City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Tracey Ann Jacobson Home Phone #: 202-321-9547

Street Address: 405 Reservoir Road City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Independent Consultant for Defense and State Departments

Position: Senior Mentor/Senior Subject Matter Expert Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: White Sex: Female Age: 55

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
Tracey Ann Jacobson
Key: 99d995faaf5d01d33d35162fad62ad3f

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/06/2020

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

TRACEY ANN JACOBSON

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Three-time U.S. Ambassador and senior staff to National Security Advisor and Secretary of State with the rank of Career Minister (3-Star General equivalent). Skilled in developing and leading diverse teams to achieve positive outcomes in challenging situations. Experienced in promoting U.S. interests in democracy and good government, sustainable development, and rule of law. Expertise in multi-sector stakeholder engagement, bilateral and multilateral diplomatic negotiations, organizational leadership, professional development and public speaking.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Freelance Senior Subject Matter Expert on Interagency and Foreign Policy Issues
2018-Present

- As a Senior Mentor for the Department of Defense's military exercises, develops overarching scenarios, storylines, and training materials to maximize achievement of training objectives at the strategic and tactical level.
- Served as Senior Mentor for the Foreign Service Institute's Ambassadorial Seminar for new Ambassadors.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Acting Assistant Secretary/Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Bureau of International Organization Affairs, Washington, DC 2015-2017

- Led a Bureau of over 300 employees at headquarters and six overseas missions in advancing U.S. interests through multilateral diplomacy at the United Nations and other organizations.
- Coached cross-cutting teams in implementing two Presidential Summits which increased international capacity in UN Peacekeeping by 40,000 troops and refugee funding by 30%.

U.S. Ambassador to Kosovo, Pristina, Kosovo 2012-2015

- Facilitated the Agreement on Normalization between Kosovo and Serbia 15 years after the war.
- Convinced political leaders to conduct the first truly free and fair elections since independence and provided training and tools to government agencies, civil society and media to ensure implementation.
- Supervised a $75 million assistance portfolio including governance, economic development, and education.

Deputy Director/Dean of the School of Professional and Area Studies, Foreign Service Institute, Arlington, VA
2009-2012

- Co-chaired and mentored courses for over 1000 new Senior Executives and Foreign Affairs Officers.
- Dramatically increased leadership/supervisory training in the classroom, online, and in the field, and created new courses in promoting human rights and religious freedom.
- Introduced industry-standard course evaluation programs across FSI's six schools to ensure effective implementation of a $64 million training budget.

U.S. Ambassador to Tajikistan, Dushanbe, Tajikistan 2006-2009

- Persuaded the government to play a positive role in the efforts to stabilize Afghanistan through joint training for security services and improved trade and transportation links.
- Addressed a humanitarian crisis through increasing U.S. assistance and building consensus among the host

government, diplomatic missions, and development organizations.

U.S. Ambassador to Turkmenistan, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 2003-2006

- Convinced the president of one of the world's most repressive regimes to change restrictive laws on freedom of movement and religion.
- Expanded the government's cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense, better securing the borders with Iran and Afghanistan against trafficking and terrorism.
- Brokered trade and investment agreements and conducted successful commercial diplomacy resulting in improved sales and market access for U.S. companies.

Previous Assignments 1989-2003

- **Deputy Chief of Mission,** U.S. Embassy Riga, Latvia 2000-2003
- **Deputy Executive Secretary,** National Security Council, Washington, DC 1998-2000
- **Management Officer,** U.S. Embassy Nassau, Bahamas 1997-1998
- **Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Management,** Washington, DC 1996-1997
- **Post Management Officer,** Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, Washington, DC 1994-1996
- **Russia Analyst,** Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Washington, DC 1993-1994
- **General Services Officer,** U.S. Embassy Moscow, Russia 1991-1993
- **Vice Consul/Management Officer,** U.S. Embassy Seoul, South Korea 1989-1991

EDUCATION AND ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS

Education: M.A., Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, 1988; B.A., Johns Hopkins University, 1987

