

VOTERS' GUIDE 2026



MINNESOTA HOUSE DISTRICT 36A (ELECT 1)

Jim DeMay (DFL)

City of residence: North Oaks
Occupation: Recently retired, former public affairs director — CSL Seqirus, former adjunct professor at Hamline University in Public Administration
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Mounds View School Board, Treasurer, 2019-present
- Shoreview Rotary Club
- St. John in the Wilderness Episcopal Church, past Board Chair



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I believe the government needs to provide the right opportunities to keep Minnesota a great place to live, work and, most importantly, raise a family. I am running for state house to make that a reality for all Minnesotans.
When I grew up, it was possible for the kid of a waitress and

a small businessman to enjoy the middle class dream, but those opportunities just aren't there for people in the same way. I was able to succeed because of a great public education at Mounds View Schools, and I'm proud that my wife and I are now parents to two MVHS graduates.
I will fight to fully fund public education around the state, and you can count on me to fight for affordable health care and child care for working people like you.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota needs to invest in and create opportunities for workers in order for our economy to thrive. This includes creating career pathways for the trades and medical industry in high school. Additionally, community college and trade schools must be accessible to all at a low cost. Finally, we need to lower the cost of and make child care more accessible so parents can participate in the workforce while knowing their kids are safe.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. Going to the doctor shouldn't break the bank. But for too many Minnesotans, skyrocketing costs are making them choose between health care and other essential expenses. If elected, I will push to fund tax credits to reduce premiums for Minnesotans and eliminate anti-competitive practices of PhRMA to lower the price of prescription drugs. I will also work to create pathways for "Medicare for All" for those without insurance through their employers, as well as promote preventive services and regular vaccinations and check-ups to reduce overall costs.
Separately, I will support fully funding the newly created Minnesota Office of Inspector General that creates an independent oversight body to stop waste, fraud and abuse. I will work to protect taxpayer dollars by promoting efficiency reviews and regular audits. I will also work to modernize state computer systems to catch fraud, promote efficiency and increase accountability measures for nonprofits.

Sebastian Stoss (R)

City of residence: Circle Pines
Occupation: Photographer/Videographer
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Legislative aide at Minnesota Senate
- Citizen investigator
- Congressional staff member



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I want to serve as our next state representative because politics as usual has failed our state. We have seen unprecedented levels of fraud, affordability has gotten worse and Minnesota student grades keep falling. I have demonstrated action. Just look at my investigation into Ramsey County's property tax spending uncovering how over \$38 million went out the back door to unaudited outside nonprofits and NGOs. I didn't sit on the sidelines; I followed the money, demanded

answers and got results. The county commissioners backed off and lowered this year's property tax increase by 15%. That's what I've done as a private citizen — now I would like to continue this work as state representative.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. At the state level, we can eliminate fraud, impose more oversight and provide tax relief. We need mandatory background checks and more required financial audits to both stop fraud that has already occurred and prevent further fraud from happening. Additionally, I support expanding whistleblower rewards to 10-20% of recovered funds with protections from retaliation. These are just a handful of initial solutions that can help prevent fraud. With the money we save once this is done, we can afford to provide tax relief to all Minnesotans. Specifically, we will be able to afford to lower the currently out-of-control property taxes, income taxes and car tab fees.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The biggest challenge facing Minnesota currently is fraud. Fraud in Minnesota has become a national embarrassment. Fraudsters have been able to steal from Minnesotans for years without any pushback from our government. This should anger every Minnesota taxpayer. To stop fraud, we need to increase oversight and transparency. For instance, counties are not currently legally required to audit organizations they give money to. This makes it easy for bad actors to get funding and misspend it.
The second challenge facing Minnesota is how unaffordable living has become, especially due to out-of-control taxes. Property taxes in particular burden homeowners and prospective homeowners. People tell me they are getting priced out of their own homes and neighborhoods. To lower the tax burden and make Minnesota more affordable, we need private third-party assessors determining property valuations to ensure fairness, and we need to cap annual property taxes raises.

