

To: Mayor Elicker and members of the Board of Alders
Re: Paul Bloom, Application to the City of New Haven Peace Commission
Dec. 11, 2024

Mr. Mayor and Alders:

It is with great delight that I am applying to be a member of the City of New Haven Peace Commission. I have been working on several projects with them for about 1 ½ years now, and have side-stepped formal application because I felt that my ongoing commitment to lead the New Haven Zen Center, as Abbot and Senior Dharma Teacher, was more than enough formal commitment to work with non-profits or city agencies. For information on the Zen Center— one of the four oldest Zen temples in the U.S.!! please see *Newhavenzen.org*). That said, I now realize that formal membership on the Commission will not tilt the scale in a negative direction but rather give me an appropriate voice in the Commission's activities.

Re my engagement to date: at one point I came to understand that the Commission was committed to renovating the West River Peace Garden to be a more visible site and to present the 30+ year recognition of New Haven as a Peace Messenger City designated by the U.N. As a trained architectural and interior design (please see resume also attached), this seemed like a wonderful way to unite two of my skills and passions: design development and working for peace and justice. Once I got to know the members of the Commission I also joined in developing a community discussion project following Hamas' attack of Israel and Israel's equally aggressive and ongoing attack on the population of Gaza.

I have been involved in ongoing peace and justice work most of my life, and have been a member of the New Haven Zen Center, Kwan Um School of Zen International, for almost 40 years. I look forward to talking with you about the possibility of becoming a formal member of the City of New Haven Peace Commission.

Respectfully—
Paul Bloom