



Mental Health Commission

CONSENT CALENDAR
June 28, 2022

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
From: Mental Health Commission
Submitted by: Dr. Margaret Fine, Mental Health Commission Chair
Subject: Appointment of Mary-Lee Smith and Glenn Turner to Mental Health Commission for the City of Berkeley

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Resolution appointing: Mary-Lee Smith as a representative of the Special Public Interest Category (consumer), to complete her first 3- year term beginning June 29, 2022 and ending June 28, 2025; and Glenn Turner as a representative of the Special Public Interest Category (family member), to complete her first 3-year term beginning June 29, 2022 and ending June 28, 2025.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

None.

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

The Mental Health Commission is authorized to be composed of thirteen members. However, there are presently seven vacancies on the Commission. The Mental Health Commission is actively seeking candidates with the ability to fulfill the state law duties for Commissioners, including reviewing and evaluating the community's needs, services, facilities and special problems. Approval of the recommended action will fill two vacancies and allow the Commission to move one step closer to having a full and diverse complement of commissioners.

BACKGROUND

California State law requires that appointments to the Mental Health Commission meet specific categories, who may serve up to nine years consecutively. The general public interest category may include anyone who has an interest in and some knowledge of mental health services. The special public interest category includes direct consumers of public mental health services and family members of consumers, which together must constitute at least fifty percent or nine of the commission seats. Direct consumers and family members shall each constitute at least 20% of the commission membership.

The Mental Health Commission nominated Mary-Lee Smith as a special public interest consumer applicant for appointment to the Mental Health Commission for the City of Berkeley for a three-year term. Mary-Lee Smith has been a resident of Berkeley since 2001. She is a full-time mom, organizer, activist for racial justice, and has previously worked an attorney for Disability Rights Advocates. She began as a staff attorney, then progressed to managing attorney, and finally became Director of Litigation over more than 10 years. She is interested in community response to mental health issues based on her lived and advocacy experience.

Mary-Lee Smith is involved with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Bay Area. She volunteers for Community Ready Corps Allies and Accomplices as well as the Anti-Police Terror Project that operates the M.H. FIRST community first response programs located in Oakland and Sacramento. Three important mental health issues to her are the lack of a non-police response, people with mental health who are unhoused, and the criminalization of these individuals with mental illness.

Glenn Turner has been a life-long resident of Berkeley since 1977. The Mental Health Commissioners nominated Glenn Turner for appointment to the Commission as a special interest family member for a three-year term. Her daughter, Hazel, struggled with schizoaffective disorder and substance use. In 2019, her daughter tragically died at age 49 from untreated heart disease resulting from refusal of medical care. Glenn also works with FASMI (Families Advocating for the Seriously Mentally Ill) at the county and state levels.

She is currently retired after serving the spiritual needs of Black, Brown, new age, and Queer people at her Berkeley retail business for more than 30 years. She brings legal, financial, operational, and other important skills to the Mental Health Commission. She is also a member of Berkeley Copwatch, Care Not Cops, Creative Action Theater, and has done planning and logistics for the Climate Emergency Task Force.

Glenn supports an alternative non-police response team like the SCU, additional crisis centers for people with SMI and SUD, additional psychiatric hospital beds and sub-acute facility beds for follow-up care, and a continuum of ongoing care for people.

The Mental Health Commission passed the following motions at the April 28, 2022 meeting:

M/S/C (Fine, Jones) Make a motion to nominate Mary-Lee Smith for the Mental Health Commission and send the nomination to the Berkeley City Council for approval as a Mental Health Commissioner. Ayes: Escarcega, Fine, Jones, Opton, Prichett; Noes: None; Abstentions: None; Absent: Taplin.

M/S/C (Fine, Prichett) Make a motion to nominate Glenn Turner for appointment to the Mental Health Commission and send the nomination to the Berkeley City Council for appointment. Ayes: Fine, Jones, Opton, Prichett; Noes: None; Abstentions: Escarcega; Absent: Taplin.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

There are no identifiable environmental effects or opportunities associated with the subject of this report.

RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Approval of the recommended action will allow the Mental Health Commission to move one step closer to having a full and diverse complement of commissioners to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

CITY MANAGER

The City Manager takes no position

CONTACT PERSON

Jamie Works-Wright, Commission Secretary, HHCS, 510-981-7721

Attachments:

1: Resolution

RESOLUTION NO. ##,###-N.S.

APPOINTMENT OF MARY-LEE SMITH AND GLENN TURNER TO THE MENTAL
HEALTH COMMISSION

WHEREAS, membership of the Mental Health Commission is composed of thirteen appointments by the City Council as a whole, including one appointment by the Mayor (*or designee*), six special public interest appointments, and four general public interest appointments; and

WHEREAS, with the ongoing implementation of the Mental Health Services Act, the City of Berkeley will need to have a full complement of diverse appointees to the Commission to review and evaluate the community's mental health needs, resources, and programs and to fulfill its mandate; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Mary-Lee Smith has an investment in the mental health community and has personal lived experience,

WHEREAS, Ms. Glenn Turner has volunteered within the community and is a family member of a person with lived experience,

WHEREAS, the Mental Health Commission at its April 28, 2022 meeting recommended appointments of Mary-Lee Smith and Glenn Turner.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Berkeley that the Council appoints Mary-Lee Smith as a representative of the Special Public Interest consumer category, to complete her first term ending June 28, 2025; and Glenn Turner as a representative of the Special Public Interest family category, to complete her first term ending June 28, 2025.