
Profile

Virginia

First Name

Sorrells

Last Name

Middle Initial

virginia.sorrells@gmail.com

Email Address

1604 8th Ave. SW

Home Address

Suite or Apt

Olympia

City

WA

State

98502

Postal Code

Home: (360) 277-6965

Primary Phone

Home:

Alternate Phone

Question applies to multiple boards

Applications are accepted for the calendar year only. The Olympia City Council's General Government Committee recommends appointments to the full Council. Recommendations are made following review of applications and interviews of qualified candidates.

The City of Olympia values participation from all perspectives and life experiences and looks for equity and inclusion in advisory board appointments.

Three absences from meetings in a year may result in removal from an advisory board.

Questions? Contact Susan Grisham, Executive Assistant, 360.753.8244, sgrisham@ci.olympia.wa.us

If you saved or submitted an application and did not receive a confirmation, please check your spam folder.

The City of Olympia is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all persons in employment and the delivery of services and resources.

When filed with the City, your application and attachment documents are public records and may be subject to public release.

Editor, trainer, lapsed city planner

Occupation

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Design Review Board: Submitted

Question applies to multiple boards

If you applied for multiple boards or commissions, please rank them in order of interest below.

Select Your Neighborhood (you must live within Olympia City limits to serve on a board or commission) *

South Westside Olympia

If you choose "other" please write in your neighborhood here:

Interests & Experiences

Question applies to multiple boards

Please keep answers concise and informative. You are introducing yourself to the Olympia City Council and sharing with them why you are interested in being considered for appointment. Olympia residency is not required; however, it is a primary consideration. You may attach a resume.

Question applies to multiple boards

1. Briefly describe why you wish to serve on this advisory committee.

I have a deep, lifelong interest in urban design and worked for many years as a city planner in Chicago. My husband and I moved to Olympia from Tokyo last year. I view serving on the Design Review Board as an opportunity to integrate myself more fully into my new community and to lend my expertise to making it an even better place. By all accounts, Olympia is on the brink of significant change and I'd like to be part of addressing that change in the most creative and responsible way possible. Besides, my friend Angela Rush tells me it's fun and she enjoys working with the other members.

Question applies to multiple boards

2. Describe your qualifications and/or skills which would benefit this advisory committee.

As a planner in Chicago, I became very familiar with government processes, including public review and comment. I am adept at organizing and facilitating meetings and keeping discussions moving forward when things get bogged down. I've worked with lots of architects and engineers over the years so I speak their language. And I've traveled to many cities around the world which gives me a good perspective on urban design.

Question applies to multiple boards

3. Describe your involvement in the Olympia community.

Member of the Southwest Neighborhood Assn. (SWONA); Volunteer tutor at CIELO; Member of the Stakeholders' Group for the Arts Cultures and History initiative; Occasional participant in open mike night at Arbutus; Member, League of Women Voters; Member of Olympians for People-oriented Places (insofar as I attend informational meetings and follow them on Facebook.)

Question applies to multiple boards

4. List your educational and professional background and area of study.

I have a master's degree in urban planning and policy and a BA in geography. For 15 years in Japan, I worked as a communications trainer - mostly working with engineers, planners and architects from around the world at the University of Tokyo. And I continue to edit scripts and other materials for NHK, Japan's public broadcaster. After grad school, I went to work for the City of Chicago during the 1990's development boom and eventually started my own practice. And I spent a couple of years before that as an investigator with the USEPA's Superfund program.

Question applies to multiple boards

5. Appointment to this committee will require your attendance at evening meetings. How many hours per month are you willing to commit as a volunteer?

5-10

Question applies to multiple boards

6. If you are not appointed to this committee at this time:

Question applies to multiple boards

6a. Do you wish to be considered for appointment to another advisory committee?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

6b. Do you wish to be considered for future appointment to this committee?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

6c. Would you be willing to volunteer for other City activities?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

If you answered yes to 6a, please identify what other Advisory Committees you would be interested in being considered for in order of interest.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (I do not bike, but neither do I drive); Planning Commission.

Question applies to multiple boards

7. Some appointments require that applicants reside within Olympia city limits. Even though your mailing address may be Olympia, you may reside in the County or another jurisdiction. Are you a resident of the City of Olympia?

Yes No

Question applies to multiple boards

8. Citizens appointed to advisory committees are assigned and required to use a City email address for all advisory committee business.

Do you agree to comply with this expectation?

I Agree *

Question applies to multiple boards

9. How did you learn about this advisory committee recruitment?

Through friends including Angela Rush.

