



Office of the Mayor
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January 22, 2015

To: Urbana City Council

Re: Appointment of Council Member from Ward 3: **Aaron Ammons**

Dear Diane, Mike, Dennis, Bill, Eric, and Charlie,

It is my pleasure to recommend the appointment of Aaron Ammons to the vacancy in Ward 3 created by the election of Carol Ammons to the Illinois House.

My basic standard for filling vacancies on the city council is to choose someone who is not only qualified to serve but who would best represent the ward—someone who is recognized as being the most likely winner of an election—the person the residents of the ward would choose for themselves. After talking with a number of people, including other applicants, it is clear that Aaron Ammons meets this standard.

I am attaching a copy of a statement submitted by Mr. Ammons in support of his nomination which details his community involvement, work experience and philosophy.

Sincerely,



Aaron Ammons 1/15/15

I have been a building service worker at the U of I for 14 years. During those years, I have earned just over 24 credits, been selected by management to teach the EPP program, (a model of ergonomically correct ways to lift, push, pull, reach, etc. without causing serious injury to self or others) and I have received awards of appreciation for my outstanding ability to teach and train my co-workers.

Another aspect of my employment at the University has been my role as President of our Service Employees International Union or SEIU for short. I have been intricately involved as a steward, chief Steward, member of the negotiating team, Vice President and now President of Chapter 119. My employment with the University of Illinois has opened my eyes to the real value of having dignity and integrity. During my tenure, I have received many informal offers to take a management position with the University. These offers highlight how much they appreciate my input during management meetings; it's obvious to me that the management team believes in my ability to communicate and my fair disposition toward management and my co-workers. When there's a need for representation, the members look to me regardless of the situation or the area in which they work.

I see my work as a representative for my co-workers and the relationships I have with members of management as motivation for me. Instead of ego tripping or becoming arrogant I simply remember the time when I had lost my dignity and integrity and very few people even wanted to be in my presence. I know that the change in my life is due to my commitment to logic and truth and I refuse to forget it.

The same principles that led me to positions of influence in the work force and in my union, also led me to start two social justice organizations with political arms as well. In 2001-2002 I co-founded Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice (CUCPJ) and in 2012, I founded Citizens with Conviction (CWC). CUCPJ is a profound group of concerned citizens who have met almost every Saturday at 4p.m. for the past 12 years to address issues around Criminal Justice reform, (Electoral) Political Awareness and Environmental Racism. Our work is so extensive that it is futile for me to start listing our accomplishments and impact on the community. I will say that when the local Urban League chapter was closed and our NAACP was in shambles, the people looked to CUCPJ to fill that void, and they still do. For more information please google CU Citizens for Peace and Justice or visit www.cucpj.org. CWC is comprised of ex-offenders, or as I prefer to call us, Citizens with Conviction. The mission of CWC is to educate ourselves and the community about the issues formerly incarcerated or convicted citizens. Our initiatives began by working with other organizations like All of Us or None, based in Oakland, CA. to address barriers to employment and political disenfranchisement. As the president of CWC, I attended a conference in Detroit, MI and Los Angeles, CA where we explored policy changes that included Ban the Box legislation at the state and local level. We have since successfully worked with the City of Urbana Human Relation Commission to enforce Ban the Box policy in the City of Urbana.

Other organizations that I am a member of or have assisted:

- NAACP of Champaign County
- National Council of African-American Men
- North End Breakfast Club (President)
- Don Moyer Boys & Girls Club
- Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (honorary member)
- Church of the Living God
- WEFT Radio Station

Committees & Commissions:

- Urbana Community and Police Partnership
- Citizens Advisory Commission on Jury Selection (Chair)
- Board Member of The Black Scholar Journal

As it relates to commissions and boards, I was recently recruited to serve on our State University Retirement board. I have agreed and I am currently collecting signatures so I can be placed on the ballot in February. Below is my candidate statement:

Aaron Ammons is currently employed at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where he has served as a Building Service Worker for 14 years.

Aaron is the chapter president for the Service Employees International Union Local 73 which represents over 600 university employees in Champaign and 5000 in the SURS system. In this role he actively coordinates support and information for the pension issues SURS participants' face. He recently participated in the Harvard Trustee Leadership Program, learning best practices from pension fund trustees throughout the country.

Aaron has been active in Champaign- Urbana community for over 15 years and held an appointment as Chair of the Champaign County Jury Service Committee. He serves on the board of several local community organizations, and coaches' youth sports in his spare time.

As a trustee, Aaron will be a strong advocate on behalf of the participants in the SURS system. He will work to ensure continued, full funding for the system from the State of Illinois. He will emphasize maintaining a healthy, diversified investment portfolio.

"I know how important retirement security is to all SURS participants. I pledge to work diligently to protect benefits for current and future SURS participants and retirees. SURS participants need to have a strong, ethical voice at the table."
