

Application Form

Profile

Michael

First Name

T

Middle
Initial

Sewell

Last Name

Email Address

Home Address

City

Suite or Apt

State

Postal Code

What Ward do you live in? Use the following link to determine your Ward if you do not know: (<https://www.cityofsalem.net/government/city-council-mayor/about-city-council/find-a-ward-map>) *

☒ Ward 1 - Downtown (north of State St.) and Northwest Salem

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

Mannix Law Firm

Employer

Attorney

Job Title

Attorney

Occupation

Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Salem Planning Commission: Submitted

Which of the following City of Salem Board or Commission meetings have you attended? *

☒ None

Interests & Experiences

What do you feel you can contribute as a board or commission member?

I bring a combination of legal expertise, community leadership, and a deep commitment to service that I believe aligns closely with the mission of Salem's boards and commissions. As an attorney with experience in public policy, nonprofit governance, and local government law, I understand the importance of transparency, accountability, and balanced decision-making. Beyond my professional background, I have a long history of civic involvement, from serving with East Salem Rotary, the Parks Advisory Board in Dallas, participating in Leadership Salem, the Oregon State Hospital Advisory Board, and many others, which reflects my dedication to making our community stronger and more connected. I approach public service with a mindset of "service before self" and a practical, solutions-oriented perspective that values collaboration and thoughtful stewardship of public resources.

What prompted your interest in applying to serve as a board or commission member?

I'm applying to serve because I believe civic leadership starts with engagement at the local level. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working with a variety of community organizations and public bodies, and I've seen firsthand how thoughtful participation can shape Salem's future for the better. As someone who lives and works here, I care deeply about ensuring our city's decisions reflect both integrity and inclusion. Serving on a board or commission allows me to give back in a tangible way, by contributing my legal, policy, and organizational experience to help address real challenges and opportunities facing Salem today.

Please explain how your education, professional, personal, or volunteer experience and knowledge qualify you to serve on the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying.

My background as an attorney, educator, and community leader has given me a well-rounded perspective on the issues that affect Salem's residents and businesses. Professionally, I practice law in Salem with a focus on helping small businesses, nonprofits, and families navigate complex legal and policy matters. This work has strengthened my understanding of municipal processes, public finance, and the balance between regulatory requirements and community needs. In addition to my legal practice, I serve as President-Elect of the East Salem Rotary and am a graduate of Leadership Salem, which deepened my appreciation for the many systems that make our city function. I have volunteered on numerous boards and commissions at the local level since moving to Oregon in 2019 (see resume). I also teach business finance at Chemeketa Community College, where I emphasize practical problem-solving and ethical leadership. Across all of these roles, I've developed skills in collaboration, public communication, and consensus-building that I believe are essential for effective service on any board or commission. I care deeply about Salem's future and bring both a professional discipline and a community-minded spirit to the work.

List any experience you have with volunteering for the City of Salem, your neighborhood association, or other public bodies organizations.

Oregon State Hospital Advisory Board Salem, Oregon Governor-appointed Board Member, 2024 - Present West Valley Housing Authority Board of Commissioners Dallas, Oregon Commissioner, 2023 - Present; Vice Chair, 2024 - Present Polk County Property Value Appeals Board Dallas, Oregon Board Member, 2025 - Present City of Dallas Parks and Trees Advisory Board Dallas, Oregon Board Member, 2023 - Present East Salem Rotary Club Salem, Oregon Rotarian, 2022 - Present; President, 2025 - Present City of Dallas Historic Preservation Commission Dallas, Oregon Commissioner, 2024 - 2025 Marion County Fire District #1 Salem, Oregon Volunteer Firefighter, 2020 - 2022

Briefly explain any experience you have working with your neighborhood association or other public bodies or organizations.

See the above question for information on my work with public bodies. Additionally, I have represented multiple public bodies on a variety of legal issues.

Can you commit to attending a minimum of 75 percent of scheduled meetings? (Please refer to the City's website for the meeting schedule. Failure to meet the attendance requirement may result in removal from office.)

☒ Yes ☐ No

Please list up to three (3) references whom we could contact to learn more about your qualifications (name/email address or phone number/relationship).

Kevin Mannix - Employer - 503-949-0422 Retired Colonel Monique DeSpain - Colleague - 541-556-0675 Michelle Mhoon - Colleague - 503-881-9626

Question applies to Civil Service Commission

If you are affiliated with any professional human resources, employment, or labor organizations, please list the organization(s) and your level of participation.

N/A

Question applies to Civil Service Commission

Please describe your experience working with employment laws or other human resources functions, such as recruitment and selection, labor relations, compliance, etc.

As an attorney, I have advised clients on matters involving employment law compliance, workplace policies, and organizational governance. My work includes reviewing and drafting employment agreements, evaluating independent contractor classifications, and ensuring compliance with both Oregon and federal labor standards. In my legal practice, I also assist nonprofits and small businesses with developing fair hiring practices, volunteer agreements, and personnel policies consistent with state and local requirements. Beyond my legal experience, I have managed and participated in recruitment and selection processes for staff, interns, and volunteers in both professional and community settings, including through the East Salem Rotary Club and local nonprofit boards. These experiences have strengthened my understanding of equitable hiring, workplace culture, and the importance of transparency and consistency in personnel decisions.

