City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: William E. Greene ("Willie") Home Phone #: 828-274-7323

Street Address: 123 Far Horizons Lane City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Retired Attorney

Position: Retired Attorney Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: White Sex: Male Age: 94

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
William E. Greene
Key: 995995faaf6d01d33d35162fadd2ad0f

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/16/2020

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

WILLIAM E. GREENE
Attorney at Law

123 Far Horizons Lane
Asheville, NC 28803

Tel (828) 274-7323
wmegreene@aol.com

Asheville resident since 1951

> Attorney at law, retired
> Chairman, Asheville Area Council on Human Relations
> President, 28th Judicial Bar Association
> President, Asheville Junior Chamber of Commerce
> Mediator, Superior Courts of North Carolina
> Arbitrator, American Arbitration Association
> Guide, Asheville Urban Trail
> Member, Central United Methodist Church since 1952
> Lay Delegate, 2008 General Conference United Methodist Church
> World War II Army Air Corps veteran
> With wife, of over 70 years, raised 3 children who all graduated from Asheville Public Schools

Conflict resolution philosophy:

"Human problems can be resolved by the voluntary cooperation and agreement of the humans involved; such method of problem solving is better than passing laws and filing lawsuits."

From my letter to the Editor of the Asheville Citizen-Times years ago

Attorney at Law, Asheville, N.C.: 1951 – 1992

Practiced civil law as a member of a firm & individually for wide range of long-term clients with emphasis on conflict avoidance, amicable settlements & litigation as a last resort.

Career Highlights:

> Representation for construction of Landmark Hotel (now The Renaissance)
> Representation for The Better Business Bureau of Asheville
> Pro bono work for disadvantaged individuals

Asheville Area Council on Human Relations: 1962 - 1966
Chairman June 1963 – Jun 1966

Led multi-racial group of civic leaders that coordinated with local business owners, the NAACP and the Asheville Student Committee on Racial Equality to peacefully integrate Asheville restaurants, hotels, motels, theaters, recreational facilities and institutions of higher education.

Community Service:

Urban Trail Guide; President PTAs; Little League Coach: Jaycee youth projects 1953-1981

World War II Veteran, US Army Air Corps: Oct 1943 – Nov 1945

35 combat missions in B-29s over Japan from Saipan; Distinguished Fly Cross; Air Medal with 4 clusters; Asian-Pacific Theater ribbon with 2 battle stars; WW II Victory medal; Good Conduct medal. On the way home, turned 20 years old.

Education: University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, NC: BA 1949; JD 1951

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.**

In the 1960's, Asheville came together to overcome the racist, oppressive system of the time—the legacy of the Jim Crow laws—to fully integrate our city. The situation today is much improved, as evidenced by the make-up of the Asheville City Council.

Now, as then, our responsibility is to make sure the playing field is level such that everyone with the desire to climb the ladder can be successful. While I do not believe systemic racism and oppression still exists, the goals set out in the "Resolution Supporting Community Reparations For Black Asheville"-- building generational wealth, boosting economic mobility, increasing minority ownership of homes and businesses, and closing gaps in health care, education, and employment—are worthy of Asheville City Council's leadership. What worked in the 1960's to overcome our problems with racism—listening, understanding, finding common ground—should work well in achieving the goals of the Resolution.

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?**

No indeed! A specific, 50% reduction to the Asheville Police Department budget as called for by Black Asheville Demands would potentially cause at least 3 significant issues:

A) A drastic reduction in our present level of security,
B) Placing insufficiently trained social workers in violent or life-threatening situations, and
C) Many future lawsuits and an incalculable liability Asheville.

The Police Department's budget should be driven by what we ask that organization to do in keeping Asheville a livable city. The APD should lead in enforcing our laws and in situations that could become violent. The APD budget should have sufficient funds for recruiting strong candidates and for the most effective training to manage difficult situations peacefully. While the APD may be currently tasked with responsibilities that could be handled by others, we must not put those other people in harm's way. Also, it is likely that any changes in responsibility for the APD would need to be negotiated, requiring someone with experience in conflict resolution and restructuring agreements.

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

Asheville depends heavily on tourists and the dollars they bring. Having Asheville on the nightly news showing peaceful demonstrations devolving into riots does not bode well for tourism. I want to serve on the Asheville City Council because I doubt our residents, business owners and employers want this type of publicity, or the potential economic malaise it could bring. However, without ACC leadership this could easily happen.

Ruben Daily (Asheville's first African American City Councilman), myself and the rest of the Asheville Area Council for Human Relations helped Asheville overcome the civil rights issues of the day. Our success was based on open, honest communication and as Chairman of that committee, my function was to bring all sides together to develop workable solutions for the betterment of Asheville.

Although Asheville has grown in size, diversity, and national stature, the current issues are not too different from the past. While today's problems will require today's solutions, getting to those solutions will require the same skills of listening, working with multiple constituencies, and finding common ground that we used on the Council for Human Relations, and that I used throughout my legal career, as a Mediator for the Superior Courts of NC, and as an Arbitrator with the American Arbitration Association. This experience makes me well qualified to work with and guide the Asheville City Council along the path to a better place that our citizens are proud of and visitors enjoy.

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.**

In a letter to the Asheville Citizen-Times, I commented "Human problems can be resolved by the voluntary cooperation and agreement of the humans involved". Solving complex, potentially contentious problems with other City Council representatives will require:

A) Listening (which is much more critical than talking),
B) Understanding all parties' definition of a problem, and gaining agreement on "what is the problem",
C) Within existing open meeting requirements, finding a way to have private, face-to-face conversations to determine what people want and what others are willing to do, and
D) Helping all sides talk it out and find a solution themselves.

As Chairman of the Asheville Area Council on Human Relations, I used all of these principles while working closely with other AACHR members, the NAACP, the Asheville Student Committee on Racial Equality, the mayor, and business and community leaders to peacefully integrate the restaurants, hotels, theaters, and higher education institutions of Asheville.

As a Mediator for the Superior Courts, facilitating a successful resolution required working with the parties separately and together to find common ground through listening, suggesting solutions, and even cajoling when needed.

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?**

Like the rest of the country, Asheville now suffers from a lack of civility and respect for others' opinions, work, property, and even dreams. Overcoming these obstacles will take listening, discussing, and ultimately reaching a mutually acceptable solution for all parties.

Asheville could honor two of its African American trailblazers who embodied hard work, civility, and respect with prominently placed monuments celebrating Ruben J. Daily, Asheville's first African American city councilman, and District Court Judge Robert L. Harrell. Also, Asheville could honor its historic leading citizens with plaques on present monuments standing downtown.