

Interview Question Bank for Boards, Commissions, Committees, and Task Forces

General Questions

1. Please tell us a little about yourself and what led you to apply for this board or commission.
2. What are you most looking forward to learning through this experience?
3. What motivates you to stay engaged in community service over time?
4. Is there a particular issue or idea you are especially interested in exploring if appointed?
5. Based on your understanding of this board or commission, where do you see the greatest opportunity for it to make a meaningful impact?
6. Boards and commissions do not always agree on every issue. How do you approach situations where your perspective differs from the majority?
7. If appointed, what would effective service on this board or commission look like to you by the end of your term?
8. In public service, avoiding a conflict of interest is not just about the rules, but also public trust. What does that mean to you?
9. Service on this board includes required ethics training and public financial disclosure filings. Are you comfortable meeting those requirements if appointed?
10. How would you balance your own views with the responsibility to consider the broader public interest and the board's advisory role to the City Council?

Incumbent Questions

1. Since your appointment, what do you believe you have contributed most to the work of this board or commission?
2. Looking back on your current term, what have you learned that would make you more effective if reappointed?
3. What do you see as the most important issue or priority facing this board or commission in the next term?
4. How has your understanding of the board's advisory role to the City Council evolved during your service?
5. Reappointment is an opportunity for the City Council to consider both continuity and fresh perspective. Why are you seeking another term at this time?
6. What unfinished work or ongoing effort would you like to help carry forward if reappointed?
7. How do you think your service has helped advance the work of the board or commission as a whole, not just the issues most important to you?
8. If reappointed, what would successful service look like by the end of your next term?
9. How have you prepared for meetings and stayed engaged between meetings during your current term?
10. How have you helped support respectful discussion and productive meetings during your service?

Tailored Questions by Committee or Commission

Architectural Review Commission

1. What interests you most about serving on the Architectural Review Commission specifically?
2. How would you evaluate a project that is well designed in your personal view, but does not fully align with the City's adopted design expectations or surrounding context?
3. How do you think good architectural review contributes to the broader character and quality of life of the community?
4. How would you distinguish between personal design taste and the Commission's responsibility to apply the City's standards consistently?
5. When applicants have invested significant time and money into a proposal, how would you offer constructive feedback if changes are needed?

Building Board of Appeals

1. What interests you most about serving on the Building Board of Appeals specifically?
2. The Board of Appeals may be asked to review decisions involving technical codes and standards. How would you approach a matter where the subject is highly technical but still requires your judgment?
3. How would you distinguish between sympathy for an applicant's circumstances and the Board's responsibility to apply the applicable standards fairly?
4. When reviewing an appeal, what factors would you want to understand before reaching a decision?
5. What does impartiality mean to you in the context of serving on an appeals board?

Civic Engagement Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Civic Engagement Committee specifically?
2. What does meaningful civic engagement look like to you in a community like Palm Desert?
3. How do you think the City can encourage broader participation from residents who may not typically engage in local government?
4. How would you balance the goal of broad public participation with the reality that not every resident will engage in the same way?
5. What opportunities do you see for the City to improve how it connects with residents and encourages civic participation?

Cultural Arts Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Cultural Arts Committee specifically?
2. When considering public art, what factors do you think are most important in evaluating whether a piece is appropriate for a public setting?
3. What do you think makes public art successful in a civic setting?
4. Public art involves not only selection, but also long-term care and stewardship. How would you think about maintenance, durability, and public investment when reviewing a proposal?
5. How should the City think about balancing permanent public art installations with temporary or rotating works?

Environmental Resources Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Environmental Resources Committee specifically?
2. What do you see as the most important environmental issues or resource considerations for Palm Desert?
3. Environmental recommendations often involve balancing sustainability goals with cost, operations, and community needs. How would you approach those tradeoffs?
4. In your view, what does responsible environmental stewardship look like at the local level?
5. How do you think the City should balance environmental goals with the practical realities of implementation?

Finance Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Finance Committee specifically?
2. This committee may review topics such as auditing, internal controls, financial reporting, investments, and municipal debt. Which of those areas are you most familiar with, and how would that experience inform your service?
3. How would you balance caution and fiscal stewardship with the need for the City to make timely decisions and invest in its priorities?
4. Finance Committee discussions may involve differing viewpoints about risk, reserves, debt, or long-term obligations. How would you approach those discussions in a constructive and objective way?
5. The Finance Committee's role is to review and advise the City Council on financial matters referred to it. How do you see the committee adding value within that advisory role?

Historic Preservation Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Historic Preservation Committee specifically?
2. How do you think historic preservation contributes to Palm Desert's identity and sense of place?
3. How would you approach a situation where preserving a historic resource may conflict with a property owner's desire to make substantial changes?
4. How would you balance respect for historic character with the need for change, adaptation, or reinvestment over time?
5. What kinds of historic or cultural resources do you think are important for a city like Palm Desert to recognize and protect?