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heather Gustafson (DFL)

City of residence: Vadnais Heights
Occupation: Minnesota State Senator, District 36
List three most recent civic involvement roles:

- Chair, Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission
- Vice chair, Senate Education Finance Committee
- Vice chair, Senate State and Local Government Committee



I have represented Senate District 36 since 2023. Before running for office, I spent many years as a high school teacher, following an earlier career in radio broadcasting. I hold a degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead and a Master of Education from the College of Saint Scholastica. I am the mother of four daughters. As a senator, I have focused on affordability, public safety and government accountability, building a strong record of bipartisan collaboration.

Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I spent many years as a high school teacher, and as the mother of four daughters, I saw the same pressures in my

classroom as I did at my kitchen table. I see what happens when families fall behind on rent, when a school budget gets stretched too thin, or when a kid shows up hungry because breakfast wasn't an option at home. Those aren't abstract policy problems to me. I ran for office because I wanted to bring that problem-solving mindset to the legislature: listen first, find the people willing to work across the aisle, and get something done instead of just talking about it. That's how I passed the school meals program and created Minnesota's first independent watchdog for government fraud, with Republican co-authors. I want to keep doing that work so families can thrive, not just survive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota prospers when people trust that resources are being used honestly and families can actually get ahead, not just get by. That starts with practical, bipartisan solutions to tackle the cost of living directly, from housing to child care to health care, so working families in our district aren't doing the math every time they're at the grocery store. Most people in our district, no matter their party, just want a legislature that solves problems instead of fighting culture wars. That's why I authored bipartisan legislation creating a Minnesota Entrepreneurship Task Force, to bring entrepreneurs, workers, and educators together to strengthen what's working in our

business climate and fix what isn't. I've built my record on working with Republicans and Democrats for exactly that kind of work, because the next four years shouldn't be about scoring points. They should be about proving state government can still deliver for people.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. First, I've made government accountability a priority. I authored the legislation creating Minnesota's Office of Inspector General, an independent watchdog with authority to investigate fraud across state agencies, which passed with bipartisan support. I now chair the Legislative Inspector General Advisory Commission, and I'll keep pushing to give that office everything it needs to catch bad actors before they drain public resources.
Second, the cost of living has families in our district stretched thin. I've focused on meaningful relief: school meals, which save families real money every month, and consumer protections like click-to-cancel laws that stop companies from quietly draining people's wallets with recurring subscriptions. Going forward, I'll pursue an affordability agenda rooted in what families actually deal with day to day: groceries, child care, health care costs, and holding corporations accountable when they take advantage of people, so families here can actually get ahead.

GENERAL ELECTION VOTING INFORMATION

As North Oaks residents prepare for the upcoming general election taking place on Tuesday, Nov. 3, there are several options for voting.

Voting early or in person:
From Sept. 18 – Oct. 30:
Ramsey County Elections Office
90 Plato Boulevard West, Saint Paul, MN
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., extended hours Oct. 27

From Oct. 13-23, Oct. 26, Oct. 28-30:
Shoreview Community Center
4560 Victoria Street, Shoreview, MN
Monday – Friday, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., extended hours Oct. 27

A complete list of early voting locations is available at ramseycountymn.gov/residents/elections-voting.
Voting on Election Day, Nov. 3:
All residents must vote at their respective polling place.

Precinct 1 votes at Peace Methodist Church, 5050 Hodgson Road, North Oaks.
Precinct 2 votes at North Oaks Golf Club, 54 East Oaks Road, North Oaks.

Prepare for voting
Unsure what precinct you are in or what is on your ballot?
View this information on the Secretary of State Minnesota Voting Information Portal:
—City of North Oaks





VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

MINNESOTA SENATE DISTRICT 36 (ELECT 1)

Heidi Heino (R)

City of residence: Centerville
Occupation: Associate director of partnership development and small-business owner
List three most recent civic involvement roles:
• Member, Minnesota Task Force on Priority Admissions to State-Operated Treatment Programs
• President, Fellowship of Extraordinary Women, Twin Cities Chapter
• Volunteer, Eagle Brook Church One-on-One Care Team for eight years



Q. Why do you want to serve in the Minnesota Legislature?
A. I have spent my career in the private sector, negotiating contracts and solving complex problems for my company and our clients. That experience shapes how I look at government. When I see a problem, I want to understand what is causing it and find a practical way to fix it.
Like many others, I have no pension. I have to plan, save, and take responsibility for my family's future. Every additional dollar taken in taxes is money a family cannot use for its needs

today or save for tomorrow.
I am running because Minnesota government needs more people with private-sector experience who will ask hard questions, follow the money, and challenge the way things have always been done. Too often, government measures success by how much it spends instead of whether it solved the problem. I want to help restore accountability and make Minnesota a place where families can thrive.

