

February 10, 2012

Mayor Sara Presler
Vice-Mayor Celia Barotz
Councilmembers: Brewster, Evans, Overton, White

City of Flagstaff
211 West Aspen Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Re: Letter of interest, Vacant Council Seat

Dear Mayor, Vice-Mayor and Councilmembers,

I am writing to express my interest in the vacant City Council seat.

Enclosed, please find my complete application, including my Resume, Letter of Interest, as well as answers to your two requested questions: *Why do I believe I am the best person to fill this vacancy*, and *What I believe are the most important issues facing Council over the next two-and-a-half-years*.

As a resident of Flagstaff for almost 20 years, a small-business owner, Community Builder, Volunteer and Advocate in this community, I believe I bring a strong set of skills and assets to this seat.

While a 30-day appointment is ambitious, I am a fast learner, team player, and passionate about our Community and the current issues facing the City and our citizens. I believe in this community and work daily, to make Flagstaff a better place to live, work and play. I am excited for the opportunity to collaborate and work with you on Council and to serve the citizens of Flagstaff.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this application. I look forward to meeting with you and discussing how I can be an asset to the City Council and citizens of Flagstaff.

Respectfully submitted,



Sara Herron, ASID
2413 Adobe Lane
Flagstaff, Arizona 86001
928-380-4685
sara.herron@herroninteriors.com

IMPORTANT NOTICE: The City Council may consider applicant qualifications for the Council vacancy in executive sessions which are closed to the public, and then make the appointments in a public meeting. You have the right, however, to have your application considered in a public meeting by providing a written request to the City Clerk.

**CITY OF FLAGSTAFF
APPLICATION TO SERVE ON THE CITY COUNCIL**

RETURN TO: CITY CLERK'S OFFICE, 211 WEST ASPEN AVENUE, FLAGSTAFF, AZ 86001

PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT IN BLACK INK
APPLICATIONS WILL BE KEPT ON FILE FOR ONE YEAR!

DATE: 2-10-12

YOUR NAME: SARA HERRON HOME PHONE: 928-380-4685

HOME ADDRESS: 2413 ADOBE LANE, FLAGSTAFF, AZ ZIP: 86001

MAILING ADDRESS (If Different from Above): _____

EMPLOYER: SELF / COCONINO COUNTY JOB TITLE: INTERIOR DESIGNER / COMMUNITY BUILDER

BUS. PHONE: 928-226-8826 CELL: 928-380-4685 E-MAIL: Sara.herron@herroninteriors.com

LENGTH OF RESIDENCY 19+ YEARS PREFERRED TELEPHONE: HOME WORK CELL

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Please complete the following questions:


Explain why you are the best person to fill the position. (Please attach an extra page if needed.)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED.

What do you think are the most important issues facing the City Council in the next two years? (Please attach an extra page if needed.)

PLEASE SEE ATTACHED.

I certify that I meet the statutory requirements of living within the corporate limits of the City of Flagstaff for at least one year, that I am over the age of 18 years, that I am a registered voter of the City of Flagstaff; *and that I have read and understand the right to have my application considered in a public meeting.*



Applicant Signature

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Why does the applicant feel they are the best person to fill the vacancy?

I've always admired those who lead by example – the natural born leaders who don't have to yell loudly in order to be heard, who understand the importance of compromise and collaboration, and who work tirelessly to make their community a better place for all. I'm one of those people, and I can't think of a better way to be of service to Flagstaff than by joining City Council.

As a member of the Flagstaff community for 20 years, I understand the unique strengths and challenges that set our community apart. I wear many hats in our community, but no one role defines me; rather, my collective experiences have molded me into the grounded and diversified leader I am today.

As a Community Builder for Coconino County, I've gained invaluable experience with strategic planning and budgetary processes for government, having served on both the 3-5 year strategic planning and budget teams. I also am schooled in grant writing, administration and compliance, having overseen five (5) grant funded programs through my work with the County. My experience with and exposure to governmental processes and procedures would serve me well at the public policy-making level.

Additionally, as a Community Builder, I help transform zip codes into communities by leveraging the power of people working together to achieve a common goal. I teach people how to fish – not catch the fish for them – by connecting them to one another through a process called Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD). ABCD adheres to the principle of “more community, less government” by empowering agencies and individuals to pool resources to change community conditions for the better. For example, as part of the Northern Arizona Rural Regional Economic Development USDA-SET group in northern Arizona, I've been working with a community collaborative to obtain federal grant funding to bring a 4G broadband network to the Navajo and Hopi tribes, as well as Page, Arizona. In addition to requiring a working knowledge of the federal grant-making process, this work requires an understanding of tribal culture and an ability to form partnerships with tribal and local governments, agencies and utility companies. My experience and expertise as both a student and practitioner of ABCD would pave the way to working partnerships with constituents and collaborators to affect lasting change at the grassroots level.

