



Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission 2014 Voter Guide District 6

For Neighborhood Representative Members on the City's Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission

Voter Guide prepared by the Neighborhood
and Community Relations Department.

Voter's Guides are available online:

[http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards
/ncec/WCMS1P-122610](http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-122610).

District 6 Neighborhoods:

CARAG

East Isles

ECCO

Kenwood

Kingfield

Lowry Hill

Lowry Hill East

Lyndale

Stevens Square-Loring Heights

Whittier

[See the NCEC District Map](#) (pdf)

As part of the neighborhood election process to elect 4 neighborhood representatives on to the City's Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission (NCEC), applicants interested in serving were asked to respond to the following statements on their applications to be used in the Voter's Guide:

- ❖ How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?
- ❖ How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?
- ❖ Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.
- ❖ How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?
- ❖ How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?
- ❖ Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.
- ❖ Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

Candidates for District 6:

(To quickly navigate to a candidate's information, hold Ctrl and left click on candidate's name)

[Matthew Barthelemy](#)

Pages 2-4

[Debra Behrens](#)

Pages 5-6

The City-wide meeting to elect five neighborhood Commissioners will be held on Thursday, June 12, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 pm at the Crown Roller Mill Building:

City-Wide Election for Districts 2, 4, 6 & 8

Thursday, June 12, 2014

6:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Crown Roller Mill

105 5th Avenue South

Minneapolis, MN 55401

[\(Click here for a MAP and DIRECTIONS\)](#)

The building is ADA accessible. If any special accommodations are needed, please contact 612-673-3163.

All votes must be cast on June 12, 2014

If you have any questions about the elections for Districts 2, 4, 6 and 8 or the Voter's Guides, please feel free to call Howard Blin, 612-673-3163. You can also find more information on our website at <http://www.minneapolismn.gov/ncr/boards/ncec/WCMS1P-122610>.

Matthew Barthelemy: (Pages 2-4)

1. How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?

Throughout most of my adult life, I've held jobs that have empowered me with a strong ability to connect with others. I've worked in offices, restaurants, night clubs and parks in Minneapolis, and even in a variety of unique settings in Beijing, China. Many of these jobs allowed me the privilege of working alongside folks of all backgrounds, economic statuses, and personalities, more often than not at the ground level. Getting to know so many amazing people helped me recognize that everyone - no matter what they look like, where they live or how much money they make - has a voice that deserves to be heard.

Driven by the desire to encourage participation by breaking down the barriers between spectator and performer, watcher and doer, I've been organizing events and initiatives in Mpls that seek to do just that throughout the past decade. Some of what I organize includes community discussion events, ping pong parties, community-building health initiatives, and this year's Red Hot Art & Music Festival, Steven Square Community Organization's annual community outreach event that brought 100 artists, 20 bands, food trucks and Mpls organizations together for an inclusive, memorable experience. My ability to plan, organize and execute creative, community-focused events earned me "Best Event Organizer of 2013" by local cultural publication, L'Etoile, and a write-up in the Star Tribune.

Combining a passion for empowering community voices, experience promoting, organizing and executing people-driven events, a robust social network throughout the city, and an enthusiasm to see a more representative democracy, I feel that I'd be well equipped with a unique set of tools to represent my neighborhood's district on the NCEC.

2. How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?

I began attending Whittier Alliance Community Issues Committee meetings regularly since I first realized it existed 1.5 years ago. I've recruited at least one new neighbor to join me at the meetings, talking up the value in participating in the discussion of shaping our community at a local level. Even though most of the friends I've brought don't return, many of the rest have become regular participants, realizing and appreciating the influence they can have when they use their voice.

Recently, I've been working with other folks in our neighborhood - a couple of whom sit on the board of my neighborhood's organization - to come up with more creative ways of gathering neighbors and getting them to think about their neighborhood and use their voices to make for a better neighborhood for all. I'm proud to report we've engaged more than 100 residents on local issues, most of whom are underrepresented on the neighborhood's board.

3. Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.

I want to continue to serve on the NCEC first of all because I believe neighborhoods are the best platform to foster a healthier, more participative city and the NCEC - working with neighborhood leaders, City Council and city staff - has the capacity to build upon our current system to make work even better for everyone.

One of my priorities moving forward as the District 6 NCEC commissioner is to work to increase the potential of interaction between neighborhoods. I'd like to see more sharing of best practices, connecting neighborhoods that face similar issues, and see how neighborhoods can work together to have more bang for their buck, keeping in mind that every neighborhood is unique.

Another priority of mine is finding ways for more people to participate. There is a small percentage of residents who actually participate in neighborhood organizations and I'd like to work with neighborhood leaders to increase that number. From my conversations with folks at many levels within the city, a neighborhood organization has a much stronger voice when more people are involved.

