



City of St. Helena
Special City Council Meeting - Applicant
Interviews
Tuesday, July 15, 2025 @ 4:30 PM
St. Helena City Hall, Main Conference
Room, 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena

PLEASE NOTE: Any person who wishes to speak regarding an item on the agenda or make a comment under the "Oral Communication" portion of the agenda may do so, but please observe the time limit of four minutes.

Public comment for City Council meetings will be accepted via email to publiccomment@cityofsthelena.gov. All public comments must be received three hours prior to the meeting. All other public comments received after the deadline will be attached to the item the next business day or soon thereafter. Public comments will not be read out loud but will be publicly available and attached to the on-line City Council agenda.

Simultaneous Spanish interpretation services during meetings can be scheduled upon request. To ensure interpreters are available, requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance by calling the Office of the City Clerk at (707) 968-2640 or emailing cityclerk@cityofsthelena.gov.

The schedule of upcoming meetings and published meeting agendas can be found on the City of St. Helena website at <https://sthelena.civicweb.net/portal/>.

Servicios de interpretación en español durante la reunión pueden ser solicitados por el público. Para asegurar que los intérpretes estén disponibles, los servicios tienen que ser solicitados al menos 72 horas antes de la reunión llamando a la oficina de la Secretaria de la Ciudad al (707) 968-2640 o por correo electrónico a cityclerk@cityofsthelena.org.

El horario de las reuniones publicadas y próximas puede ser localizado en el sitio de web de la Ciudad en <https://sthelena.civicweb.net/portal/>.

Page

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
Mayor: Paul Dohring, Vice Mayor: Michelle Deasy City Council Members:
Aaron Barak, Kate Spadarotto, Billy Summers
3. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA
4. PUBLIC COMMENT:
Under California law, public comments at special meetings are limited to subjects on the agenda only. Therefore public comment will take place during consideration of the item. Each person's comments shall be limited to 4 minutes.
5. NEW BUSINESS:
Applicant interviews for the Planning Commission.

- 5.1. The applicants for the two (2) vacancies on the Planning Commission

3 - 43

with term ending June 30, 2029:

1. John Anderson
2. Michelle Covell
3. Hector Lopez
4. Federico Paragrecó

[Planning Commission Application - John Anderson](#)

[Planning Commission Application - Michelle Covell](#)

[Planning Commission Application - Hector F. Lopez](#)

[Planning Commission Application - Federico Parlagreco](#)

[Public Comment.Claire Pott](#)

[Public Comment.Claudia Schmidt](#)

[Public Comment.Dana Johnson](#)

[Public Comment.Heather Wright Foye](#)

[Public Comment.Jennifer and David Risher](#)

[Public Comment.Jim Fassio](#)

[Public Comment.Kara Smith](#)

[Public Comment.Pierette Titus](#)

[Public Comment.Andrea Jane York](#)

[Public Comment.Jesse Clifton](#)

[Public Comment.Agnessa Todorova](#)

[Public Comment.Kelleen Sullivan](#)

[Public Comment.Beth Cook](#)

[Public Comment.Andrea Minoo](#)

[Public Comment.Elizabeth Anne Clough](#)

[Public Comment.John Harrington](#)

[Public Comment.Brian Carroll](#)

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The next Regular City Council meeting is scheduled for July 22, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

This agenda was posted at City Hall, 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California on 15 Jul 2025.

Erika Opp, Administrative Analyst

In Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please call the City Clerk's Office (707) 967-2792. Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting as required by Section 202 of the Americans with Disabilities Act will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to this meeting.

Any supplemental writings or documents distributed to a majority of the City Council regarding any item on this Agenda, after the posting of the Agenda, will be available for public review in the City Clerk's Office located at 1088 College Avenue, St. Helena, California, during normal business hours and by appointment. In addition, such writings or documents will be made available on the City's web site at <https://sthelena.civicweb.net> and will be available for public review at the respective meeting.



City of St. Helena

CA-25-026

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Received Date: June 13, 2025

Application Type: Planning Commission

NAME: John Anderson

ADDRESS: 1880 Spring Mountain Rd, Saint Helena, CA, 94574

PHONE: 7074792619

EMAIL ADDRESS: john@woodhousechocolate.com

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: 27 years

EMPLOYER: Alpa Omega - Tasting Host

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed

REASON FOR APPLYING: I am interested in giving back to my community and help as we decide important questions that impact our collective future.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: BA: Claremont McKenna College (1984), Art History: Christie's London (1986), MBA: UC Davis (2003)

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: I managed S. Anderson Vineyard (1992-2002). I founded and managed Woodhouse Chocolate (2004-2023). Both local business

REFERENCE 1: Name: Paul Dohring
Address:
Phone Number(s):(707) 942-1298
Email: pdohring@cityofstheleena.gov

REFERENCE 2: Name: Sue Furdek
Address:
Phone Number(s):(707) 738-9330
Email: sue@eonianwines.com

REFERENCE 3: Name: Marcus Robbins
Address:
Phone Number(s):(707) 963-5445
Email: marcus@patinajewelry.com

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission to which you are applying?

