



## APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO YPSILANTI CITY COUNCIL WARD #1 POSITION

### Applicant Information

(Please type or print)

Applicant Name Toi E. Dennis

Residence Address [REDACTED]

Home Phone [REDACTED] Work Phone [REDACTED]

E-Mail [REDACTED]

### Cover Letter & Resume

Please attach a one page cover letter and a resume of no more than two pages to this application.

### Supplemental Questions

Please respond to the following questions regarding your interest in the position of Councilmember for the City of Ypsilanti on separate pages using no more than 3 pages total:

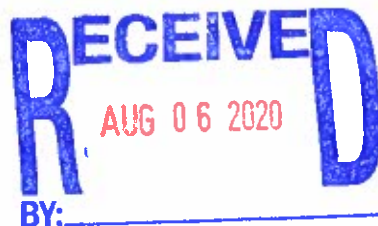
1. Why are you interested in serving as an Ypsilanti City Councilmember?
2. What strength would you bring to the Council?
3. What are the three highest priorities and/or issues you believe the City needs to address? How would you propose to address these issues?
4. Explain your current and past community involvement and/or service on city, nonprofit, or public boards, committees, task forces, or commissions and how this has contributed to the Ypsilanti community. Address its relevance to the position of Ypsilanti City Councilmember.
5. What do you wish to accomplish during this appointed term as an Ypsilanti City Councilmember?
6. What is your vision for our City and community?
7. Is there anything else that you may wish to add that would help us get to know you a little better?

Please return (*in person*) this form, your cover letter, resume, and answers to the supplemental questions to the City Clerk, at Ypsilanti City Hall (1 S. Huron St.) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 6, 2020.

Applications received after 5:00 p.m. will not be accepted.

The application and any correspondence should be addressed to:

Andrew Hellenga, City Clerk  
City of Ypsilanti  
One South Huron Street  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197



# TOI E. DENNIS

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August 6, 2020

Andrew Helena, City Clerk  
One South Huron Street  
Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

Dear Mr. Hellenga and City Council Members:

Please accept this letter as my application for appointment to the Ypsilanti Ward #1 position recently listed on your website. I am a resident of Ward One whose family have been residents and property owners in Ypsilanti since before the great depression. I have a proven history of community service and grass roots activities. I have served as Block Club President, Precinct Delegate, Chairperson of numerous UAW committees, and most recently as a City of Ypsilanti Planning Commissioner and President of the Vanzetti M. Hamilton Bar Association. I believe strongly in giving back to my community through service and that involvement in local government can have the biggest impact on a community.

I am also a graduate of Wayne State University Law School with a joint Masters in Alternate Dispute Resolution. I have an "all but thesis" master's in human resources, and a bachelor's in business administration. I have strong negotiation, conflict resolution and mediation skills and the ability to interact well with people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. I believe strongly that my community service experiences, educational background and interpersonal and mediation skills make me perfectly suited to serve the residents of Ward One and the City of Ypsilanti as a whole.

Enclosed you will find my resume, and answers to the supplemental questions for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with all of you to discuss my qualifications in more detail. I look forward to hearing from you soon. Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature area, obscuring the name and any handwritten notes or dates.

# TOI E. DENNIS

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## **ADMISSION**

**State Bar of Michigan,**

**February 2012**

## **EXPERIENCE**

**Legal Services of South Central Michigan**

**Ypsilanti, MI**

**CVLAP Staff Attorney,**

**November 2019 – Present**

- Providing free counseling, mediation, settlement, and litigation services to individuals 55 years or older who have experienced abuse, neglect, or exploitation.

**Law & Mediation Offices of Toi Dennis**

**Detroit, MI**

**Sole Practitioner,**

**February 2012 – November 2019**

- Provided counseling, mediation, settlement, and litigation services to clients with disputes involving Criminal law; Employment Law; No Fault law; Probate, Guardianship, and Mental Health Hearings; Social Security; Wills, Trusts and Estate Planning
- Appointed 36<sup>th</sup> District House Counsel and Wayne County Criminal Advocacy Program Certified
- Certified General Civil, Adult Guardianship, Domestic Relations and Truancy Mediator

**Legal Project Team Lead,**

- Supervised and trained 15 to 70 contract attorneys on various document review projects involving Multi District litigation, Shareholder Derivative litigation and Patent Infringement
- Created and updated decision log, updated coding protocol, fielded substantive question to and from supervising counsel for responsiveness, privilege, and confidentiality, created Quality Control searches, briefed the client, assigned work and supervised second level review team, reviewed and approved hours and kept track of absences
- Motivated, managed, and provided leadership to team members, ensured work product by helping prepare procedural guidelines for special projects including quality control, privilege and redaction reviews, identified and resolved issues through the QC process as well as through database searches and spot checks

