

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 *

john@john4madison.vote

Candidate name *

John Guequierre

Position you are running for (include municipality) *

Madison Common Council District 19 Alder

Campaign website

john4madison.vote

Professional Experience *

Current: Principal of I-OSC, LLC, a consultancy in advanced construction techniques used to provide affordable and sustainable housing with current projects in Oregon and Vermont.

Current: President of Otologic Technologies, Inc., a company that uses artificial intelligence to improve ear disease diagnosis worldwide.

Previously: CFO, COO and CEO of multiple private and public companies producing affordable housing.

Political/Service Experience *

Finishing 1st term as Madison Common Council District 19 Alder and serving on the Plan Commission, Board of Public Works, Housing Strategy Committee, Community Development Block Grant Committee and Vendor Oversight Committee. Prior to becoming Alder, served as a resident member of the Madison Sustainability Committee. I have been on the Wexford Village board for eleven years, currently serving as VP. I have also provided leadership to many nonprofits, including mentoring startups in Madison, and social service organizations in multiple states (Chair of United Way of Elkhart County, Indiana and President of the Indiana Association of United Ways).

Why are you running for this seat? *

A few years ago, I realized that my experience and expertise in finance and budgeting, affordable housing, and bringing sustainability to the built environment were a fit for the most challenging problems facing Madison. I believe that my efforts have contributed to progress in these areas, and I would like to continue that contribution in another term.

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

- 1) Moving forward with our five-year budget plan that reduces the impact of the state-caused structural deficit and gives us time to get a fairer deal from the legislature
- 2) Accelerating the expansion of the supply of affordable housing
- 3) Working to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, Madison's racial disparities.

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

Madison needs to continue reducing its own carbon footprint in its operations and buildings. Despite state opposition, the City can incentivize developers, residents, and visitors to lower their carbon footprint through building permit incentives that encourage greater efficiency and transit infrastructure investments that reduce dependency on high-emission vehicles. We need to place particular focus on public and private activities that contribute to the degradation of our lakes and streams by continuing our attention to salt and leaf runoff. Also, our watershed studies have provided a long list of climate resilience projects that we need to prioritize and implement.

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

Too many of our neighbors are forced to rely on food banks because after rent, childcare, and health care there is no room left for food. My votes at Plan Commission, Board of Public Works, Community Development Block Grant Committee and Common Council support not just housing in general but truly affordable housing despite some very strong opposition. Few alders invested the effort I did to understand our budget deficit and the tragic risk we faced of reducing some of the services that have the greatest equity component. I want to continue the fight to avoid what America repeatedly does to its detriment – balance budgets on the backs of the most vulnerable.

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

I will continue to do what I have been doing: supporting those efforts that we know can be effective I voted to restore funding to the Office of the Independent Monitor, which racially marginalized communities have fought for; I championed the expansion of the CARES program which substitutes mental health experts for police in responding to residents struggling with mental health and trauma; I fought for the tax referendum so we could save the Community Development grants to those nonprofits focused on these issues that were on the chopping block as well as community policing and police training budgets . Going forward, one specific initiative I'd like to consider is a requirement that data on race be collected and made public for all traffic stops. Across the country, there is a lack of data on this basic point of interaction between the police and the public, but several states do require this. Outgoing Madison Police Chief Barnes has initiated a greater emphasis on data collection and hired staff to do so. Because I do not think we can count on our legislature to mandate this statewide any time soon, I would like to explore the option of doing this locally with the Community Oversight Board to see if it is an initiative they would support and like me to prioritize in my role. I will continue to listen to individuals of color in the community who help me better understand the needs and solutions supported by those directly impacted.

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

Preventive health care has a big return on investment, and I want to continue supporting Madison and Dane County's efforts in that area. Some of the biggest risks to health are ones of which Madisonians aren't aware. Our sewers, water mains, stormwater systems and even our communications infrastructure are aging and under the stress of population growth. We need to continue our investment in those most basic of municipal services. If I'm elected to a new term and return to the Board of Public Works, I'll continue to support those investments.

