

Sunnyvale City Council Summary - Tuesday, May 13, 2025

The Sunnyvale City Council meeting was held in person and online (via Zoom) on Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 5:02 PM.

The following council members were present at the meeting:

- * Mayor Klein
- * Vice Mayor Sell
- * Council Member Cisneros
- * Council Member Mellinger
- * Council Member Sunni Vasan
- * Council Member Chang
- * Council Member Lay

I. Board and Commission Interviews:

- Interviews were conducted for approximately 40 candidates over two nights.
- Each 15-minute interview included questions from all council members.
- Appointments were to be made on May 20th.
- Key candidates discussed included Wade (plug-and-play energy), Adam (legal background, climate adaptation), and Lee (sustainability speaker series). State laws regarding electric buildings in multifamily housing were also discussed.

II. Public Comments:

- A public hearing was opened regarding the board and commission interviews.
- No in-person or remote speakers were present.
- The public comment process was outlined, including instructions for submitting speaker cards and using the Zoom "raised hand" feature.
- Speakers were allotted 3 minutes each.

III. Food Scraps Collection Program & Public-Private Partnerships:

- Council members discussed the Sunnyvale food scraps collection program's effectiveness and potential improvements.
- A lack of focus on corporate and small/medium business contributions to food waste was noted.
- Suggestions included targeted programs for these sectors to enhance waste reduction.
- The council expressed strong interest in expanding EV charging infrastructure via public-private partnerships, emphasizing decarbonization.

IV. Climate Action Plan Review:

- Candidate input suggested improvements to the city's climate action plan implementation and tracking mechanisms.
- High-level goals were well-defined, but operational details were lacking.
- Difficulty in quantifying progress in areas like water conservation and non-GHG reduction areas (battery recycling, wastewater treatment) was noted.

V. Arts Commission Candidate Interviews:

- Candidate interviews assessed experience, vision, community inclusion, and addressing the affordability crisis.
- Candidates proposed art programs for children and seniors, improved information dissemination, and direct community assistance.
- One candidate focused on youth initiatives to combat social isolation; another on expanding beyond visual arts.
- Discussions included candidate preferences for local art (e.g., colorful installations), past accomplishments (family events, creative plastic repurposing), and the use of reused materials to lower costs.

VI. Heritage Preservation Committee Interviews:

- Interviews focused on increasing the committee's scope and potential projects.

- Discussion included partnering with other commissions (Arts Commission and Japanese incarceration memorial), schools, and private organizations for funding.
- A candidate suggested showcasing historical items in schools.
- Questions arose regarding the impact of SB 9 (housing development) on heritage resources.
- One candidate's high meeting attendance (89%) was noted.

VII. Sustainability Commission Candidate Interviews:

- Candidates discussed backgrounds and approaches to sustainability, including food waste reduction, improved communication, and EV adoption strategies.
- Topics included waste management (organic vs. non-organic), battery disposal/recycling, and visual aids for waste reduction initiatives.
- One candidate highlighted food waste in the tech community and proposed redirecting surplus food.
- Another candidate emphasized addressing language and cultural barriers in communication.

VIII. Parks Commission Candidate Interviews:

- David's reapplication covered accessibility to green spaces, including reassessing underutilized city property and adding late-night lighting.
- He highlighted community engagement at various parks (Plaza del Sol, Sarah Park, Brayley Park, and a large unnamed park).
- He discussed the successful, privately funded renovation of Washington Pool.
- He emphasized the importance of recreation programs and suggested improvements for older children's activities.
- Council members praised David's passion for community involvement and park development.

IX. Personnel Commission Candidate Interviews:

- Richard's reapplication highlighted the professionalism and thoroughness of the city's processes.
- He requested more time for reviewing case materials before meetings.

- His experience as an army commander and finance professional provided unique insights into disciplinary processes.
- Discussion focused on ideal candidate qualities: impartiality, understanding of relevant laws and regulations, and avoidance of overturning city decisions.
- Council members sought input on improving the commission's effectiveness and attracting more applicants. Richard discussed the serious nature of personnel decisions and the potential impact on individuals' careers. He used examples from his military and other professional experiences to illustrate the weight of such decisions.

