City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Monisha Mills Home Phone #: 4042267821

Street Address: 43 Emmett Lane City: Asheville Zip Code: 28806

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Self-employed

Position: Owner 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: 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
Monisha Devi Mills
Key: 995995faaf6d01d33d35162fadd2ad0f

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

monisha **mills**

43 Emmett Lane • Asheville, NC • 28806
MOBILE (404) 226-7821 • **E-MAIL** monishamills@hotmail.com

OVERVIEW

Senior Marketing & Product Executive with 15+ years experience specializing in establishing and executing sophisticated programs while maximizing efficiency and output. Particularly adept at translating aspirations into reality through the development of high performance teams, disciplined program management and technology enablement.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Retreat Within, LLC, Asheville, NC — 2017– Present

OWNER

Owner and property manager of 4 short term vacation rental properties in the Western north Carolina region.

Trader Interactive, Norfolk, VA — 2018 – 2020

CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER

For this leader in digital marketplaces and digital marketing services for the powersports, commercial and recreational vehicle industries, responsible for the design, strategy and execution of all B2B & B2C Marketing programs including brand identity and advertising, content creation, demand generation, public relations, SEO & SEM and responsible for customer marketing services delivery for lifestyle vehicle marketplaces Cycle Trader, RV Trader, ATV Trader, PWC Trader, Snowmobile Trader, Aero Trader, as well as commercial equipment segments Commercial Truck Trader and Equipment Trader. Led the successful implementation of a centralized marketing department and acquisition of NextTruck, Rock & Dirt, Trade-A-Plane and Tradequip. Reported to the CEO for this portfolio company of Goldman Sachs and Eurazeo.

- Directed over a dozen brands driving over 10 million unique visitors monthly under the Trader Interactive umbrella, including
- Overhauled customer journeys and executed enhanced marketing drip campaigns equating to an overall increase of email engagement by 33% in the first year, and 520% increase in unique visitors to our marketplaces. Generated 2.8 Million consumer leads for our B2B customers
- Established and implemented the first strategic demand generation practice that led to a YoY increase of total B2B leads by 46.97% in a down market. Marketing leads generated annualized revenue of $3.1 million, of which $2.3 million was from new prospects in 2019
- Broke records repeatedly in traffic for every domain in my tenure, with an annual unique visitor of over 108 Million and 61% increase YoY in number one rankings in Google and double digit growth in 2020, while dropping cost per lead on social by 384% while increasing social media traffic to marketplaces an average of 109% YoY
- Created the first lead- generating public relations strategy which provided more media placements than the entire corporation had ever received - 173 Million impressions in 2019 alone. Led to media placements with key industry publications, but also Forbes, Yahoo Finance, CNN, MSN Money & USA Today

Monisha Mills, Inc., Atlanta, GA & Asheville, NC
2011 – Present

OWNER / PRESIDENT

Provide consultative marketing and product services around new customer acquisition and retention, brand activations and go-to-market strategies to increase clients' revenue and market share.

COMCAST CORPORATION, CONSULTANT *(through CMG Partners, Inc.), Philadelphia, PA* — ***2014 –2017***

Business VoiceEdge™ *(Comcast Business)*

Strategic Program Leader for hosted, cloud-based VoIP solution for this Fortune 50, focused on identifying, developing and implementing strategies for expanding sales distribution, creating order and provisioning process efficiencies, and increasing customer satisfaction. Simultaneously manage and monitor over 30 initiatives across

the Comcast Business Services organization and create collaboration throughout the organization. Reported to the VP of Product Management & Strategy.

- Drive high collaboration between the entire voice organization, including, product engineering, product management, deployment, customer education, marketing, service delivery and service assurance which have led to increased early life customer loyalty (NPS) by 26 points in 9 months
- Manage the cohesive implementation of simultaneous go to market product launches which include traditional and digital marketing, sales activation and enablement, internal and external education and customer communications. Provided competitive intelligence, mystery shopping and analysis of the VoIP space to help drive 2016 & 2017 pricing strategies and best practices
- Involved in all aspects of the product lifecycle process from inception and/or engineering design to customer retention and responsible for identifying and resolving risks and issues
- Lead for driving the evolution and improvements of the customer/user experience through implementing a customer education methodology and streamlining and creating consistency across all potential customer touchpoints *(offline and online)*
- Lead on special projects, including eliminating at least 2 weeks off the development lifecycle through the creation of standardized and more simplified product requirement templates for the entire B2B product portfolio (Data, Voice, Video and customer portals and applications)

