



John	Gianbello	11-13 years	1. Planning Commission		Graduated Summa cum laude from Bethel University with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from Bethel University in 2009	Building Maintenance, Construction Worker	Spanish-I have basic fluency	Have served on the Planning Commission of Columbia Heights for the past three years and currently serve as Vice Chair. Served on the Columbia Heights 2040 Comprehensive Plan Review Committee. Serve as a deacon at my local church in Columbia Heights. Participated in Troopmaster International for 4 years in both a Columbia Heights and St. Paul club.	Helped secure a general contractor license for a construction company in Minneapolis (I served as the qualifying person)	I am interested in serving a second term on the Planning Commission because I believe I can be a positive presence on the committee and bring about positive change for Columbia Heights, a city that I love and call home. With the experience I now have, I believe I understand more of the complexities and nuances of city planning and thus, can contribute this knowledge to the committee meetings to help make wise and informed decisions. In terms of the city itself, I am proud of the changes we have made and am excited to continue to build upon them, particularly in the areas of sustainability, resiliency, and accessibility.	Even though I am somewhat young, I really feel like I have interacted with people from just about every walk of life from every corner of the globe. This gives me a broad perspective, which I believe is a major asset in a multicultural community like Columbia Heights. I am well-educated - I can think abstractly and systematically - but also am very practical and detail oriented. I am an American with European ancestry, but I am also the adopted grandson of an Arishianabe wife.	Jim S Kim, (763) 670-7886 John Anderson Laura Newby	N/A	
Jani	Arnold	9 years	Library Board Park & Rec Economic Development Sustainability Charter		Some college	Pharmacy Liaison - Savane Specialty Services Pharmacy	No	Computer Tutor at Minneapolis Central Library	Because I care about my community.	Have a lot of experience working with diverse populations, both in my work history at the University of Minnesota Hospital and volunteering with Hennepin County Libraries.	Wang Moua Pharmacy Liaison Sunderly Carriens Dept. Training Coordinator Megan Michels Pharmacist	City Newsletter		
Stan	McFall	11 years	Planning Commission - 1	Friday	Master's degree in Public and Non-Profit Management	Driver/UPS part-time, Real Estate Investor part-time	French	Active volunteer at local church. Presently assisting in the delivery of food out of Valley View Elementary. Six years member of the Human Rights Commission in Bloomington, Minnesota	Chief Operations Officer of family real estate investment company	After 11 years in Columbia Heights, I finally feel I have the time space to serve my community in a civic volunteer capacity. I believe I am qualified to serve on the Planning Commission because of my 16 years experience in the real estate industry. I own several properties in Columbia Heights as well as renovated distressed properties in the city and am well acquainted with building codes and permits. I also understand variances and the need for well defined buildable city ordinances. I have worked with a developer (United Properties) on a large-scale project that took months of meeting with residents, the planning commission and city council (of Bloomington, MN) I am familiar with the approval process.	Have lived and worked in several states and countries over the years with my family. I have a broad perspective of the world and attempt to be a student of the culture wherever I am. I am very personable and take time to listen to opinions and proposals before making decisions. I am responsible because of my many life experiences and can interact well with babies to senior adults.	Steve Zaehls, my pastor Juan Mendez, one of my tenants that lives in one of my properties in Columbia Heights. Bob Holmstrom, neighbor	Saw in City Newsletter	
Catherine	Veley	30 years	Planning Commission 1. Library Board 2.	Thursday/Friday	Graduate Degrees	Retired	No	Extensive service on the Library Board, Board of Barfill Locke Center for the Arts, Anoka Co. Historical Society, Election Judge in Heights, Mpls. Historic Preservation and Arts Commission etc.	Columbia Heights appreciation award for 20 years of service on the Library Board. Award from the City of Mpls for challenging the Citizens Committee on the Garbage Burial. Etc.	History of community involvement, and a well educated perspective. I was an academic. Historian, have traveled the world, read extensively on a wide range of topics, and have always had an interest in civic planning. I have also had a chance to spend time in many of the worlds great libraries.	A basic question is how the built environment affects the people who experience it everyday. There is considerable evidence that living in an overcrowded/decaying environment has a definite negative effect on the inhabitants, hence the desire to improve the experience through successful planning. Libraries are the perfect Third Stage Place, open to all and a bastion of civilization in so many ways.	Julienne Wyloff Sul Olson Renee D. Library Director	City Newsletter	
