City of Asheville
City Council Vacancy Application Form

Your name: Andrew Fletcher Home Phone #: 828-348-4672

Street Address: 136 Clingman Ave. City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing Address (if different): _____

Employer: Currently disemployed due to the pandemic.

Position: _____ Office Phone # _____

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

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

Race: White Sex: M Age: 37

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)

Applicant Signature
Date: 20 August 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

Andrew J. Fletcher

136 Clingman Ave. Asheville, NC 28801
828.348.4672 | hey@andrewjfletcher.com

Objective

I seek appointment to Asheville City Council to fill the recent vacancy.

Qualifications

I have years of experience as a community organizer, activist, board member, and volunteer, as well as professional experience in multiple segments of Asheville's largest industry, tourism.

Education

2007 – 2009 Associate of Arts, Asheville-Buncombe Technical College
Graduated May, 2009

2009 – 2012, 2020- University of North Carolina at Asheville
Coursework focus in Economics, History

Work & Employment

November 1999 – January 2008 Production Asst./IT Manager, Tryon Daily Bulletin, Tryon, N.C.
In this dual-role, I worked in the production department designing advertisements and was responsible for maintaining the computer systems for the entire office which included 17 networked computers, two servers and handled all technology maintenance, troubleshooting and acquisition. I also administered an 3Com NBX 100 internal VOIP phone system. My duties were very broad because it was a small office that required flexibility on a deadline, and I was often given extra projects because of my ability to accomplish tasks in-house using limited resources. After my term of employment, I was hired as an consultant to maintain systems for several years after 2008.

January 2008 – August 2009 Digital Media Director, The Sensible City, Asheville, N.C.
At this boutique marketing and PR firm, I generated, promoted and maintained web resources, including multimedia, social media, blogs, and more. I created internal and external print and other design collateral. Supported general office technology needs including maintenance, acquisition and setup of all computers and electronics.

January 2014 – July 2014 Ananda Hair Studio, Front Desk Reception, IT Support
In a job best described as "Hair Traffic Control" I coordinated multiple locations, dozens of stylists, and also managed IT resources.

November 2016 – Present LaZoom Tours, Band & Beer Tour Guide
I conduct 40 person tours to breweries on a purple bus featuring a band, using a combination of audio production, customer service, and master of ceremony skills.

Andrew J. Fletcher

136 Clingman Ave. Asheville, NC 28801
828.348.4672 | hey@andrewjfletcher.com

Work & Employment, cont.

February 2009 – Present Music Professional, Self-Employed

The most challenging and rewarding job I've ever had, requring daily adaptive learning and implementation of a wide range of skills including event production, promotion materials design, web design, social media marketing, public relations, scheduling and logistics, contract negotation, sales - not to mention performances specializing in early 20th century American genres.

Civic & Volunteer

2016 – Present	Commissioner, City of Asheville Public Art and Cultural Commission
2016 – 2017	Chair/Spokesperson, Haywood Page Advisory Comittee
2017 – Present	Board Member, Asheville Music Professionals
2018 – Present	Vice-Chair, City of Asheville Downtown Commission
	Chair, Public Space Management Subcommitee
2019 – Present	Board Member, Nina Simone Project, Tryon, NC

References

Ian Bryan, former supervisor at Sensible City
ian@ianbryan.com 828.348.0319

Pam McNeil, former supervisor at Tryon Daily Bulletin
p111nc@gmail.com 864.580.5609

Jeff Byrd, former editor and publisher of Tryon Daily Bulletin
jeffbyrd55@me.com 828.817.0012

Jen Lauzon, current owner/manager of LaZoom Tours
jen@lazoomtours.com 828.279.2728

