

# BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Application Form

## APPLICANTS ARE STRONGLY URGED TO ATTEND SEVERAL MEETINGS OF A BOARD PRIOR TO APPLYING AND/OR APPOINTMENT TO A BOARD

Name of board or commission(s): City Council Seat

Your name: Cecil Bothwell Home Phone #: 828-713-8840

Street address: 54 Fulton St City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing address (if different): \_\_\_\_\_

Employer: self

Your position: owner Office Phone #: 828-713-8840

Resident of City Asheville County Buncombe Race irrelevant \* Sex irrelevant \* Age irrelevant

Are you a United States Citizen (circle one)? Yes

Residence location (check one): Central X North \_\_\_\_\_ South \_\_\_\_\_ East \_\_\_\_\_ West \_\_\_\_\_

How did you become aware of the opening? Webpage Current Volunteer eNews

Government Channel Newspaper Radio Organization Agenda X Other

Please indicate the area(s) of expertise that you can bring to the above board(s), and then in detail list education, experience reasons for your interest, and other factors that support your interest in serving (use additional sheets if necessary).

Expertise: Legal X Technical Fundraising X Community Contacts

Business Management (Financial) X Business Management (Operational) X Public Speaking

I believe that every citizen owes it to the community to step up and serve the public good, in accord with his or her abilities and interest. It is the only way to take back the government from career politicians who are more interested in personal power and wealth than in the common good. (And in saying this, I do not mean to impugn the motives of most sitting council members.)

Return to: Signature: Cecil Bothwell

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk

Post Office Box 7148 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148 E-Mail: cecil@braveulysses.com

E-Mail: mburleson@ashevillenc.gov

Telephone: 259-5601 Fax #: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax #: 259-5499

- This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.
- BUT IT PUTS THE CITY IN THE POSITION OF DECIDING WHAT CONSTITUTES A MEANINGFUL CROSS SECTION. ABSENT UNAMBIGUOUS GUIDELINES, THIS RENDERERS THE DECISION MAKING ENTIRELY SUBJECTIVE.

Cecil Bothwell -- a resumé

I'm 58 years old, an award winning writer and editor with a solid history in alternative energy and sustainable systems, experience in radio and TV, a painter and photographer, an experienced event organizer, fairly adept Web designer, musician and print publisher. (See links at the bottom of this resume, or Google me.)

I lived off the grid for 21 years, designed and maintained my own electrical and gravity-fed-water systems, worked for the Environmental Leadership Center at Warren Wilson College, created that college's environmental journal Heartstone as well as doing successful grant writing, was a green builder for 25 years and worked with a solar energy contractor during part of that time. My five books and syndicated columns include extensive writing on alternative and sustainable systems, with my latest title specifically aimed at that arena. I have lectured frequently on environmental issues before community groups, schools and annually at the Southern Energy and Environment Expo.

2008, published:

*Pure Bunkum: Reporting on the life and crimes of Buncombe County Sheriff Bobby Lee Medford* (Brave Ulysses.books, 2008)  
*Garden My Heart: Organic strategies for backyard sustainability* (Brave Ulysses Books, 2008)

2008, opened Asheville Art Sake, (<http://ashevilleartsake.com>) a gallery featuring my paintings along with those of Alex Cury and Gwen Freeman.

2008, ran for Buncombe County Board of Commissioners on a platform of shifting development money to creation of a sustainable community, and reframing the water system maintenance funding to encourage conservation (came in 5th with 16,600 votes.)

2007, published critically acclaimed biography:  
*The Prince of War: Billy Graham's Crusade for a Wholly Christian Empire* (Brave Ulysses Books, 2007)

2006, won regional talk radio contest,  
880 The Revolution/Jones Radio Network

2005, published best-selling guide:  
*Finding Your Way in Asheville* (Brave Ulysses Books, 2005)

2004, principal organizer Meetups for Howard Dean in Asheville.

2004-present, co-founded the Progressive Project, a national get-out-the-vote organization now operating in 5 states.

2003 - present, weekly radio  
music/commentary/interview show WPVM  
<http://archive.wpvm.org/baestream.m3u>

2003, originated and produced Asheville's Rolling Thunder Downhome Democracy Tour event

2002, Western North Carolina campaign director for Cynthia Brown's race for U.S. Senate. She came in 4th statewide, 2nd in my region.

2002, principal organizer "Support Our Soldiers, Bring Them Home" rally in Asheville, drew upward of 1,000 people. <http://www.mountainx.com/news/2003/0319rallies.php>

2002 - 2007, Editorial Board, Association of Alternative Newsweeklies

2002 - 2007, Garden Editor, investigative reporter, *Mountain Xpress*, Asheville

2003 - 2007, Senior Staff Writer, *Mountain Xpress*, Asheville

2004- National award for investigative reporting, Association of Alternative Newsweeklies

2002-2008, deliver annual seminar on alternative energy/alternative living at annual SEEXPO ("Living complexly so others can simply live," etc.) See second listing here:  
<http://www.seeexpo.com/schedule/descriptions.htm>

2002-2004, Managing Editor, *Mountain Xpress*

2003, Green Eyeshade award—humorous commentary  
Society of Professional Journalists

2001, published *The Icarus Glitch: Another Duck Soup Reader*, essays with strong emphasis on sustainability issues.

