

Form Name:
Unique ID:

Boards and Commissions A
1396108384

Date Received:
10/30/25
Voter registration verified:
On: N/A
By: MH

Idan Kestenbom
Page 1 of 6

Late

Applicant Information

Name	Idan Kestenbom
Are you a Sunnyvale resident?	Yes
How long have you lived in Sunnyvale?	6 Years
Description Area	Residence Notice:Unless otherwise noted, your principal place of residence must be in Sunnyvale. You must live in Sunnyvale at the time of appointment and at all times during service on a board or commission.
Current Main Residence	 Sunnyvale, CA 94087
Email	
Phone	
Are you currently a registered voter in Sunnyvale?	No
Have you ever served on a City of Sunnyvale board or commission?	No
Have you attended a meeting of the City Council, or a board or commission?	Yes
Briefly describe what you learned by watching or attending a meeting of the City Council, board or commission. What improvements would you suggest?	During the City Council meeting I attended, I learned how decisions about community issues such as housing, safety, and local events are discussed through a structured and respectful process that includes public input. It gave me a better understanding of how city departments collaborate and how residents' voices can directly influence policy. If I were to suggest improvements, I would recommend making the discussions more accessible to younger residents by simplifying summaries after each topic and increasing online engagement through social media updates or short recaps. This would help more community members, especially students, stay informed and involved.
Have you attended meetings of the board(s) or commission(s) for which you are applying?	No

Board or Commission Selection

Applicant Qualifications

What motivated you to apply for this board or commission?

As a student growing up in Sunnyvale, I've seen how much our city values inclusivity, safety, and connection but I've also noticed that youth voices are often underrepresented in civic discussions. I want to bridge that gap. By serving on the Human Relations Commission, I hope to bring a younger perspective to local conversations about equity, belonging, and mental health. I'm passionate about building spaces where residents of all ages feel heard and supported, and I see this role as a meaningful way to contribute to my community beyond school walls.

What skills or attributes can you bring to this board or commission?

As a student leader involved in community outreach and STEM initiatives, I've developed strong communication, collaboration, and project management skills. I regularly help organize events that bring diverse groups together, from robotics outreach to hackathons. I also understand how to listen, research, and present ideas clearly. My generation is deeply connected to technology and social awareness, and I can help the board better engage younger residents through accessible communication and creative problem-solving.

The primary role of a board or commission member is to provide advice to City Council on policy issues that are within the scope of the board or commission. What steps would you take to effectively exercise this specific board or commission role?

To serve effectively, I would start by familiarizing myself with Sunnyvale's existing human relations initiatives, reviewing recent meeting minutes, and understanding ongoing community priorities. I would listen carefully to residents' perspectives especially from youth, minorities, and underrepresented groups and use data and research to support recommendations to the City Council. I'd also help promote community events and outreach through channels that reach students and families.

Education - List college degrees, majors and any relevant training or experience that demonstrates your ability to effectively serve on this board or commission.

I am currently a high school student pursuing a rigorous STEM-focused curriculum that includes AP and honors-level coursework in Computer Science, European History, and Precalculus. Beyond academics, I actively participate in programs that emphasize leadership, ethics, and public service, including the FIRST Tech Challenge robotics program. These experiences have taught me how to collaborate in diverse teams, approach problems with empathy. My education has given me a strong foundation in research, communication, and data-driven decision-making that I can apply to civic problem-solving.

Describe your involvement in community activities, volunteer and civic organizations.

I am deeply involved in several community and youth-led initiatives. As Co-Lead of FTC Team Taro #13218, I help organize outreach events introducing students to STEM, host workshops for younger learners, and collaborate with local organizations to promote access to technology education. I also co-lead the Jewish Student Union at my school, where I've helped plan cultural events that encourage unity and understanding across backgrounds. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to inclusion, dialogue, and building meaningful connections across different parts of our community.

Description Area

The City has a Code of Ethics and Conduct for Elected and Appointed Officials and an Attendance Policy (7.2.19), 2 G (II) that appointed members are required to follow.

Do you have any concerns related to the above code and policy?

No

Are you willing to accept a temporary appointment for the remainder of an unexpired term?

Yes

Board or Commission-Specific Questions

Human Relations Commission

Category One: I'm a Sunnyvale resident.

Yes

What do you think are major equity challenges facing the Sunnyvale community?

Sunnyvale is one of the most diverse cities in the Bay Area, but that doesn't mean everyone experiences that diversity equally. The biggest equity challenge right now is housing. Santa Clara County's 2025 Point-in-Time Count reported over 10,700 people experiencing homelessness, and that's not just a statistic, it's families, students, and neighbors. Even for those who aren't unhoused, rent and cost of living are rising so fast that many longtime residents are being displaced. Stable housing directly impacts education, safety, and access to opportunity, so tackling that gap matters for everyone.

Another major challenge is language and access. Almost half of Sunnyvale's residents speak a language other than English, yet a lot of city communication, from community programs to public feedback, still leans heavily on English-only systems. It's not intentional exclusion, but it creates real barriers to participation. Translating resources and making outreach more multilingual would help more people feel part of civic life.

Lastly, there's the challenge of belonging and representation, especially for marginalized communities and youth. Sunnyvale's Human Relations Commission has already discussed issues like antisemitism and bias incidents, which shows progress, but the work can't stop there. We need to make sure the city feels safe and connected for everyone across faiths, backgrounds, and ages. I think one of the most powerful steps would be increasing youth involvement in civic conversations, since we experience these equity issues firsthand and can help design solutions that last.

Describe your experience working with historically marginalized communities. How have your actions benefited these communities?

Most of my work centers on making opportunities accessible for people who are usually left out, especially students and underrepresented groups. With my robotics team, FTC Team Taro #13218, I help lead free STEM workshops for younger students, including those from families without access to coding tools or expensive equipment. We plan sessions at schools across the district, design beginner-friendly activities, and make sure no one ever has to pay to participate. It's simple changes like that that help more students, especially first-generation and low-income ones, feel confident getting into STEM.

Outside of that roles, I've worked on hackathons and youth programs where I've pushed for inclusive practices like clear codes of conduct, prizes in the form of scholarships, and beginner tracks all to make sure nobody feels like they don't belong in tech or community events. Across everything I do, my goal is to listen first, identify what's keeping people out, and remove those barriers. I'd bring that same mindset to the Human Relations Commission, one that focuses on empathy, access, and turning good intentions into measurable change.

Demographic Information

Your age

Your gender

Description Area

LGBTQIA+ Identity (LGBTQIA+ stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, and the "+" is an all-inclusive way to include additional terms used to describe one's gender, romantic, and sexual identities for those who do not identify with heterosexuality or the gender binary.)

LGBTQIA+ Identity

Race or Ethnicity (select all that apply)

Do you speak a language other than English?

Which languages?

Household Income

Residence - Are you a

Do you live in a

Your Agreement

Description Area

IMPORTANT NOTICE – READ BEFORE SIGNING:By selecting both “Yes” and “Submit Form” below I am adding my digital signature to this application. I am also agreeing with the following statements:All statements I have made on this application are true and correct.I authorize the City of Sunnyvale (City) to investigate the accuracy of this information.I release the City from all claims and liabilities arising from such investigation.I acknowledge that any false statement on this application will be grounds for the City to deny my appointment. A false statement discovered later, will be grounds to dismiss me from my appointment at any time.I acknowledge that any false statement on this application could lead to criminal charges. Charges could fall under California Penal Code, Section 115 or other applicable law.

I agree

Yes

Your full name

Idan Kestenbom

Date

Oct 25, 2025