As a small business owner in Flagstaff, I understand the issues facing local businesses today, namely job creation, recruitment and retention. I also have deep connections in the business community, which would help strengthen the City's bond with the small business owners and entrepreneurs who define and drive our local economy. My experience with owning and maintaining a small business during tumultuous economic times would lend credibility to my work as a liaison to the business community on behalf of City Council.

As a volunteer, I've dedicated countless hours to helping our neighbors in need. When the Schultz Flood devastated homes east of Flagstaff in 2010, I answered a call to action by putting my connections and talent for motivational speaking to use to help homeowners repair and rebuild their homes. By working in partnership with United Way of Northern Arizona and Coconino County, I helped facilitate the remodeling of 45 homes on a shoestring budget, thanks to my relationships with professionals in the construction and design industries who donated labor and materials like carpet, tile and fixtures to the cause. I also have a passion for helping the homeless, and have made it my personal mission to help people in transition move toward self-sufficiency through organized efforts like Project Connect (which I manage for the County) and individual outreach on the street. Adding value to our community through volunteerism and civil service would define my work as a Councilmember.

I understand that a 30-day appointment is ambitious, and that I'll need time to bring myself up to speed on all of the current issues facing City Council. But I'm a quick study with endless passion for improving the quality of life in Flagstaff, and I work well as part of a team. I'm also known for my ability to make good decisions and stick by them, yet I'm also able to strike a balance between opinion and consensus. I'm willing to compromise to serve the greater good, which I believe is an essential character trait for public servants.

I've dedicated my entire adult life to public service at the grassroots, agency and government levels through volunteerism, nonprofit board service, and most recently in my role as Community Builder for the County. I believe true value is created when you give back to your community. My only agenda is making Flagstaff a better place, and when I put my mind to something, it doesn't take long to get results.

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What do you think are the most important issues facing City Council in the next two-and-a-half years?

Attracting and Retaining a Skilled Workforce

Flagstaff is a vibrant community, filled with beautiful vistas, diverse cultures and unique opportunities. We work diligently to attract students to Northern Arizona University to obtain their college degrees. I was one of those students, drawn to Flagstaff by the allure of higher learning in a rural yet vibrant mountain town. But as graduation approached, I found myself wondering if I could make a living in Flagstaff. I knew I wanted to be an interior designer, but Flagstaff offered limited opportunities unless I chose to start my own business, which as a recent graduate, I wasn't ready to do. Like many new graduates, I was faced with the decision to leave the community I loved in order to make a living somewhere else.

But unlike many recent graduates, I decided to stay. I was fortunate enough to find work in a related industry, and then, when I was ready, ten years later, I started my own business. But I know my experience is atypical; the majority of our post-collegiate citizens – who spend a minimum of four years in Flagstaff making impact-full connections to our culture, diversity and strong sense of community – must leave town in order to build a career in their chosen field. Even graduates coming out of NAU's most renowned programs are faced with little to no opportunity here, after graduation.

However, there is a solution to this problem. Strategic economic development combined with community collaboration to create and maintain jobs will tilt the scale in favor of retaining top-notch college graduates. Leaders in business, government and the community must work together to identify where missions and services intersect, and then evaluate gaps in employment, industry and retention to lay the groundwork for strategic partnerships that will strengthen and sustain our local economy. We already have wonderful partnerships in place with ECoNA, SEDI and NACET – why not build upon the momentum of these partnerships to involve our entire community in the process? Why not bring NAU and innovative local companies into the discussion? Why not create a task force that includes recent college graduates and young professionals to help guide us in the right direction? This type of holistic community collaboration will not only tie all of our economic development efforts together, it could also potentially result in budget savings for the City by eliminating or reducing duplication of services as well.

I've spent 20 years building a strong network of relationships in this community, and I'm one of the rare examples of a local college graduate who dug my heels into Flagstaff and succeeded. My perspective and experience as a small business owner and community builder with Coconino County allows me to move seamlessly between the public and private sectors to build bridges, make connections and encourage conversations with partners on all levels.

If appointed to the City Council, I would leverage my connections, experience and expertise to help Flagstaff become a hub of innovation, for working smarter to provide opportunities for college graduates, and to bring our economy out of recession. It is time for Flagstaff to achieve its full potential by nurturing and growing our local workforce. Let's turn our city into a destination, not just a stop along the way for young professionals chasing their dreams.

Lack of Low Income/Transitional Housing Opportunities to Decrease Reliance on Government While Increasing Self-Sufficiency

We have a significant issue in our community. People are sleeping under trees or in makeshift camps on public lands every night. Law enforcement officials are forced to step up patrols in the national forest to enforce the 14-day limit on camping, which increases taxpayer's burden while stretching emergency resources far too thin.

