

**Name:** Kristy Janigo  
**Seeking Office:**  
Maple Grove Maple Grove  
City Council At Large

Interview #7

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9/23/2022 - 3:30:00 PM

**How long have you lived in your community?**

7 years

**Are you a Homeowner or Renter?**

Home owner

**Do you own other real property (e.g. Business, Cabin, Investment, or Rental Property)? If so, which?**

No

**Describe your civic and/or community engagement.**

I'm a public servant for my fulltime work. My day job is working for Hennepin County, so I'm well versed in local government policy, including housing policy. I volunteer majority of my spare time in the community. I'm a military veteran and a Legionnaire. I travel all around the state volunteering for American Legion events and raising my voice in support of veterans and military personnel. I chair the Osseo Maple Grove American Legion Media & Communications Committee and their Legislative Committee. I'm the American Legion 10th District Vice Commander for the North Hennepin Region. At the state level, I serve on the American Legion Legislative Committee and help them form their annual legislative platform. Apart from the Legion, I sit on the United Veterans Legislative Council where Congressional staff, leading veterans nonprofits and advocates, and major players in the veterans space work together to advance support for veterans. I'm Church Council Vice President and Chair of Stewardship at Maple Grove Lutheran Church. Before that I was the Outreach Chairperson. Next year, I will be the Church Council President. I also participate as an assisting minister on Sunday worships when I can. I take my role as a lay faith leader seriously. I am a new board member of the Maple Grove Rotary. I joined as a member in February of this year and was quickly asked to take on more. The board membership started in June with the new Rotary year. I attend meetings for Age Friendly Maple Grove regularly. I'm very interested in supporting seniors in our community. Many of our veterans are seniors, but also I am just so grateful for the contributions of the generations that have gone before me. I attend the Metropolitan Interfaith Council on Affordable Housing meetings in our region regularly. It's important for me to understand the housing needs in our community. I graduated from the Maple Grove Citizens Police

Academy in 2017. My brother has been in law enforcement for 10 years in North Dakota. It was important for me to understand and empathize with his job. I very much enjoyed academy and one of the first things I did when I decided to run for office this year was do a police ride-along with a Maple Grove K-9 unit. I served on the Maple Grove Arbor Committee for two years, and I keep in touch with committee members. I go out with them to pull buckthorn from public lands each year, and I enjoy it.

**Are you accepting PAC contributions?**

Yes

**Please list any notable supporters or groups of supporters for your campaign**

Here is my endorsements page:

<https://www.janigoforcitycouncil.com/endorsements>. I have by far the most public support of any other candidate in this race. I've got a couple national endorsements, Run for Something and VoteVets. I'm proud of my labor endorsements - six locals have supported me. Several past and present elected officials, from school board to neighboring communities' city councils, to former Secretary of State Mark Ritchie, current Hennepin County Commissioner Kevin Anderson, current State Rep. Kristin Bahner, former State Sen. Mike Parry, and others. I'm very proud of the veterans who have endorsed my campaigns, and several Maple Grove residents who are known for good work in the community. It's a bipartisan coalition of people who believe I will be able to lead and advocate for all Maple Grove residents.

**What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?**

Maple Grove has expanded its residential capacity dramatically over the past 10 years, adding around 5,000 units of housing. During this period, there was a shift away from owner-occupied affordable housing toward market-rate and high-end rental units. It is easy to see the visual impact of the multistory apartment complexes that have been added throughout the city. In 2020, the City of Maple Grove commissioned a housing study, finding a lack of affordable housing, especially for seniors. Residents 65 and older account for 13% of the population. There are some plans underway to add more senior housing. Duffy Development just opened Bottineau III, and residents have moved in or are in the process of doing so. The three Bottineau buildings are beautiful and have affordability aspects. I was able to go on a tour of Bottineau III with John Duffy

for my day job before the work was complete. We need to see more of this type of work. Maple Grove owns Woodland Mounds, a senior housing complex that had fixed their rental rates that made it affordable as costs in the area rose and is now transitioning to have income requirements for its new residents. We need several more Woodland Mounds to meet the needs for senior housing that we have. Maple Grove currently has a moratorium on new rental licenses, excluding multifamily. The moratorium will last through July 2023. The logic presented at the council meeting was that they need to stop the proliferation of large national real estate organizations from buying up all the entry point houses to rent out so that families will be able to buy homes. On the other hand, I've heard from realtors that this is going to prevent their clients from being able to sell their homes or become small landlords. I think these moratoriums are band-aid fixes for the underlying larger issues that we must solve. Overall, we are short on all types of housing, so the massive amount of new apartments, to me, are understandable because these folks are coming out here for jobs, and rents may be a bit more reasonable than the cities that are closer to the urban center. I am very concerned and passionate about making sure renters can fulfill their dreams of owning in Maple Grove, and I'm interested in discussing ways we can make that happen. There are other side effects of the massive growth Maple Grove has seen, and that's the roadway infrastructure is being overwhelmed. There's also traffic and public safety concerns. We'll need to adjust our approach to manage growth to maintain our infrastructure and public safety.

