

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

Carolyn Clow
McFarland Village President
<https://www.facebook.com/CarolynClowMcFarland>
Trustee

Professional Experience:

Purchasing Agent, Dane County since April 2001

Political/Service Experience:

Village Trustee, 2017-2019, 2020 to present

Why Are You Running In This Election?

I am running so we have a change in the Executive Leadership role in the Village. We have had the same Village President for the past 9 years. The incumbent has limited community participation and has taken hostile actions against staff. The incumbent is not running and we need to restore respect and cohesion to the village. We also need to tackle issues of equity and environmental sustainability which we have long ignored.

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

1. Communication with village residents and the committee structure.
2. Building projects in the Village. We will bid out a new Public Safety Center this year and then begin renovating our existing Municipal Center.
3. Design a comprehensive economic development plan for the Village.

What Are The Largest Environmental Concerns You Aim To Deal With In Office?

We are not considering the environment when we make decisions. The Village has recently joined the DNR's Green Tier Legacy Communities program and begun an advisory committee. We are making decisions that will make our new building a net zero energy consumer. We need to integrate environmental sustainability into every decision the village makes. This will require a change in mindset and building skills for our staff, and it is imperative that this happens. We have been setting the groundwork for these changes, and we must follow through.

How Will You Use Your Position To Create More Equitable Opportunities And Help Those Living In Poverty?

Currently, the Village takes a very small role in the creating more equitable opportunities. To date, the Village undertakes two initiatives that are directly involved in 1) supporting the food pantry 2) supporting our senior outreach services. In addition, we need to make our zoning code more friendly to residents who wish to purchase 1/2 duplexes and to allow for affordable housing. In addition, we need to pursue renovating our municipal building into our community center. This center will provide us the opportunity to provide space and programming to serve our residents, particularly our most vulnerable - seniors and those who are financially unable.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

First, we stop ignoring the fact that there is racial inequality in the Village of McFarland. There is racial inequality everywhere and we need to take actions to make the Village aware of it's own inequities. We had a BLM rally in the Village in June 2020. I worked with the organizers to develop a resolution for the Village Board

and for the School Board which the community supported. Since these resolutions passed, we now have a framework in which to work and to gain a commitment on the part of the School Board and Village Board. As President of the Village Board, I will be able to ensure that our staff and elected officials uphold the commitments the community requested of us and that we agreed to.

How will you promote restorative justice and address abusive and racist practices by the police force?

We discovered over the summer that the Village was not participating in the Community Restorative Court Program. We immediately worked to join that program and directed our Police Department to refer all eligible cases to the program. We will work with our County and State elected officials for an expansion of restorative justice programs so people over the age of 21 can participate.

Due to the ongoing economic impact of Coronavirus, many local governments are expecting unprecedented budget shortfalls. What would you prioritize in the budget? Where would you make cuts?

We will need to protect the basic services of the village in the event of lower property tax revenues due to Coronavirus. In the Village this will mean ceasing spending on nonessential purchases and possibly directing our staff to take furlough days. We do not offer a lot in addition to our core services so there are not entire programs to cut. To the best of our ability, we will need to be careful about our cuts so we do not create long term damage to the Village by making poor choices now.

How have you elevated diverse voices in government and public discourse? How would you continue to do so if elected to this office?

I ran for Village President in 2019 and lost by two votes. In my concession letter to the editor, I asked community members to apply to serve on committees in the Village. Since that time, I have recruited a dozen members of committee members, and two Village board candidates. I helped to establish our first diversity, equity and inclusion committee and helped to promote having another trustee be the Village Board representative on that committee. We must continue to hear from those members of our community who we have not heard from.

Changes will need to be made to our overused committee structure to make participation more meaningful and impactful and we need to have a more careful selection process to be intentionally diverse. We can not maintain the status quo.

What Are The Largest Transportation Issues You Wish To Work On And How Will You Address Them?

The Village of McFarland is not served by public transportation. In order for us to have public transportation in the Village, we will need the authority of a Regional Transit Authority. This is currently illegal according to state law. We will need to work with our elected assemblyperson and senator to continue to shine the spotlight on this area of need. We may be able to pay for some very limited service to the Village, similar to the way that Sun Prairie provided that service. This is something that we will need to look into. Our most vulnerable residents are locked out of participating in the larger regional economy because of their lack of access to transportation. If we can provide transportation to facilitate this participation; then it is our responsibility to do so. This may be cost prohibitive and, if so, we need to develop a plan to help this happen in the future.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?