

Jim Leuthner

Candidate for: City Council Ward 3 St Louis Park

How long have you lived in your community?

Lived here 9 years, My daughter started school in SLP in 2003. Very involved here for 18 years.

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

Endorsements from: Firefighters Local 993 Minneapolis Regional Labor Federation Minneapolis Building Trades Carpenters Local 322 North Central States Regional Council of Carpenters I have several pending endorsements from organizations. I received endorsements from many individuals including current and past office holders in past campaigns. I need to touch base with them about endorsement in this campaign

What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?

Affordable Housing. The current city council spends a lot of time with this issue. I support the current city council policy of having a dedicated percentage of affordable units built into new buildings. This also results in mixed income housing verses pockets of poverty. There are big blocks of existing affordable housing. The city needs to use TIF money to ensure this housing stays affordable as the properties are upgraded. Unfortunately many properties are affordable because they are in states of disrepair. I learned a lot about development and housing from 20 years in construction. I currently work for Frerichs Construction which specializes in remodeling and building subsidized housing. I have worked for thousands of hours in subsidized housing. I have spent years building apartment building. Some homes being rented instead of purchased. Sometimes these properties are not kept up well.

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?

I want to lose as few single family houses as possible. Parcels of land continue to become available for redevelopment. I think we should build affordable apartment type units and sell them as condos. I know there are obstacles to achieving this goal. I believe we need to work around or eliminate these obstacles. I would like to include efficiencies and one bedroom units in this model. This would give moderate income people a window into buying property. Buying property is still the number one way families build wealth in this country. We also find we have to build up. We cant build out. We need to balance this with existing development. I believe in smart, intelligent, responsible studied development. My wife bought our first home in St Paul for \$50,000 in 1980. Opportunities like this don't exist anymore.

REALTORS® hold Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as core values. Please describe how you view the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in your role as an elected official.

The Carpenters Union was formally dominated by white men. We found we really needed to recruit people from diverse, racial, cultural, gender, and ethnic groups. This also means diverse people need to be comfortable on the jobsites and be represented in leadership. We have a pre apprentice program that recruits underrepresented groups. The city need diverse representation at all levels of government, elected, management, and hourly workers. I feel fortunate to live in a city that aspires to be welcoming to all groups and GLBTQ friendly. I have very close family members, colleagues, and friends that I love with differing understandings of their personal sexuality. We aspire. We are better than we were in the past. We need to work forward to a better future. Policing is one area where we have seen great problems with equity. Fortunately St Louis park seems to be doing better than some communities. We need to continue our effort toward community policing. We need continuing training police officers. Training needs to include de-escalation and racial perception. As in all areas we need to hire a diverse population. I will continue to monitor the racial justice commission that studies many areas of inclusion and diversity. A current city council member of color was formally on this commission. I will also continue to monitor the police commission. Bad police officers need to be removed. I support proposed language

to give the city council more direct control over the police. The city council does have control over hiring and firing the chief of police.

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 homeownership gap?

Previous redlining prevented many people from buying houses in the past. The City of St Louis park is formulating a program to subsidize the purchase of homes by minority buyers. This is a good program but it will help very few buyers. Hennepin County has a program where the county owns the land and sells the house to moderate income buyers. This also will only help a very limited number of people. This is why I propose creating owner occupied affordable housing. This would create opportunities for many more people. We also need to make sure any kind of redlining is a thing of the past. The banks are important to solving this problem. I see they do advertise to under represented groups. I hope they see this as an opportunity to expand their clientele.

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

St Louis Park recently addressed a problem that is prevalent here and probably in many many communities. Tenants were denied access to renting because they were suspected of criminal activity. Many innocent people are suspected of criminal activity. This is the worst kind of collaboration between police and landlords. SLP is considering policy to end this practice. Tenants need to be able to remove dangerous tenants. I have many friends that live in subsidized housing. I also come from a family of property owners. Eight of eight of my family members own their houses. Five of eight owned businesses including rental property. My father also owns his house, had owned multiple businesses, and had owned rental properties. The recent tragic plane crash in Victoria MN hit a home my grandma lived in and my brother currently owns. I believe I have excellent exposure to both sides of this issue.

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?

We are a very popular market. Location, location, location, We have close proximity to downtown and houses people want to buy. My wife and I get a half dozen offers by people wanting to sell our house, for us every week. As values increase taxes on property rises. we should have full city coffers. I think high taxes are an affordable housing issue in St Louis Park especially for seniors trying to stay in their homes. The city doesn't need to spend money on everything every time. I've heard that sentiment knocking doors. "Why is the city spending so much on that?" The best way to control taxes is a well managed city. I hope my experience on the watershed board, as a trustee and as a treasurer will inform me on these issues. This is a small thing. Knocking doors I've seen many recently (last 3 years) planted dead trees from lack of water. Those trees are expensive to purchase and plant. That really seems like a waste to me.

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

Jim Leuthner for St Louis Park city Council Ward 3 FaceBook