

City of Asheville
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): Asheville City Council

Your name: Kelly Miller Home Phone #: (828)252-7271

Street address: 89 N. Liberty Street City: Asheville Zip Code: 28801

Mailing address (if different): _____

Employer: Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce

Your position: Executive VP – AACC; Executive Director – Conv. & Vis. Bureau Office Phone #: (828)258-6104

Resident of City Yes – 9 years County Yes – 9 years Race Caucasian * Sex Male * Age 51 *

Are you a United States Citizen (circle one)? Yes or No

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

How did you become aware of the opening? _____ Webpage _____ Current Volunteer _____ eNews _____
_____ Government Channel X Newspaper _____ Radio _____ Organization _____ Agenda _____ 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 _____ Technical X Fundraising X Community Contacts X Business Management (Financial) X Business Management (Operational) X Public Speaking

Please see attached resume and answers to questions.

Return to:

Maggie Burleson, City Clerk
Post Office Box 7148
Asheville, N.C. 28802-7148

E-Mail: mburleson@ashevillenc.gov
Telephone: 259-5601
Fax #: 259-5499

Signature: Kelly M. Miller

Date: November 26, 2008

E-Mail: libertyscot@gmail.com

Fax #: (828)254-6054

* This information is requested for the sole purpose of assuring that a cross section of the community is appointed.

Kelly M. Miller
89 North Liberty Street • Asheville, NC 28801
828.230.3852 • libertyscot@gmail.com

Executive Vice President and Executive Director **1999-Present**
Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce (AACC)

- Serves as the CVB's chief liaison to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a nine-member board representing Asheville's \$1.8 B tourism industry.
- Serves as Executive VP of the Chamber for non-tourism related activities in which the AACC is proactively engaged, including economic development, workforce development and public policy.
- Tasked with forging new public-private partnership with cities, counties and other strategic regional stakeholders to not only market, but manage the Asheville area brand via collaborative and innovative programs.
- Oversees the CVB's \$5 M annual operating budget and \$1.6 M annual Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF), that have assisted in generating record visitor expenditures, tax revenues, job creation and unprecedented national brand awareness for the Asheville area.
- Leads dynamic team of 22 CVB staff to consistently surpass annual goals and objectives through an aggressive annual program of work.

Achievements

- Hotel sales increased 65% since 1999, including 13% in the year following September 11, 2001; and 13.4% in FY 05-06, despite global concerns and rising gas prices. Average Daily Rate (ADR) increased nearly 30% during same period while overall occupancy increased over 10%.
- Successfully led Asheville's recent branding initiative that yielded a unique brand platform and brand promise, creative campaign, logo, tagline and signature system. Considered one of the nation's best branding efforts which is proving crucial in maintaining market share during these tough economic times: Asheville area October 2008 hotel sales fell by only 5%.
- Championed innovative occupancy tax legislation in 2001 that created the TPDF, which has provided over \$ 9 M to 10 community capital projects.
- Provided collaborative leadership in forming the public-private *MountainSouth USA* partnership; worked with the South French Broad Neighborhood Association in launching *Neighborhood Initiative for a Clean Environment (NICE Asheville)*; and currently leading discussions with community organizations to develop a plan to improve the health of downtown Asheville.
- Orchestrated Asheville's first ever *Destination Product Development Charrette*, which resulted in the creation of a ten-year aspirational plan for future tourism product development for our community.
- Designed and opened state-of-the-art 4,000 square foot Asheville Visitor Center that attracts nearly 200,000 annual guests.
- Awarded *CVB of the Year* by Southeast Tourism Society in 2002 and 2006.

Director of International Marketing & Olympic Games Marketing **1994-1999**
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Oversaw Atlanta CVB's Olympic Games marketing strategy targeting 5 million visitors and 5 billion television viewers, in preparation for hosting the largest Olympic Games ever.
- Directed Atlanta CVB's global sales and marketing program targeting key customers, including airlines, tour operators, travel agents, media and international visitors.
- Managed the *Welcome South Visitor Center (WSVC)*, a 24,000 square foot public-private partnership facility located near Centennial Olympic Park.

Atlanta CVB Achievements

- Atlanta's international overnight visitation increased nearly 20% from 1996 to 1999, to 569,000.
- Successfully positioned not just Atlanta, but the Southeast USA, as a must see, must visit region by developing unique partnerships and opportunities with public and private partners including *Rhythms of the South*, which brought New Orleans, Nashville and Atlanta together for the first time as a standalone international packaged tourism product; and *Delta Showcase*, an international partnership tradeshow that united Delta Air Lines' gateway city tourism partners and global travel buyers. Both programs still exist today.
- Created and produced the first ever Olympic Games travel tradeshow.
- Hosted nearly one million visitors and 700 media in the WSVC in 1996.
- Exceeded 100% of personal performance objectives for five consecutive years.

