

From: [LINDA SHAFFER](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Communnication re item 32 on the Agenda for the 6/27/23 Board Meeting
Date: Tuesday, June 27, 2023 9:47:57 AM

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Clerk of the Board:

Please accept this communication re item 32 [230482] on the Agenda for the Full Board meeting on June 27, 2023. It has already been sent to each Supervisor individually. Thank you. Linda Shaffer

Supervisors: **Please vote to table** this item until some important issues related to the proposal to restructure PROSAC can be addressed.

Comments:

The instinct to ask how this large Committee can deal even better with its wide-ranging remit is understandable. However, is this proposal really the best way to accomplish that goal? I submit the following remarks, meant as constructive thoughts, for your consideration.

1. As others have pointed out, it is hard to improve member attendance at meetings of an advisory body when vacant seats go unfilled.
2. There are two possibly serious problems with the proposal to change the current appointment process to one that would have each district Supervisor appoint one voting committee member and one non-voting alternate,

Problem #1: Incentives for alternates?

Under this proposal, alternates are encouraged to "attend and participate in" meetings. But if they usually cannot vote, what INCENTIVES are there for them to do so? Or to even accept an appointment as an alternate?

It seems to me one of two things is likely to happen. IF alternates (despite the lack of incentive) mostly DO attend meetings, the number of attendees will still be large, continuing a "problem" the authors of this proposal allege they are trying to solve. On the other hand, IF alternates mostly do NOT attend meetings, on the rare occasions when they do attend, it is likely they will not be as well prepared as they should be, and their district will suffer from less adequate or less informed representation. Neither of these outcomes is good; instead they are counter-productive.

PROBLEM #2: If the size of the committee is cut in half, valuable input to the Committee from city-wide organizations would be lost.

There is a reason why each Supervisor currently gets to appoint two members to PROSAC. Each member has a different job description.

One member is envisioned as primarily representing specific concerns of their district. The job of such members is to act as liaisons among district park support groups, the Supervisor's office, and RPD. This is a big job.

The other member is envisioned as representing the concerns of a constituency that is naturally more CITY-WIDE -- members of environmental organizations,

devotees of a particular form of recreation, groups working toward improving equity in access to parks, etc. [Note that the distinction between district and city-wide is routinely made by RPD in the language of its bond issues. There are \$\$ allocated to capital projects that are carried out within districts (ex. a specific local playground or park upgrade), and \$\$ allocated to projects that are described as city-wide (ex. trail upgrades, work done in Golden Gate Park or McLaren Park.) In recognition of the different nature of the constituency for such a position, it has not been a requirement that such appointees live in the district of the Supervisor who appointed them.

Presumably, with only one voting seat on PROSAC to appoint, most Supervisors would choose someone focused on their district rather than representing a city-wide constituency. But restricting opportunities for city-wide organizations to suggest nominees for seats on PROSAC would deprive the Committee of the opportunity to receive the valuable input and perspectives that such broader-based organizations can provide. In particular, in a time when the world is focused on climate change and other pressing environmental issues, eliminating the requirement that some minimum number of PROSAC members be representatives of environmental organizations seems inexplicable.

Note -- I haven't yet mentioned the fact that cutting the size of the committee in half necessitates that other steps occur. A specific appointment must be made by the President of the Board of Supervisors in order to once again have an odd number of committee members; additional language is needed to specify how to decide which of two active members in a district would lose their right to vote at committee meetings. Why do things have to be so complicated?

3. A suggestion for a less complicated proposal.

An intention of the proposal as written seems to be to dispense with the outdated list of organizations that are qualified to nominate people for the 11 city-wide seats [currently to be found in RESOLUTION NO. 391-13, FILE NO. 131042, dated 11/5/13] and just leave it up to Supervisors to choose nominees who have required experience, hopefully with input from appropriate groups and organizations.

This seems a reasonable idea. It would greatly simplify the nomination process and make it easier for Supervisors to fill vacant seats.

In fact, I suggest that is pretty much ALL that is needed to address alleged "problems" with the Committee.

In the proposal before us, language in the Park Code giving a list of areas with which nominees for seats on PROSAC should "have relevant experience" would be modified to read "park, environmental, recreational, cultural, sports, youth, disability, racial equity, or senior citizen issues. (The two underlined terms are proposed additions). Why not simply add "environmental justice" to that list as well, eliminate the 391-13 List as described above, and leave the total number of committee members at 23? This would preserve representation of both district based and city-wide perspectives, greatly simplifying the process by which Supervisors nominate members, and no one would lose their vote.

PROSAC has managed to accomplish many important things over the years. (A sample: completely revising and standardizing RPD's Acquisition Policy; providing input into bond language; encouraging RPD to file a Strategic Plan; participating in Community Grant programs.) Like most consultative bodies, the committee ran into difficulties during the pandemic. Let's not over-react by "throwing out the baby with

the bathwater!"

Thank you for listening.

One additional question: Is the wording "racial equity" in the list above intended? I ask because "environmental justice" is often the wording used to refer to many different kinds of equity issues.

Linda J. Shaffer

San Francisco resident, District 1

Former member of PROSAC, 2008 to 2016.

Originally appointed by Supervisor Sophie Maxwell to represent D10 as a member of an environmental organization.

From: [Robert Hall](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: 6/27/23 BOS Meeting, Park Code – PROSAC Membership, Item 230482
Date: Monday, June 26, 2023 5:52:14 PM
Attachments: [PROSAC Committee Changes Letter 62623.pdf](#)

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CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Yerba Buena
Chapter

June 26, 2023

Clerk of the Board and Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place,
City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, Ca. 94102-4689

RE: Park Code – PROSAC Membership, Item 230482

Dear Supervisors,

I'm writing on behalf of the Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. We have over 600 members in San Francisco and Northern San Mateo County and are committed to protecting and expanding biodiversity, even in highly-degraded urbanized areas.