Awards: Presidential Meritorious Service Awards (2011, 2018), Rugova Medal for Peace, Democracy and Humanism (Kosovo), numerous Department of State Superior and Meritorious Honor Awards, Legion of Merit from the State of Michigan

Languages: Professional engagement in Russian, Albanian, and Tajiki; earlier study of French, Spanish, and Korean

Security Clearance: Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information

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.**

Racism remains an existential threat to the democracy and long-term stability of our nation. The fact that everyone now has a camera in their pocket means that even previously complacent people have to face what people of color have known all their lives: we have not overcome the inequalities present during the founding and building of our nation, and racism precludes access to equal justice, education, employment, and prosperity — all the elements of the American dream. The police brutality that led to Mr. Floyd's death affects people of color disproportionately, but this is not just a police problem. The biases and unfounded fears some Americans carry have led to murders of people of color beyond those committed by the police — murders that are sometimes not even investigated or prosecuted until there is a public outcry. This must change. And while there is rightly much focus on combatting both intended and unconscious bias, especially in the structures of law enforcement, governance, and the economy, we must also as a society build empathy and a sense of community based on mutual assistance and respect. This doesn't happen through goodwill alone, but rather requires legal, financial and structural incentives that bring people together. I applaud the City Council's written commitment to making racial equity and inclusion a founding principle of every policy and decision at every stage of development.

I am encouraged by the City Council's approval of reparations, which must begin to make right the generational losses faced by the African American community in terms of home ownership, business ownership, education, and access to the levers of power. Those who call this a "handout" are as wrong as they are offensive. Only when we confront the racism that still exists, for example, in hiring, access to credit, and justice, and repair the deep damage done to the wealth of the Black community through the injustices of "urban renewal", redlining, and other racist policies whose impacts are still very much in effect, can we all move forward as a society. Wouldn't it be wonderful if in addition to being known as a spectacular center of culture and world-class natural beauty, Asheville gained a reputation as a national leader in racial justice?

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?**

I am in favor of a comprehensive re-imagination of how the city provides safety and security for its citizens and visitors. When your main tool is a hammer, every problem looks like a nail — this is the problem with having armed law enforcement and policing as the first, and sometimes only resource, to deal with problems of addiction, mental illness, homelessness, domestic violence, and petty crime growing out of poverty. I am not in favor of an arbitrary deadline or percentage reduction in the budget of the Asheville Police Department. I would rather see a process with broad community participation which identifies the issues that the APD deals with that would be better handled by other social service organizations and a simultaneous transfer of both funding and function to those organizations which have the expertise and attitude to make all community members, including those suffering from the problems I mentioned above, safer and more secure. We should not be funding the police (especially for military style tactical equipment and training or for staff growth) at the expense of mental health services, addiction counseling, family advocacy, poverty reduction, and affordable housing initiatives. There has to be a better balance. I understand that many in the community are frustrated, and quick initiatives to trust and proof of concept would be welcome (I do support the Council's recent decision to limit budget approval to three months).

Problems of police brutality and overreach — and we've certainly had them here — must be dealt with immediately, transparently and effectively. Police structure and procedure must be overhauled to weed out the culture of complicity and "brotherhood of silence" which causes mistrust among the populations the police are meant to serve. But I don't see "defunding" as some kind of punishment. Rather it is a recognition of the reality that police are not the organization best equipped through training, mission, or mentality to deal with some of the safety and security problems in our society.