National Sales Manager **1993-1994**
Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau

- Managed 650 association and corporate meeting accounts resulting in 100 meetings and conventions bookings; yielding 100,000 room nights before being promoted to aforementioned position.

National Sales Manager **1990-1993**
Atlanta Market Center/INFORUM

- Managed 750 national meetings and conventions accounts that could utilize the facility's 400,000 square feet of exhibit space and 52 meeting rooms located in downtown Atlanta.

Owner **1987-1992**
Budget Tapes and CDs

- Started and operated successful retail music store in Nugget Mall located in Juneau, Alaska, while simultaneously handling full-time responsibilities as mall marketing manager. Successfully operated store as an absentee owner for two years before selling business.
- Managed all aspects of the business included purchasing, marketing, staffing, accounting and music mail-order business.
- Grew business into mall's #1 store in sales per square feet; achieving sales of nearly \$1 M/year.

Marketing Director **1985-1989**
Nugget Mall

- Planned and executed annual marketing plan for regional shopping center in Alaska.
- Mall occupancy increased from 67% to 93% and visitor volume increased by 30%.
- Oversaw mall advertising, special events, sales promotions, PR and community relations.
- Launched music retail business while performing marketing director duties for Board of Directors.

Director **1982-1984**
Juneau CVB and Centennial Hall Convention Center, Parks & Recreation Department

- Directed Juneau's tourism marketing program, the Capital City's new convention and civic center, three visitor centers and historical museum for Juneau Parks & Recreation Department.
- Supervised 15 full-time staff and 125 volunteers.
- Founding member of the regional public-private partnership, *Southeast Alaska Tourism Society*, which today is responsible for Southeast Alaska's #2 worldwide cruise ranking.
- Opened new center on time and under budget and hosted more than 500 events in two years. Center is still operating successfully today.

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Current Board Service and Relevant Volunteerism

- Downtown Master Plan Advisory Committee
- Pack Square Conservancy Board of Trustees
- Ford Foundation Regional Sustainability Fellowship
- Leading action plan team addressing downtown Asheville brand issues
- Leadership Asheville 2007 which resulted in Neighborhood Initiative for a Clean Environment (NICE Asheville) and partnership with South French Broad Neighborhood Association
- Asheville Art Museum Board of Directors
- Southeast Tourism Society Foundation Trustee and Board Secretary
- National Council of Destination Organizations Board of Directors
- Former Big Brother and YMCA Youth Coach

Education

- B.A. in Economics, University of Montana
- Received U.S. tourism industry's highest professional designation, *Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME)*, in July 2008

References

- Available upon request

Kelly Miller
Candidate for City Council

1. What motivates you to apply for this position?

Challenging times call for City Council and its newest member to provide visionary leadership that effectively prioritizes our community's collective needs and limited resources. These times also mandate that Council collaborate with traditional and nontraditional partners to craft processes and solutions that exceed the public's expectations. I am very proud of my professional and service background and believe deeply that I possess the aforementioned skills that our community needs in 2009. Ultimately, I want to bring my perspective and experience to the public dialog on issues that matter most to our citizenry and taxpayers, hence my application for this honor.

My proven leadership experience includes partnering with City and County staff and elected officials on countless programs including the Wayfinding program and the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) process that has provided over \$9 million to ten area projects; leading the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) team of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce for nine years; successfully propelling the Asheville area brand to unprecedented levels of national awareness; balancing multi-million dollar budgets and making payroll during tough economic times; managing a city-owned Civic Center in another community; and owning a small business.

"Service above Self" and *"Be the Change you Want in the World"* are mottos I embrace and are evident in my volunteer work that includes the City of Asheville Downtown Master Plan Task Force, Pack Square Conservancy, the Asheville Art Museum, Neighborhood for a Clean Environment (NICE Asheville), and the upcoming 2009 Mountain Green Conference, which is a cooperative effort between Warren Wilson College, the Asheville Board of Realtors, the Asheville Homebuilders Association, AdvantageWest and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, to bring green sustainable solutions to the tourism, homebuilding and real estate development audiences of Western North Carolina.

