

CLERK OF THE COUNCIL
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COUNTY COURTHOUSE
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RECEIVED

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

DEC 18 2017

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO FILL AT-LARGE,
POSITION B, VACANCY ON THE WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Natalie McClendon
RESIDENCE ADDRESS: 4682 Wynn Rd
CITY: Bellingham ZIP CODE: 98226
MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT THAN RESIDENCE): Same

DAY TELEPHONE: 360-319-8287 EVENING TELEPHONE: Same CELL PHONE: Same

E-MAIL ADDRESS: nataliebham@gmail.com

ARE YOU A REGISTERED RESIDENT VOTER OF WHATCOM COUNTY? yes

ARE YOU A US CITIZEN? YES NO

OCCUPATION (IF RETIRED, PLEASE INDICATE FORMER OCCUPATION):
business manager

PROFESSIONAL/COMMUNITY BACKGROUND*:

See attached

EDUCATION*:

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHY YOU WISH TO SERVE ON THE COUNTY COUNCIL*:

REFERENCES (PLEASE INCLUDE NAME AND DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER):

SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: Natalie McClendon DATE: 12/18/17

*YOU MAY ATTACH A RESUME OR DETAILED SUMMARY OF EXPERIENCE, QUALIFICATIONS, AND INTERESTS

THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT. THE ABOVE INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL, COUNTY EXECUTIVE, AND THE PUBLIC.

Natalie McClendon
Application for Whatcom County Council position appointment
December 18, 2017

Professional/community background

25 plus years as small business owner in Whatcom County, also holding various administrative positions. Elected leadership positions in local non-profits, including PTA, Sierra Club, and Democratic Party. Completing a 4-year term on the Whatcom County Planning Commission, including work on the Comprehensive Plan update, Critical Areas Ordinance update.

Education

B.A. University of Nebraska, 1977, major Environmental Politics and Economics. Secondary Teaching Certificate, 1999, Western Washington University, endorsements in History, Political Science, Social Studies, Career and Technical Education, Computer Applications.

Briefly explain why you wish to serve on the county council

Whatcom County has some difficult issues ahead of it, and the Council can't afford to make a caretaker appointment to this vacancy. Every council member needs to be ready and able to participate fully in crafting effective and affordable solutions and making thoughtful and strategic decisions. I believe I have the background, education and experience to take on that challenge from day one.

My 4 years on the Planning Commission have prepared me for a major portion of the council's agenda of planning and development issues. Since my college days taking Agricultural Economics courses, including Water Resources Economics, I have been a student of water issues. I have been following the WRIA-1 process and availing myself of every opportunity to educate myself on water law and the Hirst decision.

Regarding the county jail, the priority should be to heartily engage both the opponents and proponents of the recently rejected jail tax proposal in a robust but expeditious public process to develop a long-term plan for criminal justice that everyone can live with. Public education of the process, the issues, and the proposals is imperative.

And speaking of public education, throughout my career I have given special attention to communicating issues to the public. In a democracy, we get better and longer-lasting outcomes when an educated public participates in the process. Unfortunately, there seems to be increased interest in misinforming the public as a strategy for political success. The only defense against this is a strong offense, by stepping up our public information efforts in advance of major, and potentially controversial, decisions. I am particularly pleased to see the progress the county is making on its Integrated Land & Infrastructure Management System that will make a huge amount of information readily available to the public as well as allow county services to be delivered more efficiently. I will be looking for ways to push that information out to the public in a format that is easily received and utilized.

References

Ruth Higgins, 360-371-5312
Mike Estes, 360-220-1100
Carl Weimer, 360-223-2636



Complete

Referrer

Date Taken 2017-12-23 20:34

Location US

1 Name

Natalie McClendon

2 Which of the five Council districts do you live in?

5

3 If you are selected to fill this one year At-Large position do you plan to run for election for this position in 2018?

I have not made up my mind yet about running for election

4 Lake Whatcom is the drinking water source for about half of the County, and the County has entered into an plan to cleanup the lake to ensure it remains a good source of water far into the future. That plan is slated to take about 50 years to complete. Which statement best represents your thoughts on this effort?

50 years to clean up our drinking water source is too long, so I support speeding up that effort and would be willing to raise taxes or divert funds from other County programs to do that.