Yes.

What is your understanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission?

The Saint Helena's Planning commission considers issues relating to use permits and applications for development within the community, for the good of the community. They also help the City Council to develop future planning goals for the city.

What would be your goal(s) as a Commissioner?

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To serve my community utilizing decades of experience and understanding of the City's history, goals and development.

Have you previously served, or do you currently serve, on a St. Helena Commission or Committee? If yes, which one(s) and for what period of time?

No.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted. I also agree that if appointed, I will serve on the Commission/Committee for which I have submitted this application.

☒ I AGREE

John Stanley Anderson

June 13, 2025

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City of St. Helena

CA-25-020

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Received Date: June 2, 2025

Application Type: Planning Commission

NAME: Michelle Covell

ADDRESS: 1700 Park Street, St. Helena, CA, 94574

PHONE: 510 4099377

EMAIL ADDRESS: Michelle@covellarchitects.com

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: 10 years

EMPLOYER: Covell Architects, Architect, Director of Operations

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed

REASON FOR APPLYING: To help with the planning and development of the town

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: B.A. in Architecture at the school of Environmental Design at UC Berkeley, with High Honors 2003. Masters in Architecture, California College of the Arts 2006, Licensed Architect in the State of California in 2011, LEED AP 2009. Garden for the Environment, Get Up Graduate 2013. Architecture Teacher at Camp Sweeney Juvenile Hall San Leandro 2003.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: Helped Citizens in St Helena navigate the planning and building permit submittal process, and designing / remodeling homes and other projects in town for the past 10 years. Worked in San Francisco for 10 plus years, on higher education and hospitality projects, Master Planning, single family residences, and TI. Participated in an Architects, Engineers, and Contractors Softball League for 10 plus years, captained 3 years. Lived in a Co-op in UC Berkeley for 5 years, House Manager/Kitchen Manager for 28 people (Interpersonal skills)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: I was on the board of directors for the Napa Valley Wine Library Association, plus/minus 5 years.

REFERENCE 1: Name:Kara Smith
Address:1731 Park Street St Helena
Phone Number(s):415.254.7775
Email: khilgemeier@gmail.com

REFERENCE 2: Name:Josh Stehling
Address: 917 Charter Oak St Helena
Phone Number(s): 707.501.0632
Email: josh@redgatedevelopment.com

REFERENCE 3: Name: Susan Shifflet
Address: 1424 Oak Ave St Helena
Phone Number(s):707.363.1944
Email: Suztshiff@gmail.com

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GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission to which you are applying?

Yes

What is your understanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission?

To review projects that are submitted for conformance with the code, to review other planning related items for protecting the community and character of the town, to help promote sustainable development and understanding the social impacts of the decisions made.

What would be your goal(s) as a Commissioner?

To help offer my area of knowledge and experience, from the citizen's standpoint, from an architect's stand point, and to be fair, just, and knowledgeable in the decision making process.

Have you previously served, or do you currently serve, on a St. Helena Commission or Committee? If yes, which one(s) and for what period of time?

No.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted. I also agree that if appointed, I will serve on the Commission/Committee for which I have submitted this application.

☒ I AGREE

Michelle Liu Covell

June 3, 2025



City of St. Helena

CA-25-017

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Received Date: May 3, 2025

Application Type: Planning Commission

NAME: Hector F. Lopez

ADDRESS: 1007 Charter Oak Avenue, Saint Helena, California, 94574

PHONE: 707-718-6725 Personal Cell

ALTERNATIVE PHONE: 925-200-0372 Work Cell

EMAIL ADDRESS: hlopez@ctcnc.org

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: 56 years - Born and raised in St. Helena

EMPLOYER: Nor Cal Carpenters Union Training Committee - Apprenticeship Coordinator

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed

REASON FOR APPLYING: As a native born St. Helenan I want to serve me town. I have served for 1 year as I got elected when a commissioner left before her term and I have enjoyed the process of looking at and voting on various issues according to the General Plan and what vision we want for town and residents.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Completed 4 year Carpenter's Union Apprenticeship(1999-2003) and hold my Journeyman Certificates with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters 2003 to present(UBC). Program. A.A. degree in Carpentry from American River College(2009). B.A. degree from UC Berkeley in Ethnic Studies Letters & Science (1994-1996), A.A. degree from Santa Rosa Junior College with focusing on English as Major(1990-1993). Completed courses in Construction Management from Penn State given at the International Training Center of the UBC in Las Vegas(2010-2019). OSHA 500 Certified(2018 to Present) to walk jobs and advise contractors on safety violations. Have active TWIC card(2023-2028) to visit job sites for Apprenticeship reports in Refineries and Prisons as well as Livermore Laboratory.