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

Madison and its Dane County neighbors need to continue to lobby for a regional transportation authority. Meanwhile we need to continue to invest in viable alternatives to single-occupied gasoline engine vehicles. I'm proud of the launch of the East-West BRT last year. It's too early to know whether the change in federal administration will block our hopes for a North-South BRT route, but we need to try. Madison's efforts to focus development adjacent to public transit and easy access to biking and pedestrian trails is working. We also need to continue our efforts for safety under Vision Zero.

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

Let me first acknowledge that I am a relatively affluent white senior citizen who may owe much of my success to an easy path. I have also tried to approach what I can do to increase diversity with a healthy dose of humility, realizing that I can't possibly appreciate fully what our long denigrated neighbors have endured. Nevertheless, I am proud of the progress I achieved in improving diversity in every organization I have led. The howls are loud for the elimination of DEI funding, claiming discrimination against the "more qualified". That is not my experience. I attribute much of my success to forming highly qualified teams, and in every case, the obstacles to forming the best team were the visible and invisible racial and gender barriers. I needed every DEI tool at my disposal.

Those experiences also taught me that there isn't a single approach to elevating diverse voices, though listening is always the first step. There are times when I need to use my privilege to amplify the voices of others because they are being ignored, and times when I need to step back and provide strong, but quiet, support. I have made it a point to listen to all of my colleagues on the council and I believe I have earned the trust of most of them. This is essential in ensuring that diverse voices are part of our public discourse.

When it comes to the community at large, I thought District 19 needed more than blogs and media stories about our budget challenges, so I arranged for three neighborhood meetings to dive deeply into the causes and potential solutions for our structural deficit. I encouraged suggestions and questions. The sessions attracted not only a diverse cross-section from District 19, but folks from across the City. Despite understandable frustration in the community, I believe that this effort was a significant contribution to securing the referendum's passage.

Any other issues/topics you wish to discuss?

I anticipated that what I learned about reaching goals in business and non-profit communities was also true in elected bodies. It is. You reach objectives through forming coalitions, and those can't be stable over multiple issues unless the members practice mutual respect. That is not easy, especially in today's riven society where the natural human propensity to define "us" and "them" results in distrust and outright hate. I believe that Common Council staff would attest that I have brought that belief in mutual respect to the Common Council. I respect the effort and sacrifice that every member brings. While I disagree more often with some than others, I still look forward to the next opportunity for cooperation on an important project. I believe my many votes for progressive projects and principles speaks for itself, and I will do all I can to resist the worst affects of the Trump administration on our City.

I want to directly address concerns that were raised in my first campaign for this seat: the fact that I have voted across party lines over the course of my life. My Mom's family were Milwaukee Socialists in the Mayor Hoan era. My Dad's family were LaFollette Republicans but stayed in the party when liberals were still welcome. I picketed the White House in the Civil Rights era and campaigned for Bobby Kennedy before his assassination. Then I got married and got totally involved in work – both businesses and the non-profits I wanted to champion, affiliated with no party and uninvolved in party politics at any level. We moved around a lot but settled for several decades in an Indiana county where I voted for Republicans more than Democrats for a while.

But by the early 2000's the Republican's were too radical to fit my values, and Barak Obama cemented the permanent switch. When we moved home to Wisconsin permanently in 2013, I continued to vote Democratic at the national level. Though it was admittedly naïve, I was still hoping that the Wisconsin long-known for its bipartisan progressivism was revivable. I was curious whether any faint echoes of that Wisconsin were evident at least in the Dane County Republican Party. I paid the dues to participate in the local caucus and attended the local meetings and accomplished nothing more than voting against a string of crazy resolutions. After voting for Clinton and Baldwin it seemed rather silly to stay, and here I am as who I am, someone who was always aligned with Democratic values and now proudly carries the membership card. I am what my Common Council and committee votes say: a supporter of a society where everyone can contribute to the common wealth, where no one is excluded from the common struggle, where everyone shares in our creation, and everyone's work is appreciated, celebrated, and respected.

This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms