City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: ZaKiya Bell-Rogers Home Phone #: 8282163423

Street Address: 3 Parker Rd City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Helpmate Inc

Position: Community Engagement Specialist Office Phone # 828-254-2968

Resident of City of Asheville (required): ● Yes ☐ No

Registered Voter in the City of Asheville (required): ● Yes ☐ No

Race: Black Sex: female Age: 40

Residence location (check one) Central ____ North ____ South ● East ____ West ____

Additional Information Required:

1. Resume
2. ½ page response to the essay questions below: (not attached)

eSigned via SeamlessDocs.com
ZaKiya Bell-Rogers
Key: 695995faaf0d01d33d35162fad62a45f

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/13/2020

All applications and attachments must be
Returned by **Noon, Thursday, August 20**, 2020 to:

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk
PO Box 7148
Asheville, NC 28802
Email: mburleson@ashevillenc.gov
Phone: 828-259-5601

ZaKiya K. Bell-Rogers

3 Parker Rd | Asheville NC 28803 | 828-216-3423 | zkbrogers@gmail.com

Skills & Abilities

- The ability to work effectively with diverse populations and age groups
- Dependable, mature team leader and player
- The ability to learn quickly and willing to be trained
- The ability to assess situations clearly and with sound judgement

Experience

Foster Care Social Worker, BC Health and Human Services 3/15/05 – December 30, 2014

Asheville NC

- Assist families with developing case plans and coordinating services to help them become self-sufficient and reunite with their children
- Advocate for families with schools and other community partners, by effective communication both oral and written
- Assisted youth in foster care learn how to address their basic needs, manage funds and establish housing and education to become independent.
- Document progress and other information in court reports, and case notes

IPV Healthcare Project Manager, Helpmate INC May 2016 – September 2017

Asheville NC

- Trained local doctor offices to and surrounding shelters how to effectively screen for domestic violence in a health care setting
- Worked closely with primary care doctors/providers and Helpmate Inc. to ensure a positive experience for our clients
- Prepared monthly reports to the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Community Engagement Specialist , Helpmate INC October 2018 – present

Asheville NC

- Trained local agencies on how to address domestic violence within the agency
- Provide education to clients in the substance abuse treatment center
- Create and maintain women of color support group

Education

Western Carolina University – Cullowhee, NC – Bachelor of Science in Social Work

- December 2020

- Lenoir Ryhne University - Asheville NC current student

LEADERSHIP

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority INC Gamma Gamma Omega Chapter Asheville NC 17 years
- Former member of Building Bridges Board 2015-2018
- Current Board member of the YWCA Board
- Current Board member of the Different Strokes Performing Art Collective

The following questions may be answered directly on this form, or responses uploaded as attachments upon form submission.

1. **With the death of George Floyd the country was thrust into a new civil rights movement. Policing in America was scrutinized even more and even here locally reparations were passed. Please explain if you believe that systemic racism and oppression exist, if yes do you or do you not support reparations and what it all means in the context of equity and Inclusion.**

With the recent live murder of George Floyd, the world was force to confront the issues and trauma. People of color have been dealing with systematic racism, oppression and discrimination for centuries. The mainstream was able to be outraged and then look away. We can't look away any longer.
As a Black woman,I know what it is to be racially profiled and subjected to oppression and danger because I am Black. On March 25, 2001, I was a victim of a malicious 911 call by a white female. She reported that my father (who was Black) was at her home, brandishing a gun. I was there to pick up my younger sister, who the woman took without permission.
The police forcefully rushed into the home. I was on the floor with a gun in my face, terrified for my life. My older sister, who was six month pregnant, was able to calm the situation and provide details to the police.
I thought the terrifying afternoon was on it's way to coming to an end. The police then began to yell and scream at me to get off the floor. Their voices were angry and loud.
My body could not move;I had just been forced to the ground with a gun in my face and I was horror-stricken that this would end in bloodshed.
Every cell, muscle and organ in my body felt the shock of years of police brutality against people of color. It took me years to emotionally process this traumatic afternoon. The mental harm caused by a false call and the reaction of the police has impacted my emotional and physical well-being. But this is only one story in the world of millions. I know how lucky we are that that particular 911 call with those particular officers on that particular day call did not end in causality.

As we have learned, the voices of white people -whether right or wrong -are most often listened to first. Blacks have been the victims, over and over again of this injustice.
When we speak of reparations, people mostly think it's the government providing financial compensation to people who have been affected by slavery. I do believe in reparations for African Americans, as our people have never received them. This country was built on our backs without the opportunity to fully benefit from the "anyone can be anything" in the USA mentality.
After slavery, slave owners were giving Reparations and former slaves were given new rules and laws that continued to keep them in the cycle of oppression. Limiting access to resources and expecting African Americans to succeed on an unequal playing field continues to the present day. (redlining, predatory loans, prison system) The data is there, clear as

2. **Do you support Black Asheville Demands call for defunding the APD by 50%? If no, please explain why and if yes, what sort of timeline do you envision to reach that goal?**

This is a yes and a no question. I believe the police should be partially de-funded until they can revamp the organization to address these issues of systemic racism and abuse. You can not drastically reduce a budget without setting well thought out goals and objectives for the police department. I would like to see:
1.A group/committee of paid Community members that can review cases and police complaints from the community.
2. A system of accountable reporting needs to be created so that these reports are reviewed by this committee who will work close with the chief. There should be a multiple level review of these cases.
3.A curriculum has to be created that will address the history of policing in America, history of people of color in America, and the history of police brutality in our country.
4.Education in Psychology and Social work to understand mental health illness and disorders and an understanding of cultural differences within our community.
5. A thorough vetting system of police officers with a history of abusing Community members so they are not inadvertently put on our police squad.
6. Create actual plans to hold police accountable, that include our community, and their ask of the police.

3. **Explain why you want to serve on City Council.**

As a contributing member of the community, I feel a calling to serve. I want to make real change for people who are like me. I am an African American woman, a wife, mother, employee, tax payer, a product of the Asheville City school system, and a resident.
I know the feeling, the struggles, the highs and lows of living in Asheville. I understand the frustrations of needing change and knowing you have not been heard. I want to be a compassionate member, a strategic thinker and a consensus builder who works towards creating a better life now for our members in this Community.

4. **If selected, how do you plan to communicate and work with the other Council members? To help us understand, please give examples of your working collaboratively in the past.**

Communication is the hardest and most desired requirement for a relationship, and I have a natural way of putting people at ease. I am an open book, and comfortable in my own skin. I am proud of who I am and my contributions to our community. One does not have to guess how I am feeling or thinking. I pride myself on clear and respectful communication.

Within this Community, I hold many positions. I have been a foster care social worker. I currently work at Helpmate Inc as a Community Engagement Specialist. I also hold a part-time position as a driver for Avery's Memorial funeral home.

All of these positions are very sensitive and unique in their own setting. Each one deals with an individual's grief and loss. Whether it is loss of a child through the system, loss of a loved one through death or loss of a relationship and love through violence. They all require great care and compassion.

The greatest skills in positive communication are active listening and crisis management.
We usually listen to reply; I have learned to listen, obtain information, and respond to the needs of people who need immediate help. An example would be my current position at Helpmate Inc. I often take phone calls from people who are experiencing a crisis. I have to immediately communicate effectively to the person on the other end. I first establish a sense of trust with the caller, then a level of safety, a level of compassion, and then confidentiality and knowledge of the situation.

5. **What do you consider the most pressing problem, need, or cause for the citizens of Asheville today? How would you approach its resolution or champion the cause?**

Our community is filled with seen and unseen struggles that hinders our families' growth and ability to advance within the system. Many of our families struggle with stable and safe housing, due to lack of resources; financial, education and housing options.

If it is possible, I would like to revamp the housing process, to assist families with being able to live and thrive in their homes.

1.Leases for rent could be set very low when they enter housing and the payments could remain low for five years.
2. Free credit, tax and education classes could be provided to help educate the families on financial growth. A direct connection with a financial institution, like Self Help Credit Union, could assist with helping families get accounts established.
3. Review with families yearly about their progress while living in housing. Set achievable goals and a timeline that can be reasonably achieved.
4. Housing should be a temporary fix to hard solutions. Not a permanent situation for generations.
4.a) Assist multi-generation families end- the- cycle by assisting the building economic growth.
5. Open Section 8 and recruit actual renters to list their properties, so that our families could have access to them.

The financial stress of not making a living wage has continued to plague our city. It's evident by increasing rates of homelessness and evictions.The minimum wage has not increased in decades, however the cost of living continues to grow. It would cost a single person $15 an hour to barely make it in Asheville.
As our city continues to build hotels to sustain the necessary tourist economy, the wages for those hotel employees do not reflect the demand for pricey hotel accommodations. The revenue brought in by the millions of tourists each year simply doesn't trickle down to the essential workers who keep hotels staffed, cleaned, and running.
An authentic conversation should occur between the hotel owners and the council to address the issues at hand. Many of the individuals who work in the hotels can't afford the same rooms they clean. The cost of rooms double or triple during our leaf season and the majority of the staff does not see this great increase of revenue. Many have to take a bus to work, have trouble paying their bills, and require government assistance.

Multiple restaurants do not pay a living wage, and we have to be able to address these issues. Families deserve to live with dignity and having the minimum. the essentials. Many service providers work multiple jobs; no one should work 60 hours a week, only need assistance at the end of the month.