

May 6, 2022

Common Council Executive Committee
City-County Building
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Madison, WI 53703

RE: Application for the open District 3 seat on the Common Council

Dear Common Council Executive Committee,

Alder Lindsay Lemmer ending her tenure on the Common Council is a significant loss for our Eastside community. She has been an incredibly responsive and supportive representative. In her absence, I believe it will take contributions from many people to ensure all of our neighbors can continue to successfully navigate city services and have a voice in local government.

To do my part to fill this need, I am applying to serve as the District 3 alder for the remaining year of Alder Lemmer's term. I am doing so because she has challenged me to use my skills and passion to serve our community, and because this is a great opportunity to gain experience in public service and make a positive impact on the health and direction of our city.

I also believe it is important for the incoming alder to honor the principles and priorities that Alder Lemmer emphasized when she ran for office and that she has embodied throughout her tenure. As a fellow communications professional and an active contributor to local civic efforts, I feel that I am a great fit to finish out her term.

If appointed to serve as alder, I would continue her commitment to active and effective communication. I would organize office hours and public discussions, amplify the voices of people living and working in District 3, provide regular updates to constituents about proposals before the Common Council, and provide a written rationale for my voting record.

In addition to a continued focus on communication and transparency, I would also commit to increasing participation in essential democratic and governing processes. This would involve supporting voter registration drives; encouraging residents to apply to serve on local committees, boards and commissions; and recruiting candidates to run for the District 3 alder seat in the next election. I do not anticipate running for alder next year, and I am committed to supporting a competitive contest among several candidates who can present different styles and viewpoints for voters.

I would also make it a priority to support programs that meaningfully address racial disparities and work to improve outcomes for people of color living in Madison. That would include efforts as part of committee appointments, as well as other initiatives of the Common Council and Mayor's office focused on reversing the impact of systemic injustices, increasing the accessibility of city services, and creating new education and employment opportunities.

To this position I bring professional experience in strategic communications, nonprofit management, and community engagement. I have over 15 years of experience as a communication professional and have spent the past seven years as a consultant. I specialize in working with nonprofit organizations dedicated to science, health and education issues. My work involves communicating complex topics to public and professional audiences, and helping associations build community to advance professional practices and disciplines.

Outside of my consulting business, I also donate my time and skills to several local programs that strive to strengthen community and advance critical democratic ideals. I have served as an election official at my local polling place, I am the communications lead for the Dane County Voter ID Coalition, I am the secretary of the Rolling Meadows Neighborhood Association, and I am on the Advisory Team of a new private sector initiative called OWN IT: Building Black Wealth — which provides personal finance and homeownership education and down payment assistance to staff and families of students at One City Schools.

I have also lived in numerous locations in Madison as a student and as a working professional. This has given me an understanding and appreciation for many of the different contexts and concerns of residents. I have rented homes in the Greenbush neighborhood and near Capital Square, I have rented a Capital East apartment on the isthmus, and I now own a home in the Rolling Meadows neighborhood on the Eastside. My personal experience navigating the city using multiple forms of transportation, regularly utilizing local parks and business districts, and living in multiple housing arrangements has prepared me to contribute to discussions about many key issues the residents of this growing city face every day.

Thank you for considering me for the open District 3 alder seat. I have enclosed several statements and a professional résumé as part of my application. Please contact me if you need any additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R-Beets". The letters are stylized and connected, with a prominent "R" and "B".

Robert Beets

Enclosed:

- › Statement on Service
- › Outline of Service Goals
- › Statement on Future Candidacy
- › Professional Résumé

Statement on Service

ROBERT BEETS

I am applying to serve as the interim alder for District 3 because I am deeply committed to using my skills and passion to support my neighbors and increase civic participation. I see this as an excellent opportunity to gain experience in public service, and I believe that I can have the greatest overall impact on the health and direction of our city by serving as an alder.