Q. What can the state do in the next five years to help Minnesota prosper?
A. Minnesota can prosper by making it easier for families and businesses to stay and grow here. First, state government must slow spending growth and review programs for results before increasing their budgets. Savings should be used to reduce taxes and avoid shifting state costs onto local property taxpayers.
Second, Minnesota should shorten permitting timelines, eliminate duplicative regulations, and give small businesses one place to navigate state requirements. The state should streamline permitting without dictating local housing decisions. Cities should have a say in how their communities grow.
Third, we must protect the foundations employers and families rely on: safe communities, dependable roads, access to health care, and schools that teach reading, writing, math, and critical thinking. Minnesota has talented people, strong

communities, and innovative businesses. The next five years should focus on removing barriers, protecting taxpayer dollars, and making it possible for people to build their future here.

Q. What are two challenges that the state faces and how might you solve them if elected?
A. The first challenge is fraud and the loss of public trust. Billions of taxpayer dollars have been placed at risk because state programs lacked adequate oversight. Once fraud is discovered, the money is often already gone. I would support stronger front-end verification, tiered oversight based on risk, better coordination among agencies, and meaningful consequences for those who misuse public funds. Fraud prevention must begin before the first payment is issued.
The second challenge is affordability. Families are being squeezed by property taxes, energy costs, housing expenses, and the rising cost of everyday necessities. If elected, I would work to restrain government spending, oppose unfunded mandates that increase local property taxes, reduce barriers to housing development, and lower the tax and regulatory burden so Minnesota can retain businesses and workers. Government cannot eliminate every financial pressure, but it should stop making those pressures worse.

NORTH OAKS MAYOR (ELECT 1)

Fritz Johnson

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?
A. I have a diverse mix of business and civic involvement. As a successful serial entrepreneur, I've had to figure out how to accomplish big results while constrained by limited resources. This business experience allowed me to also be effective in civic roles as President of the Quad Area Chamber of Commerce, member of the Lino Lakes Economic Development Advisory Committee, member of the Lino Lakes Public Safety Citizens Committee and board member of the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. I'm very good at gathering information, collaborating with stakeholders and creating enduring outcomes.

Q. Why are you running for Mayor?
A. The City of North Oaks is at an inflection point, transitioning from growing community to mature city. I want to do my part to ensure that through this process, we honor the vision of the Hill family while adapting to the needs and demands of the future.

Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?
A. 1. Safeguarding what I've come to think of as the North Oaks State of Mind. It's a place of privacy and tranquility; filled with nature and great neighbors.



2. Ensuring that the concerns of our neighbors, the stakeholders of this amazing place; are sought out by the city administration and given full consideration as we plan for the future. This fits within the idea of transparency, being forthcoming with residents about what decisions are being made and also being certain to make decisions which are guided by homeowners.
3. Improving communications between the City of North Oaks and adjacent entities. This includes NOHOA, VLAWMO, Ramsey County, the cities of White Bear Township, Lino Lakes, Shoreview and Vadnais Heights. External issues do impact our community.

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as Mayor.
A. Although I listed improving communications as #3, it is the most important priority for me. As the City of North Oaks plans for the next 20 years, we can't function inside a bubble. Issues like sewer and water as well as public safety reach far beyond our borders. As a practical matter, all three issues I've identified come down to communication. We must collaborate broadly to create solutions and outcomes that are of benefit to the larger community.
As for my approach. Outreach. Meeting regularly with concerned stakeholders and identifying areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. It's impossible to lead people who've been ignored by their representatives.

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?
A. My vision for the future of North Oaks is less important than the future the majority of our community chooses to pursue. Having said that, during this campaign we've heard a lot of concern from the community about preserving the natural character of this place AND ensuring safety. Also, concerns about water, septic / sewer must be given thoughtful consideration. I have every reason to believe that what we do for this community in 2026 and beyond can honor the Hill family vision AND secure a bright promise for future generations.