Comcast, Time Warner Cable Merger & Charter Communications Transactions
Chief of Staff for the VP of Product Management for Comcast Business Services and overall Transaction Program Manager for Marketing & Product Management (Data, Voice & Video) for the 4 transactions surrounding the $45 Billion Time Warner Cable (TWC) acquisition. Drove deliverables and managed 6 product and marketing leads across 4 Business Services work streams, SMB Product, Mid-Market Product, Hospitality/Verticals and Marketing.

- Direct liaison for B2B Product & Marketing departments to Charter Communications, TWC and Comcast leadership, regional divisions, Transaction Program Management Office, Integration Management office (IMO) and cross-functional departments to create and implement the Transaction Service Agreements and Operational Transition Support Playbook
- Accelerated alignment on transaction documents with Charter & TWC and facilitated working sessions with their executives and IMO organization to ensure proper and timely dissemination of data
- Defined the systems product criticality scale and worked with Systems/IT to define, validate and prioritize system requirements and project charters to create the TWC B4B media and product launch roadmaps

ZAPPOS.COM, CONSULTANT *(through Celerity Solutions, Inc.), Las Vegas, NV* ***2011 – 2012***
Brought onto ground-breaking online $1 Billion shoe retailer, Zappos.com, a subsidiary of Amazon.com, to create a strategic marketing roadmap to drive corporate growth strategies and prioritize technology initiatives with brand and direct marketing channels including Email Marketing, Display Advertising, Affiliates Program, Brand Partnerships, Comparison Shopping Engines (CSE), Paid and Organic Search Optimization.

- Driver in the implementation, testing and training of eCommerce customer segmentation tools and provided strategic guidance to establish more sophisticated progressive profiling to drive new customer acquisitions and increase profit margins
- Aided in establishing marketing business intelligence logic, including lead qualification and customer acquisition and attribution model, for custom centralized marketing system to enable end users to accelerate market response time and create better ROI transparency
- Product Manager for custom corporate analytics application responsible for gathering detailed requirements and feature requests from business groups, head of data governance and validation, and increasing user adoption and awareness of marketing and analytics applications; Marketing chair and SME for the technical integration task force

SEEBURGER, INC., Atlanta, GA **2004 – 2011**
VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING *(hired as Marketing Manager in 2004 and promoted three times)*
Oversaw all North American marketing initiatives and priorities for a global provider of business-to-business integration, EDI, RFID, EAI and Procure-to-Pay solutions, headquartered in Germany with 19 international

subsidiaries in 50 countries and over 8,000 customers. Reported to the SVP of Sales & Business Development for Europe, North Americas and Asia Pacific.

- Led and managed all aspects of integrated marketing efforts, including telemarketing, public relations, lead generation, customer care, and direct mail and online event and product marketing
- Responsible for planning of multi-year, multi-million dollar budgets that led to increased North American sales revenue on average of 80% per year and increased the average deal size revenue by over 500%
- Collaborated with German-based corporate marketing team to establish branding, style guidelines and related templates, process guidelines and overall corporate procedures and responsible for recruiting, hiring and motivating internal marketing and telemarketing staff as well as managing external vendors
- Drove all direct and digital demand generation programs, including a webcast that generated approximately $5 Million in revenue over 18 months with a $20,000 investment
- Spearheaded development of marketing collateral, including white papers, webinars, case studies, press releases, award submissions, presentations, analyst briefings, web pages, micro-sites, welcome kits, lead generation campaigns and telemarketing scripts for both domestic and global use
- Implemented customer retention and marketing program, with first-ever customer segmentation list to cross-sell services and products which accelerated North American revenue by 10% in the first year and elevated customer satisfaction to 99%
- Administrator of CRM, marketing automation tools, and .com website

