

April 20, 2018

Dear Ashland City Council,

I am writing this letter to be considered for the current City Council position #6 vacancy.

I grew up in a very diverse community just west of Chicago called Oak Park. This was the first community I had the privilege to call home. My wife and I met while attending Southern Illinois University where I completed my B.S. in Kinesiology. Serving in the U.S. Army required us to move around quite a bit, but we were fortunate enough to settle in Ashland in 2015. We feel blessed to once again have a place to call home in Ashland. This community has so much to offer for overall well-being and quality of life.

I believe what I bring to the table is dedication to projects I'm involved in. I represent the interest of working class people, families, parents, along with unique minority perspectives. I will work hard to maintain and strengthen all the characteristics that already make Ashland great, while working to close the gap on identified shortcomings currently facing the city.

I believe showing up and genuinely wanting to make a difference for the greater good for ALL Ashland residents is the first step.

Sincerely,

Alex Whitnell

What do you think are the biggest issues facing the city?

1. Address affordable housing. With low vacancy rates driving rent up, the demand for affordable housing is overwhelming the current supply. Ashland needs to address this issue head on and work towards sustainable solutions for working class families.
2. Strengthen and maintain Ashland tourism. Most local businesses depend on the influx of tourist during Shakespeare festival to sustain them the rest of the year. Investing in this market will benefit small businesses financially, stimulate job growth, and create opportunities for diversity and culture in our town.
3. Identify ways Ashland can combat climate change, decrease carbon emissions, improve our environmental health, and commit to sustainable green energy practices.
4. Confront drug abuse and addiction. With the rising opioid crisis, we have a duty to strengthen our community awareness and available support systems for rehabilitation.
5. Support our developing youth population by offering more fun, safe activities and opportunities for healthy growth and development.

What is your primary motivation for seeking the vacant council seat?

As a military veteran, I have an innate desire to serve both my country and my community. During my time served, I learned to lead with integrity and civility and work effectively alongside a very diverse group of people. I believe it is more important than ever to be involved with our government at a local level and effect change from the ground up. It is my privilege and an honor to call Ashland home, and I am ready to show up, dive in, and work hard to maintain this community.

What community and city activities have you been involved in recently?

I enjoy volunteering with the humane society, directly engaging with and helping my neighbors, picking up gardening classes at the SOU extension center, participating in First Fridays with my small business, and delighting in all of my daughters' activities. I look forward to finding more ways to engage with community through this position.

What is the role of the city councilor?

To advocate and support the voices of the city residents by helping to structure and implement policies that reflect the best interests for present and future quality life in Ashland. A city councilor is a public servant working for the community as a liaison between the people and their governments.