I've also just received a Ford Foundation Regional Sustainability Fellowship that tasks the recipients with developing and producing a sustainable Regional Action Project (RAP). Documenting the collaborative process of bringing three distinct industries together to learn about sustainable practices, as well as serving on the steering conference, constitutes my RAP. Ultimately, this innovative approach to sustainability will provide a collaborative model for the Ford Foundation to share with other communities and industries seeking green practices that truly work.

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

As a registered Independent (unaffiliated), it is my firm belief that in today's unprecedented times, the traditional labels of conservative or liberal are no longer relevant. Political solutions in 2009 and beyond require elected bodies to be fiscally conservative while simultaneously seeking solutions to social issues that transcend historical labels and previously accepted best practices. New partnerships and collaborations void of partisan politics will prove to be the new civic model we must all champion.

I consider myself someone who understands both sides of issues and works diligently to achieve workable solutions. City and County elected officials and staffs are familiar with my leadership skills, reputation for getting things done and willingness to work hard to achieve common ground.

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?

I applaud and endorse City Council's clearly articulated 2008-09 Strategic Plan and its focus areas: Affordable; Green; Safe; Sustainable. Successful organizations must focus their attention on a manageable number of areas, which this body is attempting to do. Within that context, I would advocate prioritizing the goals and objectives outlined under each focus area of the strategic plan while ensuring these priorities are aligned with the voices of Asheville residents as summarized in the recently completed National Research Center survey for the City of Asheville.

Specific to the question, I see City Council's top priorities in the upcoming year as:

- A. Budget: This will be an incredibly difficult financial year. We must explore innovative revenue options while continuing to seek economies of scale.
- B. Economic Development and Job Creation: The City should continue doing all it can to work in partnership with key stakeholder groups engaged in business recruitment and expansion and the creation of jobs that offer higher than normal salaries.
- C. Adoption and implementation of the Downtown Master Plan: The Goody Clancy team's final draft needs to be adopted and the implementation process started. Area residents provided valuable input and the task force has worked diligently on several preliminary drafts. Now is the time to "see the end in sight" and provide a clear vision for our central business district's future; the Downtown Asheville brand.

D. Improving Relationships: The recent meeting between City Council and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is a perfect example of what I believe needs to happen more regularly with other key stakeholder groups so vital to our City's success, including county, state and federally elected officials. Improving relationships and increasing public trust will pay huge dividends as City Council seeks new partnerships and solutions in dealing with the current economic challenges that face government and residents alike.

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

A clean, safe and vibrant downtown Asheville is crucial to successfully expand or recruit businesses to the City of Asheville that create new jobs, increase our tax base and improve our quality of life. Both residents and visitors alike are increasingly voicing their concerns over the state of downtown. In fact, 42% of Asheville residents surveyed in the 2008 NRC survey felt *somewhat or very unsafe* in Asheville's downtown area after dark.

If appointed to City Council, I resolve to champion improving the wellness of downtown Asheville by continuing to meet with groups such as ADA, CAN, DARN, AIR, Quality Forward, Western Carolina Rescue Mission, City Development Office, Public Works and other City departments to develop a plan that measurably improves the health of downtown Asheville. Again, this will require new partnerships and innovative solutions due to the economic strains felt by all. I do believe, however, that we will be successful...one building, one block at a time. Let's get our downtown healthy again!

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?

These are extraordinary financial times. As any aspiring City Council candidate would do, I have reviewed in detail the City's FY 08-09 budget, strategic plan and other related materials. Without extensive background that current Council members have, it's difficult to provide suggestions on specific line item cuts. What I do bring to the table is extensive budgeting experience during financially tough times. Organizations, including city councils, should define their core businesses and services, while determining areas that may be further from the mission, and make related financial decisions based on this assessment. This tough core mission question must be answered before City Council and staff can collectively make responsible financial decisions and would be Priority #1.

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My fiscal philosophy aligns with what City Manager Gary Jackson aptly stated in his May 13, 2008 budget message to Council: "An underlining principle of the recommended budget (FY 08-09) is to balance the constraints of the current economic slowdown with the need to provide quality municipal services at the lowest possible cost to Asheville taxpayers." Adhering to this core principle would govern my budgetary decisions and would be Priority #2, if provided the opportunity to serve.

Tough decisions ahead? Yes, but these decisions are essential when elected officials are tasked with providing sound judgment to their constituency in turbulent times. City staff, at the direction of City Council, should develop 2-3 budget scenarios based on various levels of anticipated revenue and expenditures while maintaining the necessary fund balance required by state law. This would be Priority #3.