

I am interested in serving on the following boards/commissions:

1. Planning Commission

2. Board of Zoning Appeals

Name: Eric Olson-Getty

Date: December 18, 2019

Home Address: 376 E. Gay Street, Harrisonburg (Own)

Phone #: 413-519-3786 (cell)

Alternate Phone: 540-442-7727 (work)

Occupation: Director of Development and Administration

Employer: Our Community Place

E-mail: ericolsongetty@gmail.com

Harrisonburg Residency: 5½-years

Referred? Yes, by Brent Finnegan

How did you hear about volunteering on a board or commission? Other: word of mouth

Why do you wish to serve on a board or commission?

I strongly believe that in order to thrive our city needs to adopt policies that serve all of its residents, including and especially those who are marginalized and whose needs are often ignored or overlooked in discussions about economic development. Harrisonburg is at a critical moment where we have an opportunity to make decisions about housing and transportation that will affect the well-being of marginalized, low-income, and "ALICE" residents for generations to come. This will not happen by itself: Harrisonburg needs to make an intentional plan to guide growth and development in a way that centers the needs of all of our neighbors. I would consider it a privilege to be entrusted with the responsibility to serve the residents of Harrisonburg as we have these important debates about our future.

What relevant experience or education do you have to this board or commission?

For my entire adult life I have worked to build thriving communities that cross social and economic divides. My journey has invariably led me to live in neighborhoods that have been marginalized by implicit or explicit racism embedded in urban planning, but which also have deep historical roots that testify to the beauty and resilience of strong communities. As a young adult I supported the unhoused community in Springfield, MA as they fought for safe and adequate shelter space in a city where 1/3 of its housing stock sat vacant. As a resident of the historically black neighborhood of Walltown in Durham, NC I worked with our neighbors as we sought to balance neighborhood improvements with the pressures of gentrification that threatened the historic fabric of the community. I now live in the Northeast Neighborhood and serve as the Director of Development and Administration of Our Community Place. My life and work in Harrisonburg is in many ways a blending of my previous life experience as I seek to live out my commitment to building strong bonds of community across the divides that affect our own city. I believe we can find solutions to the challenges of affordable housing, transportation, and business development if everyone has a seat at the table and if we are attentive to the voices of all Harrisonburg residents, but I do not believe in one size fits all approaches: we will need to be creative, we will need to work from a deep understanding of our unique context, and we will need to learn from the successes and failures of other communities regionally and nationally.

What other interests or concerns do you have regarding the community?

Through my work at Our Community Place I am closely connected with unhoused and low-income residents and the barriers they face as they struggle to survive and thrive in Harrisonburg. OCP has helped hundreds of individuals meet their basic needs while empowering them to access resources that help build long-term stability, such as obtaining crucial documents (birth certificates, ID's, etc.), health care, employment, transportation, and housing. Our city faces an acute shortage of housing and shelter, and as part of my work I have been actively working with unhoused community members, service providers, community organizers, elected officials, and other stakeholders in efforts to address the need for housing and shelter. No single solution can address the needs of everyone who needs affordable housing, so I am interested in exploring multiple creative solutions to these challenges. I am also a bike commuter and am a supporter of infrastructure development that makes our city accessible to all, not just cars. I also believe we have a responsibility to future generations to push for green development strategies that move us away from fossil fuels and prepare us for the inevitable impacts of climate change. Both my own home and my workplace at OCP have installed rooftop solar arrays thanks to local resources that have made it affordable to do so, and I hope similar opportunities will be even more accessible to all going forward.

List any past or present community involvement, e.g. City Council, Board and Commissions, Citizen Academy, etc., in Harrisonburg or elsewhere:

Aside from my work at OCP my community involvement experience has been primarily as an activist and community organizer. I am a chapter leader of Virginia Organizing, and am currently on a strategy sub-committee that is exploring the issue of affordable housing. I also helped lead our chapter in a two-year campaign focusing on relations between the community and the Harrisonburg Police Department. Our work consisted of a survey assessing the quality of existing policy-community relations and a comprehensive review of the HPD Standard Operating Procedures. HPD is incorporating our concerns and recommendations from this review into their current SOP overhaul. Prior to my move to Harrisonburg in 2014 I lived in Durham, NC, where I graduated from Duke Divinity School in 2008 and subsequently worked for six years with a youth mentoring and employment program.