Molly	Nelson	1 year and 4 months	1. Sustainability Commission 2. Park & Recreation 3. Planning Commission	Wednesday	BS in Environmental Science, Policy, and Management and a Minor in Sustainability Management from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities	Outreach and Grants Technician, Rice Creek Watershed District	No	Volunteer with First Nations Kitchens making meals for the community. Staff liaison and minute taker for the Rice Creek Watershed Citizens Advisory Committee. Volunteer with Mississippi Parks Connection habitat restoration opportunities as able. Non-active volunteer for Radio K in college.	None.	The driving factor behind my decision to apply to be on a city commission is to have an opportunity step up for my community and apply my skills and knowledge towards decisions that can be impactful towards the city and its residents. I have not actively sat on a board or commission before, but I have significant exposure to the workings of both a volunteer commission and appointed board of managers through my career. I am proficient in how meetings are performed, including motions, taking minutes, reading and understanding status and bylaws, agendas and packets for meetings, and analyzing construction plans and comprehensive management plans. Through my experience of being a staff liaison for meetings, I understand the importance of coming to a meeting prepared for discussion, reading the packet ahead of time, and asking questions as necessary during the meeting.	I have working knowledge on the function of commissions and Board meetings as my current professional role works closely with a Board of Managers and Citizen Advisory Committee for my organization and also requires attending certain city boards and commissions as needed for projects. My undergraduate degree specialized in natural resources management which I get to practice in my professional life. However, I am looking to find out whether I can apply my knowledge and skills from my sustainability management minor. I have also lived in various places long term (Oregon, Minnesota) and short-term (Stockholm Sweden, Cairns, Australia) throughout my life that have given me valuable insight towards other communities' environmental/sustainability management strategies. One particular quality about myself is that I am an idea machine. I love brainstorming and discussing options and outcomes with others. As a new member of the Columbia Heights community, I am eager to get involved in any way that I can and apply my strengths towards lifting the community up.	Beth Carreno, Ramsey County Environmental Health Program Supervisor Kyle Avel, Watershed Project Manager Karina Sommerfeld, Communications and Outreach Manager	Website posting.	
Alexia	Venoux	20 years	Library Board		B.A. education, Health care	Costco	Intermediate French, Beginning Spanish	N/A	Army nurse	I live here and this is my home, I am 70 and would like to share my efforts with the community through the library.	Raised three children without internet and taught fourth grade while managing my household with the help of a nanny. Became an advocate in reading challenges, housing, community resource and caring for my late husband and volunteering in hospitals, hospice. Gardening - plant Apple trees around every spring from fruit to my apartment, that's my gardening. Thank you for your kind indulgence and consideration.	Im signs as I really only had my husband, but I love Karen. Fantastic CAP, Hannah Moore in Thomas Jean's class, maybe Jimmy Welch of Jimmy's billiards. Sorry my circle is small.	The post in peaceful community.	
Michael	Hartel	40 years	Charter Commissioner* Planning Commission		Some College	Transportation Supervisor 1. Minnesota Department of Transportation		Section Judge Officer at AFSCME local 2792/221 from 2005-2015	Section Judge 22 years of State service with MDT in Highway Maintenance	Spent 10 years working for AFSCME (local 2792 and 221 respectively) in various positions like Vice President, Secretary, and Chief Steward. I also helped to merge two locals which required writing new by-laws and constitution. This has given me an interest in the operation of these kinds of boards.	have experience in interpreting contract language, Robert's Rules of Order and	Ben Strand Lake Anderson an Topping	Social Media Posts	
Valerie	Wing	35 years	#1 Park & Recreation #2 Library Board	Tuesday	2 year Associate of Arts Business	Residco - Marketing Specialist		PTA president at Valley View in 1996 to 1998 Current member of Emmanuel Christian Center SACA Empty Bowls committee and volunteer in 2018 and 2019 Work committee for Minnesota Foodshare and recently for Food Forward in Golden Valley Volunteer at Crocheux Nursing Home in 2016 CHS girls tennis flower fundraisers from 2006 to 2008 Participant with Exercise with Judy from 2019 to 2025	As a citizen of Columbia Heights, I have always enjoyed our lovely parks. I have over the years taken exercise classes and other community education classes. I have enjoyed being part of the community. I enjoy cheering my youngsters at various games, plays and concerts. My children are grown and I now have 4 young grandchildren. I would like to serve to help cheer and support the youth of our community.	As a lifelong Columbia Heights library card holder, I would like to serve those to help with their programming and share my love of reading to both English and Non-English readers.	have a deep love for the history of our city. I also have much pride and hope for the future of our city. My family is diverse as my youngest daughter-in-law is Somali so so are 2 of my grandchildren. The lovely parks attract so much life to us. I have enjoyed sharing my love for community parks with my grandchildren. We now take walks and playing at the playgrounds. I would like to explore the opportunity to form a walking program for our community. How wonderful! It would be to have all people of different walks, walking together for one goal? I think would be exciting!	Steve and Mark Vesico Kara Mahoney Michelle Fabian	Facebook	
