

May 29, 2009

City of Clayton  
Planning Commission  
6000 Heritage Trail  
Clayton, CA 94517

Dear Planning Commission Selection Committee:

Please accept this letter and application as my intent to fill a vacant seat in the 2009-2011 Planning Commission. As an active citizen in the Clayton community, I am well aware of the importance of the Planning Commission and the level of commitment required of Commission members. If accepted into the Commission, I will fully execute the responsibilities asked of me during my term.

As a child growing up in Clayton, I had the opportunity to enjoy the fruits a Planning Commission's labor long ago. I witnessed the results of thoughtful development as downtown Clayton evolved and neighborhoods were established. The town has retained its unique charm while striving to meet the needs of a modern society.

After graduating from Clayton Valley High School, I attended the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington. While away for college, I was actively involved in policy-related work, including serving as a member of the Governance Committee and as Chief Justice of the university's judicial branch. As a result, I can interpret legal code as well as write policy; skills that will serve me well as a Planning Commissioner.

As I return to Clayton to raise my own family, I have a desire to give back to a city that provided me so much. I see the Planning Commission as a visionary body that will help create the future of Clayton. The downtown district of the City of Clayton is ever-evolving, with investments in infrastructure and business recruitment a top priority. The City also faces the considerable challenge of satisfying State-mandated requirements as part of the Housing Element Update, as well as making important amendments to the General Plan. The depressed economy and State's financial crisis further work against the City's efforts to support its current residents and plan for the future. These challenges cannot be tackled alone. They require an active group of passionate Commissioners partnering with City personnel, elected officials, local business owners, community organizations, and residents.

As one of the younger homeowners in Clayton, I represent the future generation of citizens in the City of Clayton. When planning my return to Clayton, I spent over a year looking for a house and I am thus very familiar with Clayton's varied neighborhoods and housing options. I have toured upwards of 100 homes in Clayton; this knowledge will provide the needed context when making decisions on home-alteration requests.

My work with non-profit organizations has also prepared me well to serve on the Planning Commission. As the Vice President at the Clayton Historical Society, I have learned a great deal about the beginnings of this town and the esprit de corps that its pioneering families espoused. We can honor Clayton's past by making good decisions today that will support the needs of future generations.

In 1965, the County Board of Supervisors applauded the City on its first-year anniversary and noted that Clayton had "maintain(ed) a careful balance between progressive development and preservation of one of the most scenic landscapes in the central part of Contra Costa County." Today's Planning Commission must likewise make decisions that support both sides of this important balance.

My membership in the CBCA, including serving as the Co-Chair of the Art & Wine Festival, has introduced me to local businesspeople and like-minded philanthropists in the community. These well-connected individuals are united by their love for Clayton and their desire to make it even better. It is important for Commissioners to be connected to the goings-on of the City outside of the Commission and the CBCA is an excellent platform for that involvement.

Lastly, my consistent employment with the Microsoft Corporation has paired me with other professionals working in a demanding environment. As a member of the Planning Commission, I will advocate for the same high standards that I am used to in the corporate world. I am fortunate that Microsoft provides me with a schedule that will accommodate the time demand of this vital role.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my application materials and considering me as a candidate for a Planning Commissioner in the City of Clayton.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Meriam". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent initial "T".

Ted Meriam