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: Custom home builder with the Carpenters Union for 10 years in Marin County. Worked also building Custom Apartments in San Francisco. Over 26 years of experience with commercial and residential construction with the Carpenters Union and walking job sites in Northern California 46 counties from Visalia to Crescent City. Walked job sites for Apprenticeship reports from the High Speed Rail in Fresno to the Trans Bay & Sales Force Towers of San Francisco to the Humboldt-Cal Poly Campus Buildings in Eureka. I am a counselor and mentor to up to 5,000 apprentices going through our 11 craft Apprenticeship programs.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Member of the St. Helena Catholic Church. I participate in meetings and am looking to become member of the Native Sons of the Golden West Parlor 53. Made a few crab feeds and meetings so far.

REFERENCE 1: Name: Daniel Villasenor
Address:1142 Hudson Avenue

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Phone Number(s): 707-592-7306
Email: villacosh99@gmail.com

REFERENCE 2:

Name: Matt Cia
Address: 1120 June Lane
Phone Number(s): 707-312-1741
Email: mattc@ogletreecorp.com

REFERENCE 3:

Name: Sean Wilson
Address: 1025A Dowdell Lane
Phone Number(s): 707-963-6404
Email:

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission to which you are applying?

Yes a few times when meetings were held for Farmstead on Charter Oak expansion of cottages. Also a few times when investors plans were being presented for the lot 1003 Charter Oak. I also have been serving a year as commissioner.

What is your understanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission?

To properly guide all those applying for new or remodeling construction projects in building according to the regulations of the city under the General Plan.

What would be your goal(s) as a Commissioner?

To work with other committee members in researching and advising on what can be accomplished in construction projects presented to us by our residents guided by the General Plan.

Have you previously served, or do you currently serve, on a St. Helena Commission or Committee? If yes, which one(s) and for what period of time?

Yes currently serve and was appointed on April 9, 2024 and have been serving St. Helena for a year.

Is there anything else you would like us to consider when reviewing your application?

As a 26 plus year member of the Carpenter's Union I pride myself with building properly according to construction standards and believe in quality of product over quantity for longevity and I believe my construction experience can give valuable insight as to what I my decisions when approving or disapproving a project. I also speak Spanish fluently and because I grew up in St. Helena I know all the Latino areas residents live at and I am willing to try and let that often silent community understand and participate on important city matters. I would be honored if I am selected to continue to serve the Planning Commission and look forward to work with the team of commissioners in coming up with solutions that satisfy both our beautiful city and the residents seeking to build in St. Helena.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted. I also agree that if appointed, I will serve on the Commission/Committee for which I have submitted this application.

☒ I AGREE

Hector Fernando Lopez

May 3, 2025

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City of St. Helena

CA-25-019

COMMISSION/COMMITTEE APPLICATION

Received Date: May 19, 2025

Application Type: Planning Commission

NAME: Federico Parlagreco

ADDRESS: 1734 Tainter Street, St. Helena, CA, 94574

PHONE: 6282329532

EMAIL ADDRESS: federico@goodrichgroup.com

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY: 9 yrs.

EMPLOYER: Sotheby's International Realty

EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Employed

REASON FOR APPLYING: I believe the Planning Commission plays a vital role in shaping the character and quality of life in our city. As someone who works closely with residents, developers, and city policies on a daily basis, I understand the importance of balancing growth with preservation, and innovation with community values.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND: Master of Science in International Business, Bachelor's Degree in Economics

OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE: As a top-producing real estate agent with years of experience in local residential and commercial markets, I bring a deep understanding of land use, zoning, and development. I've worked closely with buyers, sellers, developers, and city staff on projects ranging from single-family homes to high-value properties, including a recent \$9.6 million hotel transaction in Calistoga where I represented the buyers. This has given me practical insight into how planning decisions affect neighborhoods and the broader community. I stay actively informed on local planning policies and understand both the technical and human sides of growth and development.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: Adventist Health - contribution to the community table event, UpValley family centers - volunteered support, Cooked for the common table dinner at the St. Helena Catholic church.

REFERENCE 1: Name: Arthur Goodrich
Address: 1377 Main St. STE 1
Phone Number(s): 415 735 8779
Email: arthur@goodrichgroup.com

REFERENCE 2: Name: John Thompson
Address: 1626 Tainter St.
Phone Number(s): 707 225 2383
Email: john.thompson@berry.net

REFERENCE 3: Name: David Walker
Address: 197 Zinfandel Ln
Phone Number(s): 310 6257009
Email: david@enginerealestate.com

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GENERAL QUESTIONS:

Have you ever attended a meeting of the Commission to which you are applying?

I regularly attend various meetings involving different departments

What is your understanding of the role and responsibility of this Commission?

