

**With the growing interest in recreational activities like pickleball and the ongoing demand for ice sports, our community could benefit from a new community center that includes facilities for these activities. How do you propose to address the need for such a center, and what steps would you take to secure funding, ensure community support, and select an appropriate location? Additionally, how would you prioritize the inclusion of different amenities to meet the diverse needs of our residents?**

**Jacob Coleman\* - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

Addressing the need for a new community center that accommodates growing interests like pickleball and ice sports requires a comprehensive and community-driven approach. Here's how I propose to move forward:

**### 1. \*\*Community Engagement and Needs Assessment:\*\***

The first step would be to conduct a thorough needs assessment by engaging with residents, local sports organizations, and other stakeholders to understand the specific amenities they desire in a new community center. This could be done through surveys, town hall meetings, and focus groups. Gathering input will ensure that the center is designed to meet the diverse needs of our community, from pickleball courts and ice rinks to multipurpose spaces for other recreational activities.

**### 2. \*\*Location Selection:\*\***

The location of the community center is critical. I would work with city planners and consider factors such as accessibility, existing infrastructure, and future growth when selecting a site. The goal would be to find a location that is centrally located, easily accessible, and has room for potential expansion. This process would also involve gathering community feedback to ensure the selected location meets the needs of all residents.

**### 3. \*\*Securing Funding:\*\***

Funding such a project requires a combination of creative financing strategies. I would explore multiple funding sources, including local bonds, state and federal grants, public-private partnerships, and fundraising initiatives. To minimize the financial impact on taxpayers, we could consider phased construction or shared-use agreements with local schools or other organizations. Additionally, naming rights and sponsorships could be explored as potential revenue streams to offset costs.

**### 4. \*\*Ensuring Community Support:\*\***

Building strong community support is essential for the success of the project. Transparency and regular communication about the project's progress, costs, and benefits will be key to maintaining public trust. I would establish a community advisory board to involve residents and key stakeholders in the planning process, ensuring that the center reflects the needs and values of our community.

**### 5. \*\*Prioritizing Amenities:\*\***

To meet the diverse needs of our residents, I would prioritize the inclusion of amenities based on community input, demand, and cost-effectiveness. While pickleball courts and an ice rink might be the headline features, it's important to also consider multipurpose rooms, fitness areas, and spaces for youth and senior activities. The center should be flexible and adaptable to accommodate evolving community interests over time.

By taking a collaborative, transparent, and strategic approach, we can develop a community center that enhances the quality of life in Waconia, supports our growing interest in recreational activities, and becomes a central hub for residents of all ages.

### **Jim Lohan - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

See *Question 7: Financing Community Development* for more.

### **Simon Malinski - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

First, I believe an accessible community center with diverse and inclusive options for all ages and abilities. A functional and attractive community center is an important part of our community. A new community center is something worthy of a healthy discussion. Location and cost are important components to a well received facility. I will work with all stakeholders to ensure transparency in funding sources and uses of funds.

### **Derek Siddons - Candidate: Waconia City Council**

It's a simple answer for me. Yes. One of my strengths is making partnerships/deals like this happen in the business world. Most residents understand the need for these types of facilities for our children. The answer is we need a cooperative approach to working with the schools, corporate, local businesses, and the local youth associations to put something together for our future.

The Waconia Hockey Association has donated over \$1 million in the past 20 years to the city of Waconia. The baseball field was built with the help of the baseball association. We can leverage this success to do more of this.

As for prioritizing amenities, that comes with planning and considering the scope of each project. Multi use buildings are the future, and Waconia is ready.

### **Tim Litfin - Candidate: Waconia Mayor**

My degree is municipal recreation/community education. I have a MA degree in community education. I have successfully brought people together for 36 plus years in community recreation and enrichment programming and events. I am a state leader and a recognized national leader in this field. That does not mean I know every answer, but I am very familiar with the process. I am also not afraid of the question or of the work that it will take to make projects like this a reality.

The answer is always in the community. That is where any project finds support and can be fully vetted. First, the city needs to listen to its residents. Formal listening sessions are necessary. Formal surveys are something I believe in and something that I implemented for every class, every event, and every program in Minnetonka Community Education 20 years ago and that process continues today. I did the same thing in Waconia Community Education when I was the director of that program. Our community deserves a chance to weigh in on major projects like another community center, or an addition to either our current community center or our ice arena.

I addressed pickleball in answer #3 above. Additionally, I believe in the game. I believe in the game's ability to keep all ages engaged and active. I also believe in the need for city investment in the game.