Homelessness Task Force

1. What interests you most about serving on the Homelessness Task Force specifically?
2. Homelessness affects individuals, neighborhoods, service systems, and public spaces. How would you approach that issue in a balanced and constructive way?
3. What role do you think a city task force should play in addressing homelessness at the local level?
4. How would you balance compassion for people experiencing homelessness with community concerns related to health, safety, and quality of life?
5. In your view, what does meaningful progress on homelessness look like for Palm Desert?

Housing Commission

1. What interests you most about serving on the Housing Commission specifically?
2. What do you see as the most important responsibilities of the Housing Commission in relation to the City's housing properties and programs?
3. How would you approach a situation where resident concerns are significant, but the available solutions may be limited by cost, timing, or operational constraints?
4. What factors do you think are most important when reviewing issues related to the operation or condition of City housing properties?
5. How do you think the Housing Commission can add value in advising the City Council on matters related to the City's housing portfolio?

Library Advisory Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Library Advisory Committee specifically?
2. What role do you think the public library should play in the life of the Palm Desert community?
3. How would you approach recommendations involving limited resources and competing library needs such as collections, programming, technology, or facility improvements?
4. How would you balance preserving the library's traditional role with the need to adapt to new services, formats, and community uses?
5. What do you believe makes a public library welcoming, relevant, and useful to the community?

Parks and Recreation Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Parks and Recreation Committee specifically?
2. What do you see as the most important role of parks and recreation services in a community like Palm Desert?
3. When thinking about parks and recreation, how would you balance new amenities, ongoing maintenance, and long-term stewardship of existing facilities?
4. How would you approach a recommendation where community interest is strong, but funding or space is limited?
5. How would you approach differing views about the use of park space, recreation programming, or facility priorities?

Planning Commission

1. What interests you most about serving on the Planning Commission specifically, as opposed to another board or commission?
2. How would you approach a land use matter where nearby residents are strongly opposed, but the proposal appears to meet the City's adopted standards and policies?
3. When reviewing a project, how would you distinguish between your personal preferences and the standards the Commission is responsible for applying?
4. What planning or community development issue do you believe will be especially important for Palm Desert in the coming years?
5. What do you see as the Planning Commission's role in helping shape the City's growth and development?

Public Safety Committee

1. What interests you most about serving on the Public Safety Committee specifically?
2. What do you see as the most important public safety priorities for a community like Palm Desert?
3. Public safety issues can involve prevention, enforcement, education, and community partnership. How would you think about balancing those approaches?
4. How would you approach a public safety issue that generates strong community concern but may not have a simple or immediate solution?
5. In your view, what does effective public safety look like beyond crime statistics alone?

Rent Review Board

1. What interests you most about serving on the Rent Review Board specifically?
2. The Rent Review Board may hear matters involving competing concerns from landlords and tenants. How would you approach that responsibility fairly?
3. How would you approach a matter where both sides appear sincere, but their positions are clearly in conflict?
4. How would you distinguish between a personal opinion about housing issues and the Board's responsibility to apply the City's rules consistently?
5. What factors would you want to understand before making a recommendation or decision in a rent-related matter?

Tailored Questions for Regional Appointees

Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District

1. What interests you most about serving as Palm Desert's appointee to the Coachella Valley Mosquito and Vector Control District?
2. Vector control work involves public health, prevention, and community education. How do you think an appointee can best contribute to that mission?
3. What role do you think local coordination and communication should play in responding to mosquito and vector-related concerns affecting residents?
4. How would you approach representing Palm Desert's interests while working within a regional public health and service framework?
5. What would effective service look like to you in this appointment?

Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Trails Management Subcommittee

1. What interests you most about serving as Palm Desert's appointee to the Coachella Valley Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Trails Management Subcommittee?
2. This Subcommittee involves both habitat conservation and trail management. How would you approach balancing environmental protection with appropriate public access and recreational use?
3. How would you approach representing Palm Desert's interests while working within a regional framework focused on conservation and land management?
4. What factors do you think are most important when considering trail-related issues in areas that also serve habitat conservation purposes?
5. What would effective service look like to you in this appointment?

Joslyn Senior Center

1. What interests you most about serving as Palm Desert's appointee to the Joslyn Senior Center?
2. What role do you think the Joslyn Senior Center plays in supporting older adults and seniors in Palm Desert and the surrounding community?
3. How would you approach this appointment in a way that reflects both community needs and Palm Desert's interests?
4. What do you think is most important for an appointee to understand when helping support an organization that provides services to older adults?
5. What would effective service look like to you in this appointment?

Palm Springs International Airport Commission

1. What interests you most about serving as Palm Desert's appointee to the Palm Springs International Airport Commission?
2. The Airport Commission considers issues that affect residents, visitors, regional mobility, and the airport's long-term operation. How would you approach that broader regional responsibility?
3. How would you balance Palm Desert's interests with the need to participate constructively in a regional body serving multiple communities?
4. What factors do you think are most important when considering airport-related matters that may affect access, service, community experience, or regional connectivity?
5. What would effective service look like to you in this appointment?