**Contract Attorney**

- Performed civil litigation document review services for legal staffing and large regional law firms involving: Violations of the Consumer Financial Protection Act, Fair Debt Collection Practices Act, and the Fair Credit Reporting Act; Labeling and misbranding issues; Shareholder Class Action litigation; Patent Infringement, Antitrust litigation
- Performed second level review for quality control and privilege and performed redactions and created privilege log entries

**Baker College**

**Allen Park, MI**

**Adjunct Faculty,**

**April 2011 – June 2012**

- Implemented and developed business, legal and human resource syllabi and provided associated lectures and assessments according to college policies and procedures. Classes taught include: Employment Law, Torts, Contracts, Legal Writing & Research, Conflict Management, Performance Management, Compensating HR & Intro to Business

**Wayne Mediation Center**

**Dearborn, MI**

**Volunteer & Contract Truancy Mediator,**

**March 2009 - June 2011**

- Provided general/civil, adult guardianship, truancy, and domestic relations mediation services to Wayne Mediation Center (WMC), Friend of the Court, and Detroit Public School clients, litigants, students and parents

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Detroit, MI**  
**Judicial Intern, August 2009 – December 2009**

- Reviewed and analyzed investigative files containing administrative materials, correspondence, affidavits, records, documents and transcripts of hearings for federal sector EEO complaints of employment discrimination including race, sex, age, wage, disability and retaliation allegations
- Drafted and edited opinion and summary judgment memos for Administrative Law Judge and observed federal sector hearings

**Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Detroit, MI**  
**Civil Intern, May 2009 – August 2009**

- Investigated charges of race, color, sex, disability, national origin, religion and age discrimination in private sector through intake interviews with potential charging parties; conducted follow-up phone interviews with Charging Parties and Respondents and issued Requests for Information
- Reviewed and analyzed investigative files; drafted legal memoranda, composed and issued official agency documents regarding findings and determinations
- Observed and co-mediated employment discrimination disputes and received training in federal mediation procedures

**Miller, Canfield, Paddock and Stone, P.L.C., Detroit, MI**  
**Summer Associate, May 2008 - August 2008**

- Researched and drafted memoranda regarding current trends in employment law; defenses under Robinson-Patman Act; email provider's duty under Sarbanes-Oxley; public law franchises; taxation procedure for filing consolidated returns; and procedural issues including waiver of personal jurisdiction and immunity from service of process
- Assisted in document review, preparation and arbitration of employment discharge case

**EDUCATION**

**Wayne State University Law School, Detroit, MI**  
**Juris Doctorate, May 2010**

**Wayne State University, Detroit, MI**  
**Masters of Arts, Dispute Resolution, May 2010**

- Concentration of conflict resolution, negotiation, mediation and arbitration training and education
- Pertinent course work: Practicum in Dispute Resolution; Negotiation Theory and Practice; Communication, Culture & Conflict; Human Diversity and Conflict; Neutral Intervention

**Central Michigan University, Southfield, MI**  
**Master of Science, Human Resources, September 2006**

- Pertinent course work: Personnel Management; Fair Treatment and Legal Compliance; Benefits & Compensation; HR planning; Negotiation and Employee Relations
- Completed all course work (33 of 36 credits) toward Masters *except thesis*

**University of Phoenix, Southfield, MI**  
**Bachelor of Science, Business Administration, June 1999**

**PROFESSIONAL & PUBLIC SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

**State Bar of Michigan, Diversity and Inclusion Committee Member 2017- Present**  
**Vanzetti B. Hamilton Bar Association, Member and Current President 2012- Present**  
**City of Ypsilanti, Planning Commissioner 2016 - 2019**  
**Black Women Lawyers Association of Michigan, Member Present**  
**Washtenaw County Bar Association, Member Present**

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## SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