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SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS

- 15-years of experience in social justice, development, and service work in low-income communities
- Exceptional organizational leadership experience in the nonprofit sector
- Experienced grant writer and fundraiser, including planning major events
- Advanced writing, editing, and public communication skills
- Collaborative thinker and problem-solver

Computing: MS Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, Quickbooks, Google Docs and Sheets, constituent management systems (DonorPerfect), social media, e-newsletters

EXPERIENCE

Administrative Director/Director of Development & Administration, Our Community Place,
November 2014-Present

- Joined with Executive Director as a strategic thought partner in program development and operations.
- Oversaw and coordinated development and fundraising strategies and methods, including direct mail campaigns, online communications, donor data collection and tracking, targeted campaigns, and systemization of follow-up. Worked with the management team in the planning and implementation of fundraising events.
- Responsible for daily financial management functions, including bookkeeping, paying invoices, monitoring income and expenditures, paying tax liabilities, and working with the Board Treasurer to fulfill reporting and filing requirements. Worked with the Board Treasurer and Executive Director to plan and adhere to budgets.
- Drafted and implemented personnel policies, ensured compliance with labor laws, and oversaw payroll and employee leave.
- Worked with the management team to draft and implement community center safety policies.
- Participated with management team in the oversight of daily programming at the OCP community center facility.

Interim Executive Director, Our Community Place, June 2017-February 2018

- Assumed responsibility for advancing the mission, vision, and operational stability of OCP after the departure of the Executive Director.
- Engaged in direct, person-to-person outreach and public communications to build the donor base and ensure the continuity of relationships with existing donors.
- Worked with the Board Treasurer to develop and implement a strategy for the financial health and stability of the organization.
- Provided supervision and support to management team members, including one-on-one and group meetings.
- Enhanced social media presence through new campaigns highlighting funding needs and OCP industries.
- Represented OCP to local media, outside groups, and partner organizations.
- Oversaw maintenance of OCP facilities, including the development of a maintenance calendar and the sourcing of donated labor and materials.

Instructor, Intensive English Program, Eastern Mennonite University, August-December 2014

- Taught advanced English integrated skills course for international students preparing for college, graduate programs, and the professional world. Topics covered include reading comprehension, academic writing, debate, and research skills.

Merger Team Member, Partners for Youth Opportunity, 2013-2014

- Represented organization in a collaborative consultation process to effect a merger between two well-established nonprofit youth services.
- Designed workforce development and mentoring programs integrating research-based best-practices of both partner organizations.
- Leveraged networks, media outlets, social media, and events to effectively communicate brand, program design, fund development strategy, and volunteer needs to city-wide stakeholders.
- Trained and supervised new Internship and Mentor Coordinator in organizational policies and procedures, program model, and service delivery while facilitating introduction of new staff member into community networks.
- Provided consultation services to Executive Director on organizational infrastructure, including data collection, donor tracking, and financial management solutions.

Internship and Mentor Coordinator, Year of Opportunity for Durham Teens (YO:Durham), a program of Durham Congregations in Action, 2008-2014

- Advanced over 150 at-risk high school students towards career goals through training, paid internship placements, evaluation, crisis management, and administration of payroll procedures.
- Developed and utilized personal and professional networks to recruit local businesses and nonprofits as paid internship placements for program participants.
- Recruited, trained, and supervised volunteers to serve as one-on-one adult mentors for program participants.
- Coordinated staff and volunteers to design and implement funding strategy for annual budget averaging \$150,000, including grant writing, direct mail campaigns, donor cultivation, and annual fundraising events.
- Represented YO:Durham to diverse constituencies through targeted communications including social media, press outreach, public speaking, e-newsletters, and direct mail.