Essentially, the Commission serves as a gatekeeper for how land is used and developed in the city. I see it as both a technical and community-focused body—one that ensures projects align with city policy, while also considering neighborhood impact, aesthetics, functionality, and public input. It's a position of public trust, and I understand the importance of making decisions that are fair, transparent, and rooted in the best interest of the city as a whole.

What would be your goal(s) as a Commissioner?

I'm committed to bringing a balanced, informed, and community-focused perspective to the Planning Commission.

I agree that all of the information contained in my responses to the questions on this application are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I further agree that, by checking the box below and submitting this application, online or otherwise, I am affixing my digital signature to this form as of the date submitted. I also agree that if appointed, I will serve on the Commission/Committee for which I have submitted this application.

☒ I AGREE

Federico Parlagreco

May 19, 2025

From: [Michelle Covell](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: FW: Planning Commission Letter of Rec
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 12:43:51 PM

From: Claire Pott <claire@pottwine.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 13, 2025 1:24 AM
To: Michelle Covell <michelle@covellarchitects.com>
Subject: Planning Commission

I am pleased to recommend Michelle for a position on our Planning Commission.

I have known Michelle for over ten years and got to see her professionalism firsthand when she worked on my winery construction project. She was incredibly knowledgeable about all the complex factors involved in the construction, but was also very articulate and able to explain all the steps in the process clearly to a lay person such as myself. She was also always available to answer questions and had suggestions that brought many improvements and cost savings into the project.

Her deep understanding of zoning, infrastructure, and the unique needs of St. Helena surely makes her exceptionally well-suited for this role.

I have no doubt that Michelle will contribute valuable insight and dedicated service to the planning commission. I recommend her without reservation.

Sincerely,

Claire Pott
Pott Wine
7073633284

Claire Pott
Pott Wine
"Milk is for babies"
C: (707) 363-3284

July 14, 2025

City Council of St. Helena
St. Helena City Hall
1088 College Avenue
St. Helena, CA

Dear Council Members,

I've lived in St. Helena for 25+ years and appreciate your service to our city. Thank you.

Kindly please know I wholeheartedly recommend Michelle Covell to serve on our city's Planning Commission.

I've enjoyed knowing & working with her for 10+ years. She would bring experience to the planning commission with her architectural background and knowledge of planning and building. She is an excellent communicator, always a problem solver, has great drive and a positive approach.

Please consider my recommendation of Michelle for this position.

Sincerely,

Claudia Schmidt

1939 Vineyard Avenue
St. Helena, CA

From: [Michelle Covell](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: FW: Letter in strong support of Michelle Liu for Planning Commissioner
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 12:41:47 PM

From: Dana Johnson <danaelisejohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 13, 2025 5:16 AM
To: pdohring@cityofsthelena.gov; mdeasy@cityofsthelena.gov; abarak@cityofsthelena.gov; kspadarotto@cityofsthelena.gov; bsummers@cityofsthelena.gov
Subject: Letter in strong support of Michelle Liu for Planning Commissioner

July 13, 2025

To the St. Helena City Councilmembers:

I am writing this letter in strong and enthusiastic support of **Michelle Liu**, who has applied to join the St. Helena Planning Commission.

Michelle is a highly respected and talented architect, and she and her husband run a successful and esteemed architecture firm here in St. Helena. She is, therefore, supremely qualified to understand and assess proposed new projects and remodels, and will bring the perspective of both a trained and experienced architect and someone with boots-on-the-ground, as she works daily with the City's code and requirements.

I have known and admired Michelle for many years as a friend and community member. She is a highly intelligent and thoughtful person who actively participates, both individually and with her family, in our community. She cares deeply about our City and I know she will be a highly capable and dedicated Planning Commissioner.

We are incredibly lucky to have a person with her combination of applicable professional skills, intelligence, and commitment as an applicant for the Planning Commission. I strongly encourage you to choose Michelle Liu as a Planning Commissioner this Tuesday so that we can all benefit from the significant skills, experience and perspective that she will bring to the Commission.

If you have any questions or want to discuss Michelle's candidacy further, please feel free to reach out to me via email.

Sincerely,

Dana Johnson

2294 Boyson Lane
St. Helena, CA 94574
707.738.8942
danaelisejohnson@gmail.com

Jul 12, 2025

City of St. Helena Planning Commission
1088 College Ave
St. Helena, CA 94574

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

I am writing to provide my strongest recommendation for Michelle Covell's appointment to the Planning Commission. As a fellow architect who has worked alongside Michelle for years and known her professionally for over a decade, I can speak with confidence about her exceptional qualifications and unwavering commitment to excellence.

Michelle's architectural background provides her with a deep understanding of land use, zoning regulations, and the complex interplay between development and community needs. Throughout our collaboration, she has consistently demonstrated the ability to balance competing interests, think critically about complex issues, and make well-reasoned decisions that serve the public good.

What sets Michelle apart is her collaborative nature and communication skills. She has a talent for bringing diverse stakeholders together, listening to different perspectives, and finding common ground. Her experience navigating the development process, combined with her genuine commitment to thoughtful community planning, makes her an ideal candidate for this position.

I am confident that Michelle will bring the same level of dedication and excellence to the Planning Commission that she has brought to her architectural work. Her appointment would be a tremendous asset to your commission and the community you serve. Please feel free to contact me if you need any additional information about Michelle's qualifications or character.

Sincerely,

Best regards,
Heather Wright Foye | Principal Architect

WRIGHT ARCHITECTURE
632 Manuel T. Freitas Pkwy, San Rafael, CA 94903
415.686.3984 | wright-arch.com

From: [Jennifer Risher](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: Michelle Liu for Planning Commission
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 5:27:08 AM

Hello,

I would like to recommend Michelle Liu for a position on the Planning Commission.

We've worked with Michelle and her husband Chuck since 2018. They've been our architects for a significant remodel on Kearney Street as well as a new home on Pine Street — and we've enjoyed the process and are thrilled with the results.

Michelle's vision, creativity and willingness to jump in and problem solve truly impressed me from the start. She has proven to have an excellent eye and passion for finding solutions to constraints and problems. In all that she does, whether as an architect or a gardener, Michelle puts her whole self into a project.

While she has great vision, Michelle's true strength is her attention and her precision. She is personally involved and dedicated to ensuring everything is considered and every detail is correct.

St. Helena needs the expertise and passion Michelle brings to everything she does. We strongly vouch for adding her to the Planning Commission.

Jennifer & David Risher
1459 Kearney Street
1515 Pine Street

From: [Jim Fassio \(Corporate Executive\)](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Cc: [Paul Dohring](#); [Michelle Deasy](#); [Aaron Barak](#); [Kate Spadarotto](#); [Billy Summers](#)
Subject: Michelle Liu Covell -Letter of Recommendation for Vacant Planning Commissioner Seat
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 1:31:11 PM

Erika Opp - Administrative
eopp@cityofsthelena.gov

Dear City of St. Helena,

I have had the pleasure of working with Michelle bi-weekly for over a year now and can say with confidence that the City of St. Helena would be fortunate to have someone of her caliber serving the community. Her dedication, thoughtfulness, and integrity make her exceptionally well-suited to help guide the City through meaningful, lasting decisions that will positively impact its future.

Michelle is a thoughtful listener who seeks first to understand others' perspectives before forming an opinion or making a decision. She approaches challenges with logic and fairness and has the persistence to see difficult tasks through—often when others would step away. She is committed to upholding the rules while remaining open to rational adjustments when unique situations call for thoughtful exceptions.

Michelle and her husband, both architects, have lived in St. Helena for the past ten years. Their 5-year-old son attends public school, and they are deeply invested in the community's long-term success. Their architectural background gives them a strong appreciation for design, functionality, and planning—paired with a shared belief in putting the community's interests first.

Michelle is a forward-thinking individual who will push for progress and avoid unnecessary delays in decision-making. She understands that real people are affected when cities hesitate to act or allow personal interests to hinder the right course of action.

Her story is one of perseverance and purpose: the daughter of immigrant parents, raised in East Oakland, a UC Berkeley graduate in Architecture, and holder of a Master's in Architecture from CCAC San Francisco. She has built both a family and a business in St. Helena—and she brings that same drive and passion to everything she does.

If I were building a team, Michelle is exactly the kind of person I'd want on it.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Fassio
Former President & Chief Development Officer
Current Senior Advisor
Ross Stores, Inc.
Dublin, CA.

CC:
Paul Dohring - Mayor
Michelle Deasy - Vice Mayor
Aaron Barak - City Council
Kate Spadarotto - City Council
Billy Summers - City Council

Kara Smith

(415) 254-7775 khilgemeier@gmail.com

1731 Park Street, St. Helena, CA 94574

July 14, 2025

City of St. Helena

1088 College Ave., St. Helena, CA 94574

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to recommend Michelle Covell to the City Planning Commission of St. Helena. Michelle's care for our community and wanting the best for its residents is apparent in her involvement in many aspects. She is an advocate for the future success of our community and making St. Helena a place where residents can feel heard and their ideas and concerns are treated with respect. Michelle is detail oriented and is dedicated to follow through until the job is done and it done right.

A specific example I can share that highlights her dedication to follow and concern for our citizens is the speed limit traffic sign going Northbound on Highway 29 (between Fulton and Crinella). For many years, the sign stated 35 miles/ hour going Northbound, while the speed limit Southbound was 25 miles/ hour.

