

## Application Form

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### Profile

Micki

First Name

Varney

Last Name

Middle Initial

Email Address

Home Address

Suite or Apt

Salem

City

OR

State

97304

Postal Code

### What Ward do you live in? \*

☒ Ward 8

Primary Phone

Alternate Phone

Oregon Department of Fish and  
Wildlife

Employer

Stock Assessment Biologist

Job Title

Salmon Biologist

Occupation

### Which Boards would you like to apply for?

Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Submitted

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

- ☒ Salem Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
- ☒ Salem Planning Commission
- ☒ Salem Urban Development, Community Services and Housing Commission

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### Interests & Experiences

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

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I will contribute my time, my passion and my experience. I am committed to public service and find it extremely rewarding to utilize my analytical, organizational and communication skills combined with my knowledge of the municipal government process to solve problems, and collaboratively address issues. Being approachable and open to ideas and are key in bringing a community's vision for a park or elements of a park to fruition. My experience as the Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners and City Councilor for the city of Dayton, Washington gave me the opportunity to put my skills as a natural resource specialist and volunteer organizer to work to benefit our community in a number of ways. When park and recreation projects were brought forward, I was able to look behind and between the lines of proposals and issues to assess the impact of actions and recommendations on public safety, accessibility, the environment, and the city budget while addressing concerns and wishes of community members and alignment with future planning documents. Some examples of projects I worked with during my tenure in Dayton were the development of our first skate park, upgrades to our public fishing pond, developing no-smoking zones around play structures, building/enlarging walking and biking trails, upgrades to our municipal swimming pool and management of protected areas along trails that bordered the river that not only passed through town but was a migration corridor for a number of ESA listed salmonid species. I feel that working with a team of like-minded individuals on the preservation, maintenance, and prudent development of our green spaces and recreational areas are some of the most valuable things I can provide as a member of the SPRAB and a productive and active community member.

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[Upload a Resume](#)

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

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Being a member of an advisory group for Parks and Recreation is a natural fit for me. For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in conservation of our environment and active in recreational activities. The world-wide environmental concerns which led to the first Earth Day in 1970 ignited my activism and on that very first Earth Day, I gathered a group of classmates together to go out and pick up litter. We called ourselves the "Litter Spitters" and for many months, met and cleaned up trash once a week after school. I joined the Nature Conservancy in middle school, played every team sport available to girls at a time when Title IX was just coming on board, and grew up in a family whereby my values, commitment to service, and ethics were strongly influenced by parents and grandparents with a strong science background--an oncologist, a microbiologist and a chemist. I am a fisheries scientist, an educator and an active community volunteer and I still enjoy playing softball and basketball when I can find the time. I am passionate about providing recreational opportunities and encouraging families as well as individuals of all ages to get outside and play. Not only is it healthier for all of us, but I feel it is critically important to engage people in the outdoors to help them develop a sense of ownership and stewardship that can be passed on to generations.