2000, published *Gorillas in the Myth: A Duck Soup Reader*, essays with strong emphasis on sustainability issues.

1998 - present, Editorial Board, *Heartstone* environmental journal

1998 - 2001, worked for Environmental Leadership Center of Warren Wilson College. Work included:

- Founding editor, *Heartstone*, Warren Wilson College environmental journal (I remain on the advisory board.)
- Grant writing
- Writer, *Time for the Earth*, daily radio spots recorded by Jane Goodall and William Least-Heat Moon.
- Speech writing for the Executive Director, John Huie

1997, Green Eyeshade award—criticism  
Society of Professional Journalists

1993 - 2003, Nationally syndicated print and radio commentary:  
*Duck Soup—Essays on the Submerging Culture* <http://www.alternet.org/story/310/>

1993, winner Southeast Poetry Slam

1988 - 2002, freelance investigative journalist and critic

1979 - 2001, lived off the grid in a self-designed green home, photovoltaic, gravity fed rain water system, passive solar

1976 - present, green builder — this partly overlaps my writing career, and I set aside the building work for several years as my writing life took off. Am now doing some building projects again to make ends meet. Installing replacement windows and insulation in a 1920 home, for example.

<http://bothwellsblog.wordpress.com>

<http://braveulysses.com>

<http://ashevilleparc.com>

<http://ashevilleartsake.com>

References (please feel free to contact any of these people, I have worked with all of them in one capacity or another):

Frank Adams, founder and former Executive Director, Southern Appalachian Coalition for Cooperative Ownership  
[ftadams1@charter.net](mailto:ftadams1@charter.net)

Donna Clark, Pack Square Conservancy (former colleague at Warren Wilson College)  
[dclark@packsquarepark.org](mailto:dclark@packsquarepark.org)

Ned Doyle, founder and Executive Director, Southern Energy and Environment Expo (his team did stage and facilities management for the Hightower event I created at the Civic Center in 2003).  
[info@seeexpo.com](mailto:info@seeexpo.com)

Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, guiding light of The Progressive Project, now at Harvard Divinity School  
[jbeachferrara@gmail.com](mailto:jbeachferrara@gmail.com)

Bryan Freeborn, former City Council member, now with Top Floor Studio  
[freeborn@freebornasheville.com](mailto:freeborn@freebornasheville.com)

David Gantt, Buncombe County Commissioner (candidate for Chair)  
[david@davidgantt.com](mailto:david@davidgantt.com)

John Huie, founder and former Executive Director, Environmental Leadership Center of Warren Wilson College, former Executive Director, Outward Bound

John@JohnHuie.com

Holly Jones, Director Asheville YWCA, Asheville City Council member, candidate for Buncombe County board of Commissioners  
hollyj@buncombe.main.nc.us

John Mac Kah, instructor, Fine Arts League of Asheville  
rkah@earthlink.net

Brian Sarzynski, former colleague at Mountain Xpress, now with 6;14 Films  
bsarzynski@gmail.com

## Cecil Bothwell: Application for Asheville City Council Seat

### 1. What motivates you to apply for this position?

•I believe that every citizen owes it to the community to step up and serve the public good, in accord with his or her abilities and interest. It is the only way to take back the government from career politicians who are more interested in personal power and wealth than in the common good. I was initially very reluctant to apply for the Council seat, but have been urged to do so by numerous friends and supporters and have been convinced to overcome that reluctance.

As I explained during my campaign for the Buncombe County Commission last spring, it appears to me that we are in for some very rough sledding in the near to mid-term future. I believe that the confluence of the bankruptcy of this country created by Bush administration spending, the end of the petroleum era and global climate change will combine to beggar the U.S.

Our entire way of life is built on cheap and plentiful fossil fuels. We tend to frame that as a transportation issue but it is far more profound than that. Most of our food supply qualifies as petrochemical, in that we use vast amounts of natural gas to create nitrogen fertilizers, fuel tractors and then fuel transport of food. Our cars may be converted to electricity, but what about the asphalt roads? There is no affordable alternative to that petroleum product (Portland cement is energy-intensive). The range of industrial applications of petroleum is beyond easy categorization, and the impact of scarcity is incalculable. Our economy is broadly dependent on cheap fuel as well, with many major manufacturers now relocated overseas.

Why do I mention all that in relation to city government?

The cities and regions who prepare for the coming storm will be far better off than those which do not. We need to steer Asheville and Buncombe County toward zero-growth in resource use, and then toward reduction of that use. We obviously cannot limit population growth absent some serious family planning on an international scale, but we can enact policies that reduce our collective impact.

### 2. Where do you fall on the conservative-liberal spectrum in terms of fiscal and social policy?

•I am a fiscal conservative and a social liberal.

