

Date: October 30, 2020  
To: Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone  
From: Appointments Advisory Committee  
CC: Jennifer Mancia  
RE: Recommendation for Appointment to the Universal Design Commission (UDC)

The Somerville Appointments Advisory Committee (“AAC” or the “Committee”) recommends Tim Talun, Heidi Cron, and Kerri Connolly for appointment to the vacant positions on the Urban Design Commission (UDC).

The Committee was impressed with Tim Talun for his continued commitment to the City and willingness to serve the public good. As he is an architect, he demonstrated a depth of knowledge and sound judgement that made him stand out from other well-qualified applicants regarding the importance of our public realm. As there is a need to balance expiration dates for this relatively new commission, we recommend that Tim be appointed to the Full Member position that expires or is up for renewal in 2024.

The Committee was also pleased with our discussion with Heidi Cron. Her background includes design experience but from a different perspective that architecture or landscape design and has an open-minded viewpoint from working internationally. The Committee recommends that Heidi be appointed to the Full Member position with a term expiring in 2025.

With a background in journalism and urban planning, the AAC recommends Kerri Connolly to the Alternate Member position with a term expiring in 2024. Kerri is a pragmatic and patient collaborator who prides herself on talking through realities to find compromises which will be a significant strength for the design review process.

We had terrific conversations with all the candidates from this round of applicants and were genuinely awed by the qualifications. Please let us know if we can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,

## Charlotte Leis

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**From:** Kerri Connolly [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 6, 2020 11:39 PM  
**To:** COS-Website-Planning  
**Subject:** [For consideration] Resident position on UDC  
**Attachments:** Kerri Connolly CV.pdf

**Follow Up Flag:** Flag for follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Members of the commission,

I am writing today to ask you to consider me for a Resident position on the Urban Design Commission (UDC). I believe my unique history, academic background, and professional experience would be of value to the commission in fulfilling their mandate to the citizens of Somerville.

I was born and raised in Somerville. I grew up on Winslow Avenue in Ward 6, and am a product of the city's public school system. I attended primary school at the Brown and Kennedy schools, and graduated from Somerville High in 2002. I received my undergraduate degree in urban planning from the College of Art, Architecture and Planning at Cornell University, and have a Master's in Journalism from the University of California at Berkeley. I currently work at Google as a strategist for the Google News products.

I am interested in participating in the UDC for two primary reasons. First, I studied urban planning, as well as conservation, design, and architecture. And though I chose not to pursue urbanism as an academic or as a professional, I remain highly interested in these subjects and their practice in Somerville.

The second reason is even simpler: because I want to see useful, aesthetically pleasing public spaces enjoyed by citizens across this city.

Somerville is where I grew up, and, after many years living away, where I am a resident of once more. The development of Union Square, the impact of the GLX, Somerville High School's renovation, the improvements to the West Branch Library—all projects whose outcome I care deeply about. I grew up spending afternoons in the West Branch Library. My locker was on the fourth floor of the high school, in the wing next door to City Hall. I took the Red Line to soccer practice, and lived with my best friends in an apartment on Prospect Street, right by the bridge. This is my home, and I want to serve my community by helping to make sound, thoughtful decisions about infrastructure, developments, and green spaces where Somervillians live their lives.

I have many skills that would benefit the UDC. I am trained in design thinking: how to consider the generic interests of a majority of users alongside the specific concerns and experiences of smaller, but no less important, niche groups. And, yes, while the construction of a plaza and the building of a software app may result in very different final products, the processes and perspectives that go into producing them are the same: both require deep consideration of a user's (resident's) position, orientation, motivations, resources, and abilities. Both require critical thinking, but above all else, require empathy.

For these reasons among many, I believe my perspective would be of value to the UDC.

Thank you for your time, energy, and consideration. Please let me know if there is anything further I can provide that would be of use to the commission.