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?
A. By being available! Primarily via email but also in person at regular Town Hall meetings where the only agenda is to hear what our neighbors have to say. In my business life, we set an objective of responding to inquiries within 24 hours. Usually, we responded much quicker than this. When our partners, meaning customers and suppliers, felt the need to reach out we made it part of our cultural DNA to respond. Input and feedback are what allow an organization to thrive. I haven't had a chance to create a budget and plan for Town Hall meetings, but it seems like twice a year is a reasonable frequency to bring people together. Some might say this is impractical. I say, it's worth a try.



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NORTH OAKS MAYOR (ELECT 1)

Krista Wolter

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?

A. For years, I’ve helped buyers and sellers come and go in North Oaks, and I’ve heard countless comments—many of which are very different from those in other communities I serve. A few years ago, my real estate business was almost split 50/50 between St. Paul & Minneapolis. Some of those clients that I worked with moved to our city. I continually heard comments about what buyers liked and what they were looking for. My experience across many real estate markets, along with day-to-day interactions in and around North Oaks, gives me a high-level of understanding of our residents’ needs and is a huge advantage in continuing as Mayor.



extensively with Pleasant Lake. That is something that has needed our attention for far too long. The condition of our lake goes way beyond our community. The water from our community is supplied to many neighboring communities by the St. Paul Regional Water System. The second item would be to continue infrastructure planning for future needs and ensure that any planning is comprehensive to achieve cost savings for our residents. And last but not least, North Oaks needs to maintain local control over its issues and not be controlled by outside entities such as the Metropolitan Council.

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as mayor

A. Future infrastructure is my top priority because it matters to so many residents across North Oaks. I worked for months to get a new Joint Powers Agreement for those residents served by White Bear Township for city water because it was the only option for water service to our residents along our east and North borders. I was also able to negotiate and secure a million-dollar water metering pit project for \$0 expense to our residents, and obtain an additional \$100k for future maintenance of existing infrastructure. My job as mayor is to work to address and fix our residents’ issues. A recent letter to the editor noted that they were out of room for another septic system and noted that the current system discharges to the pond behind the home. This is not something that a leader would or should ever turn their back on. I have enough space on my own property for 4 more septic systems, but most people don’t. Future planning could eliminate the need for septic systems while preserving the environment, sparing trees from being cleared, and ultimately saving the homeowner money.

continue to feel like it has for the years that I’ve known it – 27 years now – a close-knit community where neighbors help neighbors. I would love for more residents to volunteer, serve on task forces, and attend council and board meetings when possible. I would also like to see more block club captains step forward, as they help keep our streets and neighborhoods safe. When I receive our police reports and see the welfare and mental health checks in the city, I am so thankful for our emergency responders. In addition to keeping a close-knit community, I’ve had concerns in recent years about seeing the same type of partisan behavior here as in Washington, DC. The city of North Oaks has always been non-partisan in its political races, and I’m hoping we can keep it that way.

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?

A. Our City Council meetings can be attended in person or via Zoom, and the minutes are posted on our city’s website. Meetings in recent years have been extremely calm, and those in attendance are able to give comments/suggestions. I have heard from many residents who have given positive feedback about the current council’s willingness to look at issues that have been ignored or not addressed in the past. The City of North Oaks also sends out a weekly, in-depth email blast. We recently held a follow up question-and-answer session on LPRs – which originally included several years of research, discussion, weighing options, and implementation. Some think our council moves too slow, but big issues need big discussions from both the council and the community. I’m thankful that the majority of our current city council has taken the time and shown interest in making thoughtful decisions for our residents.

Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?

A. The first would be to continue the work we have done

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?

A. My vision for the future of North Oaks is that it would

NORTH OAKS CITY COUNCIL (ELECT 2)

Mark Azman

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?