**The Twin Cities Metro is facing a housing shortage unlike any we have experienced in recent history. What will you do to increase the number of homes available to residents of your community?**

There are some solutions our city hasn't explored much that could help. In my work with the county, we sold tax forfeited property to the Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans (MAC-V). They used the four parcels of land to build a primary dwelling structure and an accessory dwelling unit on each property. Collectively, this made up to 40 units of supportive housing available to veterans who were experiencing homelessness. Maple Grove has a pretty restrictive ADU policy, and I think we should look at that. I've had several residents ask me about ADU's because they want their in-laws or parents to live in a detached ADU on their property, but it's not currently allowed. YardHomes has a neat program where you can buy an ADU with a loan, have a homeless veteran live in it for at least 10 years, and the loan gets forgiven. After that, the ADU is yours. I know building costs are almost impossible right now, and that's what's preventing developers from building at more opening price points of the market. There are public dollars to be had from the state and county for affordable housing, and it's not all at the 30% AMI level. There are plenty of opportunities for 60-80% of

the area median income, which we see more need for out here. If we are smart about utilizing some public dollars, we can reach more "missing middle" residents.

**Minnesota has one of the largest homeownership gaps between Whites and Blacks, Indigenous, and People of Color. This is one of MAR's primary concerns. What would you propose at the local level to close this home ownership gap?**

I'm also very concerned about this and it's an area that combines two of my biggest platform pieces, diversity/equity/inclusion and home ownership. On my issues page, they are my second and third major issue I'm advocating for: <https://www.janigoforcitycouncil.com/issues> I've been watching what other cities are doing. The City of Edina launched a program last year to financially assist first-generation home buyers with their mortgages, and they also have a housing preservation program to prevent the tear-down of smaller, affordable single-family homes. I think this is a really neat program that could change things for BIPOC home owners. I do know that Maple Grove works with the West Hennepin Affordable Housing Land Trust. Land trusts could be a great tool for the city to use to preserve affordability for those entry-point single family homes. There are creative ways to use tax forfeited lands. I mentioned the example of the ADU's before, and I understand that there is not as much TFL land out here in Maple Grove compared to the urban center. But when property is TFL and is not reconciled to the previous owner, this is an opportunity for the city to purchase the property and use it for public good.

**How do you think the city can best balance the rights of tenants and property owners to effectively manage rental housing?**

The pandemic has really strained tenant and property owner relationships. With the moratorium on evictions, it saved people from experiencing homelessness, but it really put many property owners' businesses at risk, including those who are small property owners. It affected the owners' financial solvency. Early on in the pandemic, I met with small property owners and heard the horror stories of tenants trashing their place without repercussions because of the moratorium. There was no recourse because the person left with unpaid rent, and they could not rent out the unit to someone else. The federal emergency rental assistance was very slow to get out into the community. There were many administrative and IT issues that prevented people from getting their rental assistance in a timely manner, and meanwhile the property owners were left holding the bag. I did hear some success stories coming from the pandemic, and that was when tenants and property owners had relationships and worked together to solve a situation. Most of the owners I talked to just wanted to know what was going on so that they could make plans. Tenants were ashamed or embarrassed to ask for

help, so they did not tell the owner about their situation. When tenants and property owners can sit down together, discuss available resources, and make a plan to move forward, both sides win. To have this type of relationship, it does take time and investment on both sides. Tenants need to communicate their needs, and property owners need to be responsive. I understand that the city is struggling with staffing to be able to conduct all the inspections they need to do for rental properties, and that is part of the reason behind the rental license moratorium. If there are staffing issues, how do we build more staffing infrastructure? I think the city will need to look at their budget and see where more staff are needed for these roles. They did a great job advocating for the hiring needs of the police department, which is very publicly visible. But staff for these administrative duties, while not very visible, make a huge difference and eliminate a lot of the waiting time and painfulness behind the bureaucratic process. I think the city can also be a connector for tenants and property owners, and I know that the economic development department is already doing this, as I've had contact with them in my day job on requests. The city knows the human services organizations, like CROSS Services, and the county, which can help tenants get the resources and assistance they need to pay their bills so property owners continue to be solvent.

**What are your views on property tax rates in your community? Do you have concerns related to the city's property tax rate? If so, how would you address those concerns once elected?**

The property tax rates are high in the community. I'm especially worried for residents on fixed incomes. In my day job, I was part of setting the operating and capital budget for Hennepin County, so I was able to see the budget process for local government from beginning to end. The max levy and the final levy rate are a serious discussion because this is real money that residents need to pay. It's a fine balance between what is enough to deliver essential public services and what is not fiscally responsible. The city has worked to hold their tax levy relatively flat in recent years, and my understanding is that the city is on strong financial footing. They are trying to expand the community center, and a local option sales tax will be put to voters in November. I likely will be voting in support of that because it's a way to diversify where the money is coming from rather than putting it solely on property tax, which is already a lot for residents. Another area of concern I have is how the city does roadway improvements. Residents in the neighborhood that has their local roads redone in a given year receive a property tax assessment of 7000-8000. I think this is a lot for a single household to shoulder, and although they can split it out over a number of years, interest makes this a lot more than the initial assessment. I'd like to research and understand more about what other cities are doing. Are they using franchise fees

on public utilities to fund their roadway capital improvement plan? Are they exploring county, state, and federal funding on eligible roadways? How are they making the case for that funding? I'm interested in finding ways to cut operational costs the city has through building efficiency, energy savings, etc., so those dollars can be reinvested to fund other needs.

**Please provide links to all social media accounts connected to you or your campaign if any.**

[https://www.instagram.com/kristy\\_janigo/](https://www.instagram.com/kristy_janigo/) <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristy-janigo-37b4227/> <https://www.tiktok.com/@kristyannjanigo>  
<https://twitter.com/JanigoMG> <https://www.facebook.com/people/Kristy-Janigo/100064214104707/>

**The Minneapolis Area Association of REALTORS(R) may plan to interview some candidates virtually, would you be willing to participate, if contacted?**

Yes