

## **Economic Development & Business Growth**

### **1. What policies or initiatives would you support to attract and retain businesses in Fond du Lac, particularly in high-growth sectors like manufacturing, healthcare, and technology?**

Making Fond du Lac an attractive community in which to live, work, and play is a key factor in attracting interest in our community. In my time on City Council so far, I have supported initiatives to revitalize our Riverfront District and North Main Street. I have supported enhancements to many of our city parks, including a pedestrian bridge that connects Lakeside Park with Lakeside West, and an award-winning, inclusive playground at Plamore Park. I have been honored to serve on the Library Board and support our amazing Fond du Lac Public Library, which I think is one of the best libraries in the state. I have supported increased investments in our downtown, which is the heart of our community. I would love the opportunity to continue the work that I have been a part of for the past four years, and to keep contributing to Fond du Lac's growth. Through continued investment in city amenities and infrastructure, we are making sure Fond du Lac is a thriving community that keeps progressing forward.

### **2. What are the top three issues the City of Fond du Lac faces during the next four years and your plans to address them?**

1. Housing availability is one of the biggest issues facing the city. I have supported the creation of a TIF district, a plan to redevelop the former Saputo site into mixed-use development, funds in the 2025 budget for infrastructure for new subdivisions, and a new ordinance to allow accessory dwelling units, all of which will help us add more housing. I will continue to work with city staff and City Council members to make more progress on increasing housing availability.
2. The City, like most employers, is dealing with a tight labor market, so I will also be focused on employee retention and attraction. We allocated funds in the 2025 budget for a wage study to make sure our wages are fair and competitive as one way to work on addressing this issue.
3. Finally, an issue that I am passionate about is access to quality, affordable child care. Fond du Lac recently saw a large child care center close, and we need to expand child care access to maintain a strong economy where parents can afford to stay in the workforce. I hope to continue working with community partners, including Envision, to tackle this issue.

### **3. What is your vision for fostering a vibrant, business-friendly Fond du Lac?**

My vision focuses on the people of Fond du Lac, because in my role as a City Council member, it is my responsibility to ensure we provide our community with the services and infrastructure residents need, while being able to afford some of the wants that make our community a great place to live. By keeping this focus, I believe we make Fond du Lac a vibrant community that is

also business-friendly. A business cannot survive if it doesn't have good roads to connect it to the community, access to clean drinking water, a functioning sewer system, or excellent police and fire/EMS services in case of emergencies. A business will also have a greater chance of success if it is in a community with amenities like beautiful parks and a stellar public library. In my time on City Council, we have funded our cities wants and needs while keeping tax rates steady, and we have avoided increases in water and sewer rates, despite rising inflation. This is good for our residents and for our businesses.

## **Workforce & Talent Development**

### **1. Workforce shortages remain a key challenge for local businesses. How would you work with Envision, educational institutions, and employers to expand workforce training and talent retention efforts?**

It is not within my role as a City Council member to expand workforce training or talent retention efforts; that is up to individual employers. However, my role does include promoting our city and the work we do. I am constantly sharing how much I love our community. I've had the opportunity to personally share with Governor Evers and his staff some of the great things we have here in Fond du Lac, along with some of the challenges we're facing. I've talked with our state legislators about addressing issues like child care to ensure Fond du Lac can continue to thrive. I attend conferences and brag about our city.

I also believe in being a champion for our school district, because a strong community needs strong public schools. If we want to ensure our school district is able to continue the great work it does—including workforce training—it needs adequate funding, which is why I am supporting the school district referendum that is also on the April 1 ballot. I am glad to see Envision is hosting an informational session on March 26 about the referendum, and I hope they encourage their members to support our public schools.

### **2. Homelessness has been a subject of several City Council meetings in the past year. What do you see as the most effective role the City can play in addressing homelessness in Fond du Lac?**

I don't know the answer to this yet, which is why, as Council President, I have asked the City Council to take a deeper look into this difficult issue. I want to extend a thank you to my fellow council members, because every single one of them has shown they are committed to taking homelessness seriously, and I hope to be able to continue this work together, if reelected. The unfortunate truth is that homelessness is a complex problem, and without unlimited funds available, we need to be strategic as we work to find effective local solutions. What I have learned so far is that we have incredible nonprofits doing amazing work to assist our unhoused residents, but our nonprofits have been struggling with funding, and, quite frankly, the recent uncertainty in federal funding is putting even greater strain on their ability to do the important work they do. I have also learned that many of our unhoused residents are senior citizens, disabled, and/or veterans. Some have been preyed upon by scammers, or lost their jobs due to

a major illness. They are Fond du Lac residents who need our help, and I hope we can find effective solutions.

