



DATE: March 18, 2025

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers

FROM: Charmaine Arredondo, City Clerk  
*City Clerk's Office*

SUBJECT: Candidate Interviews for City Council Position 5

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As a result of an appointment to the Washington State House of Representatives, 41<sup>st</sup> Legislative District, Councilmember Zahn has indicated her intent to resign from her Bellevue City Council position. The effective date of her resignation is planned for March 28.

Pursuant to state law, the City Council has until June 27 to appoint a qualified individual to fill the vacancy. On February 25, Council directed staff to open a call for applications for the position and the application period was open from February 26 – March 7. Twenty applications were received in total.

On March 11, the Council reviewed the qualifications of the applicants and then determined to move five candidates forward for interview. To qualify for appointment, state law provides that an individual must (a) be at least 18 years of age, (b) be a registered voter at the time of application to office, and (c) have been a resident of the city for a period of at least one year prior to appointment. The individuals moving forward for interviews this evening have all met the minimum qualifications. They are, in alphabetical order:

- Vishal Bhargava
- Eric Drever
- Diala Ezzeddine
- Jaskaran Singh Sarao
- Claire Sumadiwirya

Tonight, Council will be conducting the interviews of the five finalists. Each candidate will have three minutes to provide an opening statement and will then be given twelve additional minutes to respond to the following questions:

1. What do you see as the role of a City Councilmember, and what does it take to perform the role well?
2. What do you consider the top issues facing the City, and how would you address them?
3. Can you share an example of a time when you navigated a complex decision-making process involving conflicting viewpoints, interests, or competing priorities? How did you handle the situation?
4. If appointed, how would you actively support and advance the City Council Vision?

Just prior to the Council meeting, staff will set the order of interviews at random and will communicate the order to the candidates.

Attachments:

A. News Release

B. Letters of Interest - Finalists