City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Pratik Bhakta Home Phone #: 8286762033

Street Address: 2006 Viburnum Lane City: Asheville Zip Code: 28803

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Self

Position: Managing Member Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: Asian Indian Sex: Male Age: 48

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
Pratik H. Bhakta
Key: 995995faaf6d01d33d35162fadd2ad3f

Applicant Signature
Date: 08/19/2020

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

Pratik H. Bhakta
2006 Viburnum Lane
Asheville, NC 28806
phbhakta@yahoo.com
LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/pub/pratik-h-bhakta-cho/34/9a4/9aa

DOB/Age: December 5, 1971 – Navsari, Gujarat, INDIA

Education:

B.S. Electrical Engineering (1994)
North Carolina State University – Raleigh, NC
High School Diploma (1990)
Enka High School – Enka, NC

Professional Experience:

DAYS INN Franchise Advisory Committee (FAC)

- Nationally elected position, voted by franchisees at large
- 2007 to 2012

AAHOA Board of Directors (North Carolina Regional Director)

-2012 to 2016
- Plan Town Halls for our area members
- Plan budgets, attract vendor participation and sponsorships
- Discuss with members and potential members, the benefits of membership
- Engage membership on key issues facing the hospitality industries
- Participate in industry events & board meetings
- Lobby politicians on legislative issues impacting the hospitality industry
- Nationally Elected position
- 2012 to Present
- Serving on the Strategic Planning Committee
- Serving on the By-Laws & Governance Committee
- Served on the Membership Committee

AAHOA Regional Ambassador of Western North Carolina

- Regionally appointed position under the Regional Director
- 2007 to 2012, 2017-2019
- Served on Franchise & Industry Relations Committee
- Served on PR & Communications Committee
- Served on/Chair Membership Committee

North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association (NCRLA)

-Board member 2016

DAYS INN – Asheville, NC (owned 1995-2019)

Managing Member

Oversee Management as the Managing Member of the Days Inn North in Asheville, NC.

- Plan annual budgets
- Delegate Managerial decisions
- Capital improvements analysis
- Professional development of staff
- Maintenance
- Industry advocacy
- Growth opportunities
- Development

RAMADA – Asheville, NC (owned 2012-2018)

Owner

Oversee Management of the Hotel

- Capital Improvement Budgets
- Maintenance
- Budget Analysis
- Procurement
- Revenue Management

Misc:

N.C. Real Estate Broker License – 2003-2005
Buncombe County (NC) Board of Adjustments 2017-Present
India Cultural Association of Western North Carolina (VP) 2019
Council of Independent Business Owners

Pratik Bhakta's Bio:

Pratik Bhakta exudes passion for the hospitality/small business industry and also volunteering. He has been actively involved in several acquisitions, operations, and liquidation of real estate and managing assets. He continues to oversee operations and management for several properties while focusing on development and core growth strategies. Networking in the industry is paramount to success, and Pratik has great ties to industry leaders, owners, and operators.

Prior to becoming actively involved in the industry, Pratik earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from North Carolina State University in 1994. He earned his NC real estate broker's license in 2004. In 2007, he decided to become more engaged in the hospitality industry and subsequently was elected to the Days Inn Franchise Advisory Committee as a Board of Director. His leadership was recognized as he was later elected to the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA, the largest hotel owner's association in the world) Board of Directors as the North Carolina

Regional Director. His leadership role has helped him network and more effectively communicate with industry leaders and professionals. His volunteer time at AAHOA has helped the hotel industry at all levels, including legislative priorities, charitable contributions, and member involvement and community relations. In addition to being a lifetime AAHOA member, he is also a proud member of the North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (NCRLA) and Council of Independent Business Owners (CIBO). Since January 2017, Pratik has served on the Asheville Board of Adjustments and later in 2019 appointed to the board of CIBO (Council of Independent Business Owners)

Family values are at the heart of Pratik's motivation. He enjoys spending time with his family and likes to travel with his wife, son, daughter and mother whenever possible. He has volunteered and coached his son's baseball, football, and basketball activities, while encouraging them to achieve and do their best!

Pratik has served on the Asheville Board of Adjustments for the past 3 years. He has also been a resident of Asheville/Buncombe County for 35+ years.

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.**

As an immigrant who came to this country with nothing except our clothes and the hopes of make a better life through hard work, education and achievement, I feel some folks do not know what TRUE oppression is until one visits a country where people will NEVER have the chances that America continues to give everyday through freedom of choice. I came from a country where caste system means, that person will NEVER have the opportunity to better themselves socially or economically. Traveling over Christmas break, 8 months ago, with my wife and 2 children ages 15, and 19 (at the time), we continued to see what TRUE oppression is while realizing we were fortunate to have seized the opportunities that American freedom and choice has given us. The opportunities that every American has access to vs. 80% of the world population is incredible. Is it a wonder why foreigners (of all races, religion and color) want to immigrate to America? Is it because they see systemic oppression or the opportunity to succeed where they cannot in their own country?

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?**

First and foremost, if you think Black Asheville or the citizens of Asheville demand defunding the APD, why not go with a referendum to see what those same voters truly feel? When the whole demographic of the citizens of city of Asheville's needs are not addressed to cater to a vocal minority of people, priorities and funding are often misplaced. If you honestly feel that reduction of the APD would decrease crime, that is a false equivalent to similar to assessing that less teachers in the classroom would increase educational success. You cannot solve crime, by reducing the safety of the people who do not commit them.

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

Lets not kid ourselves. My chances of getting "picked" are less than nil. Its not about choosing the right candidate, its about choosing the person that will be the "yes man" to the narrative. If you want a fiscally responsible individual who can help with figuring out ways to fund the city's finances, with the programs and investments in the community, through business experience, I fit that category. However, I can sense you have already stereotyped me in various forms of which you continue to preach of equity and inclusion, but not the least of which are insinuated as important such as, immigrant, Indian-American, 35 years resident rooted in the Asheville Area. Similar to how the TDA appointment went, I know this is just a formality to ensure the idea of an "fair and equal" process.

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.**

Thats a big IF. IF selected, I will always do my best for the community as a whole and not just the vocal minority, but the overall population. That means working with the fellow council members and uniting divided groups to collaborate on initiatives to ALWAYS help the community. It means help others understand different perspectives, while EQUALLY listening to their respective concerns. I've done that in the business my family I run, in the community organizations(s) and city board I serve, and also the volunteer associations I've served on. Its a cliche, but its always a TEAM effort.

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?**

The biggest issue we face today is an issues that affects 100% of the Asheville residents. Clean Water. We need to fix the crumbling water system to ensure we have clean water for ALL of the residents. I'm in favor of going more green over a period of time to be more energy independent, thereby reducing costs and providing better services, including transit for the residents. Are there opportunities to foster relationships with TPDF funding to acquire some of those funds? Quite possibly, but not with the animosity shown towards an industry that employs 27000 jobs (before the Covid19) in Buncombe County. "If you want to achieve something you've never had, you must be willing to do something you've never done."