

# Council Business Meeting

February 4, 2020

<b>Agenda Item</b>	Appointment of Echo Fields to the Housing and Human Services Commission	
<b>From</b>	Melissa Huhtala	City Recorder
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:Melissa.huhtala@ashland.or.us">Melissa.huhtala@ashland.or.us</a> ; (541) 488-5703	

## **SUMMARY**

Confirm Mayor's appointment of Echo Fields to the Housing and Human Services Commission.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

Ashland Municipal Code (AMC) Chapter 2.19.

## **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

N/A

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

This is confirmation by the City Council of the Mayor's appointment to the Housing and Human Services Commission.

## **FISCAL IMPACTS**

N/A

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

## **ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

I move to approve the appointment of Echo Fields to the Housing and Human Services Commission with a term expiring April 30, 2022.

## **REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Application

## APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO CITY COMMISSION/COMMITTEE

Please type or print answers to the following questions and submit to the City Recorder at City Hall, 20 E Main Street, or email melissa.huhtala@ashland.or.us. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the City Recorder at 488-5307. **Attach additional sheets if necessary.**

Name Echo E. Fields

Requesting to serve on: Housing and Human Services Commission (Commission/Committee)

*[I see that the City website doesn't list an open position but Rich Rohde, Commission Chair, told me in personal conversation that there is in fact a vacancy and encouraged me to go ahead and submit this application now]*

Mailing Address 367 Glenn St. Ashland OR 97520

Physical Address same as above

Occupation retired SOU sociology professor

Phone: Cell 541 821 5879 Home 541 488 3502

Work n/a

Email fieldse@sou.edu

Fax none

### 1. Education Background

**What schools have you attended?** Oklahoma City University; University of Oregon

**What degrees do you hold?** Bachelor of Arts, Sociology, Oklahoma City University (1975). Ph.D. Sociology, University of Oregon (1984)

**What additional training or education have you had that would apply to this position?** Participant in the Neighborhood Leadership Academy, City of Medford, (2006)

I have attended a few meetings of the Commission in recent months and have been reading material posted on the City's website so that I could be sure that I would have something positive to contribute. I recently attended the Commission's December 17<sup>th</sup> retreat to discuss the group's goals for the coming year, for example. Full disclosure: I am personally acquainted with several members.

### 2. Related Experience

**What prior work experience have you had that would help you if you were appointed to this position?**

20+ years as a professor/ degree coordinator for SOU's Human Service major and sociology program. I regularly taught classes in social welfare policy, in organizational sociology with a focus on non-profit and public sector organizations as well as classes on community development and revitalization. I have kept current in the research literature in those areas as well as how that research is applied in communities. I have been a department chair at SOU and served/chaired major University committees.

I know how hard it can be to get by in Ashland: As an academic advisor at SOU, my "case load" included students of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds and gender identities. I have worked with students who were connected to the VA in White City, older adult students, traditional aged students, students with significant mental health challenges, who were neuro-atypical, experiencing housing/health care/food/transportation insecurity, in recovery from addictions, etc.

I also have been an officer in my small planned unit development's home owners' association since 2007 (15 units, annual revenues of \$35K). I own my unit in what is an example of affordable, multi-family development. I facilitated updating CC&Rs to bring them into conformity with state law, developing a long-term maintenance plan, dealt with homeowner needs & conflicts. I also coordinate and do oversight for major maintenance projects. I chair our Association meetings and make sure that we are operating in compliance with state and federal law. As a result, I understand the needs of property management companies, of unit owners, both in-residence and investment property owners, as well as the needs of tenants renting those units.

**Do you feel it would be advantageous for you to have further training in this field, such as attending conferences or seminars? Why?**

I have time to visit other communities, can afford to attend conferences, go to the state capitol, etc. Connecting with other communities on how they are responding to the issues the Housing & Human Services Commission would of course be helpful: there are many approaches to dealing with affordable housing/lack of housing, mental health services, strategies for funding social services, etc. Learning from other communities' experiences is incredibly helpful. Having taught classes on these issues, I keep up with new scholarly research and track current press coverage of changes in state and federal regulations and policies as well as community initiatives and activism.

### 3. Interests

**Why are you applying for this position?** I believe I can make a positive contribution to attaining the goals of the Commission and I am committed to helping Ashland become the best community it can be. I have time now to be of some use.

The housing issues in our town are personal for me. People I know well experience bouts of living outside or being in marginal, unsuitable housing. For several months this past year, I provided shelter in my home to a person I'd known for years who had a job in Ashland, but couldn't afford any kind of stable housing. He was also dealing with a family member with significant mental health and addictions issues. I know that no small number of us who are fortunate to have housing try to help one-on-one if we can, but personal approaches aren't sufficient.

Professionally, I have both academic and applied experience with the issues the Commission deals with. I have extensive expertise in relevant academic literature from various disciplines; I have served on several advisory boards over the years, including recently the RCC Human Service Advisory Board. Because I often supervised students' internships, I have been personally acquainted with many staff/leaders in our local non-profit social service sector that comprise our local "safety net;" some now are my former students. As long-time SOU faculty member, I can help to foster the relationship between the City and the University.

### 4. Availability

**Are you available to attend special meetings, in addition to the regularly scheduled meetings? Do you prefer day or evening meetings?**

Yes. I can attend meetings in both afternoons and evenings. I can also be available on weekends.

### 5. Additional Information

**How long have you lived in this community?** 26 years .

**Please use the space below to summarize any additional qualifications you have for this position**

I have advanced written and oral communication skills, honed in years of teaching and being an academic department chairperson. I have basic social science research design skills: i.e. how to design and implement surveys and do simple statistical/descriptive analysis in forms that laypersons will understand. I know how to handle the practical details of doing workshops, chairing committee meetings & keeping members on-task, running focus groups, facilitating discussions, organizing formal panel presentations, and event planning/logistics in general.

I am reasonably adept at using social media platforms, and support using digital media/social media for successful outreach and public relations now. Having taught young adults for decades, I understand that they access information in ways that older adults do not.

Date December 20, 2019

Signature

Echo E. Fields