A. With decades in North Oaks, I know our culture and the issues that are important to our residents. On the NOHOA board (six years, four as President), we built the beach bathroom, the new West Rec center, and commissioned a Roads and Asset Study. On the Planning Commission (four years, including as Chair), we handled many complex development projects, successfully engaged the public, analyzed environmental impacts, contract obligations, and developed comprehensive recommendations to the City Council. We also finalized the current Comprehensive Plan. On the City Council, we approved a conservative Financial Management Plan, negotiated a long-term water supply contract, built a new fire station (on time/under budget), stood up a public works department, began an infrastructure study for the future, increased local control over our future planning, and built a better relationship with NOHOA. I bring not just experience, but also productive, meaningful relationships with other city leaders.



control spending, and a final decision for a long-term City Hall (shared with NOHOA). My understanding and relationship with NOHOA also increases the successes the city has undertaken to jointly plan with NOHOA, avoid unnecessary duplication, and develop a lasting, productive relationship, especially considering the city is fully developed and the Company is winding down its participation in the community.

Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?

A. First, finalize a long-term solution for City Hall. Our lease is expiring, and the City needs a permanent place to call home to accommodate the City’s staffing and storage needs, space for NOHOA, and reduced spending for office space. Second, an increasing number of properties lack sufficient space for replacement of aging and noncompliant septic systems which prompts contamination concerns and expensive, undesirable choices. I intend to finalize measured and thoughtful planning to address future, long-term solutions, with respect for conservation and a commitment to the natural beauty that makes North Oaks special, and to obtain local control of our future. This includes the multi-party study of Pleasant Lake. Third, safety, security and cooperation with community partners is a primary concern. I will continue to engage residents, NOHOA and our police and fire partners for effective and meaningful policing, safety, trespassing and speeding.

community members to evaluate current and future facility needs, resident needs and convenience, extensively consulted with a real estate professional to evaluate costs, potential sites, reviewed purchasing versus renting, studied new construction versus existing, considered potential financing options, and worked with legal professionals. We have engaged an architect to provide expert insight on costs and timelines. And we have regularly reported to the Council and the community on progress of the Committee’s efforts. I intend to conclude this effort if elected with an option that serves the City, NOHOA and the community for many years.

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?

A. For over 75 years, the special vision for North Oaks has focused on our shared values of thoughtful and deliberate planning, a strong community commitment to preserving and maintaining our natural environment, conservation through respect for the land, and privacy. I have dedicated my 15-plus years of service to the North Oaks community steadfastly pursuing that vision. But these are not just cliched statements, they are embedded in and guide each decision I have made as a city leader over the years. Regardless of the issue, my thought process considers these values both individually and collectively, to ensure the vision endures in each decision I make.

Q. Why are you running for City Council?

A. The city needs steady, thoughtful leadership, with a continuity of experienced leaders that have a history of strong participation and governing with transparency. I will use my 40-plus years of community experience, including service on the NOHOA Board, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, to continue the meaningful planning efforts the Council initiated over the last 4 years, including seeking local control over our future, continued prudent financial management planning to

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as a council member.

A. As a member of the City Hall committee, I want to finalize a long-term solution for the location of City Hall. With our lease expiring and having rented our space since 2010, the City needs to determine a long-term, financially sensible solution. Over the past year, the City has partnered with NOHOA leaders and

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?

A. I will ensure transparency by sharing clear, timely information and making city decisions easy to understand. I’ll support accessible public meetings, open communication, and regular updates on projects and finances. For accountability, I’ll rely on data-driven decisions, follow established policies, and welcome resident feedback to strengthen trust and improve how we serve the community.

FORUMS FOR NORTH OAKS CANDIDATES AVAILABLE ONLINE

The candidates for Minnesota State Senate District 36, MN State House Districts 36A/B, and for North Oaks Mayor and City Council participated in candidate forums moderated by the League of Women Voters. The White Bear Lake Area School Board candidates also took part in a forum this past month. They are all available to view at lvwmn-wbla.org.

The League of Women Voters - White Bear Lake Area invited citizens to submit the questions used. The playback video is bookmarked for each

question so viewers can home in on segments that particularly interest them. This is an excellent opportunity to hear from each of the candidates on the issues that are important to you. Early voting has begun and the League offers these forums as a unique way to become an informed voter.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan volunteer organization which encourages citizens to participate in government. Our mission is to support voter education and voters’ rights. For more election information check our website, lvw-wbla.org.