### 3. In your eyes, what should be the top 2 or 3 priorities our City Council should be focused on in the upcoming year and why?

•We should immediately rescind city participation in the Biltmore parking deck. There is no good argument for more parking downtown. If there is demand, private businesses will build it. Car parking downtown is not an enterprise that should be supported by any urban government given the upcoming energy and financial collapse.

•Revamp development rules to emphasize smaller, more efficient housing units. Building permits should be cheaper for homes under 1200 square feet and much more expensive, on a sliding scale, for larger units. (Similar rules should apply to multi-family buildings.) Gold LEED (or similarly strict standards) structures could be accorded steep discounts. We should accord stronger tax benefits to preserving farm land (not that there is a lot of that within the city), and more actively encourage preservation through conservation trusts. Local food is going to become more and more critical.

•Negotiate a new approach to water use with Buncombe County. Our current rate structure is insane because it forces the Water Authority to sell more water. Both governments should subsidize infrastructure costs, and then revamp the rates to encourage conservation. We could set the current average household use as the benchmark. Water consumption below that level should be substantially cheaper, use above that level should be more expensive. This benchmark could be gradually reduced over time as conservation habits take hold. (This can be designed to be revenue neutral, balancing necessary tax increases with rate reductions.)

We pretended that Asheville was not much affected by the current drought, but there were places on the French Broad River below Asheville where you could cross without getting your feet wet this past summer. We are starving the river because we aren't releasing enough water. This lends the illusion of "enough" because we externalize the cost to the ecosystem.

•All city employees should work four day weeks. We could revamp work schedules to make city government a seven day operation instead of five as well, and possibly 24-7. (This is to save money on office space, transportation, parking.)

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4. What do you consider the most crucial problem, need, or cause for the citizens of Asheville? How would you approach its resolution or champion the cause?

We need to prepare for a post-tourism economy. We should stop advertising Asheville as a desirable destination and start building a community that works for the current residents. (The brand is well enough established that we can count on plenty of tourists during the transition.) To the extent that we still depend on tourism, we should do everything we can to preserve the attractiveness of the walkable downtown. (This means no Fraga projects. No Ellington. .... hmm, what to do with the BB&T? What's scrap iron worth these days? Or can we mount solar panels on the entire south-facing surface?)

NO APPROVAL OF NEW BIG PROJECTS DOWNTOWN PENDING ADOPTION OF THE MASTER PLAN.

More critically, we need to build a green economy. Here's one idea:

The city could contract with a solar energy company to supply all of its electricity. (I mean, the power for government operations, not for all users.) Instead of putting up \$16 million for a parking deck, we should spend \$8 million for a solar farm (we can even contract with FLS, a local company which is building one in Canton.) Perhaps on the old Buncombe landfill – I hear the county will lease that for \$1 per year for energy projects. Take Asheville off the grid, so to speak. (As a practical matter, this would mean that the city would subsidize the plant, sell the power to Progress Energy and then buy it back at the meters on the city buildings. But, coupled with continued conservation efforts – yes, the Council has made some good progress, hurray! - the city could actually make money on the project.)

5. 2008-09 and 2009-10 fiscal years will be financially tough for the City. What will be your top funding priorities and what would you like to see reduced to balance the budget?

Somebody is dreaming. I feel sure that the 2010-2016 budgets will be at least as tough.

### To do.

Create a conservation corps to perform free energy audits of all homes and businesses. This team should install free water heater blankets on each home audited, as appropriate.

Create a revolving loan program for energy retrofits on homes and businesses with payback via a tax surcharge. This will pass along the "green mortgage" to subsequent owners of the properties.

Every Council member should volunteer as a tutor for city students and encourage participation by city employees, then use that example to urge residents to do the same. We can eliminate drop-outs one student at a time.

Restore funding for art/music education in city schools.

Council members should be required to use alternative transportation for all official city business. If Council members don't walk, take the bus or ride a bike, why should citizens?

### To cut.

Cut funding for drug enforcement to reduce police/jail/court costs. After a century-long war on drugs we have proven it does not work. We can't change state and federal law, but we can quit pretending that we are having any effect at the local level.

Cancel the appeal of the water rate law suit immediately.

Cut funding for advertising Asheville (try to divert the room/dining tax to green energy projects ... tough fight, I know. But how much advertising would we need if we became a solar-powered city?)

Cut the city work force through attrition.

Cut operations costs by reducing office use. Encourage telecommuting for employees whose jobs will work that way. Lease unused office space to private firms where possible.

Use "smart" scheduling to reduce city vehicle use (for example: building inspections should be scheduled to minimize driving between stops, covering a sector of the city each day instead of first-come-first served)

Turn down the thermostats in all city buildings in winter, up in summer.

Eliminate funding in excess of revenue for Bele Chere and other city festivals.

Find a private/non-profit entity to take over the film festival.

Dump the deck on Biltmore and look at the feasibility of selling current city decks to private operators.