1. Why are you interested in serving as an Ypsilanti City Councilmember?
  - First, because of my belief in service above self. One of my favorite quotes is “to whom much is given, much is required.” Although I have suffered adversity and challenges in life, I have also been blessed. I believe I have a duty to share my blessings, resources and testimony with others to help uplift others as I have been uplifted.
  - Second, because I live and own property in Ypsilanti, and I want to see my community flourish. I believe that “Diversity is our strength” and that “Anyone, no matter what age or income, can find a place to call home in Ypsilanti” and want to be apart of making and keeping those guiding values true.
2. What strength would you bring to the Council?
  - I believe one of my greatest strengths is my optimism. I have the tendency to see all situations as “ the glass being half full.”
  - My mediation and negotiation skills would also be of benefit to Council as well as the citizens of Ypsilanti because I look for win-win solutions to any problem. This tendency helps keep people working together and not as opponents.
3. What are the three highest priorities and/or issues you believe the City needs to address? How would you propose to address these issues?
  1. Systemic Racism - how the racism of the past regarding redlining, education, housing, banking, jobs, etc. affects the racism of today and how we can counteract its effects regarding city services, housing, resources and opportunities.
  2. Economic development
  3. Housing

In my opinion, the first step to addressing any issue is education or research of the issues and problems. The second step is brain storming and evaluation of possible solutions and the third is implementation.

4. Explain your current and past community involvement and/or service on city, nonprofit, or public boards, committees, task forces, or commissions and how this has contributed to the Ypsilanti community. Address its relevance to the position of Ypsilanti City Councilmember.
  - Currently, I am the president of the VHBA which is the “Black” bar of Washtenaw county. We do community and bar activities designed to help educate the Washtenaw community and members of the bar on the issues that affect us today. Some of our outreach includes seminars on: Bias Awareness, what to do when stopped by the police, how to know if you have an immigration or discrimination case, and How to get your criminal record expunged.
    - i. The same community outreach and organization skills used to organize the above events can be used to organize, educate and reach out to the citizens of Ypsilanti on issues that impact our residents.
  - I am also currently a member of the State Bar of Michigan’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee (DIAC). The main goal of DIAC is to increase diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. We do this by educating the stakeholders on the issues and providing education and training on bias awareness and other barriers to inclusion. One of the committees that I serve on is the Mock Trial and Education committee, where our goal is to increase diversity in legal education by reaching out to disenfranchised groups and

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providing them with education and support. In fact, DIAC and VHBA are currently reaching out to students in the Ypsilanti area and trying to organize High School teams to participate in local, state and regional Mock trial competitions during the upcoming school year. VHBA has agreed to sponsor a team.

- i. The skills used to reach out to stakeholders in the legal profession can also be used to reach out to stakeholders in the community when Council needs to collaborate with others in our community to further a cause or initiative.
  - During my three years of service on the Planning Commission I interacted with members of the community who either supported or disagreed with the proposals before the commission. I also served on the Housing subcommittee during my tenure which gave me a better understanding of the Ypsilanti housing stock and its assets and liabilities. I was involved early in the process where we developed survey questions, presented them to the citizens of Ypsilanti and compiled the results. We then researched and developed solutions to the issues gotten from the surveys which was then presented to the citizens for feedback.
    - i. As a result, I learned how to weigh the rules of the commission with the wants and values of the community which lead to suggesting solutions that the citizens support and that would have the most impact on the community.
  - As an attorney for a local legal service organization, I serve vulnerable individuals who have been the victim of some type of crime, harm or exploitation. Often these individuals have disabilities, lower incomes and are marginalized. As a result, I serve on committees and taskforces with other community organizations that provide resources and support for our lower income, marginalized and vulnerable citizens.
    - i. This familiarization with community resources can be transferred to other citizens in our community and Council can be a liaison for bring resource and like groups together to help these vulnerable citizens.
5. What do you wish to accomplish during this appointed term as an Ypsilanti City Councilmember?
- I do not have a set agenda, as the council works as a team and I just wish to be of service to my community. Of course, I will address any issues my constituents in Ward One deem important to the Council and advocate on their behalf. However, my only goal is to do my best to represent the interests of my ward and the city and to address the issues presented to Council effectively and efficiently.
6. What is your vision for our City and community?
- I would like to see Ypsilanti truly become a place where everyone, no matter, what race, income, age, disability or sexual orientation, can call home and flourish, not just exist.
7. Is there anything else that you may wish to add that would help us get to know you a little better?
- No, I am what people call an "open book." What you see is what you get.

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

In Service

Attorney at Law

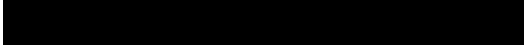
# Affidavit of Identity

State of Michigan

County of Washtenaw

I, Toi E Dennis do hereby affirm the following:

Name: Toi E Dennis

Address: 

Date of birth: 08/14/1966

I certify under penalty of perjury that the above statements are true and correct.

Signature  Date: 08/06/2020

  
City of Ypsilanti Clerk Staff

Date: 8/5/2020 1:03 PM