Chris	Christopherson	3 years	Parks and Rec Sustainability Economic development Authority Charter commission		Some college	Edina Realty		2nd vice president of the Columbia Heights Lions Club and want to contribute as much as I am able.	As a resident and a business owner, I feel it's important to be involved in your community. I enjoy being involved in the Lions Club and want to contribute as much as I am able.	feel I bring a balanced perspective. Along with experience on community boards. Along with a long history of collaboration with diverse populations to achieve successful results.	Sean Clerkin Ben Harris Tanya Moore Cara Christopherson (Wolfe)	public posting		
Tessa	Brown	18 years	Library Board Park & Recreation Commission	Tuesday/Thursday	Bachelor Degree / Journalism & Mass Communication	N/A	know some sign language	Was on the Area 11 Board as Admin Assistant, helping to set up for annual games for Special Olympics Currently volunteer for sections / visiting judge working the polls Three Day Walk for Susan G. Komen / Breast Cancer Member of the Twin Cities Chapter of Sisters in Crime; Formerly board member and webmaster	N/A	I have been using Braille since I was a young child. I gave me a place to go on hot summer days or a cold winter. There were so many books for me to choose from for reading (I was a bit advanced for reading), as well as listening to audiobooks while at the library. I also took creative classes for sewing, crafting, etc. know what's important to me and love helping people.	Parks and Recreation allows me to help keep things clean, fixed as needed, and connect with the community which we need now more than ever.	grew up with a sister who was four years older than me and was born with Down Syndrome, so at the time when people didn't bring their DS children home. My parents did. She was the core of our family. I learned so much from her, more than I could teach her. I took care of her after my parents divorced and my mom worked. This could be hard through the week. I didn't have a true social group, but I did have a comfortable house and a sister who mostly would walk the same route and let me know (through sign language) if she wanted my attention or a drink or food. Because of my sister, I listen more and am more comfortable talking with people with disabilities, as well as students, parents, peers, etc. I believe people deserve try	Timmy Owen, Tasha Mustaan, Maggie Roak, Rae Henry	Searching online for jobs and volunteer opportunities after hearing about them from the
Isa	Levitt	15 years	Park & Recreation Commission	Thursday	Bachelors degree in Accounting from Minnesota State University Moorhead	Senior Tax Manager at Mortenson Construction	English only	OTA tax return reviewer for 2016 and 2017 filing seasons	CPA, inactive MN#24418	would like to serve on the Park & Recreation Commission. I am interested in this commission because I am the mother to an 8 year old child and we make good use of the facilities available in the city. I would like to become more involved in the city and offer my participation to ensure we have great opportunities for recreation for years to come. Parks and recreation opportunities offer space to spend time together as a community. I don't have prior experience working on a commission, but I am a fast learner and I have management experience to offer. I believe in inclusive practices and a variety of opportunities for all ages and backgrounds. My values are aligned with the mission statement of the commission. I love being a resident of Columbia Heights and I believe our parks are a great way to show off our community values.	have spent the last 20 years as a tax adviser, 5 years in public accounting and the last 15 years progressive roles at Mortenson. My main practice areas are corporate income, sales & use, and property taxes. I will bring strong financial acumen to the table. I coordinate between many internal departments in my role to ensure compliance with tax laws. I have people, process, and project leadership experience. I have experience with identifying issues, addressing barriers, and gathering feedback to solve problems.	was raised in a low income family in Moorhead, MN. I understand that city offered opportunities for children may be the only affordable recreation opportunities for some families. I lost my mother 3 years ago, she spent the last 10 years of her life in an assisted living facility. I believe the opportunities afforded her via community activities played a role in extending her life and enhancing the quality. Ensuring residents are given the chance to spend time together and have activities to look forward to is deeply important to me. Parks and recreation are at the heart of any community. I also love fun and planning future fun, so I will be bringing enthusiasm.	Steve Hill, Vice President Controller at Mortenson Construction, current manager. Jenifer Forbes-Bondur, neighbor at the end of the block, Rocco Adams, friend of 30 years	City Facebook post
