

Dane County Democratic Party Candidate Questionnaire

Heidi Murphy
Village Trustee
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Professional Experience:

Geographic and Partnership Specialist with US Census Bureau
2008-2013, Substitute Teacher 2013-2015

Political/Service Experience:

Village Trustee 2019-Present, Chair of Parks, Recreation and Forestry Committee and Ordinance Review Committee. Member of the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee, Utility Commission, Personnel and Finance Committee, and Board of Review. I serve on the Capital Area Regional Planning Commission, appointed by the Dane County Cities and Villages Association. I also belong to the Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce and the Optimist Club of Cottage Grove.

Why Are You Running In This Election?

I am running for re-election to the Village Board because I feel passionate about the issues and decisions in front of us as Cottage Grove grows. We have accomplished a number of things during my first term, but I would like keep us moving forward in a second term on the Village Board. My top priority is promoting an active community where bicycling, walking, and recreation are a safe, healthy, and accessible part of our daily activities. I support expanding recreational and park opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of our community's senior, youth, and adult

populations. I will continue to support proposals and programs that build a stronger local economy, provide opportunities for residents and businesses, provide housing opportunities at all levels, promote inclusivity for all of our current and future residents, and reduce our impact on the environment.

What Are The Three Most Important Issues In Your Race?

Housing options at various prices, community spaces (library/parks), sustainability

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

I am currently working on both longer term projects and immediate solutions with the Ad Hoc Sustainability Committee. For example, we are working Alliant Energy on where we may plan for a large community based solar field in the future while joining RENEW Wisconsin's MadiSUN program to connect residents to affordable group buys now and starting a rain barrel program so residents can access discounted rain barrels to install at their own homes.

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

Accessibility to quality housing that is affordable is a challenge across Dane County and it is a particular challenge in Cottage Grove. For many years, the vast majority of housing being built in Cottage Grove was single family housing and the current limited supply of that is driving up housing prices even further. This has created many challenges: some people can no longer afford to live in Cottage Grove due to the rising costs, some people are spending a large portion of their income on housing leaving them little money left for food and essentials, some people getting jobs in our community are unable access housing in Cottage Grove

which affects our local businesses, their quality of life, and increases traffic/pollution because those employees travel from outside of Cottage Grove for work. In my first term on the Village Board, we have approved a number of new developments that will address this clear need in our community including a Movin' Out apartment complex, market rate apartments, condos, and townhomes to provide greater opportunity in the village. We have also established a Housing Task Force to evaluate our current situation and make recommendations for the future. I look forward to building on that progress in a second term.

How Do We Address Racial Inequality?

The process of undoing the centuries of systemic racism will not be completed overnight. It will take some quick changes and other other long term community work. The village has established an Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to get started on this work. As an elected official and a community member, I plan to work with this committee to change policies that might need changing, support building a local library to increase accessibility to library resources for all, support our recreational programming so they can offer a wide variety of programs that include something for everyone, support programs and policies that address the ways racism permeates our society, build on relationships with other organizations doing this work in our community (school district, local First Friends group).

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

This is an important topic and I would like to see work on this at many levels. I believe it is a result of the systemic racism in our

society and these need to be addressed together. I am committed to accountability, transparency and oversight at the local level. In addition, systemic changes in the police system at a higher level will also be necessary to address this issue by holding officers accountable. I am also supportive of additional resources for our communities to address economic disparities, support for recovery for substance abusers, mental health support which will help connect residents that may be currently interacting with the police force to the services they need instead of moving into the prison system.

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 are currently growing in Cottage Grove and will likely need additional staff in the future. The anticipated budget shortfalls would likely delay an increase in village staff or purchase of new equipment which will need to be carefully evaluated so continue to provide the level of service our residents expect. The village may also want to look for opportunities for sharing costs through grants to meet other sustainability goals such as transitioning the village fleet to electric or hybrid.

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

The main way that we are improving the public discourse in the village is through the creation of a number of new committees to address needs within our community. We are working to get more voices at the table and provide opportunities for more residents to be involved in the decision making process. We have more work to do in the area of community engagement.

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

We are historically a bedroom community that depends almost entirely on personal vehicles for transportation. I have been working to increase the connectivity of our multi-use off street paths to promote safe and easy alternative transportation options around the village. However, it is also imperative that we continue to grow our housing and economic options so people can find more of the things they need and recreational opportunities right here in Cottage Grove reducing the need to rely on cars for your everyday life. I would also support a feasibility study to understand the costs associated with a BRT line to Cottage Grove.

Any Other Issues/Topics You Wish To Discuss?

One important issue in Cottage Grove is the lack of a public library. I believe we should develop a plan to make a library a reality in Cottage Grove. A library fits within all of my priorities and I believe a library will make our community stronger. The library would serve as a hub within Cottage Grove providing essential services, community programming, resources for small businesses, and keep residents right here in Cottage Grove driving demand for additional local businesses. When residents stay in Cottage Grove, it provides fuel for our local economy while also reducing our fuel consumption. It is essential to our community and our future to lay out a plan for a local, community library.