**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.**

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I feel that my having a natural resources background is an asset for the parks advisory board. I also have experience coordinating volunteers, and participating in and assuming leadership roles in a number of voluntary organizations and committees (American Association of University Women, SEIU 503, library board, softball/basketball coaching, political campaigns). I pursued two careers--secondary science educator and fisheries biologist--and have been fortunate to be able to combine elements of both careers in my work and in volunteer activities. For 18 years I worked on a fish research team that was tasked with restoring a nearly extirpated population of fall Chinook salmon after the construction of the four lower Snake River dams nearly decimated them. We were very successful. At the same time, I was teaching at environmental learning centers, conducting STEM workshops for middle school age girls, and mentoring high school interns that were interested in fish biology. Most of the time I was working as a volunteer for various organizations, but I did occasionally get paid as a representative of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). Being recognized and receiving the WDFW Statewide Educator of the Year award in 2008 was quite an honor. The policy making experience I gained while serving in various capacities as a Dayton City Councilor was invaluable. I especially enjoyed participating in the multi-jurisdictional group tasked with developing a pilot program for towns who were suddenly facing conflicting federal mandates brought about after Hurricane Katrina decimated the Gulf coast. In response to the massive flooding caused by the hurricane and fatal engineering flaws in the levees, the USACE developed new policies regarding maintenance of river levees over which they had jurisdiction. Many of the USACE's new policies regarding vegetation removal on dikes were in direct opposition to many of the temperature and riparian requirements of the Clean Water Act, the ESA and National Marine Fisheries Service. However, refusal to follow USACE mandates would disqualify a town from receiving FEMA assistance. Many cities were caught between a rock and a hard spot. My group had just begun implementation of the first phase of the pilot program we had developed to address this when I moved from Washington to Oregon. I currently work for Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. I evaluate our state's fish hatchery programs and make recommendations to our programs to get more fish in the hands of anglers while reducing the numbers of hatchery-produced fish on spawning grounds and decreasing their interactions with our native wild fish. I serve as Oregon's representative on a bilateral committee that reports directly to the Pacific Salmon Commission—the decision-making body tasked with cooperative management of Pacific salmon guided by the negotiated Pacific Salmon Treaty between the US and Canada. In my work, I also have the opportunity to work with many volunteers and co-workers that work with many volunteers. The interactions between fish, hatcheries, dams, water users and passionate volunteers, environmentalists, hunters, anglers and recreational advocates, have at times made for challenging discussions and learning opportunities for all. Working in a public agency deeply integrated with outdoor recreational activities has given me an window into the trends and changes in the area of recreation and how demographics are changing. I feel my experience and education as a community volunteer, educator, city councilor and biologist, combined with the ability to balance the needs of raising a family and working full-time has demonstrated that I am not only committed to public service but have been well prepared and am highly capable of serving on policy developing bodies such as the SPRAB.

**List any experience you have with volunteering for the City of Salem or other organizations.**

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I have pulled weeds at Salem City Hall, have pulled ivy off of trees at Wallace Marine Park, and have assisted with planting vegetation and trees at Friends of Trees activities. I volunteer at City Vibe to serve dinner to the homeless on Fridays. I have volunteered hundreds of hours of time (as a union steward and Chair of the SEIU 503 statewide stewards committee) training and mentoring stewards, preparing for arbitration, developing policies to assist stewards and negotiating contracts. My work as a member and leader in the American Association of University women for over 15 years has empowered many women and girls to challenge themselves to take unfamiliar paths in STEM fields, to encourage them to advocate for others or to pursue elected office.

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

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I live in West Salem. I started attending the WSNA meetings in 2012. Although I have not taken on a leadership role or committee assignment in my WSNA, I have followed the actions taken by the Association, provided comment on issues, and been there to vote. I am so impressed by the commitment of the community leaders tracking and reporting on various topics and neighborhood concerns as well as their depth of knowledge on land use issues. Keeping our neighborhood associations current on land use decisions, parks development, transportation infrastructure, urban renewal and development of comprehensive and local plans is absolutely essential. Our neighborhood associations are truly the voices of our neighborhoods. Much of my experience working with other public bodies or committees was described in previous answers. I did also serve on the Public Safety Committee in Dayton WA. One of our biggest concerns was making improvements to key intersections to provide a safe route to school for students who lived on the north side of town but had to cross the highway to get to any of the schools. The intersection of the highway and the road going to the ski area would get very busy too. We had to coordinate those projects with ODOT because of the state highway. It is rewarding to see the flashing lights and the signage that exist today and know that a number of potentially serious accidents have been prevented.

**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.)**

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☒ 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).**

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• Chris Hoy [REDACTED] friend and Salem City Councilor • Dolores Mylnarczyk [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] AAUW Membership VP, friend, West Salem resident • Melissa Gustav-Silbernagel [REDACTED] friend, SEIU organizer, Salem resident

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?

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☐ Yes ☒ No

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## 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

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☒ Caucasian/Non-Hispanic

### Gender

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☒ Female