5

There are many human needs in our community. Please check below all the areas that you believe need greater effort.

- The county food banks
- Long-term affordable housing
- Programs to address domestic violence and sexual assault
- Emergency shelter for the homeless
- Mental health programs
- Substance abuse programs
- Incarceration prevention programs
- Low income medical and dental programs

6 If on question #5 you said any efforts need to increase, which of these statements best represents your belief in the County's role in funding such efforts.

There is no one path to better programs and their finding. I would work with B-E



7

Voters recently rejected a ballot measure to fund a new County jail. What do you think the County should do now to address this situation?

Aggressively engage both opponents and proponents of the jail tax to find lasting solutions to our incarceration and criminal justice problems. There is no one right answer.

8 Individual's property rights are an important issue in Whatcom County. What are your thoughts on how current governmental rules regarding land use and environmental protection impact a person's property rights

The ability of individuals to not only own property but enforce their rights through local courts, and use that property as a fungible asset is one of the main reasons the US has been so successful. That being said, there are limits to rights when they impose on others or society at large. Humans are the ultimate invasive species and our impact on the land, water and air must be checked if modern civilization is to survive. (Humans will survive, because we are the ultimate adaptable species. But I'm not sure we want to live in a Mad Max world) We will always struggle to find the proper balance between the rights of individuals and the rights of the community, and that's what politics is all about.

9 The recent "Hirst" decision from the Supreme Court has affected many people's ability to drill wells to develop their property, and has caused the County to take a broader look at water rights and in-stream flow protections. Do you have any thoughts on how the Council should proceed on this issue?

A lot of changes have taken place in Whatcom County in the year since the Hirst decision. The County Assessor has identified some 1,100 parcels directly affected by the Hirst Decision, or 1% of county parcels. Property impacted by Hirst has sold at a new value, been developed using alternative household water sources, and re-sold to new homeowners. Water availability is no longer being taken for granted, and that's a good thing. But some things stay the same, namely attitudes that we have unlimited water and we don't need to do anything differently.

I see two obstacles to finding solutions that will meet all water needs, including the fish. The first is lack of public understanding of basic water law, rights to water, and common solutions used elsewhere. We have a lot of dedicated people in this county who have been working on water issues for years before Hirst, but the general public doesn't know about them or the plans they've developed. The second is a lack of political will on the part of our leaders, both the Council and the Executive, to move existing plans forward and engage the public with education of the issue and solutions at hand. We can continue along the current path of disfunction until the fish are all gone, or we can act now. I say we act now.

The Council should make clear what kind of "fix" they are hoping for from the Legislature. Many in the County have advocated turning back the clock and pretending that there is a separate and distinct pool of water that land developers can tap for rural homes. This ignores reality. Instead we should be pressing for these three principles: 1) Tribal agreement, since they have the most senior water rights in the state, 2) A mitigation mechanism for new exempt wells, and a way to fund mitigation projects. This would provide a method for landowners to move forward with existing projects, and 3) Mitigation must be water for water, in the same basin, and at the same time. It should not allow, for example, for planting trees in another part of the state with effects on water in the future.

10 **Whatcom County sits in a unique geographical position and has one of the last undeveloped deep water ports on the west coast. In 2017 the County Council entered into a contract with an outside legal firm to gain information about what authority the County does, and does not have, regarding dealing with the various potential impacts from an increase in exports of fossil fuels from Cherry Point. Do you believe spending County money on such a legal analysis was a good idea?**

Yes

11

There is always an argument about what role the County plays in job creation and economic development, and how much County funding should be devoted to those things. What is your opinion on the County's role in this area?

The county, and cities, should focus on providing basic services and infrastructure, and basic quality of life values, that make living and working here, and starting a business here attractive. We should not spend time or money looking for businesses to move here. That just brings more people and more pressure on our resources, including housing. Competing with every other city/county in the country for the next Amazon2 is a losing strategy. We should not participate in the race to the bottom. We should focus on providing resources for people who already live here to start and grow their businesses.

The County should also look very closely at laws, etc, that make and/or keep people poor. While many of these are state and federal laws, It's worth a look to see what we can do locally. Economic development includes helping people move out of poverty, so they contribute to the overall economy of the region, and at the same time reduce the drag on county services having to deal with them as poor people.