Question applies to Civil Service Commission

Have you ever been or are you related to anyone who has ever been employed by the City of Salem Fire Department?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Question applies to Citizens Advisory Traffic Commission

Briefly describe your experience in transportation planning or traffic engineering.

N/A - But I have been involved in many policy conversations about transportation planning through my work with State Representative Kevin Mannix.

Question applies to Downtown Advisory Board

Select the following positions for which you are applying: *

☒ Representative of the Salem community at-large. (Note: You must not have a business or own property withing the Riverfront-Downtown Urban Renewal Area.)

Question applies to Historic Landmarks Commission

Please list the colleges/universities attended, including degrees earned, areas of study, and dates completed.

Missouri Western State University - B.S. Communications - completed 2019 Willamette University College of Law - Juris Doctor - completed 2022

Question applies to Historic Landmarks Commission

Please describe any work or volunteer experience involving local history and/or historic preservation activities such as publications, committee work, etc.

I previously served on the City of Dallas Historic Preservation Commission

Question applies to Historic Landmarks Commission

In your opinion, why is historic preservation important for the city of Salem?

Historic preservation matters because it maintains Salem's sense of identity and continuity. Our historic buildings and neighborhoods reflect the city's cultural and architectural heritage, and preserving them helps ensure that growth respects that context. Thoughtful preservation supports economic vitality, sustainability, and civic pride by keeping Salem's character intact while allowing it to evolve.

Question applies to Historic Landmarks Commission

Please indicate the area(s) in which you have work experience: *

☒ Historic preservation or historic preservation planning

Question applies to Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board bylaws state that one member must have expertise in urban forestry, horticulture, or arboriculture. Does this apply to you?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Question applies to Salem Planning Commission

The Commission strives to make decisions that implement the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code. Please describe your affiliations within the community that could affect your ability to participate in land use decisions if you are appointed to the Planning Commission (i.e., familial or financial relationship with developers, builders, land use attorneys, land use consultants, etc.).

N/A

Question applies to Salem Planning Commission

Please state your profession

Attorney

Question applies to Salem Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

In your opinion, what do cultural amenities such as Bush House, Deepwood Estate, Historic Elsinore Theatre or the Hallie Ford Museum of Art contribute to our community and quality of life?

Cultural amenities like Bush House, Deepwood Estate, the Elsinore Theatre, and the Hallie Ford Museum enrich Salem's quality of life by connecting people to art, history, and shared experiences. They strengthen our community identity, attract visitors, and create spaces where culture and creativity thrive. Having performed at the Elsinore with the Salem Symphonic Winds in recent years, I've seen firsthand how these venues bring people together and inspire pride in our city's cultural life.

Question applies to Salem Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

In your opinion, are there any opportunities in Salem to improve its image as a tourist destination?

Salem has a strong foundation for tourism. It has a historic downtown, the riverfront, vibrant cultural institutions, and proximity to the Willamette Valley wine region, but we can do more to present these assets under a cohesive brand. The city has an opportunity to define itself as "Oregon's Capital and Wine-Country Gateway," linking our government, cultural, and natural landmarks into one inviting identity. Simple improvements like coordinated signage, wayfinding, and beautification at city gateways can help visitors feel welcomed and oriented from the start. We can also strengthen tourism through collaboration among our cultural, historic, and entertainment venues. A unified "Cultural Corridor" that connects sites like the Elsinore Theatre, Hallie Ford Museum, Bush House, and Deepwood Estate, with shared marketing, passes, and coordinated events, would make Salem more appealing to visitors and residents alike. Coupled with expanded riverfront programming, seasonal festivals, and improved evening activities downtown, these efforts would help position Salem as a more dynamic and memorable destination in the heart of Oregon.

Question applies to Salem Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board

The Salem Cultural and Tourism Promotion Advisory Board includes one member from the for-profit tourism industry. Are you applying for this position?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Question applies to Salem Housing Advisory Committee

Please describe your experience working on housing issues.

I am the current Vice Chair of the West Valley Housing Authority in Polk County. Additionally, my work under a State Representative has given me great exposure to housing issues.

Question applies to Salem Human Rights Commission

As part of its mission, the Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission strives to reach out to the Salem community. Please describe your affiliations within the community that may aid the Commission in this mission.

I am involved in many advisory boards and commissions locally and at the state level (see resume). Additionally, I am President of the East Salem Rotary Club and as a community service organization, we are always involved with reaching out to the Salem community.

Question applies to Salem Human Rights Commission

The Salem Human Rights and Relations Advisory Commission includes one youth representative who shall not be younger than 15 years of age and not older than 21 years of age. Are you applying for this position?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Question applies to West Salem Redevelopment Advisory Board

Are you a resident within the boundaries of the West Salem Neighborhood Association?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Question applies to West Salem Redevelopment Advisory Board

Are you a resident living within the West Salem Urban Renewal District?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Question applies to West Salem Redevelopment Advisory Board

Select the following positions for which you are applying: *

☒ Representative of the Salem community at large.

Demographics

Some boards and commissions require membership to be racially, politically or geographically proportionate to the general public. The following information helps track our recruitment and diversity efforts.

Ethnicity

Gender

Question