X. Additional Candidate Interviews:

- Several additional candidates were interviewed for various commissions.
- Discussions included candidate's personal experiences with Sunnyvale's art and their vision for its future.
- Candidates expressed strong opinions on the city's art master plan, suggesting initiatives for youth engagement and inclusivity.
- Specific concerns around social isolation among youth and the importance of creating accessible and engaging art programs were highlighted.
- Candidate experience in event planning and community building were frequently discussed.

XI. Planning Commission Candidate Interviews:

- Martin's reapplication discussed potential improvements to the commission's operations, including clarifying the study issue process and improving communication with city staff.
- Martin highlighted the Moffitt specific plan as a positive example of a large-scale project, contrasting it with a more adversarial meeting regarding the Fremont Corners project.
- Council members discussed ways to accelerate housing production in Sunnyvale, considering economic headwinds and the impact of impact fees and density bonuses. Concerns about balancing retail needs with housing development were also raised. A preference for high-density housing with consideration for community feel and preservation of minority-owned businesses was expressed.

- Martin reflected on his performance as a planning commissioner, citing his comprehension of materials and ability to contribute effectively to discussions.
- Council members questioned Martin on his ability to achieve consensus and his approach to resolving conflicting priorities (housing vs. retail, traffic).
- Martin emphasized the importance of community engagement and holistic approaches to development, citing examples from his professional experience in marketing and his personal observations of recent development projects. He also discussed the need for city assistance for displaced businesses.

XII. Addressing Food Deserts in Sunnyvale:

- Council members discussed the issue of food deserts in Sunnyvale.
- A recent public presentation highlighted the impact of grocery store closures on residents' access to food.
- Council members acknowledged the complexity of addressing this issue, particularly concerning village centers and existing zoning.
- The upcoming Village Center Master Plan will include a thorough discussion of this issue.
- Council members expressed a commitment to exploring solutions to preserve and improve access to grocery stores.

XIII. Maintaining Awareness of Changing State Laws:

- Council members discussed how staff keeps them informed about changes in state laws.
- An annual study session on state laws is usually held, though this year's session was delayed.
- There was discussion about making these sessions more regular.
- The council receives regular updates and ordinance changes to reflect new state laws.
- The process of updating ordinances in response to state law changes is seen as inherently educational.

XIV. Library Expansion Strategy:

- A library bond measure failed (59% in favor), necessitating a long-term expansion strategy.
- A 20-year plan is needed, guided by existing demand mapping prioritizing underserved areas.
- Expansion should go beyond books to include services like cooling centers and job resources.
- Incorporating Generative AI was discussed, weighing potential benefits against risks ("hallucinations").
- Candidate interviews revealed preferences for unique programming, diverse language collections, and accessible spaces. The need for larger collections (especially graphic novels) and improved communication about existing services were also raised. Discussions included mobile library services for preschoolers and extended hours at a new branch library in Lakewood to address internet access inequities. The possibility of a larger main library vs. a branch model was also debated.

XV. Other Discussions:

- Discussion of Climate Trace and its potential applications in Sunnyvale's sustainability initiatives.
- Further discussion of balancing high-density housing with the preservation of existing community character and minority-owned businesses.
- Exploration of mixed-use development models that integrate residential and retail spaces within walking distance.
- Emphasis on incorporating green spaces into new developments to mitigate the intensity of urban living.
- A council member expressed a preference for higher density housing with more green space, drawing on European models. Concerns were raised about the impact of Prop 13 on housing supply and the need for potential subsidies to increase housing production.

XVI. Library Board of Trustees Candidate Interviews:

- Multiple candidates were interviewed.
- Candidates discussed their vision for the library's future, including expanding collections (especially graphic novels and materials in multiple languages), improving communication about

existing services, and creating unique programs.

- Concerns about library accessibility for all residents (including those lacking transportation) and the need for services beyond books were discussed.
- The possibility of a larger main library versus a branch model was discussed.
- Candidate backgrounds and relevant expertise (data analysis, communications) were considered.