—League of Women Voters of White Bear Lake Area



VOTERS' GUIDE 2026

NORTH OAKS CITY COUNCIL (ELECT 2)

Riki Banerjee

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?

A. My professional background is as an engineer and manager at 3M and Medtronic. And I grew in my career into the roles of Vice President and Chief Technology officer at a leading edge startup company. I led engineering and operations teams through complex, regulated environments — managing budgets, navigating audits, and driving real decisions under real scrutiny. I drove a culture of transparency not only with my own teams but with suppliers and across the organization. We worked on medical implants, even in the brain, and our work carried real risk to real people. I needed to be able to meet with regulators, auditors, and patients and their families and be certain that my team had done the right thing. I'm data-driven. I'm solution-oriented. And I know how to bring people together to get things done. That's what I can bring to the City Council.



Q. Why are you running for City Council?

A. Recently, as I transitioned from a full time engineering executive to consulting, I have had the opportunity to engage more with the community. Community members encouraged me to run to bring my engineering background and pragmatic, engaging leadership style to the city council. I've also found good camaraderie with Fritz Johnson and Andrew Gaspard who are also running for mayor and city council positions. Together, we can bring a complementary skillset and leadership experiences to the City Council.

Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?

A.

- Data driven decision making and forums where residents can engage in meaningful dialogue with city leadership.
- Bringing good budgetary practices that restore fiscal responsibility and transparency.
- Preserve the natural environment and self-governance of North Oaks.

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as a council member.

A. As I've engaged with the community, I've learned that there

are a lot of smart people in North Oaks and they feel an erosion of trust with city leadership. My top priority would be to work to restore that trust with residents and key partner organizations, such as NOHOA and local school boards. I will approach it with a data driven approach and a process to engage the community in forums that enable meaningful dialogue with city leadership.

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?

A. After 75+ years of mindful growth, North Oaks has largely completed development. As a candidate, I've been meeting people not only in the core part of North Oaks, but also in other areas such as Deer Hills, Rapp Farm, and Waverly Gardens. The needs are variable, but a common theme is a commitment to the historic founding vision of North Oaks as a community grounded in nature.

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?

A. As a 20-year resident, my husband and I engaged arborists, naturalists, and other expertise to ensure a long-term horizon for our property and old growth trees. This is the kind of stewardship I can bring to the City Council to ensure good collaboration with NOHOA and operational budget planning that enables preservation of the truly unique character of North Oaks.

Andrew Gaspard

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?

A. My professional skills are in finance, business management, and city planning, all of which I think are relevant to the management of the city. I hold both a Master of Urban Planning degree and an MBA. After working as a city planner and subsequently a commercial banker for more than 15 years, my wife Nina and I started an environmentally friendly garment care company, which we grew from humble beginnings to a large, profitable operation. After 10+ years of operation, we successfully sold to the market leader in 2022. I currently manage a private company that, among other assets, manages 10,000 acres of commercial forest land, and I serve on two non-profit boards.



important issues before voting.

Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?

A. My first priority is restoring fiscal discipline, both in terms of how we set our tax levy but also how we manage our expenses and revenues during the year. My second priority is transparency and resident involvement. We need to do things in a way that is clear and timely and provides both Council and residents the facts and data to make good decisions. My third priority is the natural environment and preserving North Oaks' founding vision. We have a great opportunity to preserve and expand on the Hill family's original vision by improving our management of association lands, improving our lakes from a natural and recreational point of view, completing our trail system, and working with the community to add or enhance other amenities.

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as a council member.

A. I chose fiscal responsibility as my first priority because it represents a huge opportunity for residents right now. Under the current mayor, there have been three years of double-digit tax increases, and higher city taxes, together with higher association fees, have greatly increased our cost of living.

The good news is much of this increase has been unnecessary, since property taxes have greatly exceeded spending for several years. A refocus on basic blocking and tackling, such as cost controls, careful spending management, seeking multiple bids, eliminating redundant functions with NOHOA, and judicious

use of outside consultants and attorneys, should pay huge dividends through lower costs and better services.

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?

A. Our family lives in North Oaks because we love nature and the texture of the community; kids biking to the beach or exploring the city by kayak, giant turtles, eagles, and herons, and falling to sleep at night to the sound of owls and frogs. North Oaks is a truly unique place in the Twin Cities and we need to keep it that way.