[Virginia Sorrells_CC_resume.doc](#)

Upload a Resume

Question applies to Design Review Board

10. Describe your experience, training, or education in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, or development (residential, commercial, or other).

I earned a Master's Degree in Urban Planning and Policy and a BA in Geography with an emphasis on environmental policy. For about a decade, I worked in government in Chicago: for the USEPA Region V Superfund program, the City of Chicago Department of Planning and Development, and as a planning consultant. In the latter two roles, I was involved in community and open space development, policy and legislative analysis. For 10 years at the University of Tokyo, I trained architects, urban planners and civil engineers from around the world in methods for communicating their messages - and was able to keep abreast of innovative approaches to city building.

Question applies to Design Review Board

11. What do you consider influences on building and/or site design?

For me, the main ones are the environment, accessibility, social justice, and joy. People should experience a sense of joy in their surroundings, engagement and delight. Social justice is important because the city belongs to everyone who lives and visits here: it should be designed in ways that allow everyone to feel a sense of participation. Accessibility is a related factor, but gets more at the sidewalks, transit system and physical accommodations that allow people to move about freely. And environmental factors must be taken into account so that the built environment does not degrade the natural surroundings, and maybe even enhances it.

Question applies to Design Review Board

12. What does "good design" mean to you?

When it comes to urban design, I'm going to crib a bit from the Form Based Codes Institute website. The overall design should be welcoming, encouraging people to walk around and explore. Buildings should "contribute to the public realm," embracing the community rather than turning their backs on it. And building design and road design should match, the scale of buildings, sidewalks and roadways in balance and proper consideration given to street trees, furniture and other amenities.

Question applies to Design Review Board

13. Describe your experience reading site plans and design drawings.

My work as a planner gave me a basic understanding of how to read site plans and other planning-related drawings.

VIRGINIA SORRELLS

✉ virginia.sorrells@gmail.com

☎ 360-277-6965

OVERVIEW

Extensive experience in creating strong, compelling messages in a variety of media - and helping others to do the same. Expertise in project management, strategic planning, team building, urban affairs, and public policy.

EXPERIENCE

Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK)

Tokyo, Japan

Editor and Narrator

January 2007 - present

Script developer, news editor and narrator for Japan's public broadcaster. Responsible for re-versioning programming from the original Japanese for English-speaking audiences, coaching reporters in on-camera delivery.

University of Tokyo

Tokyo, Japan

Lecturer, Faculty of Engineering

March 2005 - March 2015

Trained engineering, science, architecture, urban studies, and engineering students in argumentation and presentation techniques and methods for communicating with international audiences.

Self-employed

Tokyo, Japan

Communications Trainer

May 2002 - June 2015

Trained university students and professionals from around the world in the fine art of preparing and delivering effective messages.

V. Sorrells, Ltd.

Chicago, Illinois

City Planning Consultant

September 1997 - May 2002

Specialized in urban redevelopment, neighborhood revitalization, open space development, preservation of cultural/historical resources, communication, and project management.

City of Chicago Department of Planning & Development *Chicago, Illinois*

Assistant Commissioner

June 1995 - July 1997

Supervised redevelopment of 34-square-mile area with over 200,000 residents. Directed preservation strategies for historic buildings and development plans for some of Chicago's most economically disadvantaged areas.

Coordinating Planner

September 1992 - June 1995

Managed strategies and coauthored funding proposals with major intergovernmental and private-sector involvement. Significant projects included:

- o Successful bid for \$100 million in federal empowerment zone funding. Coordinated efforts of hundreds of partners, including community residents, government officials and consultants.

- o Democratic National Convention bid and West Side '96 plan for area surrounding convention hall.

Resource Applications, Inc.

Chicago, Illinois

Regional Project Manager January 1989 - September 1991

Managed Chicago office of environmental consulting firm under contract to U.S. EPA. Supervised 10 environmental field technicians and analysts engaged in hazardous waste investigations.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Chicago, Illinois

Environmental Protection Specialist January 1988 - January 1989

Conducted investigations for U.S. EPA's Superfund program. Assembled and managed technical evidence used in prosecution of polluters.

EDUCATION

University of Illinois

Chicago, Illinois

Master of Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP)

June 1995

University of Illinois

Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Arts in Geography

December 1987

Phi Beta Kappa

ETC.

- Familiar with design and social media programs including Photoshop and Lightroom, Canva, Hootsuite, Facebook and Instagram
Intermediate conversational fluency in Spanish, French and Japanese
Volunteer ELL instructor
Collector of 19th and 20th C Japanese textiles
- Darned good singer