

# Dane Dems Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for seeking an endorsement from the Dane County Democratic Party. **This questionnaire is due by no later than Friday, January 24, at 11:59 PM.**

**You do not need to answer all of the questions below, but please answer all of the ones you feel are pertinent to your campaign and mark the questions you do not feel are pertinent N/A.** We will ask more detailed questions and followups during our interview, if we choose to have one, so feel free to answer these questions as briefly or thoroughly as you desire.

These answers will be shared in full with our membership before they vote on your endorsement.

Email \*

johnpaul.villavicencio@gmail.com

Candidate name \*

JP Villavicencio

Position you are running for (include municipality) \*

Village Trustee, Village of Cottage Grove

Campaign website

<https://jpforcg.com/>

## Professional Experience \*

I am a higher education professional and master's-level instructor with expertise in organizational governance, data analysis, educational policy, academic advising, and innovative uses of technology to enhance systems and strategies. My academic background includes a Doctorate in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education Leadership from Edgewood College, a Master's degree in Higher Education Leadership from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, and a Bachelor's degree in Geography and Environmental Studies from the University of Wisconsin. I also have professional experience working with Wisconsin's Technical Colleges and the Universities of Wisconsin, giving me a deep understanding of how to analyze complex systems, develop effective policies, and drive meaningful change.

## Political/Service Experience \*

I have a strong background in political and community service that reflects my commitment to Cottage Grove. I serve as Vice President of the Cottage Grove Library Board, a member of the Village's Ad Hoc Housing Zoning Committee, on the Cottage Grove Student Family Organization's Committee to bring a truly inclusive playground to our elementary schools, and I coach youth soccer and basketball.

## Why are you running for this seat? \*

I am running for Village Board Trustee because I am deeply committed to fostering transparency, inclusivity, and responsible growth in our community. I want to ensure that residents are informed and engaged, with access to the facts they need to actively participate in decision-making processes that shape our village's future. Through my work on the library board, the ad hoc housing zoning committee, and other community initiatives, I've seen firsthand the importance of listening to diverse perspectives and making data-driven decisions that benefit everyone. My goal is to help build a Cottage Grove that supports all residents—from young families to seniors—while prioritizing equity, sustainability, and fiscal responsibility.

What are the three most important issues in your race? \*

1. Transparency and Community Engagement: Ensuring residents are informed about what is happening in the village and have the tools to participate in decision-making processes. Open communication and accessibility are key to fostering trust and collaboration between the board and the community.
2. Sustainable and Equitable Growth: Supporting responsible development that reflects our shared values of sustainability, accessibility, and inclusivity. This includes addressing housing affordability, supporting "missing middle" housing options, and protecting our environment.
3. Fiscal Responsibility: Ensuring the village's financial resources are managed wisely and invested in ways that enhance quality of life while keeping taxes fair and manageable. This includes prioritizing essential services, supporting local businesses, and making strategic decisions that balance growth with long-term sustainability.

What are the largest environmental concerns you aim to deal with in office?

One of the largest environmental concerns I aim to address is ensuring sustainable growth while protecting and enhancing our natural resources. This includes expanding and maintaining bike paths, pedestrian-friendly infrastructure, and other alternative forms of transportation to reduce emissions and promote active lifestyles.

I will also advocate for green energy initiatives, such as exploring renewable energy options for municipal buildings and encouraging energy-efficient development practices. Protecting our water resources and preserving green spaces are equally critical to maintaining our community's environmental health.

By prioritizing sustainability in village planning and development, we can reduce our environmental impact, improve quality of life, and create a healthier, more resilient community for future generations.

How will you use your position to create more equitable opportunities and help those living in poverty?

As a Village Board Trustee, I will work to create more equitable opportunities by focusing on policies that address the root causes of poverty and inequality. This includes supporting affordable housing initiatives, such as expanding access to "missing middle" housing, which offers a range of affordable options for families at various income levels. I will also work to ensure that local and county services—such as job training, mental health support, and food security programs—are accessible to those in need, partnering with local organizations to address gaps.

Additionally, I will prioritize financial policies that ensure the village's resources are used wisely, focusing on investments that benefit all residents while keeping taxes fair and manageable. By actively engaging with underrepresented voices, I will help shape a more inclusive community where every resident has the opportunity to thrive.

What will you do to address racial inequality, promote restorative justice, and/or address racially biased policing?

To address racial inequality and promote restorative justice, I would advocate for policies and practices that prioritize equity, transparency, and community trust. This includes supporting initiatives that provide ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training for all village employees, including police, to ensure fair and unbiased practices.

I would work to establish or strengthen community oversight mechanisms that encourage accountability and open dialogue between residents and law enforcement. Promoting restorative justice approaches—such as mediation, community service, and other alternatives to traditional punitive measures—can help repair harm and rebuild trust while addressing systemic issues.

Finally, I would actively engage with diverse community members to understand their experiences and ensure their voices are represented in decision-making. By fostering collaboration, transparency, and education, we can take meaningful steps toward creating a more inclusive and equitable community.

How will you improve the public health of our community in your position?

N/A

What are the largest transportation issues you wish to work on and how will you address them?

The largest transportation issues I wish to address are improving connectivity, expanding alternative transportation options, and ensuring accessibility for all residents. This includes working to enhance our bike path network and pedestrian infrastructure, providing safe routes for biking and walking, and reducing reliance on cars for short trips.

Additionally, I will work to improve road safety, especially for vulnerable groups like seniors and children, by prioritizing crosswalks, traffic calming measures, and better signage. Addressing these transportation challenges requires thoughtful planning and collaboration with regional partners, and I will work to ensure that Cottage Grove remains a community that is accessible and connected for everyone.

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

I have actively worked to elevate diverse voices in government and public discourse by ensuring that all community members have the opportunity to be heard. In my current roles on the library board and the village's housing committee, I've made it a priority to listen to and incorporate perspectives from individuals with varying backgrounds, experiences, and needs. I also seek out opportunities to engage with underrepresented groups and ensure they have a seat at the table when decisions are being made.

If elected, I will continue this work by actively engaging with diverse communities in Cottage Grove, holding inclusive public forums, and reaching out to groups that may not always have the resources or time to attend meetings. I will advocate for policies that not only listen to but also empower marginalized voices, ensuring that all residents feel represented and valued in the decision-making process.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

N/A

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