Andrew Fletcher Council Vacancy Application Questions 20 August, 2020

1. Systemic racism and oppression absolutely exist. As a white person it does not affect my bodily safety and it is not my lived experience, but it is something that my eyes have seen and that weighs heavily on my heart. I see daily examples of racism across the country and here at home in Asheville, and I consider it my duty to do what I can to bring what abilities and resources I have to ensuring that opportunity and dignity are never denied because of the color of one's skin. I want the content of my character to see my neighbors' complaints of police harassment and other issues not as problems to be ignored or silenced, but as messengers to a truth that I believe. This requires an active stance by those with power, not merely a passive acceptance of this fact. More and more people are realizing that no has equality until all of us have equality. I stand in solidarity and trust with our African-American community and will defer to their wise leadership as needed.
2. Absolutely. The dream of public safety solely through guns and badges may be dead, but it still is a zombie stalking our streets. It's time to wake up. Long before the George Floyd protests I have witnessed the gross inefficiency of the police to perform the many tasks that they have been given. While much of the blame has been cast on the police themselves and much of it is backed up by the reputation that law enforcement has created for themselves, I find fault in the elected officials that have chosen funding of police over almost all other public safety tools. The combination of moral cowardice and political calculation that keeping white property safe is more likely to win election than keeping black bodies safe must end. The damage that police do to communities of color must end. What defunding the police means to me: an immediate hiring freeze with reductions through attrition (already happening - we don't have to refill those positions), with immediate 1-to-1 funding shifts away from law enforcement to social programs with proven outcomes like increasing ownership in communities suffering decades of bureaucratic and police oppression. Saying this can be done in a single budget cycle doesn't respect the scope of the problem or the solution, and will probably take 2-4 years but there will be a lot of milestones along the way that can prove that our leaders are serious, and lots of opportunities that the community can help with if we trust them - not outside, ex-police consultants. It's not just morally correct, it makes fiscal sense to not waste tax dollars on an inefficient bureaucracy that it isn't able to provide the public safety it is tasked with, and claims to, provide.

3. When the need arises and help is sought, I think of the prophet Isaiah who said "Send me, O Lord." This is an innate drive to public service that goes back to my youth, and through the values I was raised with. I have found many ways to express that drive in service to Asheville already. As an activist and community organizer in public space management, busking, zoning, and in my professional career I have seen the disconnection between power and people many, many times. Power is structurally designed to be held by those who already have it, and that is a paradigm that I'd like break whether through me or with me. When we have problems in working class communities, we can't look to people who haven't experienced those problems to work with the same passion, vigor and understanding of someone with direct experience of those problems. I believe that my perspective could do much good. As a council member that has worked in the trenches of tourism, that has volunteered on boards and commissions in the bowels of city hall, and a working-class citizen of a city that I love that doesn't always love me back, I would have the courage to speak up when Asheville is doing wrong us wrong, and I would like to see those qualities in whomever is appointed or elected. In addition, because democracy is important and the people's voice should be heard - if appointed, I pledge to serve honorably as caretaker of the duties of a Council member until the November election, and then step down in favor of the election's fourth-place finisher to be appointed by City Council. The people will speak - will we hear them?
4. My role as Chair and Spokesperson of the Haywood Page Advisory Committee is probably the best example I can give you of how I work to achieve a lasting, unified results from a body divided by deep initial differences. I'll take some credit for that result, because I know the trust I had to build to get people who were reluctant to trust each other to see that maximal positions wouldn't generate results for anyone. Lots of one on one coffees and lunches and phone calls, full of honest communication and straight talk about what is the best outcome we can work together for. In my work as now Vice-Chair of the Downtown Committee I continue that approach in my work with city staff, the public and other commissioners in honest, productive ways. I would bring those skills to council with a recognition that as one of seven, the best deal I can imagine isn't the best deal I can get passed. But I'll still come to the table and work together with you all in a straightforward way that I hope you as well as the public will find refreshing.
5. Picking the "most pressing problem" is like picking a favorite child - it does a disservice to the rest, and it denies our ability to multi-task our love, attention and effort, which is a crucial skill for a council member. However, the uniting

factor that brings together many of the problems that I see is OG Asheville - The Opportunity Gap. This is multi-faceted. There is the opportunity gap for African-American youth in city schools, driven by an unelected and unaccountable school board at its helm. There is the opportunity gap for people that can't earn enough money working in low-wage jobs because we haven't invested in industries and infrastructure for anything better. There's the opportunity gap expressed in a bus service that is less reliable than a 30 year old Honda. Criminalizing normal teenage behavior for black residents while wagging a finger at white residents creates an opportunity gap when those kids go to get an education or a job. Having dozens of white-owned hemp businesses while there are many, many black Asheville citizens in jail on marijuana charges is an opportunity gap. Decade after decade, policy after policy, our city has taken away rungs from the American ladder, and in my lifetime the whole dream has collapsed. We must reverse this trend and ensure that opportunity is present in the lives and decision making of everyone regardless of class, color, or connection. When council has celebrated success for some, they have often ignored that it brings problems to others. For instance, choosing to underfund enforcement on the many illegal short term rentals transfers opportunity to those who own multiple homes from those who struggle to pay rent with multiple jobs. Without asking bigger questions about who benefits and who hurts from decisions (and decisions avoided!) at the council dais and what tools we are using to achieve those ends, we're just going to keep digging a bigger hole for our citizens and the next council to deal with.