

Seaf Hartley

VNC APPLICATION

1. Why do you want to serve on the VNC Board of Officers?

Venice is more than where I live: it's my roots and my home. I grew up above my family's coffee shop, The Cow's End Café, in a building my father built in 1969. Venice has a rare microclimate of creativity, individuality, small businesses, longtime locals, and genuine community. I want to help preserve that character while recognizing that Venice must evolve and improve with the times, without sacrificing that unique spirit. Serving on the VNC would allow me to give back to the community that shaped me.

1(a). Have you previously served on the VNC Board or any other Neighborhood Council Board? If so, where and when?

No, I have not previously served on the VNC Board or another Neighborhood Council Board. I would bring a fresh perspective informed by my lifelong connection to Venice, experience with local government and community service, and professional experience as an attorney.

1(b). Have you served on a VNC Committee? Which one and for how long?

No, I have not previously served on a VNC Committee.

1(c). Please state your professional qualifications or related experience relevant to this position.

I'm currently a civil litigation attorney, specializing in data privacy, counterterrorism, mass torts, and bad-faith insurance claims. My practice requires advocacy, critical analysis, negotiation, consensus-building, and navigating issues involving individuals, businesses, municipalities, and government agencies—all of which are skills that I believe will be helpful to the VNC. Before practicing law, I interned for the L.A. City Council District 11, assisting with constituents and community issues, and interned with the L.A. Mayor's Office and County Board of Supervisors. I have seen the cross section between grass-roots efforts and government intervention, while also learning how to navigate various constituent concerns.

1(d). How long have you been a stakeholder in the VNC area?

My connection to Venice is lifelong. I grew up above The Cow's End Café, my family's business, where my parents still live and my mother continues to operate the café today. My father built the building in 1969, and my family has been part of the Venice community ever since. I spent my childhood working at the coffee shop and spending every morning with the Venice locals. Although education and work took me elsewhere for periods of time, I returned

to Venice from 2020 to 2021 during Covid-19 and later in 2023 to make it my permanent home once again.

2. Please list your previous and/or current neighborhood or community involvement.

In 2008, I received a City of L.A. Certificate of Appreciation for helping establish Venice's first nonprofit public recycling program, which later expanded citywide. I've previously worked with District 11 constituents during my internships, volunteered with the Venice Save-a-Penny Thanksgiving Feed, and worked the Venice polls. Recently, I've helped The Cow navigate neighborhood events, including Venice Surf-a-Thons, Marina Well Rey, and Washington Square Second Saturdays. Beyond Venice, my service has included programs addressing homelessness/diversion, food programs, assisted-living residents, and living/volunteering at a Nepalese monastery. Venice has taught me the importance of giving back here and abroad.

3. Please list the three most pressing issues that you feel are facing the Venice Community.

- 1. Homelessness, public safety, and quality of life:** pursuing compassionate, effective solutions while ensuring our streets, beach, parks, and public spaces remain safe and accessible.
- 2. Protecting Venice's character amid change:** accommodating necessary housing and development without losing the artists, longtime residents, independent businesses, architecture, and individuality that make Venice distinct.
- 3. Supporting a livable, locally rooted Venice:** addressing infrastructure, traffic, parking, sanitation, and environmental concerns while ensuring that longtime residents and small businesses can continue to afford, operate, and thrive in the community.

4. What do you see as the primary roles of the Venice Neighborhood Council?

The VNC should be the strongest bridge between Venice stakeholders and the City of Los Angeles. Its role is to listen to residents and businesses, provide a meaningful forum for differing viewpoints, identify shared priorities, and turn community concerns into effective advocacy. It should fight for Venice to receive the City attention, services, and resources it deserves while ensuring decisions affecting our neighborhood are informed by the people who actually live and work here. Above all, the VNC should make local government accessible and give stakeholders confidence that participation can meaningfully influence the future of their community.

5. What is your vision for Venice?

My vision is a Venice that evolves without losing its soul. My family has watched Venice transform for more than five decades, yet its greatest asset remains its authenticity: artists, surfers, families, independent businesses, longtime locals, newcomers, and people who simply

do things differently. However, I do not believe preserving that character requires resisting change. Venice should thoughtfully adapt to new housing, transportation, environmental, economic, and public-safety realities while protecting what cannot be recreated once lost. I want Venice to be safer, cleaner, more functional and inclusive in twenty years, but still eclectic, independent, grounded, and unmistakably Venice.

6. If not selected, are you willing to participate in a VNC committee? Which committee(s) interest you? Why?

Absolutely. My interest is in serving Venice, not simply holding a Board position. I would be particularly interested in Land Use & Planning, Budget and Finance, Public Health & Safety, or Homelessness. Land use especially interests me because Venice must navigate growth and housing needs without erasing the character and independent businesses that make the community unique. Having grown up in a Venice small business and now practicing law, I understand these issues from both personal and professional perspectives. I would welcome the opportunity to analyze proposals, listen to competing viewpoints, and help develop practical solutions.