Given the concerns for safety to cross the street at multiple intersections where there were discrepancies in the speed based on direction of travel, and the overall concern for safety at 35 miles/ hour in a highly residential area, Michelle worked directly with California Highway Patrol to match the speed limit going Northbound to 25 miles/ hour. This was not as easy a task as one might think. It took multiple follow-ups with the Highway Patrol to advocate for the cause. Once they approved the change from 35 to 25 miles per hour Northbound, she made sure that the sign was updated as quickly as possible. This small but mighty change benefits our community's children walking to schools, adults walking their dogs and even hotel guests staying at the Alila who are contributing to our taxes and local businesses. Michelle was able to navigate the red tape and was dedicated to seeing this executed over the many months from start to finish.

This is how Michelle would tackle any project she is faced with. As a business owner and someone who lives in the town with her husband and child, she wants to see this community thrive and be a place where we are all proud to live for years to come. She is hard working and willing to put all the time and effort into what is required for this position. Her background as an architect provides tremendous insight on building and designing spaces that are functional and maximizing any amount of space, large or small.

Michelle is always open to hearing different opinions and is someone who is fair. We would all benefit long-term from Michelle's contributions in this position.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kara Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kara Smith, St. Helena Resident

From: [Pierette Titus](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Cc: michelle@covellarchitects.com
Subject: Re: Recommendation Letter for Planning Commissioner Candidate, Michelle Covell
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 2:11:26 PM

> On Jul 14, 2025, at 12:05 PM, Pierette Titus <ptitus60@gmail.com> wrote:

>

>

> Dear Members of the St. Helena City Council:

>

> I am writing to strongly recommend Michelle Covell, for a position on the St. Helena Planning Commission. I have had the pleasure of knowing Michelle since she moved to our neighborhood in 2017, and I can confidently speak to her civic-mindedness and commitment to thoughtful community development.

>

> Michelle is an architect with deep expertise in design and land use, perspectives that are essential to well-informed planning decisions. She also maintains a passion for sustainable living, expressed through her work as an exceptional gardener. She is incredibly generous with her garden bounty, often sharing expertise and produce with neighbors, which reflects her spirit of community and generosity.

>

> Recently, Michelle brought awareness to a proposed city policy change that would redefine the maximum allowable building floor area to include covered porches. Her proactive outreach helped the community understand how this change could disproportionately impact small- to moderately- sized homes with future expansion plans. Her ability to clearly communicate the implications of this policy demonstrated her technical insight and her dedication to equitable planning.

>

> Michelle's husband, Charles, her son Issac, and their dog Coco, are all deeply embedded in the fabric of our community. Michelle is warm with a natural ability to bring people together, paired with her architectural background, strong understanding of planning issues, makes her an ideal candidate for this role.

>

> I strongly support Michelle Covell's candidacy and am confident that she would serve the Planning Commission with diligence, fairness and thoughtful leadership.

>

> Sincerely,

>

> Pierette Titus

>

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From: [Andrea Jane York](#)
To: [Paul Dohring](#); [Michelle Deasy](#); [Kate Spadarotto](#); [Aaron Barak](#); [Billy Summers](#); [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: Planning Commissioner Recommendation
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 10:59:23 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

It has come to my attention that Michelle Liu is running for Planning Commissioner. I couldn't pass up the opportunity to share why I think she is perfect for this position. I grew up in St. Helena in the house my great-great-grandfather built. I returned to my childhood home in 2021. Michelle and I connected soon after, initially through our mutual love of gardening. We're also around the same age and both have sons around the same age.

As I've gotten to know Michelle, I've been awed by her many talents, skills and work ethic. Whether she's in the garden, caring for her son or at her desk, no one I know works harder than her. She brings an unmatched presence and finesse to everything she does. It's been humbling for me to witness but she does it all with humility and a sense of community, not competition. She uplifts everyone around her. She's generous with her knowledge and the bounty of her incredible garden. She's truly an inspiring person I'm so grateful to call a friend.

I know what being a Planning Commissioner takes. My dad was a Planning Commissioner and the Chairman of the Planning Commission for many years when I was growing up. I recall all the evenings spent preparing for meetings, studying the materials and his attention to all the details. I know Michelle possesses the dedication and diligence to serve our community in this capacity. I hope she is given the opportunity to do so.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Jane York

From: [Jesse Clifton](#)
To: [Michelle Deasy](#); [Paul Dohring](#); [Aaron Barak](#); [Kate Spadarotto](#); [Billy Summers](#); [Erika Opp](#)
Cc: Michelle@covellarchitects.com
Subject: Michelle Covell for Planning Commission
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025 5:10:01 PM

To the St. Helena City Council,

I am writing to give my full support and recommendation for Michelle Covell as a candidate for the Planning Commission.

