



Only **Wenonah** residents can vote for this candidate for a Neighborhood Election.

2022 Board Candidate Application

Name: Adam Somers

Neighborhood: Wenonah

Currently Serving on the NENA Board: Yes

1. Tell us about yourself and your experience in the Wenonah neighborhood and in Nokomis East?

My wife and I moved to the Wenonah neighborhood nine years ago and are passionate about the community we call home. I have served on the NENA Board of Directors for the past four years and it has been more rewarding than expected. I currently serve as the Vice Chair of NENA, being largely involved with leading the organization through a period change of strategic planning and hiring a new executive director. I have also served as the team lead for NENA's Events and Fundraising Committee, planning fundraising events such as the Food Truck Rallies, Kickball Tournament and Neighborhood Jam, among many other NENA neighborhood events and activities. Connecting with people and promoting all the great things about Nokomis East is what I love about serving on the NENA board the most.

Professionally, I work for the U.S. Department of State in Passport Services as a regional training coordinator. Being a civil servant is something I take great pride in. I have the opportunity to interact with people from all different backgrounds, cultures and communities. These personal and positive experiences are something I hope to continue replicate when connecting with the residents of Nokomis East.

2. Why are you interested in serving on the NENA Board of Directors? Describe your interests, skills, experience, hobbies, volunteer work or community involvement that will help your service on the Board?

The past four years serving on the NENA board has been a very rewarding experience, more than I expected. Connecting with people is a hallmark to every strong community and that is important now more so than ever before. With current health crisis in our world, I believe my skills and experience with the neighborhood, as well as professionally with communication and strategic planning are serviceable. I firmly believe in the mantra "We are Stronger Together" and that is what NENA is all about.

I love literally "being active" in the neighborhood. Many times this means going running or taking our dog walking through new parts of Nokomis East I don't have the chance to visit as often. My wife and I are active participants in the adult sports that the Minneapolis Parks Board offers, which has led me to volunteer as a youth sports coach the past two years.

With my job with the State Department I serve others on a daily basis. In many cases my agency is one of the first encounters immigrants have with the U.S. government, be it applying for a passport, obtaining

citizenship for their child, or through one of many outreach efforts. I have the experience in assisting people as they become members of their communities as U.S. citizens.

3. What hopes, goals and concerns do you have for the Wenonah neighborhood and Nokomis East?

I think one of the greatest things about living in Nokomis East is the diversity we have within our neighbors and businesses. One of my top goals for our neighborhood is to continue developing and nurturing a diverse and engaged community. The events over the past couple years have made creating greater equity even more important for our neighborhood and city abroad. I am proud of the diversity, equity and inclusion work NENA has done and it has made my time on the board worth more than I ever expected. Concerns over having our neighborhood a healthy place physically, mentally, and financially for all exist. This is something we can never stop trying to achieve. Finding a compromise with the population growth of the city without undermining the values, priorities and housing affordability is very important. Keeping our green space clean and used, as well as protecting the nearby bodies of water (Lake Nokomis, Lake Hiawatha, Minnehaha Creek) is another objective I'd focus on in our neighborhood. We are so fortunate in where we live to have these spaces to use that I want to help people take full advantage of them, which just builds community pride. In turn that community pride needs to lead to community welcoming and I take pride in helping raise that level of engagement being a part of NENA.

Being engaged can also help another big concern we all have and that is with crime. It is a reality and there is never a perfect solution, but what can we do to make it 'better?' Being engaged with each other, as well as active in our community through events, recreation, volunteering or business can go a long way. We're all in this together, so my hope is to build on that.

4. What hopes, goals and concerns do you have for NENA?

One of the main goals is to build a bridge connecting community members with local resources at a city, county and statewide level, as well as facilitating access to these resources whenever possible. Many times people just don't know who or where to turn to with their concerns and needs, so why can't that be NENA? With funding of neighborhood associations being cut by the city, community engagement by volunteers becomes even more important. Beyond being a connector of resources, NENA as a resource itself is something I hope to see continue and grow.

The grant and loan programs it has established for residents have been fantastic so far and I would like to see those develop even more going forward. That means advancing the existing fundraising opportunities, as well as creating new revenue streams that will translate into financing for the variety of matching grant programs currently offered by NENA.

I do have concerns that with neighborhood resources being cut by the city helping neighbors in need will become even more challenging. However, that is why I am volunteering. While neighborhood association will have less funding, it does not mean that volunteers have less time or passion. We need to step up even more and have done that with surveying residents this winter for their input on the organization's strategic planning.

5. How will you reach out to the community during your Board term?

First and foremost, community events. In my opinion, the best way to conduct community is face to face. I

have been involved with organizing many NENA events and fundraisers and building on those would be key. In what ways can NENA engage residents that have not yet been reached? This could be through more outdoor outreach events at parks during the summer and fall months, meeting with neighbors for coffee or hosting periodic listening sessions for neighbors. We have done some of these sessions already around city budget, policing and crime, diversity and inclusion, affordable housing, green initiatives, and building developments. Sometimes NENA is more accessible than city council members and can be the first contact for neighborhood residents.

I also will continue to connect with neighborhood establishments to further familiarize myself with both business owners and residents. We have so many fantastic and unique businesses in Nokomis East in which our neighbors own, operate and visit that I want to help them share their story! Nokomis East Business Association has been great to work with.

6. What additional organizations, programs and events are you involved with?

My wife and I volunteer with Safe Hands Animal Rescue. In addition to sponsoring at-risk animals to be brought to Minnesota from high-kill shelters in Kentucky, we also foster rescue dogs when we are able. We adopted our dog through Safe Hands and now give back to the organization by being the bridge for rescue dogs to their forever homes, which is a truly rewarding experience.

I am also active with the Minneapolis Parks Board through their adult sports offerings, as well volunteering as a youth flag football coach for the last two years. This experience has been very rewarding as I have met many local families in our neighborhood, as well as making opportunities for more kids to participate in sports within the city.

7. If elected, I will be able to complete the full term of service of 2 years? Yes

8. If elected, I will support NENA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement of Purpose? Yes

9. I affirm that I meet the requirements of serving on the NENA Board of Directors and the information given in this Nomination Form is factual and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that should the nominee become an elected Board Member, any false statements, omissions or other misrepresentations could result in immediate dismissal. Yes