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

I am applying for the City Council for two main reasons. First, I want to put the skills in strategic planning, change management, negotiation, communication and effective stewardship of resources I developed during a three-decade government career to work for Asheville. In a way, leading an embassy as a U.S. Ambassador is similar to managing a town. For example, I led teams of stakeholders in building consensus around our key strategic goals and tactics, and figured out how to best use limited resources to achieve them. These goals included improving governance, supporting the development of civil society when it was under threat, training and protecting independent journalists, and building country capacity in health, education, and security. My embassies also worked extensively on economic development, including identifying and support diverse, sustainable livelihoods in agriculture and other businesses. I ensured taxpayers got their money's worth by careful oversight of the contracting process, strong management controls, attentive performance monitoring, and an insistence on absolute integrity from all members of the team. I had overall responsibility for the health and safety of the embassy community, including family members, and was able to build out better medical support for our teams as well as more equitable housing programs. And I successfully negotiated with some tricky individuals (including a dictator!) to achieve better outcomes for the United States and local people alike.

Second, I am extremely enthusiastic about joining a team that is gaining national attention for innovation on racial equity and justice. I have strong feelings about this topic as you can see from my other answers, and I also recognize that there are community members who feel differently to me. I believe that my negotiating and persuasive communications skills can help build bridges between people with different viewpoints to build consensus on improving inclusion and equity. On a personal note, I will share that I came to Asheville for a week's vacation in August 2017, listening to the news of the White Supremacist rally and vicious attacks on counter-protestors in Charlottesville all the way from Washington, DC. I spent that evening on Pack Square listening to demonstrators who argued, "this is not who we are." When I returned home a week later I resigned from my 30-year career and moved here a few months later. And now I would like to work on behalf of the cause and the place that changed my life.

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.**

I would communicate and work collaboratively, energetically, and most importantly — with humility. I have served as a senior official in both the State Department and the White House, but I would be new to local government and therefore an eager listener to and student of those with more experience. This would of course including Council Members but also city workers at all levels, community interest groups, businesspeople, activists, and ordinary citizens like me.

One of my passions is breaking through stovepipes to improve outcomes. When I was Ambassador to Tajikistan, I won a State Department award and additional funding for my post for introducing a new model of collaborative strategic planning, in which team members from different backgrounds, representing different departments and agencies with their own mandates and priorities, came together to decide on our overall goals and developed cross-cutting tactics to achieve them. The State Department's Inspector General judged that during my time at the Foreign Service Institute, I had done more to improve the coordination and performance of the Institute's six schools than any leader in the past decade.

My experience has taught me that achieving complex aims such as improving governance and empowering the vulnerable requires constant engagement with a broad complex of stakeholders in government, civil society, education, media, business and beyond — and that our engagement has to be crafted to respond to the needs and preferences of the people with whom we communicate. I am comfortable working in small meetings, large groups, and with the media, and as COVID continues, I am getting some good experience with online platforms.

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?**

Achieving racial equity and inclusion, as well as a new approach to public safety, are priority issues I've discussed in other questions.

Asheville needs to develop a more diversified economic base which is both sufficiently resilient to survive challenges like a pandemic, and also better able to provide living wages to residents. We've seen what happens when we put most of our eggs in the basket of tourism, and while the sector provides jobs and incomes, a disproportionate focus on visitors can disadvantages residents in terms of access to affordable housing and jobs that pay more than a minimum wage. In a recent study, Asheville came in 8th of all mid-size towns in America for the number of hours the average resident has to work per week to afford a one-bedroom apartment. This is not a statistic to make us proud. We need to develop incentives to attract more technology and manufacturing businesses that pay better wages, and adapt education at the community college and high school level to give residents the skills they need to be successful at these jobs. The cities that will be most successful in coming decades are those that support entrepreneurship and attract investment in the sustainable industries of the future such as sustainable energy (to this end I congratulate the panel on the solar energy installation at public facilities announced recently.) Business incentives should prioritize companies that have a plan for creating jobs that pay a living wage. We also need to scrupulously examine residential development proposals and the short term rental market to ensure they do not price local residents out of adequate housing.

I wouldn't take on this job with too many preconceived notions of exactly how things should be done. My expertise and enthusiasm is built around bringing diverse groups of stakeholders together, establishing ways of working and communicating the promote collaboration, confidence, and mutual understanding and respect, and moving forward as a community. The process of figuring out the way forward can itself be a force for building trust and accountability if it is open, transparent, and accessible.