I met Michelle and her Husband Charles shortly after they moved into the Park St./Crinella neighborhood. Over the years we have had many conversations. Michelle engages with everyone in the neighborhood. I've watched Michelle and Charles' house turn into a home and the yard transform into a comfortable and inviting place to gather. Michelle is a dedicated mother and Wife. She is a caregiver too. Michelle is energetic and driven. When she puts her mind to a goal she is unstoppable. Her background and experience as an architect in St. Helena helping many different clients navigate through the planning process makes her perfect for this job. I believe that she would help bring a balanced vision to the planning commission. Her creativity, passion and care for the city and especially the people here is clear.

Please appoint Michelle Covell to the Planning Commission.

Sincerely,

Jesse Clifton

1745 Crinella Drive

From: [Michelle Covell](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of recommendation - Michelle Covell for Planning Commissioner St Helena
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 10:01:55 AM

Hi Erika,

This one was sent and I don't see your email CC'ed, I just wanted to make sure it gets onto the agenda.

Thank you, MLC

From: Agnessa Todorova <agiarch.sf@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 14, 2025 6:35 AM
To: Paul Dohring <pdohring@cityofsthelena.gov>; Michelle Deasy <mdeasy@cityofsthelena.gov>; Aaron Barak <abarak@cityofsthelena.gov>; Kate Spadarotto <kspadarotto@cityofsthelena.gov>; Billy Summers <BSummers@cityofsthelena.gov>
Subject: Letter of recommendation - Michelle Covell for Planning Commissioner St Helena

To the Members of the St. Helena City Council

I am writing with great enthusiasm to recommend Michelle Covell for a seat on the St. Helena Planning Commission.

As a licensed California architect and CEO of Outer Labs, I've had the privilege of working alongside some of the most values-driven professionals in the built environment. Michelle is one of the most exceptional.

We met in graduate school for architecture, became licensed architects together, and have supported one another through every stage of our careers. Her dedication to design, planning, and public service is truly inspiring. What sets Michelle apart is not just her professional expertise but her deep commitment to the character, health, and long-term vitality of her community.

Her recent article in the St. Helena Star is just one example of how she approaches complex planning topics with clarity, integrity, and a sincere desire to engage residents in respectful, informed dialogue. She is thoughtful, analytical, and always focused on outcomes that reflect the shared values of St. Helena—preserving its unique charm while ensuring it remains a safe, livable, and thriving place for families and future generations.

I know the City Council and Planning Commission are entrusted with balancing growth, stewardship, and community well-being—a responsibility that requires not only

technical understanding but also deep empathy and a collaborative spirit. Michelle brings all of that and more. She listens deeply, builds consensus, and leads with care. Her voice would be a powerful, thoughtful addition to the Planning Commission at a time when inclusive, forward-thinking perspectives are more important than ever.

St. Helena is a special place—and I can think of no one better equipped to help protect and shape its future.

I offer my full support for Michelle Covell’s appointment and would be honored to provide any further insight if needed.

Sincerely,
Agnessa Todorova
CEO, Outer Labs

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Agnessa Todorova, NCARB, AIA, LEED AP

Architect | CEO



From: [Kelleen Sullivan](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: Letter of recommendation for Michelle Covell
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 11:30:32 AM

To the City Council,

My name is Kelleen Sullivan. I grew up on Galleron Road, on the south end of St. Helena and I live within the city limits at this time. I am writing to you to recommend Michelle Covelle for the Planning Commission. Michelle lives around the corner from me and I have been profoundly impressed by her dedication to our community. She has a drive and determination to learn everything about community issues and planning commission codes that affect our town and residents. She is highly intelligent and is interested to listen, research and organize issues and has been able to clarify and summarize issues for our small neighborhood.

I would highly recommend Michelle Covell and feel she would be an asset to the planning commission team.

Thank you for your time,

Kelleen Sullivan
1751 Crinella DR., St. Helena, CA

Sent from my iPad

From: [Beth Cook](#)
To: [Paul Dohring](#); [Michelle Deasy](#); [Kate Spadarotto](#); [Aaron Barak](#); [Billy Summers](#); [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: Recommendation for Michelle Covell - Planning Commission
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 12:45:26 PM

Dear Council Members of St Helena,

I would like to send my enthusiastic recommendation of Michelle Covell for St Helena Planning Commission.

I've known Michelle Covell for over five years as a neighbor, fellow mother, and friend and can't imagine there is someone who cares more about this community and its success than her.

She has done an incredible job enhancing the safety, beauty, and community of our neighborhood and beyond. Just a few of the many things she's done: advocating for nearby speed limit signage, adding crosswalk signage/flags at our neighborhood entryway, creating community spirit by making neighbor introductions between existing neighbors, welcoming new neighbors, creating a neighborhood contact list (helpful for fire events and power outages), and hosting fruit and vegetable swaps.

I can't imagine our neighborhood without Michelle; it truly would not be the same inclusive place buzzing with enthusiasm, kindness and camaraderie!

Our city would be in wonderful, capable hands with her on the Planning Commission.

