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To: Lynnwood City Council
From: Lynnwood Public Facilities District DBA The District
RE: Vacant Board Position #2

The District Board Position #2 was vacated in November 2022. This position is one of three positions that require community outreach before final approval by the City Council per State of Washington Chapter 165.

Filling District board positions has only occurred a handful of times since our formation in 1999. This is due to multiple board members staying on extended terms, some for 12-15 years and more. As a result, there were limited opportunities to test a healthy recruitment and approval process between the City and The District. Recent appointment processes have been problematic as business models and needs have changed within the Public Facilities District. In 2019 The District board approved resolution 19-01 giving advisory guidance to the Council for the filling of these positions to ensure Lynnwood Public Facilities District “functions effectively into the future”. However, even some of the guidance within this resolution does not fit well as our staff and board have undergone dramatic changes from the past. The District has changed operators at the Event Center and has progressed significantly on our master planning to redevelop the property. In 2021, our board approved new key performance indicators to improve our mission to increase economic impact for the City of Lynnwood, as well as increase public benefit, sustainability and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Since our board has now moved from a governance oversight board, to one that will need to be equipped to make significant decisions impacting the future of Lynnwood, filling this position with an effective person is critical. In an effort to improve the process of the appointment this time around, The District worked closely with City Staff to write a recruitment announcement citing the qualifications needed for our current board and developing an application process similar to other City commissions. We were all delighted when this process resulted in seven community members applying. On recommendation of City Staff, The District convened an interview committee of board and staff to submit our top recommendations to Council. We also determined we would like to include all applicants not selected to our community advisory committee.

Once Councilmembers reviewed the applications, only one of our top two preferred candidates moved forward to the final four being considered. Council President Shannon Sessions recommended that we submit our evaluations of these top four. In addition, we hope to work with the City to further improve this process for the future through updated resolutions by both The District Board of Directors and the City of Lynnwood. There are several successful different models demonstrated by other public facilities districts within the State of Washington.

Below are our recommendations for the top four finalists:



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Teresa Bitner: While Resolution 19-01 from The District “encourages Council to consider local hotel representatives” it also cites that new board members should have “no substantial business relationships with the Public Facilities District”. Our new business model has created a major shift with our staff at the Lynnwood Event Center working directly with most hotels within the City to secure more hotel room overnight stays and room blocks to increase our economic impact. This inherently creates a “substantial business relationship” with all local hotel administrative, event planning and sales staff. In addition, Ms. Bitner is Director of Sales for Embassy Suites, which is the only hotel in town that has additional convention space, and we are frequently in direct competition with them for clients. We are also planning a new hotel on our property which will be in competition with local hotels, and our board will be making decisions on the scope and scale of that project. Finally, our board does approve policy and plans which, while not proprietary since our meetings are public, could inform the direction of our competitors. She also serves in a leadership position, along with The District Executive Director on the County Tourism Promotion Area board. This is a board that we will be seeking funding from multiple times in the near future. As both our Executive Director and Ms. Bitner as a District board member would have to recuse themselves from these requests, it creates an additional potential conflict and challenge. We do not recommend Ms. Bitner due to this conflict of interest.

Nick Coelho: Mr. Coelho was one of our top two recommended candidates. He particularly possesses all the requirements outlined in Resolution 19-01. In addition, he possesses much-needed skills of leadership, strong communication, broad business background and community advocacy that will be essential for our board’s success in the near future. His skill set fills many of the gaps found on our board. While we recognize that he may soon be elected to office, that is not ordained, and we believe he best meets our needs at this time.

Dr. Annie Armstrong: Dr. Armstrong was our third choice of the seven candidates. While her business background is not quite as broad as Mr. Coelho and she has limited leadership experience, we believe her passion for our sector and our master plan project, her communication skills and understanding of multiple business best practices make her a good fit.

Vivian Dong: Ms. Dong has a strong passion for this community. We also appreciate the diversity and financial skill set she would bring to our board. However, in her interview she seemed unfocused and unclear on what we do. She also appears to be extremely busy. Currently, our board meets during the day, which conflicts with her work schedule. Given that we have some attendance problems and have had to cancel critical meetings due to a lack of a quorum, this was a concern. Our interview team did not believe she would be able to fill some of the urgent gaps we are currently experiencing.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Pope, Executive Director

Mike Miller, Board Chair



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