While homelessness is not unique to our community, Flagstaff faces a different challenge in addressing the issue of homelessness due to our migratory transient population. Our city sees a significant influx of homeless people during the warmer months, which further taxes law enforcement through increased patrols of public lands, and drains resources for emergency medical personal and fire departments responding to emergencies and fires in the forest and on public lands. But many folks in transition have no place to go besides the next makeshift camp, resulting in an endless goose-chase that strains our budget and results in wildfires set by people simply trying to stay warm and survive. We know this population is living here among us, yet we often turn a blind eye. We need a solution that will help this population to become self-sufficient and improve their quality of life, and the quality of life of our community as well.

Permanent, supportive housing – especially for veterans struggling with substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder – would greatly reduce homelessness by providing an environment that fosters healing while providing shelter and opportunities to develop vital skills for work and life. In my role as Community Builder, I work closely with the homeless as well as the agencies, organizations and individuals who comprise their support system. I've seen men and women who've been stuck in shelters for years because they can't afford a place of their own. The high cost of living in Flagstaff (where the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is about \$925/month), combined with the region's low wages make it virtually impossible for these citizens to become self-sufficient. They have no choice but to continue a cycle of reliance on government and agencies in order to survive.

However, we have a choice. Through strong strategic partnerships and collaborations, we can create sound solutions to benefit all stakeholders involved. We need to place more emphasis on self-reliance, and ease the burden on taxpayers and government by partnering with local agencies who offer workforce development, job training, and access to health and medical care, among other things. This is already happening in cities like Phoenix through a program called Housing First, which is made possible through Low Income Housing Tax Credits, private financing, and federal and city loans. A similar model could be implemented in Flagstaff to provide a home for residents in transition and a mechanism for achieving self-sufficiency. What would happen if we revitalized blighted properties and motels along Route 66 by transforming them into permanent affordable housing? What would happen if we reduced the number of transients living in our national forests each summer? How much money could we save by providing a roof over someone's head instead of wasting resources every year fighting costly, destructive forest fires that could have been prevented?

Because I work closely with many people in our community each day, I know I'm not the only concerned citizen asking these questions. Our community wants to help, but there is a missing link. We need someone who can connect the right people, places and resources to help change community conditions for the better. I am that link. And I have the passion, know-how and connections to not only to draw attention to this issue, but to issue a call to action, and most importantly do something about decreasing reliance on government while increasing self-sufficiency.

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Mission Statement: To use my talents, skills and abilities to help Flagstaff achieve its potential through increased opportunities for economic development, attainable housing, and job creation to attract and retain high caliber citizens to our community while maintaining the rural character and charm of a small mountain town.

Professional Experience:

Herron Interior Design, Inc., 2004 to present

- President and Owner of a commercial and residential interior design firm serving Northern Arizona. Services include space planning of residential and commercial spaces, knowledge of ADA compliance, local and National Building Codes, preparing construction documents utilizing computer aided drafting (CAD) and specifications, maintaining knowledge of codes, material and industry changes. Work directly with Contractors on bidding, project coordination and overseeing construction and project administration.
- Client list includes: W.L. Gore and Associates, SenesTech, ECoNA, NAU, Pioneer Title, Coconino County, Machine Solutions, Pine Canyon, the Historic El Pueblo Motel/Route 66 Design Development planning, as well as other commercial and residential projects.

Community Builder, Coconino County Community Services (CCCSD), January 2011 to present

- Responsibilities include partnering with various local agencies, non-profits, governments and the community to develop an *Asset Based Community Development*-modeled approach to Community Building, teaching citizens how to empower themselves with less government assistance and more self-reliance.
- As a Member of the Leadership Team, I work with the Director and County Staff to develop leadership and mentoring strategies for our Divisions.
- Currently working with our Department, Staff and Leadership on a 3-5 year Strategic Plan for our Department, including a Marketing strategy and Community Needs Assessment.
- Currently working with the Leadership Team on the Fiscal and 3-year budget plan for CCCSD.
- Facilitator and Committee Member for *Flagstaff Project Connect (FPC)*. Responsibilities include coordinating and managing a one day, one-stop-shop for those facing homelessness and poverty in our community in which direct service is provided at no cost, under one roof, on one day. Coordinated the March 2011 and January 2012 'Connects' in which we served over 1,100 low-income or homeless individuals in our community with the help of over 500 volunteers and over 100 service providers.
- *Northern Arizona Rural Regional Economic Development (NARRED) USDA SET*, Partnership through a grant funded program to reach out to rural Arizona regarding business opportunities. Working on bringing 4G broadband-access to rural Arizona, including the Navajo and Hopi tribes via grant funding through the USDA, and in Partnership with Coconino County, City of Page, the utility companies and the two Nations.
- *100 Best Communities* – Partner and Collaborator in the naming the City of Flagstaff as a '100 Best Community for Youth and Children', 2011
- *Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)* Partner; emergency response for rural Coconino County, regarding domestic violence issues. Keynote Speaker at annual conference, 2011, Tuba City.
- *Micah Collaborative* - A faith-based group focused on outreach regarding community issues.
- *Jobs for Life* - A faith-based approach to job training and outreach to women in shelter. Teach business plans, models, and empowerment to start a new business and find a way out of homelessness.

