



City Hall  
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## City Council

### Approval of Poet Laureate for 2019-2020

**Agenda Date:** 11/27/2018  
**Agenda Item Number:** 6.A  
**File Number:** 18-1088

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**Type:** decision **Version:** 1 **Status:** Passed

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**Title**

Approval of Poet Laureate for 2019-2020

**Recommended Action**

**Committee Recommendation:**

The Arts Commission recommends approval of the proposed 2019-2020 Poet Laureate and alternate.

**City Manager Recommendation:**

Move to approve the proposed 2019-2020 Poet Laureate and alternate.

**Report**

**Issue:**

Whether to approve the 2019-2020 Poet Laureate and alternate.

**Staff Contact:**

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Program Manager, Parks, Arts & Recreation, 360.709.2678

**Presenter(s):**

Stephanie Johnson, Arts Commission staff liaison  
Marygrace Goddu, Olympia Arts Commission

**Background and Analysis:**

The intent of Olympia's Poet Laureate designation is to:

- Promote poetry as an art form
- Expand access to the literary arts
- Connect the community to poetry
- Promote poetry as a community voice that contributes to a sense of place

Olympia's current Poet Laureate, Amy Solomon Minarchi, completes her two-year appointment at the end of December 2018. As part of her work plan, Ms. Minarchi conducted a workshop for interested Poet Laureate applicants and participated on the jury to recommend her successor.

Jurors met on October 4, to deliberate on the eight applications received for Poet Laureate.

Applications included a resume, samples of poetry, a video reading and a program proposal. In

addition to Ms. Minarchi, jurors included:

- Kellie Braseth, Director of Strategic Communications, City of Olympia
- Marygrace Goddu, Olympia Arts Commission
- Kathy Murray, Olympia Arts Commission
- DeAngelo Oliver, Poet and Student of Tacoma Poet Laureate Kellie Richardson

After deliberation, the jury recommended Sady Sparks for Poet Laureate, finding the poet able to convey a strong sense of inquiry and dynamism, along with a very approachable and doable program proposal. The first line of her proposal reads, "I am passionate about creating vibrant and enthusiastic spaces where people see, create, share and play with poetry." As Ms. Sparks is in her last year of study at The Evergreen State College, the jury's questions for her references focused on her commitment and ability to meet the requirements of the position. The response was affirming, with one reference noting Ms. Sparks "will build her life around this position." The recommended alternate, Thresea Yost, also demonstrates a very approachable manner in her proposal and presentation.

The Arts Commission reviewed the work of the jury on October 11, 2018, and moved to forward the recommendation to Council for approval with one dissenting vote. Commission Autumn Yoke felt that the recommended alternate better fits what she (Ms. Yoke) believes to be the roles and responsibilities of a Poet Laureate.

**Neighborhood/Community Interests (if known):**

N/A

**Options:**

1. Approve the recommendation for the 2019-2020 Poet Laureate and alternate as recommended by the Arts Commission
2. Do not approve the recommendation for the 2019-2020 Poet Laureate and alternate.

**Financial Impact:**

Approved honoraria for the Poet Laureate is \$1,000 per year, for a two-year appointment - from the Municipal Art Fund.

**Attachments:**

Sady Sparks application  
Sady Sparks reading  
Thresea Yost application  
Thresea Yost reading