

**From:** [Charles Collins](#)  
**To:** [Mainardi, Jesse \(MYR\)](#); [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#); [Walton, Shamann \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** Unqualified Recommendation for Lydia So  
**Date:** Friday, April 26, 2024 9:40:08 AM

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In support of Lydia So  
Candidate  
San Francisco Planning Commission

April 26, 2024

Lydia So is a Chinese American, Cantonese speaking architect who was born in Hong Kong. She believes that buildings, open spaces and necessity infrastructure connect communities and bring people together in a vibrant and sustainable city.

As an architect, she understands and values land use policies and regulatory requirements that create livable spaces integrating human activities. She fully embraces the urgency of addressing climate change and creating solutions that cause a just transition in all programs and policies especially for those living in neighborhoods and communities where the impacts are the greatest.

I served with Ms. So on the San Francisco Arts Commission where I now lead the agency as its President. She was diligent, reliable and provided skilled input into our decision making process. She understood the need to ensure ethics and governmental efficiency in executing the business of the Commission. Her attendance and punctuality were exemplary and she always came prepared.

As an Historic Preservation Commissioner for SF Planning Department she implemented the Department's Racial & Equity Policy to align with CEQA's review and hiring.

As a Board Member of SFMTA, she worked with SFPD and SFMTA to increase presence of police and accountability on MUNI and served on the Train Control Upgrade Project Committee to upgrade the entire technology system.

Commissioner So served as liaison with the US Department of State, SFMTA and Chinese communities to foster Chinatown connectivity during APEC.

Her commitment to the City and County of San Francisco is exceptional and I have no reservations in providing this unqualified recommendation for her appointment to the City Planning Commission.

Charles M Collins  
24 6th Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 94118  
415 720-5633

Sent from my iPhone

Gene Schnair FAIA Emeritus  
535 El Camino Del Mar  
San Francisco, Ca. 94121  
GSchnair@gmail.com  
March 29, 2024

Chair, Supervisor Hillary Ronen  
Supervisor Asha Safai  
Supervisor Shamann Walton  
Rules Committee San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
1 Dr. Carlton B Goodlett Pl, City Hall, Room 244  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Subject: Recommendation for Lydia So, Nominee for City Planning Commissioner

Dear Supervisors Ronan, Safai and Walton:

This letter is to express my enthusiastic support for Lydia So, nominated to serve as a Planning Commissioner of the San Francisco Planning Department. I have had the privilege of knowing Lydia for over fifteen years, a portion which time she was an architect and had an important technical leadership role at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM), San Francisco. At the time Lydia was at SOM, I was the Managing Partner (now retired) of our international practice of architecture, urban design and planning, and engineering. I had direct working contact with Lydia who continuously excelled in design and technical development of complex architectural assignments. She was particularly exceptional in her thoroughness and analytic approach in evaluating technical codes and developing creative design solutions. In addition she was considered by her colleagues, clients, consultants and contractors to be a trustworthy and effective collaborator working towards common project objectives. She has always displayed a concern for the big picture of how the built environment contributes to quality of life issues at a civic, community and individual level. At the same time, she rigorously maintained a focus on quality of work and the details that lead to successful completion of projects. In short she was and is a consummate professional.

It's clear that Lydia has a passion for civic and community affairs based on her numerous appointments and civic roles. In the architectural profession it's quite challenging to make the time to engage in community affairs in a meaningful way. Lydia has the unique ability to be effective both in terms of professional practice and community/civic service- ranging from the arts, housing, transportation, the environment and cultural identity. She is a listener and questions; she connects and collaborates; she prepares and stays on point; she seeks solutions and resolutions.

I am a longtime resident of District 1, a former President of the American Institute of Architects (San Francisco), a former board member of SPUR, a former board member of PAR (Planning Association for the Richmond), a member of Mayor Brown's Fiscal Advisory Committee ("MFAC" now integrated with SPUR). I wish to express that Lydia So is one of the strongest professional candidates I have seen nominated for planning commissioner. I hope that she will receive your support in her selection for this position.

Very truly yours,



Gene Schnair, FAIA Emeritus  
Licensed Ca Architect C-25416

Lydia So

Recommendation Letter

March 29,2024

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cc: Clerk of the Rules Committee, Victor Young  
President of the Board of Supervisor, Aaron Peskin  
Supervisor Connie Chan  
Supervisor Catherine Stefani  
Supervisor Joel Engardio  
Supervisor Dean Preston  
Supervisor Myrna Melgar  
Supervisor Rafael Mandelman  
Supervisor Matt Dorsey  
Clerk of the Board, Angela Calvillo  
Deputy Clerk of the Board, Alisa Somera