Best,  
Kerri Connolly



# Kerri Connolly

*Producer | Strategist | Reporter*

## Contact



## Education

### **University of California - Berkeley**

*Graduate School of Journalism - Berkeley, California*

Master of Journalism Multimedia Class of 2012

### **Cornell University**

*College of Art, Architecture, and Planning Ithaca, New York*

Bachelor of Science, Urban Planning, Class of 2006

## Current role

### **Google News—Cambridge, Massachusetts**

*Product Experience Strategist, Google News*

- Drive content strategy for cross-product Google News features, projects and collaborations
- Lead editorial efforts for key political, sports, and entertainment events across domestic and international markets
- Collaborate with Product, Eng, UX, and Marketing partners through project launches and landings
- Conduct quarterly industry research on areas of developmental interest or opportunity

## Previous roles

### **Adecco (for Google, Inc.)—Mountain View, California**

*Communications Writing Specialist (Contract)*

September 2013 - July 2015

- Managed the 1M follower Life at Google and Google student social media channel
- Designed and analyzed online hiring campaigns for internal partners
- Marketing content specialist and writer for Google Career site

### **Center for Investigative Reporting—Emeryville, California**

*Multimedia Associate Producer*

March 2012 - September 2013

- Produced multimedia-based public interest stories for Pulitzer Prize-finalist and MacArthur

award-winning news organization

- Collaborated on year-long investigation into criminal justice/human rights abuse at California's Pelican Bay State Prison
- Built interactive focused on the correspondence from inmates held in solitary confinement
- Researched and produced content for CIR investigations on environmental, human rights, criminal justice and homeland security projects
- Oversaw video and still assets catalogue
- Managed budgets for multimedia and web projects

### **Current TV, *The War Room*—San Francisco, California**

*Digital Associate Producer - The War Room with Jennifer Granholm*

June 2012 - June 2013

- Wrote and produced daily online content for US political and current events program
- Managed video, social, photo assets and daily blog
- Managed time-sensitive nightly digital workflow and ingest for live studio recording
- Produced live event broadcasts for US Presidential campaign debate and convention coverage

### **Motherboard/Vice Magazine**

*Science/Technology Contributor*

October 2012 - August 2013

- Developed, pitched and wrote stories for the daily science and technology news arm of Vice Media

### **Al Jazeera English, *The Stream*—Washington, D.C.**

*Digital News Production Intern*

May 2011 - July 2011

- Launched social media-centric broadcast program following the Arab Spring
- Reported and produced stories for a daily live international news television program
- Performed floor manager duties, edited, produced graphics, and provided technical support

### **NKP Media - Boston, Massachusetts**

*Associate Producer/Production Manager*

July 2009 - June 2010

- Produced video content for small and medium-sized businesses
- Produced educational content major publishing houses including Pearson, Wiley and Cengage
- Production managed multi-camera shoots, on-location and in-studio
- Edited projects in post-production as well as coordinated final project deliverables

### **Digital Media Academy at Harvard University—Cambridge, Massachusetts**

*Teaching Assistant*

June 2009

- Instructed Cambridge middle-school students on how-to's of shooting and editing digital media

### **42 Degrees North Films—Boston, Massachusetts**

*Assistant Producer/Production Coordinator*

October 2008 - May 2009

- Assistant edited and produced award-winning Alaskan Indian/First Peoples natural history film
- Production managed travel natural history program in partnership with Smithsonian Institute

## **Veriscope Pictures, *Solving the Dinosaur Code*—Boston, Massachusetts**

*Archival Researcher/Production Assistant*

October 2008

- Research and production coordinator for National Geographic one-off documentary

## **Discovery Channel/Original Media, *Storm Chasers***

*Production Assistant/Coordinator*

April 2008 – June 2008

- Provided camera and technical assistance to shooters and field producers during three-month-long production
- Logged daily tapes and performed footage research
- Managed travel booking, expense accounting and reconciliation for 30+ person crew
- Assisted with coordinating post-production needs at NYC-based production outfit

## **Roadside Entertainment—New York, New York**

*Production Coordinator*

September 2006 – April 2008

- Researched, pitched and developed one-off, series and event programs
- Lead project management and production coordination for fashion, cosmetic and design projects, as well as entertainment television projects for IFC, ABC, and ESPN
- Production assistant/coordinator for ESPY Awards, *NBA LIVE: Bring it Home*; IFC series *Framed*; and various pilot projects
- Worked closely with editors, graphics artists, animators, and producers to assemble packages, segments and episodes.

## Technical Skills

**UX/UI:** Adobe Photoshop, Sketch, Fireworks

**Video/Motion:** Premiere, FCP, AFX,

**CMS:** Drupal, Wordpress

**Analytics:** Google Analytics

## Organizations

### **Volunteer**

- Charles River Conservation Society, Water Quality Sampler
- National Map Corps Structural Mapping

### **Member**

- Online News Association
- Appalachian Mountain Club
- American Alpine Association
- MIT Outdoors Club