



PO Box 16326 Duluth MN 55816-0326  
[www.parkpointcommunityclub.org](http://www.parkpointcommunityclub.org)  
Since 1889

## Mayoral Candidates Questions

Park Point Community Club Candidate Forum Tuesday, September 19, 2023

Lafayette Square

657 pm Welcome and let's get started & intention/ground rules

7:02 pm PPCC reads the question

Welcome. We will start with Mayor Larson with the first question and then alternate who goes first for each question. **Please tell us about yourself; include your relationship with Minnesota Point and tell us what is Minnesota Point's greatest value in relation to the City of Duluth?**

7:10 pm PPCC will read the question

**Traffic.** On Jan. 19, 2021, PPCC set up and hosted a virtual Traffic Safety meeting with Mike Tusken, Chad Nagorski and Nick Lukovsky of the DPD. Chief Tusken said that the meeting was the first of its type for the DPD- a virtual community problem solving meeting. More than forty Park Pointers participated in this meeting; this issue is important to us! Since that meeting, several strategies have been implemented to reduce speeding, passing, address excessively loud trucks in caravans, revving motorcycles, reckless driving, and illegal parking and these efforts must continue and expand. Despite mitigating efforts, speeding, traffic noise, and congestion continues at times it is increased. Over this past Labor Day weekend, the traffic was backed up to Lafayette Square for many hours. Heavy traffic and congestion in Canal Park directly affects residents and, especially, response time for emergency services. We have been asking for several years for additional police/fire presence, signage to designate the recreation lane, signage to inform visitors of the rules for summer parking and an emergency plan for situations like Shelter in Place Warnings, when getting across the bridge is impossible. We have asked for additional crosswalks in busy areas. We have offered community volunteers for implementing these solutions. **How, specifically, will your administration work with our community to effectively monitor and manage traffic congestion, noise, and related safety concerns on Minnesota Point?**

7:18pm

**Taxes.** Park Point was a [Redlined Community in 1932](#), a hazardous and poor neighborhood. The times and the landscape on PP have changed dramatically. Today, a number of homes on PP are second homes and/or vacation rental properties. Family homes are being torn down for retirement and vacation properties. A 4th hotel is in the works and the infrastructure additions/ burdens are of concern to residents. Residents are concerned about the water supply in relation to adequate fire suppression; property owners have been ordered to update their sewer lines to reduce inflow and infiltration. Property taxes have risen considerably. Several recent home sales

are “outliers,” properties purchased at rates considerably above market value. Long term Park Pointers fear being taxed out of their homes. **How do you propose controlling the explosive development and spiraling property taxes on Park Point?**

7:26pm

**Planning/Access** Police Chief Mike Tusken met with us at a PPCC meeting in 2021. In his introductory statement he referred to Park Point as the “gem” of Duluth. We are not alone in those who realize how valuable it is. As others realize this fact, access and use is becoming a free-for-all. Property development, street access, recreation, safety, business construction, and other use is happening without planning. The most recent [Park Point Small Area Plan](#) was published in 2016. The word “unique” is used eleven times within the report. This plan does not formulate planning for compelling issues today such as property development, erosion, flooding, street access to the lake and bay, traffic congestion, and water access to fire hydrants. Parking strategies are needed to keep cars out of the recreation lane when parking lots are full. The signage on the side street accesses is inconsistent and structures have been built over the years without following [City processes](#). Non-clarity and inconsistency creates conflict and raises larger questions of equity and inclusion. The Small Area Plan is inadequate for dealing with accelerating value for, and exploitations of, this gem in a time of increased use due, in part, to climate change. **What are your ideas on planning and policy that will maintain Park Point with its present qualities of parks, beaches, natural areas, affordable housing and small businesses intact for all to use?**

7:34

**Erosion and Flooding.** [Four years ago \(October 2019\) Duluth experienced an especially powerful nor-easter](#). That storm event resulted in extensive erosion of the shorelines (both lake and bay sides of Park Point) and flooding (to property and homes on the bayside and on the streets). Though not an isolated event, the storm in 2019 was especially damaging to public and private property on Park Point.

The City has been engaged in planning activities to address the erosion and flooding issues, but no substantive actions have been taken over the past four years to prevent further damage from future storms which, because of climate change, are likely to be more severe than past storms. **Describe one or more actions you will direct your administration to take over the next four years to make Minnesota Point resilient to long-term erosion and flooding.**

7:42pm Questions from neighbors to either or both candidates

8:00 pm Informal time to greet and talk with the candidates

8:30pm Wrap up