Made in Durham Youth Engagement Committee, MDC, Inc., 2013-2014

- Contributed to the development of a Durham-wide collective impact solution to youth disconnection through engagement with a cross-section of local youth and young adults.
- Facilitated a series of youth meetings to develop and discover youth priorities and prepare for a youth-led panel engaging city-wide stakeholders and policy-makers.
- Supported youth in the development of a concrete proposal for youth representation in the Made in Durham board of directors and working groups.

Congregational Delegate, Durham CAN (Congregations, Associations, Neighborhoods), local affiliate of Industrial Areas Foundation, 2008-2014

- Facilitated house meeting process in local congregation to identify priority issues of concern to community.
- Engaged in action campaigns to enact change around priority issues by engaging with elected officials, clergy, and other community stakeholders.

Career Coach, Public Allies of North Carolina, 2012-2013

- Volunteered to meet monthly with Public Allies apprentice to facilitate the development and pursuit of practical learning goals for career exploration and development.

Public Allies of North Carolina, Americorps, 2008-2009

- Completed year-long apprenticeship in non-profit leadership and social change.

- Collaborated with Public Allies team members and local community partners to establish the Feed My Sheep Community Garden in Northeast Central Durham.

Coordinator of Urban Ministry, Nehemiah House, Springfield, MA, 2003-2005

- Developed and implemented urban education and immersion program to raise awareness among college students and churches of issues of urban poverty, racism, and social justice while providing valuable volunteer services to community partners.

Intern, Center for Anabaptist Leadership, Urban Peace Center, Pasadena, CA, summer 2004

- Participated in local affordable housing organizing effort.
- Planned a series of public peace witnesses including media outreach, public speaking, and logistics.
- Fostered personal formation through rigorous theological reflection, writing, and engagement with local faith-based activists.

EDUCATION

- **Duke University Nonprofit Management Certificate, March 2014.**
- **Duke Divinity School, Durham, NC—Master of Divinity, *Summa Cum Laude*, 2008. Cumulative GPA—3.96**
- **Williams College, Williamstown, MA—Bachelor of Arts, *Cum Laude*, Class of 2002. Cumulative GPA—3.71, Dean’s List, Class of 1957 Scholar, Edgar Bronfman Scholar. History major with concentration in Religion.**

AWARDS

- **Steve Schewel/Duke Sanford School of Public Policy Award, 2013**
First annual award by the Independent Weekly Give!Guide to a young nonprofit leader.
- **Delegate, 2012 Opportunity Nation Summit and Hill Day, Washington, DC**
Selected from among Public Allies NC alumni to represent Public Allies at the 2012 summit focusing on development of school-to-career pathways for youth and young adults. Met with Congressional representatives to advocate for national service funding.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Chairperson, Durham Mennonite Church Council, 2010-present

Ministry Intern, Durham Mennonite Church, Duke Divinity School Field Placement, 2007-2008

Ministry Intern, Tabernacle United Methodist Church, Greensboro, NC, Duke Divinity School Field Placement, Summer 2006

Substitute Teacher, Springfield Public Schools, 2004-2005

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Great Lakes Initiative, Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation, Kampala, Uganda and Bujumbura, Burundi, January 2010

- Recorded minutes of plenary and breakout sessions. Assisted with conference logistics.

University of Edinburgh, Scotland—Study abroad program, October 2000-June 2001

- Coursework in history/ecclesiastical history.

Reconciliation in Northern Ireland. Winter Study, January 2002

- Designed an independent project in Belfast, Northern Ireland, to study church and faith-based contributions to the peace process.

PUBLICATIONS

- “Durham Mennonites Stand with Immigrant Neighbors,” Virginia Mennonite Conference Connections, December 2013.
- “Review of Paul Sorrentino, ed., *A Transforming Vision: Multiethnic Fellowship in College and in the Church*,” Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Religion, May 2011.
- “Building Peace in Northern Ireland: Christian Reconcilers in an Economy of Hate,” Journal of Hate Studies, vol.2 no. 1, 2003.