Additional investment could also be addressed by the private sector. Like what happened in Chanhassen with Lifetime's new indoor pickleball facility. In Minnetonka with the new pickleball facility on highway 7 and 101. And with the project that is currently under construction in Delano where a private indoor pickleball facility near the Dairy Queen on highway 12 is being built. Those three cities all have public outdoor pickleball courts that are full and busy. The private sector has also stepped up in those communities and is investing to meet the growing need of this sport. I would love to engage the private sector in Waconia for this need as well.

In response to the question of a community center. When Safari Island was built in the early 2000's, the land to the east of the Safari Island building was designated as an additional space to build on for future recreation needs of the community. That fact may have been lost through the years, but I recall it clearly as I was one of the few that helped design the recreation facilities at the then Waconia Middle School/Safari Island. That land could hold a pickleball facility and other, and be an efficient site for the city as it would be part of the current Safari Island Community Center.

Knowing that a second sheet of ice would be nice for our growing hockey community, it would also be expensive to build. The current school cost per square foot counting land, clearing and construction is \$495 per square foot per ATS&R architects. If something does get built, it will not be cheap, and the cost increases each year.

Partnerships are the answer to making any major project like this become a reality. The hockey association, the school district, the city, sponsors, and others will need to be at the table to discuss and contribute to this major addition to our community if it were to become a reality. A broad range of community support is the only way to make a project like this happen.

### **Mayor Nicole Waldron\*- Candidate: Waconia Mayor**

Like with the pickleball courts, these types of requests go through a process and then if approved are placed into the Capital Improvement Plan. This allows time for fundraising efforts from those that made the request, much like the Inclusive Playground project.

As for a community center, we continue to evaluate the use of our current facility. To gauge the community support and funding options for something new, including additional amenities, we are considering bringing a levy to the residents for a recreation type referendum. This would ensure community support and the willingness of the residents to move forward with a project of this nature.

## CONTACT THE CANDIDATES

### Jacob Coleman

jacobpcoleman@gmail.com  
651-280-0772

### Jim Lohan

LohanforWaconia@outlook.com  
612-730-6927

### Simon Malinski

simon.malinski@gmail.com  
617-785-6431

### Derek Siddons

derek\_siddons@yahoo.com  
952-465-9469

### Tim Litfin

timlitfin2022@gmail.com  
612-910-6200

### Nicole Waldron

waldron4waconia@gmail.com  
612-503-9591

### How Can I Vote in Waconia?

City of Waconia residents have multiple options for voting:

1. Vote by mail.
2. Vote at City Hall, 201 South Vine Street (City of Waconia Residents Only).
3. Go to the Taxpayer Services Department at Carver County Government Center, 600 E. 4th Street, Chaska, (ALL Carver County Residents).
4. Vote in person on Election Day on November 5, 2024.



### Early and Absentee Voting at City Hall (Waconia residents only)

Early and absentee voting starts September 20 and goes through November 4. Waconia residents can vote at City Hall Monday - Thursday from 7:30 am - 4:30 pm, and Fridays from 7:30 am - 11:30 am. Extended hours include:

- Saturday, October 26 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, October 29 - 7:30 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
- Saturday, November 2 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Sunday, November 3 - 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 4 - 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you are not a City of Waconia resident (but reside in Carver County) you can absentee vote at the Carver County Government Center in Chaska. Their hours are different than the hours listed above.

### How Do I Vote by Mail?

To request a mail ballot, please visit the [Secretary of State's Website](#) or [www.waconia.org/votebymail](http://www.waconia.org/votebymail).

### City of Waconia Polling Locations

The City of Waconia is no longer part of a Ward Boundary System. Your polling place may have changed in 2022. The City of Waconia is divided into three precincts, please view the polling places listed below. If you are unsure of the precinct in which you reside, please consult the [City of Waconia Precinct map](#) (link).  
[www.waconia.org/DocumentCenter/View/3042/WaconiaPrecincts](http://www.waconia.org/DocumentCenter/View/3042/WaconiaPrecincts)

#### Precinct 1

Faith Lutheran Church  
800 Waconia Parkway North  
Waconia, MN 55387

#### Precinct 2

Trinity Lutheran Church  
601 E. 2nd St.  
Waconia, MN 55387

#### Precinct 3

Waconia Ice Arena  
1250 Oak Avenue  
Waconia, MN 55387

Questions? Call City Hall at 952-442-2184

### Current Elected Officials

For a full listing of current city, county, state, and federal elected officials, visit [www.DestinationWaconia.org/live/#government](http://www.DestinationWaconia.org/live/#government).

