



Application for Appointment to Whatcom County Boards and Commissions

Public Statement

THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT: As a candidate for a public board or commission, the information provided will be available to the County Council, County Executive, and the public. All board and commission members are expected to be fair, impartial, and respectful of the public, County staff, and each other. Failure to abide by these expectations may result in revocation of appointment and removal from the appointive position.

Title *Field not completed.*

First Name Von

Last Name Ochoa

Today's Date 1/4/2022

Street Address

City

Zip

Do you live in & are you registered Yes
to vote in Whatcom County?

Do you have a different mailing YES
address?

Mailing Address

Primary Telephone

Secondary Telephone *Field not completed.*

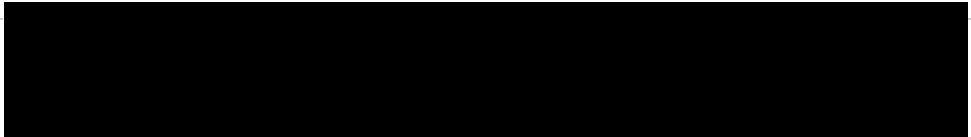
Email Address

1. Name of Board or Committee **Housing Advisory Committee**

Position applied for Housing Advocate

2. Do you meet the residency, Yes
employment, and/or affiliation
requirements of the position for
which you're applying?

3. Which Council district do you District 4
live in?

4. Are you a US citizen?	Yes
5. Are you registered to vote in Whatcom County?	Yes
6. Have you declared candidacy (as defined by RCW 42.17A.055) for a paid elected office in any jurisdiction within the county?	No
7. Have you ever been a member of this Board/Commission?	No
8. Do you or your spouse have a financial interest in or are you an employee or officer of any business or agency that does business with Whatcom County?	No
<p>You may attach a resume or detailed summary of experience, qualifications, & interest in response to the following questions</p> 	
9. Please describe your occupation (or former occupation if retired), qualifications, professional and/or community activities, and education	Please see attached
10. Please describe why you're interested in serving on this board or commission	<p>Warm Greetings County Executive & Housing Advisory Committee,</p> <p>Tonight, I continue my contemplations on what we as a local county populace are inheriting from 2021. The past 2 months have been marked by over 1,900 structures affected by the record-breaking atmospheric Nooksack River flooding, hundreds displaced in addition to the hundreds displaced prior to the flood, a father drowned as he was swept by the force of the waters on his way to work, a senator's life was claimed by Covid-19, and new records for freezing temperatures in December. What does it mean to be in recovery while also in crises? How do we proceed when we are called to stop and grieve and called to action all in the same moment?</p> <p>My motivation to serve on the Housing Advisory Committee comes from hope. My hope feels rooted in pragmatism because some of the most disempowering, heartbreak, and psychologically grueling situations I have ever learned of, or I have personally lived through, have also been some of the most innovative and transmutational. Another reason I have hope is because of what all I learned at the onset of the pandemic in 2020. I suddenly had the sufficient conditions necessary to study remotely and step into a new chapter of brain injury recovery. As I continued to heal, I took a deep dive into educating myself on the most vanguard renewable technologies and sustainable materials, progressive & equitable housing policies, and comprehensive biosphere crises discussions occurring at that time. By the end of summer 2020, I had achieved my Living Future Accreditation with the International Living Future Institute. Their mission is, "regenerative design that is culturally rich, socially just, and ecologically restorative." This mission adds to my hope because I know that humanity is capable of being resourceful for the right reasons and in the most inspiring ways.</p>

One surreal aspect about the beginning of the pandemic was how all of the logistical and existential questions that had engulfed the grinding poverty of my daily life for at least the 5.5 years I was in what I call “the homelessness quicksand”, were suddenly being asked by almost everyone else around me. “How am I going to pay rent? How am I going to budget for bills and food? What happens if I get sick at work? Will I lose my job? How long will it take for me to get through on the phone line to speak to a representative? Am I eligible for assistance?” I empathize with those fears.

After becoming fully vaccinated for Covid, I returned to working in schools in April 2021. I brought with me a replenished determination to eliminate inequities. Working in schools exposes one to the realities of the many adverse childhood experiences that a significant number of our students face. We can see in person, in real-time, how housing insecurity or homelessness affect a student, whether small child or adolescent. If we wish to provide our youth with as many protective factors as possible to ensure their flourishing, we must end generational cycles of trauma, including those marked by chronic displacement and lack of healthy housing.

During an all-woman panel presentation and discussion at the Conference of the Parties 26 this year in Glasgow, I listened to a former astronaut recount her experiences living on the International Space Station. She put a particular emphasis on the mindset of “Crewmates, not Passengers” and how all residents aboard genuinely cared for one another and were acutely aware of their interdependency. If all of us were to spend some time living on the International Space Station, we would know how to cherish and live regeneratively with our resources and appreciate the full scope of beauty and value of our crewmates. We would measure our relationships with people, place, and planet with higher levels of discernment and compassion.

Life is an ongoing journey with navigating the interplay between the realities and illusions of control. I understand that a person - or a confluence of people - has influence over the meaning they make from their multitude of circumstances and life stories. The meaning that we make in advancing the efforts toward ending housing shortages, housing insecurity, and homelessness is the legacy we leave and the inheritance of our descendants. I wish for us as a county to proceed with clarity in our hearts and minds, confidence in our collective agency, and to exercise our cornerstone insights combined with keystone foresight for the greater well-being of our communities. Let us build steadfast foundations and steward lush ecosystems.

I would be deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as a crewmate on the Housing Advisory Committee.

Próspero Año Nuevo, Prosperous New Year,

Von Emeth Ochoa

References (please include daytime telephone number):

Signature of applicant: Von Emeth Ochoa

Place Signed / Submitted Lynden, WA