ADDITIONAL WORK EXPERIENCE

Certified 200-hour Yoga Teacher, KRIPALU, 2014
Marketing Director, HEAL OUR WARRIORS FOUNDATION, Frankfort, MI, 2007
Marketing Manager, CAMP FIRE USA GEORGIA COUNCIL, Atlanta, GA, 2003-2004
Consultant, Asset Management Team, Homeland Security SASR Project, LOCKHEED MARTIN (through CARDINAL TECHNOLOGIES, INC.), Bethesda, MD 2002 – 2003

EDUCATION

Meredith College, Raleigh, NC
B.S. in International Business, Minor in French, *2000*
(Graduated in 3 years while working part-time)

Úniversite Catholique de l'Ouest, Angers, France
Semester Abroad: Centre International d'Études Francaise, 1999

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.**

I do believe systemic racism and oppression exists in America today.
According to the January 2020 Department of Housing and Urban Development report from January 2020, although black people make up only 13% of the population in the US, they represent almost 50% of the homelessness population. Only 3.3% of executives or senior leaders are black in 2018 and only 4 of the Fortune 500 today have black CEO's, according to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

Financial institutions implemented policies and procedures that would rule out predominantly black neighborhoods due to "high risk" investments – redlining.

The Federal Reserve's 2016 Consumer Survey showed the net worth of a typical white family being $171,000, and a Black family being $17,150 – almost 10 times greater. From an income gap, per the US Census Bureau, in 1967 the black income as a percent of white income was 59% and in 2017 it is only moved to 62%, and overall about 42% lower income.

It is hard to deny the facts. Let alone the stories from friends and colleagues reality of growing up and being taught around the age of 12 how to engage with the police, and yet white parents often don't even consider having to have the conversation. And when a black male is pulled over, they are often asked to remove themselves from the vehicle, whereas, a white male is less likely to be asked such.
I do support reparations from government, and I believe that the opportunities that are provided and supportive social programs needed to help shift and uplift the under-served. And, I feel cautious about segregating social programs to only one race as I think that could create deeper systemic issues and potentially backfire. However, I think focusing on the communities that represent the largest populations, would then help support the endeavors, like the Shiloh community. However, I do believe there could be education grants that are dedicated to black students.

I believe reparations should come through social programs and think a micro-lending program, like Kiva had amazing results in uplifting communities and fostering more education. I do not believe in just providing grants or loans, but providing programs like Maricopa County's SmartStart that helps employees transitions to entrepreneurs and their Boot

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 would need more information to make that decision – like what does the police need for operations, is that loss outweighed by gain? What would be the impact to our communities? What would it be replaced by? Unfortunately, the Black Asheville Demands site just calls for the divestment, but does not provide any details to explore their stance further. Thus not providing confidence that this was a number based on what could be eliminated and what it could be replaced with. I do think we need to focus more on crime prevention, like mental health, homelessness and education issues.

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

I never had aspirations of being in politics, however, I felt compelled to serve when I saw the notice in the Citizen-Times. The nation is at a very interesting time, and if I want change I have to be willing to be part of it. One of my closest friends is a leader in the Fulton County government in Georgia. I have seen what his experience in the private sector has parlayed to in terms of value for the county and feel I could bring a lot of value and insight from my experiences, but also provide a different point of view. As someone who was raised in Western North Carolina - I went to the bulk of elementary in Fairview, middle school and high school at A.C. Reynolds (where I was dual enrolled at AB Tech my senior year) and spent a semester of my high school at Asheville High. I spent my first semester of college at UNCA - and has come back, I have a deeper appreciation for the nature and beauty that surrounds this town, and want to ensure we preserve the magical essence of this town, but also help shape it's future.

Having served in incredibly demanding and time-consuming roles in my past, often which included significant amounts of travel, I would not have been equipped to have successfully taken on a role in my community. However, after leaving the last organization, and focusing on my local business, I do have more time to invest in my community and now more than ever.

This city helped shape who I am as an individual, and I feel like I am a success story of Asheville – I graduated college in 3 years, became a VP before the age of 30, entered the C-Suite before the age of 40, have worked for Fortune 50 companies and start-ups alike. I am coming back to Asheville with more information and knowledge than ever, more understanding of the outside world and how incredible Asheville is as a city. I wish to pay forward what I received from this city.

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.**

If selected, in addition to council meetings, I plan to meet with each member individually, their time permitting, to understand them not only as council members but as citizens and individuals. I find that each individual has a different communication style and love language and want to seek out the best way in which to communicate with each individual.