Cassandra	Leoni-Hebacka	5	Sustainability Commission		BS Environmental Science, current sustainability commission member	Wells Fargo		Wells Fargo employee impact team sustainability chair responsible for sustainability education for the state of Minnesota, co-organizer of the Invasive Species Clean up team in Columbia Heights in partnership with city staff member Lann Decker	feel I still have a lot to give to the commission. Community resiliency programs and infrastructure are needed to ensure all members of our community can find refuge and resources when impacted by the effects of climate change. I really want to see that through.	I am action oriented and love to find tasks and items to take action on while waiting for policy and infrastructure changes. I bring perspective of a community member that has implemented programs in an effort to educate fellow members to make decisions to help themselves as much as the environment. There are financial and physical limitations to everyone but together we can provide options to apply to every community member.	Lann Decker, Columbia Heights Urban Revolver and natural resources specialist Andrew Boucher - former city planner for Columbia Heights and former green corps member Rob Finnemore - business executive - former sustainability co chair with employee impact team	Current sustainability commission member		
Matthew	Lugares	18 years	Planning Commission Economic Development Authority Park and Rec		University of MN	Commercial Real Estate/Calls and Harvest		Coach CHS Baseball and Harvest	Certified Community Associations Manager Licensed Real Estate Agent worked as a City Engineer	feel like I have expertise that would be beneficial to my community.	have worked with TR, PUD's and complicated shared use agreements. I have also done operations background on how real world experience, which has moved to better discussions with architects, engineers, and developers.	Jay Scott - Selkirk Real Estate Specialist Mike Anderson - Real Estate Matt Greenstein - Greenstein Sellers, PLLC		

Lyla	Rosen	14 years this June	Planning Commission Park and rec Commission	Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday/Friday	BA in Sociology, Minor in Peace & Justice Studies - Gettysburg College	Real estate and development - self employed	No			I've been a resident of Columbia Heights for sometime now and we like the community a lot. We enjoy the diversity of the area in proximity to the city. I think with good vision for future planning the city can continue to grow to be a strong asset to the community with planning and development goals to support positive residential and economic growth through small and medium sized businesses, quality housing and community resources, which will create more demand for housing and services that can be sustained largely by the community of residents and not an asset to not only the Columbia Heights community, but surrounding communities as well without needing to bring in large corporate businesses.	Have a strong entrepreneurial background, and have a true drive to be a part of quality improvements, not only through housing, but would love to be supportive in community development. I feel like Columbia Heights, as a first tier suburb, has a lot of potential for strong growth. The support the city has seen through the current administration has made significant progress and I think that if those same commitments are made through continued positive growth in other areas of the community the city will continue to develop to be a very desirable place to live not only due to its proximity to Minneapolis and surrounding communities, but partially due to the expansive corridor we have that can continue to attract quality businesses, and economic growth through the city while being able to offer excellent neighborhoods and services to residents.	Shannon Culbert Brandi Bruland Erin Callahan	Online		
Michael	Heggen	10 years				2 yr business management	Retired	Volunteer at food shelf					I have been a Columbia Heights resident for over 15 years. I have spent much time in the community and area interacting with businesses and residents. I volunteer at the food shelf in my free time. In my time and dealings with the community I feel I have a great understanding and relationship with the community. I would look forward to serving the community of Columbia Heights. I feel I could and would be an asset with my work ethic, values and beliefs. I would like to help bring the city back to high standards and values for all.	Amber McLaughlin, Stephanie Helmer, Crystal Romero.	Facebook
Whitney	Starvick Marlan	4 years	Library Board	Monday/Tuesday/Thursday	BA in Communications, MEd in progress	Ramsey County Library	N/A	Senior Library Assistant for Ramsey County Library Volunteer for Pro-Choice Minnesota		I'm interested in increasing my civic service and engagement. As an MEd candidate and library employee, I believe I would bring practical experience to the board as well as a passion to move the Columbia Heights library forward.	Previous to my new library career, I spent around 10 years in advertising and marketing. The project management, critical thinking, and strategic planning skills I gained would serve me well on the Library Board.	Kayla Yekanosich Erma Peacha Ernie Sirok	City of Columbia Heights Instagram		