We need to make decisions carefully or we risk costing-out long-term residents and making it impossible for new families to move here for the same reasons my family did. My vision for the future is for us to continue to be a unique, natural, informal, quiet community, the kind of place our children would choose for their own families.

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?

A. The most important ingredient in community involvement is putting problems and proposals in front of residents simply, clearly, and early enough to matter. People are busy, and frankly have much more important things on their plates. Our job is to make it easy for them to see what's at stake and tell us what they think, not to bury the question in a packet released a few days before a vote.

And it's my job as an elected representative not to wait for input but to go get it. That's why I reached out to more than 1,000 residents when I ran two years ago, and why I make a point of asking residents directly whenever the Council faces an important decision.

Greg Peterson

Q. What relevant experience will you bring to the role?

A. My career spans two complementary disciplines: providing legal advice to individuals and families and building long-term financial security for them. After practicing law for eight years, I transitioned to a financial advisory role in which I have spent over three decades helping hundreds of clients think through their sources of income, their expenses, and their budget issues, with an eye toward long-term financial stewardship.

City governance requires the exact same skills. Whether it's a client's retirement plan or a city's balance sheet, the questions are the same: what are we willing to commit to, who pays for it, and can we sustain it without surprises down the road? Statutes and regulations are familiar turf for me and I know my way around a balance sheet.



Q. What are the three biggest priorities you would like to focus on during your term?

A. My priorities are secondary to the community's priorities. That said:

1. Clean water. Pleasant Lake is the crown jewel of North Oaks, but its ecosystem faces growing threats that impact water quality and recreational enjoyment. Cleaning up and preserving the lake is essential to maintain the quality of life that attracted residents to North Oaks in the first place.
2. Infrastructure. Aging septic systems face physical space constraints and eventual failure. I advocate for thoughtful, proactive planning to achieve local control over future infrastructure needs that respect our natural surroundings.
3. Community partnership. Strategic partnering with NOHOA, the new Community Foundation, and groups like the Hill Farm Historical Society to protect North Oaks' natural beauty and small-town feel as pressures on our infrastructure increase.

Q. For your top priority, please provide more detail on why this issue is important to you, and how will you approach it as a council member.

A. Kudos to the current Council for their hard work on this issue, including an ongoing, comprehensive study of the factors contributing to the lake's decline. I would continue that approach with a focus on collaborative, grant-funded environmental management:

- Data-Driven Solutions: Base interventions on continuous water quality monitoring to address root causes like nutrient loading (phosphorous), invasive species, and the connection to the Mississippi.
- Strategic Partnerships: Work directly with the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization, St. Paul Regional Water Services, NOHOA, and state agencies to implement targeted watershed management, invasive species control (like carp

removal), and runoff mitigation.

- Non-Levy Funding: Aggressively pursue regional, state, and private conservation grants to cover cleanup and maintenance costs without raising taxes.

Q. What is your vision for the future of North Oaks?

A. North Oaks residents share a clear priority: preserving what makes our community unique. We cherish our lakes, trails, and woods; we are committed to environmental stewardship; we value safety, privacy, and the small-town feel of the community. I would work to protect these core values while keeping an open mind on changes that could make the community even better.

The Hill family legacy is both one of preservation and progressive vision. Preserving what we love about North Oaks is not inconsistent with anticipating the developing constraints of yesterday's infrastructure. Change is always hard, but we need to think long term about the kind of place North Oaks will be for the generations that follow. I believe thoughtful, fiscally responsible planning will help us get there.

Q. How will you engage the community in your decision-making process?

A. As an attorney and financial advisor, I have sharpened my listening skills over many years. I commit to being available to residents who wish to share their concerns. Community engagement, however, is about more than listening - it's about structured, clear communication before decisions are made. The best outcomes in any process happen when stakeholders are actively consulted and fully informed. My pledge to the residents of North Oaks is that I will listen to your concerns with an open mind, that I will prioritize clear, advance notice on key municipal proposals, and that I will support breaking down complex budget and infrastructure decisions into clear, accessible information. Every resident should have a voice and a seat at the table as we plan for the future.