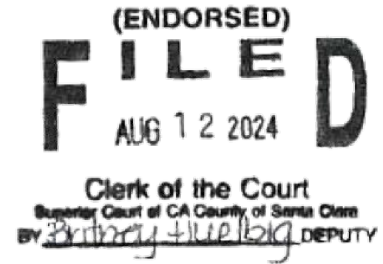


Ms. Britney Huelbig,  
Deputy Manager for the Civil Grand Jury  
Sending via email: CGJ@scscourt.org



**Reg:** Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05(f), the 2023-24 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury draft report, **Irreconcilable Differences: Santa Clara City Council. Response from Raj Chahal**

Dear Ms. Britney Huelbig,

Following is my response as requested to the items as per the report:

Findings: 1a, 1b, 1c, 2, 5

Response requested from myself for recommendations 1f, 2c, 5d

**Finding 1a**

The working relationships among Councilmembers and the Mayor are broken.

**Finding 1b**

Some Councilmembers do not adhere to the City's adopted ethical and behavioral standards while conducting City business on the dais.

**Finding 1c**

Councilmembers Becker and Park air petty grievances and engage in squabbles with other elected officials and constituents from the dais.

**Recommendation 1f**

Councilmember Chahal should attend one-on-one conflict resolution training to learn to work more effectively for the good of the City. This recommendation should be implemented by October 1, 2024.

**Response:**

At the outset, I would like to mention that no governing body is perfect, and neither is the governing body of the City of Santa Clara. The way in which this Grand Jury Report has been compiled does reflect cherry picking of facts and shows a lot of bias towards a few members of the council. This recommendation 1f is linked to the finding 1a,b,c - under the finding 1a, b, c there are two other recommendations 1g and 1h. Comparing the recommendations 1f, 1g, 1h clearly shows the bias towards myself.

I would like to point out (just as one example) that both Mayor Gillmor and Councilmember Watanabe accused Councilmember Hardy and me of taking gifts from 49ers when we went on an operational tour of the stadium during an NFL game. Making such serious and unsubstantiated accusations from dais during the council meetings is inappropriate decorum, for which both should be pointed out in this report too. These were false accusations, FPPC has cleared us of these accusations. Please see the attached FPPC letter clearing both Councilmember Hardy and me.

There have been multiple instances of provocations/accusations by Mayor Gillmor and Councilmember Watanabe about several councilmembers, these provocations/accusations are in no way related to the agenda item being discussed. I am surprised that none of these instances have been mentioned in the report, to be fair their behavior/conduct should also be highlighted. Councilmember Watanabe on multiple occasions unnecessarily interrupts other councilmembers when they are speaking. It is the collective responsibility of all seven of us to make this council work harmoniously.

Giving a free pass to Mayor Gillmor and Councilmember Watanabe by mentioning, “**Even though Mayor Gillmor has shown appropriate meeting decorum,.....**” is not justified at all. I strongly think recommendations 1b,1c,1d,1e, 1f, 1g, 1h should either be applied to every member of the council (including the mayor) in the same way, or these should not be applied to any member of the council. There should not be cherry picking comments for two members.

### **Finding 2**

Councilmembers Becker, Park, and Chahal do not understand and/or do not follow established parliamentary and meeting procedures.

### **Recommendation 2c**

Councilmember Chahal should pledge to attend trainings in parliamentary procedures, so he can demonstrate a better working knowledge of the parliamentary process. This recommendation should be implemented by October 1, 2024.

### **Response:**

Finding 2 and recommendation 2c is based on a 15 second video as per **Appendix 2, Item 15**. I strongly disagree with this finding about myself and also disagree with recommendation 2c. Please review the video, I am not challenging the Mayor’s authority, rather I was responding to the accusation she made. Correcting an accusation is not challenging Mayor’s authority but it is a democratic way to respond and correct an accusation.

My comments were less than 15 seconds and only a few seconds of comments were after the gavel was hit. Rather, in response to my 15-second comments Mayor could not justify her accusations/comments made about some council members (including me).

This allegation that I did not follow parliamentary process is unfounded, unjustified and arbitrary. Respect is two-way traffic – my colleagues should stop making false allegations against their colleagues to score political points

### **Finding 5**

Councilmembers Becker and Park have engaged in unethical behavior on the dais by insulting, humiliating, and intimidating constituents and volunteers. Councilmembers Becker and Hardy explicitly encourage this behavior by laughing, snickering, or eye-rolling. Councilmembers Becker, Park, Hardy, Jain, and Chahal implicitly encourage these behaviors by failing to call out inappropriate conduct.

### **Recommendation 5d**

Councilmember Chahal should pledge to train with an ethics expert from an established outside entity that specializes in government ethics. This recommendation should be implemented by October 1, 2024, and should occur annually.

### **Response:**

Again, this is another example of cherry picking the facts, I have never encouraged any unethical behavior on dais rather I have been subject to some false accusations by mayor and councilmember Watanabe, to me these are serious unethical behaviors and inappropriate conducts too which have not been pointed out in this report.

Lady Justice is a symbol of the judicial system that stands for the belief that courts and judicial system protect the rights of the people without consideration of other factors. She is often depicted as a blindfolded woman, holding scales and a sword, which represent impartiality, fairness, and the pursuit of justice. I expected the same impartiality and fairness in this grand jury report for the findings and recommendations which I think is missing.

Sincerely,

**Raj Chahal**

Councilmember D2  
City of Santa Clara



STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
FAIR POLITICAL PRACTICES COMMISSION  
1102 Q Street • Suite 3050 • Sacramento, CA 95811

April 22, 2024

Karen Hardy  
Via email: [khardy@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:khardy@santaclaraca.gov)

Raj Chahal  
Via email: [rchahal@santaclaraca.gov](mailto:rchahal@santaclaraca.gov)

**No Action Closure Letter re: FPPC No. 2022-00561; Karen Hardy and Raj Chahal**

Dear Karen Hardy and Raj Chahal:

The Enforcement Division of the Fair Political Practices Commission enforces the provisions of the Political Reform Act (the “Act”).<sup>1</sup> This letter is in response to a sworn complaint that alleged you violated the Act’s gift provisions by accepting a gift over the \$520 limit in the form of tickets to a San Francisco 49ers football game at Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara, CA.

After our investigation and review of the case, the Enforcement Division has found insufficient evidence that a violation occurred. The purpose of the visit to Levi’s Stadium was to better inform Hardy and Chahal in their role as Levi’s Stadium Authority Board Members to further their understanding of security operations, logistics, parking, and overall game day operations. No transportation was provided to them, they were accompanied by Levi’s Stadium staff during the entirety of the tour, and one bottle of water was given to each of them. Hardy and Chahal started the operational tour before the start of the NFL game and ended the tour post-game after observing the post-game sweep of the stadium area from both cleaning and safety perspectives. Therefore, we are closing this matter without further action.

Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at 916-322-5771 or [abreron@fppc.ca.gov](mailto:abreron@fppc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

*Angela J. Brereton*

Angela J. Brereton  
Assistant Chief  
Enforcement Division

Cc: Brian Doyle [REDACTED] (Sworn Complainant)

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<sup>1</sup> The Political Reform Act is contained in Government Code sections 81000 through 91014, and all statutory references are to this code. The regulations of the Fair Political Practices Commission are contained in sections 18104 through 18998 of Title 2 of the California Code of Regulations, and all regulatory references are to this source.