Thank you for your time,
Beth Cook

Beth Cook
Director
PROMISE
707.690.2289
beth@promisewine.com

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for Michelle Lui in her candidacy for the City Planner's Office of St. Helena. As a longtime resident, active community member, and dedicated mother, Michelle brings a rare and invaluable perspective to city planning—one rooted in care, collaboration, and a deep understanding of how policy directly impacts families and the future of our town. Her long-standing career as an architect across several cities also brings a uniquely qualified lens to this role.

I have had the pleasure of working alongside Michelle during my time as a T-Ball coach, and I can say with confidence that she approaches every challenge with empathy, intelligence, grace, and a strong sense of civic responsibility. Without hesitation, she stepped in every time my co-coach was unavailable, leading practices and games with confidence and kindness.

Michelle has an exceptional ability to listen, synthesize diverse viewpoints, and offer thoughtful, forward-thinking solutions—qualities that are absolutely essential in a planning role.

What truly sets Michelle apart is her lived experience. As a mother, she brings an intimate awareness of how planning decisions affect everything from walkability and school access to green spaces and housing. She is deeply committed to making St. Helena a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community—not just for today's residents, but for generations to come.

With her strong work ethic, collaborative mindset, and genuine passion for our town's well-being, Michelle will be a tremendous asset to the City Planner's Office. I wholeheartedly endorse her candidacy and encourage you to support her with your vote.

And if you need one last reason? Just look at her tomatoes—they're beyond perfect. Any gardener knows the dedication, time, and love that go into growing a tomato like that.

Sincerely,
Andrea Minoo
Coach and new friend
415-571-7043

From: [Elizabeth](#)
To: [Michelle Deasy](#); [Paul Dohring](#); [Aaron Barak](#); [Kate Spadarotto](#); [Billy Summers](#); [Erika Opp](#)
Cc: Michelle@covellarchitects.com
Subject: Michelle Covell for Planning Commission
Date: Tuesday, July 15, 2025 2:58:39 PM

To the Saint Helena City Council,

I am writing to give my highest recommendation for Michelle Covell as a candidate for the Planning Commission.

With her intelligence and experience, Michelle is an asset to our community. Michelle is an involved and caring resident, business owner and family woman. She is meticulously detail oriented while still being able to see the 'big picture'. Michelle is extremely creative and will provide new ideas to tackle the many issues overseen by the Planning Commission. She will bring a much needed, balanced view to meetings and is ready to connect directly with fellow residents regarding their concerns.

I fully support Michelle Covell for Planning Commission and steward of our community.

Elizabeth Anne Clough
Full-time Saint Helena Resident and Small Business Owner
707-344-7788

From: [John Harrington](#)
To: [Erika Opp](#)
Subject: Michelle Covell - A Recommendation For Her To Become Apart of The St. Helena Planning Commission
Date: Wednesday, July 16, 2025 10:09:36 AM

Ms. Opp,

My name is John Harrington and I have lived and worked here in St. Helena for the past 24 years. I recently learned that my friend Michelle Covell is running to be a member of the St. Helena Planning Commission and hope whole heartedly that she gets the position. I have known Michelle for approximately fourteen years and know that no matter what the position, I trust her and want her representing my town. Why... because Michelle has tremendous integrity. Michelle is smart, hard working, listens and cares about people. To top it all off, Michelle is a very successful local architect and understands how Planning Commission decisions will affect our community.

Sincerely,
John Harrington

July 15, 2025

Paul Dohring, Mayor

Michelle Deasy, Vice Mayor

Aaron Barak, City Council Member

Kate Spadarotto, City Council Member

Billy Summers, City Council Member

St Helena City Council

1088 College Ave

St Helena, CA 94574

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR PLANNING COMMISSION APPOINTMENT

Recommendation for Michelle Covell to the St Helena Planning Commission

To the Honorable Mayor Dohring and Esteemed Members of the City Council,

I am writing to offer my wholehearted recommendation for Michelle Covell's appointment to the St Helena Planning Commission, to serve alongside commissioners Christopher Warner, Autumn Anderson and Sue Furdek.

I have had the privilege of knowing Michelle not only as a fellow parent but also as an accomplished architect and a person of great integrity. As a parent, Michelle brings the perspective of someone deeply invested in the long-term well-being and livability of our city for all families. As an experienced local architect she possesses both the technical expertise and creative insight necessary to thoughtfully evaluate the complexities of development proposals.

Michelle is meticulous with sharp attention to detail. She has a rare passion and ability to carefully parse city codes and ordinances ensuring that her recommendations and decisions will be logical, just and well-informed.

Michelle will be a tremendous asset to the Planning Commission given her blend of professional knowledge, personal investment in our city's future, and what I'm confident will be dedication to equitable and thorough review of any project or issue put before her.

Thank you for your consideration of this exceptional candidate.

Respectfully,



Brian Hunter Carroll

24 Henry Ct

St Helena, CA 94574