

# MANY OPENINGS ON BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS AS SHENG THAO TAKES OFFICE

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opportunities for people to help make positive changes in Oakland," said Vann.

The post [Many Openings on Boards and Commissions as Sheng Thao Takes Office](#) first appeared on [Post News Group](#).

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By Ken Epstein

As Mayor-elect Sheng Thao prepares to take office, many Oaklanders are looking forward to the possibility of creating a new era in which the city administration creates policy more transparently and inclusively than it did for the past eight years under Libby Schaaf's leadership.

One important step may be for Oakland residents with ideas and energy to become actively involved in developing policy by joining one of the city's many voluntary appointed boards and commissions.



James Vann. Photo courtesy of James Vann.

Promoting community participation, James Vann, a longtime Oakland advocate for tenants' rights and for humane homelessness policies, said he hopes to see people stepping up to work with Thao's administration.

"There are many openings on boards and commissions, and there will be opportunities for people to help make positive changes in Oakland," said Vann.



LaNiece Jones. Photo courtesy of LaNiece Jones.

Added LaNiece Jones of Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA):

"Now, we have a great opportunity to help encourage and increase civic participation for community change among our BWOPA members and the Black community at large with our new administration via the numerous boards and commission opportunities available. Let's go!"

"It's a chance for our people who have not had an opportunity to be part of decision making to be at the table," she said.

At present, some of the nearly 40 boards and commissions are almost dormant, and others have a narrow range of members mostly allied with the outgoing mayor's pro-corporate development agenda. The list includes:

- City Planning Commission (2 vacancies)
- Commission on Homelessness (7 vacancies)
- Oakland Youth Commission (2 vacancies)
- Cultural Affairs Commission (5 vacancies)

- Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (1 vacancy)
- Police Commission (2 vacancies)
- Oakland Workforce Development Board (3 vacancies)
- Public Safety and Service Violence Prevention (2 vacancies)
- Cannabis Regulatory Commission (5 vacancies)
- Oakland Housing Authority (4 vacancies)
- Budget Advisory Commission (8 vacancies)

For a list of boards and commissions, an explanation of what they do and an application, go to [www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions](http://www.oaklandca.gov/boards-commissions)

For a list of current vacancies on these bodies, go to: <https://oakland.granicus.com/boards/w/8552f8c4c0e15460/boards/6672>

Vann told the Oakland Post that at the last City Council meeting, Mayor Schaaf had submitted some appointments to the boards and commissions, but the council did not approve them.

“The Council held them back because the incoming mayor should have the opportunity to fill the vacancies. That was a good decision,” he said.



Pamela Drake. Photo courtesy of Pamela Drake.

Pamela Drake, who is a member of the Wellstone Democratic Club and is active in the Democratic

Party said, "We have a lot of commissions and boards, but under Libby, anyone who had influence was part of an inside clique. She left us in a state of dysfunction."

"To me, it's most important that people are involved in local government," she said. "They need to be involved in making decisions. At the level of commissions, they can actually make policy."

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