

Page 1: Government Affairs Committee - Candidate Selection Survey

Q1

Full Name

Roslyn Harmon

Q2

Preferred phone number

763-286-6274

Q3

Preferred email address

roslynh4gvmayor@gmail.com

Q4

Office Sought

Mayor

Q5

Town of Residence

Golden Valley

Q6

How long have you lived in your community?

30 years

Q7

Are you a Homeowner or Renter?

Renter

Q8

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

NA

Q9

Describe your civic and/or community engagement.

I have taken part in several peaceful protests for local activism and advocacy causes.

I am Vice Chair of the PEACE (Police, Employment, Accountability and Community Engagement) Commission. We actively support GVPD in the areas of Recruitment, Data, and Community Engagement.

I am a founding member and Co-Chair of PRIME (Prioritize Race & Inclusion for More Equity) with residents in Golden Valley. Our goal is to promote racial equity through partnerships with the city, championing positive change in the community and city government. We called for a city equity task force which led to the Rising TIDES Task Force, the creation of an Equity Coordinator, and supporting the creation of the DEI Commission and PEACE Commission.

I am a founding member and Board of Directors for the Sweet Potato Comfort Pie (SPCP) Initiative which is a catalyst for caring and building community through courageous conversation centered around sweet potato pie. Volunteers from around the world help bake and gift pies to community for healing and empowerment, alliance building, crisis/trauma response, the arts, and mentorship.

SPCP is a nationally recognized movement that is also a family legacy, which I will one day operate. In January, we will celebrate 10 years of hosting our annual MLK Day of Service in the City of Golden Valley to hundreds of community members and residents.

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

I identify as a Democrat, yet I strive to represent ALL people regardless of their respective party. I have garnered both endorsements and support from multiple elected Democratic officials, including Golden Valley Mayor Shep Harris, MN Attorney General Keith Ellis, Mayor April Graves, and Mayor Melvin Carter, among others. My support also extends to 'The Divine 9,' the esteemed historically black fraternities and sororities, several faith-based organizations, as well as PRIME members.

I've actively pursued the backing of Women Winning, Teamsters, AFL-CIO, and the Senior DFL Caucus. However, I am awaiting responses from these organizations.

Q13

What are the most important housing challenges facing your community?

One of the most prevalent challenges in GV is the lack of affordable and attainable housing options. Scarcity of suitable housing for low- and middle-income individuals and families makes diversity goals harder to achieve. I have spoken to so many people who bought homes or located in neighboring suburbs because GV homes were too expensive or simply unavailable. This includes the Superintendent of Robbinsdale School District and Golden Valley's Chief of Police!

We need to ensure that all residents have equitable access to housing regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or other factors. New market-rate apartments are being built with some affordable options in the mix. However, GV does not have enough townhouse or senior housing options, which offer transition to or from single-family home ownership. We must also prioritize environmental sustainability in new construction. GV was once a wetland rightfully occupied by the Dakota people. Commercial and residential construction has had a noticeable impact on already stressed trees and water features, is a big challenge for several residents.

Golden Valley is recognized for its spacious and generous lots. However, with virtually all developable land already built up, increased density offers the main way to diversify housing options. Building on smaller lots or putting multi-family housing in single-family neighborhoods is likely to meet resistance.

Q14

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?

Creating workforce housing in suburbs is essential for accommodating a diverse range of residents while promoting economic growth. As Mayor, we will continue to work with programs such as Habitat for Humanity, Common Bond, and PRISM. We should continue collaborating with private developers to create mixed-income housing developments.

We should explore the feasibility of smaller housing units or co-living spaces to accommodate single residents or those seeking more affordable options. We can reevaluate zoning and land use policies or plan new housing developments near public transportation hubs, encouraging walking and reducing car dependency. As a renter, I believe we need to implement rent stabilization and tenant protections.

Thus far, Golden Valley has taken some small and scattered steps, such as developing unconventional parcels and allowing ADUs. We need a bigger vision. Golden Valley should establish a Community Land Trust to provide affordable options.

Q15

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?

Currently, I live in one of GV's newest complexes that is not affordable for most renters. I make a great income, yet as a single person, I cannot afford a nice house in Golden Valley. As a Black woman, I was not aware of homebuyer incentives for BIPOC individuals (such as offering down payment assistance, low-interest loans, or subsidies) until my realtor friend told me a year ago there were great ones to apply for, so I appreciate the MAR initiatives. But it is a reality that BIPOC-friendly resources are kept quiet, especially for suburban homeownership. Financial literacy programs and homeownership counseling services should be promoted by the City as well as by your profession.

Golden Valley's BIPOC population is roughly 20%. As Mayor (with the support of council), we will advocate for policies that prioritize affordable housing development in areas with existing BIPOC populations, ensuring equitable access to housing opportunities. We can also collaborate with programs that help renters transition into homeownership by offering rent-to-own options or pathways to purchase the homes they currently live in.

We need access to programs that offer post-purchase support and resources to ensure BIPOC homeowners can maintain their homes and overcome challenges that may arise. We need to work closely with our state representatives to support anti-predatory lending initiatives that protect vulnerable communities from discriminative/exploitative lending practices and to create credit-building programs that help BIPOC individuals improve their credit scores over time.

Q16

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

Golden Valley must partner with a community mediation organization that can provide mediation services where tenants and property owners can resolve disputes without resorting to legal action. As Executive Director of Dispute Resolution Center, I have the expertise to help guide the City toward resources that can provide this support. Partnering with local organizations such as PRISM, we can offer programs for both landlords and tenants. Best practices for property management and information about tenant rights and responsibilities will help develop better landlord-tenant relations.

I believe Golden Valley can do a better job gathering and analyzing data on rental trends, housing supply, and demand from the perspective tenants and current property owners. It's critical that we also develop and enforce clear, comprehensive rental laws that outline the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and property owners.

Q17

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?

Golden Valley's property taxes are too high! That's the message I have been hearing from residents. Some are financially prepared to deal with increases due to higher property valuations. However, many are not. I am concerned for seniors and what our tax levy means for them staying in their homes. One resident noted how their mortgage payment increased \$200/month, while they have friends in Orono a block of Lake Minnetonka who have lower taxes. My mother saw a \$500 a month increase, which was not something she had budgeted for or was prepared to pay.

We need transparency regarding our city's budget. We need to assess what is priority and what can wait. According to our city's current Mayor, our tax increase was due to inflation as well as hiring initiatives for DEI work. I am a firm supporter of DEI efforts, yet the city made a mistake with this decision by not truly assessing the impact it would have on residents.

Although the county determines much of the property tax load, the City must better align its spending priorities with what residents can bear. As Mayor, I will advocate that high property taxes are not the route to take if our goal is to have equitable and fair housing for all people.

Q18

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

Website: Roslyn4gv.com

Facebook: [RoslynHarmonGV](#)

Instagram: [Roslynh4gvmayor](#) (pending)

Twitter: [Roslynh4gvmayor](#) (pending)
