

## Public Statement Regarding Mayoral Campaign Decision

I want to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who encouraged me to run for Mayor of Lino Lakes. After careful consideration, I have decided not to actively pursue this campaign or seek election to the office. While my name will remain on the ballot due to procedural rules, I am not campaigning and will not be asking for votes.

This decision was not made lightly, and I want to explain my reasoning:

When I first entered the race, I believed the incumbent would be running unchallenged. However, as the race has evolved, the dynamics have shifted. I have come to realize the significant amount of time, energy, and personal sacrifice a full-scale campaign would require. As a working parent with three children—two of whom were recently sick—I’ve had to reflect on the balance between my professional, family, and community responsibilities. It became clear that my obligations at home and work must take priority, and I am unable to devote the time necessary to this campaign.

That being said, I remain deeply committed to the well-being of our community. I will continue to support efforts that strengthen Lino Lakes in any way I can. I encourage all eligible residents to get out and vote in this upcoming election. Absentee voting begins September 19, 2025, and will continue through November 3, 2025. For those who prefer to vote in person, polls will be open on Election Day, November 4, 2025, from 7:00 AM to 8:00 PM. Please remember, there are two open City Council seats in addition to the mayor’s position.

While I am stepping back from the mayoral race, I feel it’s important to address one of the main reasons I became involved in local politics: the development proposals in the northwest quadrant of Lino Lakes. I was proud to help lead the Love Lino Lakes movement, which opposed several large developments suddenly proposed in the area. While residents raised a wide range of legitimate concerns—traffic, rapid growth, strain on public services—my primary concern was a particular project that seemed to target a specific demographic.

The developer marketed the project as “centric” or “friendly” to a particular group, which, whether intentionally or not, conflicts with the core intent of the 1968 Fair Housing Act. This landmark federal law was enacted to eliminate discriminatory housing practices, such as redlining and steering, and to prevent the refusal to sell or rent based on race, ethnicity, or other protected classes. By designing and marketing a development aimed specifically at one group, the project perpetuates the exclusionary practices the Fair Housing Act sought to eliminate.

While a developer might argue that anyone is free to purchase a home in these developments, the real question is whether people would feel welcome in a neighborhood explicitly designed for a specific group. Would you feel comfortable making the largest purchase of your life and raising your family in a community that signals it’s primarily for others?

This issue goes beyond local city planning—it’s part of a troubling, statewide and national trend. Proposals for self-segregating developments are becoming more common, and Lino Lakes is not exempt. Other incidents around Minnesota, including a high-profile case in Lakeville and an ongoing investigation

into a developer who took funds from potential buyers without submitting plans, underscore the urgency of this issue.

I stand with many other residents of Lino Lakes who believe that we need a city council committed to preventing such developments in our community. On a broader level, I urge our elected representatives in the Minnesota House and Senate to take action. We need legislation that ensures our neighborhoods remain diverse, inclusive, and welcoming to all—without exception. Now is the time to prevent division from becoming the norm, and to protect the values of equality and inclusivity that define our state and country.

This Election Day, I will be casting my vote for Rob Rafferty for Mayor, and for Julia Nelson and Randy Rennaker for City Council. I encourage everyone to join me in making your voice heard.

Thank you again for your continued support and engagement in making Lino Lakes a better place for all.

Luke Walter