**Housing Specialist/Utility Repair and Replacement Program Coordinator,
Coconino County Community Services, June 2011 to present**

- Responsibilities include writing and administering grants for Owner Occupied Housing Rehabilitation (OOHR) projects in Coconino County, working with outside-consultants, Project Managers, Contractors and Homeowners on rehabilitation projects for low income individuals in our community on a non-interest bearing loan/grant program through CDBG and Arizona Department of Housing (ADOH) funds.
- Oversee the bid and construction process on grant-funded rehabilitation projects.
- Duties include collaborating and partnering with the City of Flagstaff and Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) on sharing resources and funds to assist low income residents of Coconino County.

United Way of Northern Arizona, August 2010 to March 2011

- Outside Consultant, Flood Resource Coordinator for Schultz Fire/Flood events
- Responsibilities included meeting with homeowners affected by flooding; coordinated a response team for each Project, collaborated with local businesses and individuals on receiving donated materials and labor, oversaw the construction to completion, met with team members from United Way of Northern Arizona and Coconino County, and prepared reports on spending and budget.

Josh Barclay Architects, Ltd.

- Project Manager, 1994 to 2004
- Responsibilities included creating CAD Construction Documents incorporating current ADA and Building Codes; Managing and overseeing the construction of each project; Meeting with Contractors and Subcontractors; Reviewing cost estimates for construction projects; Planning pre-bid and bid conferences, Reviewing Bids, Pay Applications, Change Orders and Requests for Information, Preparing Supplemental Instructions and Addendums.
- Client list includes: Coconino County, Flagstaff Unified School District, Cities of Flagstaff, Page, Williams, and Kingman, W.L. Gore and Associates, Community Behavioral Health Services as well as many commercial projects.
- Strong working relationships with jurisdictional Staff and CUP, Variance and P&Z processes.

Associate Instructor, Interior Design, Northern Arizona University, 2005-2006
Instructed 100-300 level interior design courses

Associate Faculty, Construction Management, Coconino Community College, 2003 – 2005
Designed and wrote the Program for an Associates Degree in Interior Design to be offered at CCC, 2004.

Education:

Bachelor of Science, Interior Design, Northern Arizona University, 1996

Community Service/Clubs:

- *United Way of Northern Arizona Campaign, January 2011 to present*
- *Sonshine Industries (Hope Cottage and Sunshine Rescue Mission), December 2007 to present*
- *Flagstaff Shelter Services, 2011 to present*
- *Salvation Army of Northern Arizona, 2011 to present*
- *American Society of Interior Designers (ASID), Professional Member, 2003 to present*
- *Soroptimist International of the Arizona Peaks, Member, 2006 to 2010*
- *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Flagstaff, Big Sister, 2009 – 2010*
- *Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, Flagstaff Unit, Volunteer 1995 to 2008*
- *Preventative Search and Rescue, Grand Canyon National Park (GCNP), 1997 – 1998*

Herron Interior Design is also proud to have donated services to many local organizations, including the United Way of Northern Arizona, Victim Witness Services, Northland Family Help Center, Cancer Center of Northern Arizona, Bothands and Sharon Manor, Hope Cottage and Coconino County.

Boards/Organizations:

- *Flagstaff Leadership Program, Class of 2012*
- *Community Action Board, 2011 – present*
- *Continuum of Care, Executive Committee Member 2011 – present*
- *Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, Member, 2004-present*
- *American Society of Interior Designers, ASID, Professional Member, 2003 to present*
- *American Society of Interior Designers (ASID) North Chapter, Legislative Chair, 2006 -2009*
- *Soroptimist International of the Arizona Peaks, Board Member 2007-2009*
- *Flagstaff Professional Referral Organization, Board Member 2005 – 2009*
- *Interior Design Coalition of Arizona, Board Member, 2004-2006*
- *Coconino County Sheriff's Search and Rescue, Board Member, 1997-2006*

Awards:

Young Professional ATHENA Recipient, Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce, 2008
Best of Flagstaff, by the readers of the Arizona Daily Sun, Interior Design 2006, 2008-2011
Volunteer of the Year, United Way of Northern Arizona 2010
Heart in Hands Award, Arizona Community Action Association, 2010
National Council for interior Designers Qualifications, Certificate Number 019470