**From:** [donfalk.personal@gmail.com](mailto:donfalk.personal@gmail.com)  
**To:** [Ronen, Hillary \(BOS\)](#); [Safai, Ahsha \(BOS\)](#); [Walton, Shamann \(BOS\)](#)  
**Cc:** [Peskin, Aaron \(BOS\)](#); [Chan, Connie \(BOS\)](#); [Dorsey, Matt \(BOS\)](#); [Engardio, Joel \(BOS\)](#); [Preston, Dean \(BOS\)](#); [Mandelman, Rafael \(BOS\)](#); [Melgar, Myrna \(BOS\)](#); [Stefani, Catherine \(BOS\)](#); [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#); [Somera, Alisa \(BOS\)](#); [Calvillo, Angela \(BOS\)](#); [ChanStaff \(BOS\)](#); [DorseyStaff \(BOS\)](#); [MandelmanStaff \(BOS\)](#); [MelgarStaff \(BOS\)](#); [PrestonStaff \(BOS\)](#); [RonenStaff \(BOS\)](#); [Waltonstaff \(BOS\)](#); [Hillis, Rich \(CPC\)](#)  
**Subject:** Letter of Support--Lydia So (Planning Commission) {File #240300}  
**Date:** Sunday, April 28, 2024 9:59:16 AM

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Dear Supervisors Ronen, Safai, and Walton:

I write to you in support of the nomination of Lydia So to the Planning Commission, which is coming before the Rules Committee on April 29, 2024 {Item [240300](#)}.

I first met Lydia when she was a member of a panel representing The Arts Commission to select a developer of 626 Mission Bay Boulevard South. Her questions during that interview piqued my interest, and we subsequently formed a relationship around our mutual interests in affordable housing, design, and community development.

In our interactions in the years since then, I have been struck by Lydia's curiosity and breadth of knowledge, which allow her to bring a balanced perspective to the complex issues impacting land use planning, urban design, and livable open spaces. She sat on the Historic Planning and Arts Commissions, so understands those two perspectives well. As a Chinese American born in Hong Kong, and a past member of numerous related Boards and advisory committees, she well represents the AAPI community. An architect, she has global design experience.

Lydia is an ardent supporter of affordable housing, and her recent work as a member of the SF Municipal Transportation Authority has enhanced her understanding of the crucial intersection of housing and transportation. Typical of Lydia, even before she was seated as a Board member, she was reaching out to MTA staff as well as transportation research analysts at SPUR in order to dive into the gritty details of San Francisco's transportation policies and challenges.

In addition to her many professional accomplishments and sophisticated understanding of the range of issues that impact city planning, I have found Lydia to be a delightful colleague. She is a straightforward, honest communicator with a sense of humor, earning widespread respect among her colleagues, and I think she will work well in the context of the Planning Commission and staff. I encourage you to recommend her appointment to the full Board of Supervisors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (415) 264-7949 or [donfalk.personal@gmail.com](mailto:donfalk.personal@gmail.com) should you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration.

~Don

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Don Falk

[DonFalk.personal@gmail.com](mailto:DonFalk.personal@gmail.com)

(415) 264-7949

**From:** [Mchugh, Eileen \(BOS\)](#)  
**To:** [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Letter of Support--Lydia So (Planning Commission) {File #240300}  
**Date:** Monday, April 29, 2024 10:08:59 AM

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**From:** donfalk.personal@gmail.com <donfalk.personal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 28, 2024 9:59 AM  
**To:** Ronen, Hillary (BOS) <hillary.ronen@sfgov.org>; Safai, Ahsha (BOS) <ahsha.safai@sfgov.org>; Walton, Shamann (BOS) <shamann.walton@sfgov.org>  
**Cc:** Peskin, Aaron (BOS) <aaron.peskin@sfgov.org>; Chan, Connie (BOS) <connie.chan@sfgov.org>; Dorsey, Matt (BOS) <matt.dorsey@sfgov.org>; Engardio, Joel (BOS) <joel.engardio@sfgov.org>; Preston, Dean (BOS) <dean.preston@sfgov.org>; Mandelman, Rafael (BOS) <rafael.mandelman@sfgov.org>; Melgar, Myrna (BOS) <myrna.melgar@sfgov.org>; Stefani, Catherine (BOS) <catherine.stefani@sfgov.org>; Young, Victor (BOS) <victor.young@sfgov.org>; Somera, Alisa (BOS) <alisa.somera@sfgov.org>; Calvillo, Angela (BOS) <angela.calvillo@sfgov.org>; ChanStaff (BOS) <chanstaff@sfgov.org>; DorseyStaff (BOS) <DorseyStaff@sfgov.org>; MandelmanStaff (BOS) <mandelmanstaff@sfgov.org>; MelgarStaff (BOS) <melgarstaff@sfgov.org>; PrestonStaff (BOS) <prestonstaff@sfgov.org>; RonenStaff (BOS) <ronenstaff@sfgov.org>; Waltonstaff (BOS) <waltonstaff@sfgov.org>; Hillis, Rich (CPC) <rich.hillis@sfgov.org>  
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~Don

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