; therefore, this goal is not applicable to this action.

Document History

Item 432 Time Certain in [May 29-30, 2024 Council Agenda](https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2024/5/29)
(<https://www.portland.gov/council/agenda/2024/5/29>)

City Council

Confirmed

Motion to accept the report: Moved by Gonzalez and seconded by Rubio.

Commissioner Dan Ryan Yea

Commissioner Rene Gonzalez Yea

Commissioner Mingus Mapps Yea

Commissioner Carmen Rubio Yea

Mayor Ted Wheeler Yea