Communication is key in any setting. I seek to learn and understand where someone's opinion or point of view is coming from and often help create a bridge to help foster better communication between parties with differing ideas. Although I have most recently come from leadership positions, I treat everyone with respect and equality, regardless of role. I have been told I am transparent in my communications within a team environment. I do not have a hidden agenda, and will use data, factual information or case studies, if available, to help make or support a decision an/or quell what could become issues or frustrations.

I also think it will be important to get to know and be available to employees of the city as a whole. I would make myself available as an advisor to help solve any challenges that the city may be facing and provide recommendations where desired.

I will want to understand where I can best be of value and if there are ongoing or upcoming projects that I can jump into and support immediately, and also recognize that I come with a learning curve and will need guidance of the council.

Example of collaboration:
In my role at Trader Interactive, I was brought into an organization that had 4 marketing groups within 4 different departments. I centralized those individuals, combining almost 30 people, into one team leaving 4 executives without direct purview of the marketing function. That left me to ensure that I collaborated with my peers, embedded myself in the communication channels with product and sales to ensure timely dissemination of information for successful go to market launches and understand how to solve challenges through customer communications, education and the like to ensure we were driving revenue. Even within the marketing department, I had to ensure the proper communication and cohesion amongst groups. In order to create a piece of collateral, it was created in Content, mocked up by Design, put on the website by Demand Generation, sent to sales via Sales Operations. Due to issues encountered in the beginning of lack of visibility on timing and accountability, I set up an agile-like methodology and instilled the weekly sprint methodology to ensure proper timing and accountability of the team, which lead to increased efficiency and output in addition to higher

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?**

What I often hear is the pressing problem in Asheville today is affordable housing, but what I perceive to actually be the issue is the lack of well-paying jobs, especially to meet the rising housing market.

I think COVID-19 is also a pressing issue of the moment, and not knowing what will happen and how we will bounce back. I have already seen multiple small businesses close their doors forever, predominantly in the hospitality and leisure industry.

A significant amount of the Asheville community works in and is dependent on the hospitality industry, I believe it has even surpassed the healthcare industry which dominated in 2015. However, hospitality is a very fickle industry dependent upon the economy and with COVID-19, what will be the long term impact of the hotel investments that were made? According to the Asheville Visitors and Conventions bureau, there are 18,000 jobs in Buncombe County related to tourism, 15% of the employment in the county. According to Zip Recruiter, the average hospitality industry annual salary in Asheville NC is $53,145 as of August 12, 2020 - 7% less than the industry average and provide less room for advancement. While according to Glassdoor, the healthcare industry in Asheville, NC average annual salary is $55,947 – 15% below the national average. Manufacturing is also prevalent, but again, lesser salaries. And all those salaries are factoring in the top paid individuals. I would like to take out the top 5-10% and bottom 5-10% for a more realistic representation. But per MIT's Living Wage Calculator, a family of 4 requires $63,522 in income before taxes. Thus assuming that both parents, on average in Asheville, would need to work assuming a 2 parent home. According to the Asheville Chamber of Commerce Cost of Living Calculator, it would cost $1, 675 more for an individual living in Charlotte to relocate to Asheville, NC. Housing costs are 15.72% more healthcare 12.07%, transportation 11.71% and utilities will cost 2.91% more.

I understand that tourism is a great industry and every $1 invested in tourism equates to $43 in spending at local businesses according to the Asheville Chamber of Commerce, but is there opportunity to increase that ratio?

I believe providing more momentum and attention to the creation of business incubators or entrepreneur centers would help support our local infrastructure, but also support and grow businesses over time, and tie into the potential reparations. By providing an incubator, typically there is specific criteria and goals to achieve, but also gains attention from investment firms that can then lead to larger facilities and greater investment in the Asheville area. I have already been speaking to venture capitalists about this area and convinced him to buy a house here.

I would look to foster more opportunities to provide science or technology incubators, make Asheville more attractive to venture capitalists, and look at opportunities to foster more programs with local colleges like AB Tech and UNCA or medical incubators with Mission hospital. Are there other large organizations who would like to create innovation centers? There is a very large professional market that lives in Asheville, and Asheville is a place that people wish to be. In a time where people cannot always compete on money, companies could be more