Emily	Coveyou	5 years (we moved in Dec. 2025)	1. Sustainability Commission 2. Library Board 3. Park & Recreation Commission	Friday	BA in Sociology, Minor in Peace & Justice Studies - Gettysburg College	Associate Recruiting Manager/Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath	No	I am an active member of Twin Cities Diversity in Practice (2023-Present) and currently serve as Co-Chair of the AI Task Force for the National Association for Law Placement (2023-26). Previously, I served on NALP's lateral recruiting subcommittee (2020-22) and as Vice President of the Minnesota Legal Career Professionals (2019-20). I have a background in community-building through the arts, having taught improv at HUGO Theater from 2018-2020 and currently teaching improv at Strike Theater in Northeast Minneapolis on a contract basis. I also do some contract communications work for Strike and helped them with their latest Open to the Main Day fundraiser, which raised over \$25K. Earlier in my career, while working at nonprofit legal aid, I was a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. More recently, I organized a neighborhood food drive for SPCA in November 2025 and have submitted a volunteer application to become more involved with the organization. I am also an active member of Moms Demand Action.	In 2015, while serving as Program Manager at Call for Justice, a nonprofit dedicated to connecting social service organizations with law firm resources, our organization received the American Bar Association's Louis M. Brown Award for legal access. After that role, I worked as a fundraising coordinator & grant writer for Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services. Since 2017, I have worked in law firm environments in downtown Minneapolis, gaining extensive experience in legal operations, professional collaboration, and organizational systems. In 2024, my husband nominated me for a Columbia Heights Recycling Champion award - and I got a certificate, which was pretty cool (it's	I have lived in Columbia Heights for five years and have developed a deep appreciation for the community and the people who make it such a welcoming place to live. While my professional career has shifted towards a focus on law firm recruiting, my true passion has always been service and helping others. I am excited about the opportunity to serve on a city board or commission because it allows me to contribute meaningfully at the local level, learn more about how the City operates, and support decisions that positively impact residents. I feel qualified to serve based on my professional experience collaborating across issues, facilitating productive discussions, and balancing competing priorities. I value thoughtful decision-making, inclusive dialogue, and showing up consistently to do the work required. At this stage of my life (I'm 35 this year!), I am eager to dedicate my time, skills, and energy to serving my city. I've been told I come off as very serious and professional, which I feel is important to make sure that I'm representing where I work and where I live in the best light. That said, it is also like to assure the reader that I'm a very fun and kind person, too!	bring a combination of nonprofit, legal, and community-based experience that allows me to understand issues from multiple perspectives. I grew up in Champlin, Minnesota, attended college in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and returned to the Twin Cities after graduation, where I lived in Minneapolis for seven years before moving to Columbia Heights. Beginning my career in legal aid nonprofits provided me with a strong understanding of working with diverse populations, navigating complex systems, and maximizing limited resources. My transition to law firms gave me insight into how the business community operates and strengthened my ability to communicate clearly, efficiently, and professionally with attorneys and other stakeholders. On a personal level, I have lived on 37th Avenue and Buchanan Street for five years and have made a deliberate effort to foster community among my neighbors. After living two blocks from Lake Street during the George Floyd uprising, I learned a lot in a short amount of time about what it means to show up for your community - especially when it requires bravery in the face of uncertainty. Since moving to Columbia Heights, my husband and I had a baby, and we have been increasingly weaving ourselves into this city and its people. Having a toddler, we also have a newfound appreciation for how close we live to the Columbia Heights Library! My neighbor recently told me that I have a unique, natural ability to connect people and create welcoming environments, feedback that has encouraged me to seek opportunities for broader civic engagement. I would love the chance to bring my relationship-building mindset, along with my professional experience, to service on a City board or commission.	Stanne Weiss - my former boss at Faegre Drinker (retired) Emily Fischer - my current boss at Faegre Drinker Molly Chase - friend & MN Communications Lead for Moms Demand Action	Social Media		