## **Housing & Infrastructure**

**1. The availability of diverse and affordable housing is crucial for economic growth. Currently, demand for housing far outpaces the supply in the City. What solutions do you propose?**

City Council has been doing what we can to increase housing availability. In 2024, the city underwent a Housing Study to get a better grasp on our specific needs and challenges, and we have been working to implement recommendations of that study. As I stated earlier, we created a TIF district that includes the FIVES parking lot and will include housing. We supported a plan to develop the former Saputo site into mixed-use development. We are funding infrastructure in new subdivisions because developers' costs have gotten so high that they can no longer absorb these costs like they used to. We approved an ordinance to allow ADUs. I will support increased development opportunities as they arise.

I have also been watching what other communities in Wisconsin have been doing, because the housing crisis is state- and nationwide. Sheboygan County's Economic Development Corporation was able to facilitate an investment from their county's major employers to build workforce housing and create growth there. Sheboygan Falls created a downpayment assistance program to allow more families the opportunity to purchase a home. We can learn from our neighbors' successes, and hopefully implement some of their strategies here.

## **Business-Friendly Policies & Government Efficiency**

**1. How would you ensure that city policies, regulations, and permitting processes support a pro-business environment while maintaining responsible governance?**

I have never owned a business, so I have not gone through the processes to start one myself. But I have learned about Fond du Lac's policies and processes, and I am confident our city government works hard to be timely and efficient in responding to businesses' needs. We have worked to streamline our processes by laying out our expectations within our zoning code. This means many projects do not need to take the time to go before Plan Commission, as is the case in other communities. Site plans can be approved by the city within a week. Some buildings do need to receive state approval if they are of a certain use or above a certain square footage, which does take longer, but the city must adhere to state law. But locally, our city staff are regularly revisiting our zoning codes and bringing recommended changes before City Council annually. These changes are often based upon feedback from business owners. I would continue to work with our city staff and consider their recommendations for any changes, because they are the experts in their field, and I would listen to the concerns of any current or potential business owner, as well.

**2. If elected, how will you nurture and maintain a relationship with the local business community?**

As a City Council member, part of my job is to listen to the questions and concerns of the Fond du Lac community, and this certainly includes business owners. I have discussed many issues with business owners in my four years on the City Council. Sometimes an issue can be resolved in a simple conversation. Sometimes a concern needs to be forwarded on to the appropriate city staff so that they can address it. Sometimes an issue can lead to changes to our city ordinances. I am always open to any possibilities, and I always want to do my best to find resolutions to issues.

### **3. What are your top 2 priorities for the City Council and why?**

My first priority is to continue the great work we have been doing for the past four years. While those of us currently on the City Council come from varied backgrounds and can disagree on issues, I believe we all respect each other and trust that we share the common value of wanting to do what's best for our community. I believe that this trust and respect also extends from City Council to city staff, which means we are able to do great work together. We have been able to accomplish so much in my four years on City Council. If reelected, it would be my priority to see this positive momentum continue.

As far as a specific issue, my top priority right now is continuing our work on homelessness. I believe we have a duty to find effective local solutions to help the most vulnerable in our community. I have seen how truly kind and generous the people of Fond du Lac are, and I know many have been looking to City Council to make sure we are acting together to help those most in need.

### **4. If elected, are you willing to work with Envision Greater Fond du Lac on economic development? How can we support your priorities?**

Council Vice President Heisler and I have been meeting regularly with Envision leadership to foster a better relationship between the city and Envision. I think at times we have struggled as separate organizations to understand each other's goals and priorities, and I have been part of the work to find common ground and learn how we can better work together. I hope that I have shown a willingness to work with Envision, because I truly do believe we can be stronger if we work collaboratively, and I would be committed to continuing this work if I am reelected. I think we can support each others' priorities if we are all willing to be open and honest and continue building that relationship.