I'm excited to be able to work off of the momentum I've created in helping to build off of the great things we already have in place while taking advantage of opportunities to improve things that aren't as beneficial to our neighborhoods.

4. How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?

I was elected in January through a special election and have since come to learn how it works, developing many productive relationships in the process. I unfortunately haven't been able to meet with folks from all of the neighborhood organizations' leadership in my districts, but I'm looking forward to it. If I'm re-elected, I will invite neighborhood leaders in my district for a potluck I'll organize so that we may all be better introduced.

5. How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?

I've been successful with working with other neighborhood leaders in my own 'hood to get more people involved, primarily by reaching out to them in a way that speaks to them. Our efforts turned out about 50 neighbors who were otherwise unengaged.

I also would like to explore ways in which the city devote more money towards community engagement around under-represented folks. This includes food/child care at neighborhood meetings and providing more direction to city staff (NCR and other city departments) to engage and connect with residents on the issues that are important to them.

6. Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.

Whittier Alliance, Whittier Project, Buds of Spring.

7. Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

Debra Behrens: (Pages 5-6)



1. How have your life/work/cultural experiences prepared you to be a neighborhood representative on the NCEC?

My roots are here in the Twin Cities community and when I returned home after college I chose a career path that would allow me to contribute to making my community better. For the past 15 years I have worked in nonprofit development for a range of causes, from the arts, to animal welfare, healthcare and education. My husband and I have sought out diverse, integrated neighborhoods because of the richness it brings all of us when we learn to live together. We were proud to become first-time homeowners in Stevens Square 5 years ago and it motivated me to give back to the community we love.

2. How have you participated in your neighborhood organization?

When we first moved to the neighborhood we participated in some of the activities organized by Stevens Square Community Organization and I reached out to the Executive Director to learn how I could get more involved. He encouraged me to attend the Annual Meeting, where I met more of my neighbors and learned about the organization. The next year I attended the Annual Meeting again and this time stood for election onto the board. Not long after my election, I became Vice Chair in 2012 and in 2013 volunteered to Chair our newly formed Neighborhood Activity group. In addition to my board and committee service, I have volunteered for various projects and activities in the neighborhood as well.

3. Describe why you want to serve on the NCEC.

The more I get involved in my community, the more I realize the importance of involvement – for myself and for my neighbors. I have sought out opportunities to connect with my neighbors and have encouraged them to become more involved, often helping them navigate the opportunities that take best advantage of their skills and interests. I have spent my career making these sorts of connections between causes and the people who care about them. I delight in seeing what can be accomplished when people who share the same goals come together. My experience working with and serving on nonprofit boards has taught me how to find common ground by listening and observing, and how to speak out for my beliefs with courage and conviction. As a leader, I care deeply about ethics and service to others. I would like to contribute my skills and leadership to the work of the NCEC to act as a bridge between the neighborhoods I will represent and the city we all love.

4. How do you plan to maintain a relationship with the neighborhoods you would represent, if elected?

I intend to continue my service on the board of the Stevens Square Community Organization and to participate as a volunteer in my neighborhood. I would be available to attend meetings of the Calhoun Area Residents Action Group, East Calhoun Neighborhood Organization, Kenwood Isles Area Association, Kingfield Neighborhood Association, Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association, Lowry Hill East Neighborhood

Association, Whittier Alliance and Lyndale Neighborhood Association upon request. I would also plan to create a regular rotation of sitting in on their meetings to maintain an awareness of the issues that matter most for each neighborhood. I will seek to build good working relationships with key staff and volunteers for each neighborhood and serve as a resource for them. I will pay special attention to email updates from the neighborhood organizations in our district as well. My email and cell phone would be made public so that citizens could reach out to me directly.

5. How do you plan to engage with under-represented groups within your district?

Too often, we make the mistake of waiting for those in under-represented groups to join in the process. But it can be intimidating to navigate social structures you haven't participated in before. My duty would be to invite these groups to the table and to seek their advice on how we can do a better job of including them in the life of our neighborhoods in the 6th District. I would promote our neighborhood organizations as a way for under-represented groups to make their voices heard and I would ask each neighborhood to identify groups they feel may currently be under-represented. I believe that everyone who lives in our district deserves to have a voice in shaping their community, regardless of income class, race or their status as property owners or renters. I would strive to be inclusive of all differences and would welcome broad participation.

6. Please list any community-based organization(s) with which you are currently involved.

Stevens Square Community Organization (SSCO) Board of Directors, Vice Chair

SSCO's Neighborhood Activity group, Chair

7. Please list all current paid and unpaid affiliations.

College Possible, Development Director

Association of Fundraising Professionals – Minnesota Chapter (AFP-MN) Board of Directors

AFP-MN Communications Committee member