APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE CITY OF DULUTH VACANT SECOND DISTRICT CITY COUNCILOR POSITION

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CITY CLERKS OFFICE

INSTRUCTIONS: (1) Print the application. (2) Fill in your information. Please remember to SIGN the application below. (3) Mail or deliver to the address below by 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2014.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS FORM AND ANY ATTACHMENTS ARE PUBLIC.

NAME Joel Sipress

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VOCATION, OCCUPATION, EMPLOYMENT College Professor, UW-Superior

PLEASE ATTACH A STATEMENT AS TO WHY YOU ARE APPLYING AND WHAT ASSETS YOU WOULD BRING TO THE CITY COUNCIL. YOU MAY ALSO ATTACH A RESUME.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** 1/28/14

****PLEASE REMEMBER TO SIGN & DATE THE APPLICATION****

NOTE:

- **MARK YOUR CALENDAR: Council interviews will be on Thursday, February 6, 2014, at 5:00 p.m., in the Council Chamber, 3rd Floor, City Hall. This is the only notice you will receive.**
- **Applicants must be 21 years of age and an eligible voter in the 2nd District of the City of Duluth.**
- **The deadline for submitting applications to the City Clerk's Office, 330 City Hall, 411 W. 1st St., Duluth, MN 55802, is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2014.**

Twenty years ago I got a job teaching at UW-Superior. My wife and I moved to Duluth and bought a home in the city's Second Council District, just half a block from the current site of the Chester Creek Café. When, after seventeen years, we decided to look for a new house, we couldn't bear to leave the neighborhood, so we moved four blocks straight down the hill to 4th Street. I've lived in Duluth's 2nd Council District longer than any other place in my life. It is my home, and it is where I raised my daughter.

I never actually set foot in Minnesota until I came here for my job interview. Duluth, however, has truly become my home. Maybe it is the weather or maybe it is the lake, but it is absolutely true that Duluth retains a strong sense of community that has been lost in most other places. Certainly, we have our challenges—limited job opportunities, aging city infrastructure and housing stock, difficult fiscal issues. But we also have something very special here. And in recent years, we have begun to have some real success building upon the city's unique qualities to address our economic and fiscal challenges.

I am applying for a position on the city council because I care deeply about this city and believe that I have a set of experiences and assets that would allow me to work productively with the council, the administration, and the public to address our pressing issues and to move Duluth forward. I am interested in the *job* far more than I am interested in the position. It is something that I have thought about doing for a long time. Now that my daughter is older (she just got her drivers' license!), it is something that I can actually do without neglecting either my obligation as a parent or my obligations to my day job.

I would bring the following assets to the council:

- Knowledge of city issues—As long as I have lived here, I have followed city issues very closely and have personally worked on a number important and (in some cases) controversial issues. I would be able to get up to speed on the issues facing the council quite quickly.

- Understanding of the political process—I understand that you don't really know what it is like to be a councilor until you are actually in the position. My long involvement in the political process in Duluth, though, including a term on City Charter Commission and membership on Mayor Doty's Bayfront Task Force (the citizen's committee that helped bring about the current Bayfront Park) has given me significant insight into the workings of city government. This would allow me to quickly step into the role of councilor.

- Strong collaborative skills—I genuinely enjoy working with others to achieve tangible goals (something I first learned as a teenager playing in rock'n'roll bands). In my work at UW-Superior I have sought out opportunities to work on campus-

wide issues. I have served many years on the campus strategic planning and budget committee. I have also served as chair of the UW-Superior Faculty Senate, the body that has primary responsibility for determining curriculum and academic policy at the campus. In these roles, I have worked with individuals who bring a variety of perspectives to identify and move forward on issues of common concern. I have also learned how to work through inevitable disagreements and conflicts (including conflicts with administration, in some cases) without allowing disputes to become personal and without severing the ongoing relationships that are required for the campus to thrive and prosper.

- A fundamental respect for the variety of people's views and life experiences—One of the things I most enjoy about working at UW-Superior is the diversity of our students' life experiences. We have students of all ages, economic and family backgrounds, and walks of life. Our students include single parents, military veterans, retirees, kids straight out of high school, and everything in between. Twenty years experience working with such a wide range of people would serve me well in the role of councilor. The job of councilor is to represent all those who live in the district and, in fact, all those who live in Duluth. While there will inevitably be disagreements, it would be my job to listen, understand, and consider the viewpoints of all, including those who have had life experiences that I have not shared and that I need to learn from. This is something I have done every day for twenty years in my job, and it is something I would look forward to doing as a councilor.

It is with the greatest respect for the responsibility in front of you, that I ask for your consideration for the position of Second District Duluth City Councilor.

Joel Sipress

Twenty-year resident of Duluth's Second City Council District

Occupation:

- Professor of History, The University of Wisconsin-Superior, 1994-present

  In addition to teaching, I have served on numerous campus committees, including the strategic planning and budget committee, numerous search committees for faculty and administrators. I have also held the position of Chair of the Faculty Senate, the body that has primary responsibility for determining curriculum and academic policy for the campus, and have served as chair of my academic department for the past four years.

Education:

- Holmdel High School; Holmdel, New Jersey
- BA, Princeton University; Princeton, New Jersey
- MA and Ph.D., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Community Involvement:

- Duluth Area Green Party Steering Committee, 1995-2002

- Duluth Progressive Action Steering Committee, 2003-2005

- Duluth DFL Executive Board, 2009-present

- Duluth Charter Commission, 2002-2006

- Bayfront Development Task Force, 1999-2000

  Member of a diverse citizens' committee charged by Mayor Gary Doty to make recommendations regarding development of the controversial Bayfront property. The task force issued a set of recommendations calling for mixed use of the property. Although the full recommendations were not implemented, the task report did call for an expansion and redevelopment of Bayfront Festival Park, which paved the way for the park to be developed into its current form.

- Bayfront Park Citizen's Management Team, 2000-2001

  Member of an advisory committee that provided input and oversight for the redevelopment and expansion of Bayfront Festival Park.

- Negotiating Committee, American Federation of Teachers-Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin-Superior, 2010-11

Member of three-person team charged with negotiating a first contract for the faculty union at UW-Superior. (UW-Superior faculty voted to unionize in 2010.) Work of the team was terminated in 2011 when Wisconsin enacted legislation stripping public employees of their right to bargain collectively.

In addition, I have worked in an informal volunteer capacity on a wide range of community issues including planning issues, school levy issues, and local labor issues.

Hobbies:

- Guitarist
- Bicycling