Our chapter has just learned that the Board of Supervisors will be holding a hearing on how the Park and Recreation Open Space Citizens Advisory Committee (PROSAC) members are appointed. Our organization understands that the proposal is to eliminate the list of potential appointees that is created by citywide environmental organizations. The Yerba Buena Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is one of the participating organizations. We feel that it's imperative that park advocates and environmentalists sit on this committee.

We feel that the stakeholders in appointing members to PROSAC should have been informed that this proposed change was going to be on the agenda. There should be an opportunity for the public to share input on this issue and we ask for a delay in the vote. There needs to be more discussion with the public and the stakeholder environmental organizations before this is voted on.

Sincerely,

Bob Hall
CNPS Yerba Buena chapter Conservation Chair

Cc: Eddie Bartley CNPS Yerba Buena chapter President

<http://cnps-yerabuena.org>



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Sincerely,

Bob Hall
CNPS Yerba Buena chapter Conservation Chair

Cc: Eddie Bartley CNPS Yerba Buena chapter President

<http://cnps-yerbabuena.org>

From: [Nick Belloni \(Gmail\)](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Item 32 on Tuesdays agenda
Date: Sunday, June 25, 2023 3:32:02 PM

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Supervisors

I am writing to respectfully request that you table or vote against the change of the membership to PROSAC for a few reasons.

Firstly, there has been little discussion with PROSAC or with the community over these changes. No one has ever come to PROSAC and worked with us to create this legislation. It was just put up without input from us at all. We did talk about it in a PROSAC meeting and we voted on a resolution asking the sponsors to come to our July 10th meeting, but that was ignored at the rules committee hearing.

Secondly, as it stands now, the committee's two representatives work within the districts having one voting member and one alternate. This takes away a voice for the district. No one is going to want to talk to the alternate; they will want to talk to the voting member. The alternate will quickly become disenfranchised and either resign or just not show up. Basically creating a new problem of finding ways to keep the alternates engaged.

Over the years I have been on this committee there is a lot we have done for the parks department, from little fixes of parks that have been needed to bond forums to working to support the apprentice gardener program.

PROSAC has always looked out for the community taking away half of that will limit and hinder the good work PROSAC can do in the future.

Thank you for your time.

Nick Belloni
Chair Emiratis and current d2 representative

From: [Linda D'Avirro](#)
To: [Board of Supervisors \(BOS\)](#)
Subject: Comments Urging You to Reject Item 32 - Changes in the PROSAC membership/appointees - Until Further Broader Discussions Are Held
Date: Saturday, June 24, 2023 9:23:10 PM

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To the Members of the Board of Supervisors:

Please vote against approving Item 32 - Park Code - PROSAC Membership File No. 230482 - Instead, vote to table it until PROSAC, the Recreation and Parks Commission, and the public, have an opportunity to discuss and possibly amend the legislation before you.

We respectfully ask you to consider what is the urgency today to approve this major restructuring of an important committee without PROSAC members or RPD Commissioners having an input?

At the May 8th rules committee Supervisor Peskin, with support from Supervisors Connie Chan and Ahsha Safai, introduced this legislation changing the structure of PROSAC.

Saying it is necessary to "optimize governance structure, fix a frequent lack of quorum, eliminating District reps holding opposing views, canceling the other's votes, and eliminating its unwieldy processes, Legislation File# 230482 was introduced and is now before you.

As much as this - and many of the City's Committees and Councils - may need to be reviewed and updated from time-to-time, a wider discussion of this important Committee needs to take place in a forum that considers changes that produce real positive results.

For example, the lack of quorum this legislation claims to fix: Each District Supervisor is the "appointing authority" to appoint people to serve on committees. A significant reason PROSAC may not be able to meet quorum is often the result of no one being appointed in a timely manner to fill vacancies on PROSAC.

Under Park Code 13.01(b) § 3 and 4 PROSAC's bylaws very clearly spell out the Chair is required to notify the "appointing authority" after a member misses 3 meetings and when a vacancy occurs, so the widest representation is seated, the broadest viewpoints can be brought, and quorum is maintained.

Should this legislation pass today, what process is now in place to "fix a

frequent lack of quorum" ensuring vacancies going forward are filled quickly under the new, smaller committee member make-up?

Another reason to table this legislation and have a broader discussion, is the proposal to reduce the number of PROSAC reps to "optimize governance structure and eliminate canceling each other's vote."

Why is having and voting based on different points of view considered a failing and "canceling out each other's vote"?

Different points of view often lead to the best solution. Even if two district members don't agree on one item, many times on others they agree. For those PROSAC members who regularly discuss parks and open space issues with their supervisor, this usually isn't an issue.

Besides, after any vote by the majority, Park Code 13.01(b) § 5 allows for **any** member of the **majority** or the **minority** "to revise and extend their remarks in the form of an advisory opinion to be made part of the record for the meeting."

Certainly, a good look at this committee (and many of the other committees not mentioned here) may lead to changes. However, this hasty legislation isn't ready to be passed until there's time to come up with real solutions to issues that aren't addressed here. This legislation can be tabled with enough time to listen to suggestions and solutions offered by the volunteer citizens who serve on this committee.

Please do not approve this legislation at this time. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Linda J. D'Avirro
Past PROSAC Chair
Member
Co-Founder, Friends of the Jerry Garcia Amphitheater
the Jerry Garcia Amphitheater
Co-Founder, McLaren Park Collaborative
Park Collaborative

Sharon Eberhardt
Past PROSAC
Member, Friends of
Member, McLaren