

Papa John Kolstad For Mayor
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Questionnaire from Lyndale Neighborhood Association.

1. Why are you running for Mayor?

We need a full time Mayor. The current Mayor is running for Governor instead of leading the city. Minneapolis is being mismanaged, both organizationally and financially. The city has forced up property values to increase tax revenue. The city has greatly increased fees, penalties, fines, assessments, etc to businesses and residents. All of these taxes are regressive and disproportionately affect the poor, people on fixed incomes, and small businesses. The City forces taxes from citizens with no regard to ability to pay, and continues to spend money without regard to the burden placed on citizens. There has been no detailed audit of the City in 3 years and Mayor Rybak voted with those opposed to an audit. Now the Mayor and City Council want to eliminate the Board of Estimate and Taxation who propose and perform the audit. The current City government is arrogant and often mistreats city residents.

2. Describe your background and why it makes you a good candidate for Mayor?

President, Mill City Music (a national music distributor with two record labels) 30 yrs; Chair, MN Universal Health Care Coalition Steering Committee (04 to 06); Boards: Metro Independent Business Alliance, Former Member Lake Street Council, Seward Redesign CDC, and Mpls Micro Loan.

Recording artist, performing musician and teacher for 40 years. I have spoken extensively on the subject of Health Care and Small Independent Business to business organizations, city councils, community and civic groups. I have appeared many times on TV and radio.

Served on numerous other boards, committees, task forces, and with a number of civic and community groups. Candidate for Attorney General '06. Active in politics 30 years. I have studied health care and its effect on the economy and jobs, since 1992.

Studied the contributions and power of small independent business. Graduate of U of M '66 and Berkley College of Music '77. Graduate work in sculpture.

3. If elected, how will you work with the Lyndale Neighborhood Association and Lyndale Community members to help us improve our neighborhood?

Neighborhood Associations and Community civic leaders are very much like small business, they are the closest connection to the vitality and quality of the community and thus the city. I would like to direct more control and resources to the community as opposed to central control from downtown. The current Council and Mayor are making proposals and taking actions that will bring more power to them and City Hall. This is about controlling the money and the communities, which produces political power. This is bad for our city and our communities. The power players downtown have not managed our City or our finances well. I will work to return control and power to the neighborhoods.

I would work to support and grow existing small business and help new ones open. This will create jobs in the community and bring economic growth and grassroots development.

4. What will your top priorities be if you are elected?

Priorities: 1) Order an immediate, thorough, and professional audit of the City's spending over the past 3 years. With that information, I'd re-evaluate all non-essential spending by the City. 2) I would look into ways to minimize or end the expense of costly lawsuits and settlements for the city due to misconduct or criminal behavior by elected officials and the police. 3) I would immediately create an aggressive plan to help small, independent business. Small business provides over 50% of employment in the USA and over 90% of new jobs in MN. Small business is the economic engine of MN and Minneapolis, yet the city and state directly harm this business sector and provide no direct help. Property taxes, the cost of health insurance, City Regulatory Services (permits, fees, inspections, etc) and the unequal playing field with Big Business are chronic problems for small business.

5. For Mayor Candidates

(a) What is your view on the role of neighborhood organizations in Minneapolis and how will you work with and support these organizations if you are elected?

I have already covered part of this under #3 above. I would work to strengthen these organizations and help to increase community participation with civic and community groups. I think the City is too City Hall oriented and they make decisions about what will be done in the neighborhoods with little or no regard for the people who live there. There are meetings, even hearings, but often the will of the people is managed, manipulated or ignored. Ex: The Lake Street Rebuild and the SA Station expansion at 44th and E. Lake St. (There was overwhelming opposition to closing the alley and the city did it any way.)

I would also like to see the neighborhood organizations work to grow and help create new, independent businesses in the neighborhood. In addition to jobs, small business creates the unique and creative places to shop for goods and services.

(b) What will your approach be to ensuring the City is financially healthy over the long-term?

First get spending under control and stop forcing people on low and fixed incomes to carry a disproportionate burden of property taxes, fees and assessments. The same regarding the burden on small, inde business, that often rent or own small, free standing buildings. Taxing small business excessively is fiscally irresponsible, since this group is the economic and job force in the neighborhood. Small biz is traditionally under capitalized. Thus the City Property Taxes, fees, fines, permits, assessments. Etc. rob them of precious capital to operate and grow their business.

I'd examine the inequitable property taxes between small, free standing buildings and strip malls and downtown skyscrapers. (see studies by University United)

I'd remove the barriers and huddles for entertainment clubs and venues, to allow them to attract tourists and other visitors. I'd work to create Green manufacturing, installation and consulting jobs, making Minneapolis a center for this new technology.

Respectfully submitted,
Papa John Kolstad
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