I also believe society and our local community need to place a greater emphasis on the importance of public discourse and public service. I see alders playing a key role in this regard. Alders can amplify the voices of residents and actively recruit people with all types of experiences and skills to engage the governing processes. As nonpartisan office holders, alders can also honestly lead dialogue and genuinely represent the wide range of views present in their districts. Critically, I believe an interim alder not seeking reelection may have the best opportunity to forthrightly champion such important causes. The opportunity to promote various forms of civic participation as a local representative is an important reason why I am applying to serve as alder. I discuss a few related ideas in my outline of service goals.

I am also drawn to apply because Alder Lindsay Lemmer has been an inspiring and engaging local leader who has encouraged me to seek this position and to use my skills to further serve our community. I take this challenge seriously, and I believe it is important for the interim alder to carry forward the priorities that she emphasized during her tenure. Centrally this includes her commitments to open communication, constituent engagement, and overall fairness and equity. As a fellow communications professional and an active contributor to local civic efforts, I feel that I am very well suited to honor these principles and to finish out her term.

Thank you for learning about why I wish to serve as the alderperson for District 3. Please refer to my introductory letter and outline of service goals for a list of intended priorities, and my résumé for a list of my relevant civic and professional experience.

Outline of Service Goals

ROBERT BEETS

If appointed to serve as the District 3 alderperson for the remaining year of the current term, I would continue Alder Lindsay Lemmer's commitments to communication, engagement, fairness and equity. I would also emphasize increasing public discourse and civic participation, and work to meaningfully address racial disparities.

To prioritize open communication and transparency as alder, I would host open office hours, organize public discussions, provide updates about proposals before the Common Council, and provide a written rationale for my voting record. I believe open and consistent communication about the issues affecting the people of our city can help leaders more quickly identify areas of need and steadily lay the groundwork for establishing broad consensus. While it may be tough to advance some larger agenda items during an interim appointment, investments into a focus on communication and discourse can produce dividends for many years to come.

To increase participation in essential democratic and governing processes, I would support community-led voter registration drives, encourage candidates to run for the District 3 alder seat in the next election, and recruit residents to serve on committees, boards and commissions. My goal is for the wards of District 3 to consistently return some of the highest voter turnout rates in the city, and for residents of District 3 to regularly apply for open constituent-designated seats on governing bodies. Additionally, as I do not plan to run for alder in the next election, I am committed to encouraging others to pursue this seat. I hope to foster a competitive contest among several candidates who can present different styles and viewpoints for voters.

I would also work to support programs that meaningfully address racial disparities and have the potential to improve outcomes for people of color living in Madison. This includes by working through official appointments as well as contributing to efforts organized by the Common Council, the Mayor's office, and other partnerships. I believe it is essential for the City of Madison to take a proactive role to increase the accessibility of services, to help create new education and employment opportunities, and to reverse the impacts of systemic injustice. No single program or initiative can accomplish the profound change that our community requires, but it is important for decision makers in local government to be consistent and intentional when it comes to furthering diversity, equity and inclusion.

In addition to these priorities, I would seek to apply my professional experience and personal interest in science, natural resources, sustainability, urban planning, and health to the work of various city and county committees, boards, commissions and programs.

Thank you for reviewing a basic outline of my intended priorities and goals if selected to serve as the interim alder for District 3. Please refer to my statement on service for insight about why I feel these are critical priorities, and refer to my résumé for a look at how my relevant civic and professional experience can help me accomplish these goals.

Statement on Future Candidacy

ROBERT BEETS

I do not anticipate running for alder next year. I am applying for the open seat because it is a great opportunity to gain experience representing fellow residents and serving on a local governing body. This will help prepare me for future pursuits in public service.

Robert Beets

, Madison, WI 53714

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science

Natural Resources / Concentration in Life Sciences Communication
University of Wisconsin–Madison
May 2006

Environmental Studies Certificate

Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies
University of Wisconsin–Madison
May 2006

CIVIC EXPERIENCE

Election Official

City of Madison
March–April 2022

- › Worked at the Ward 11 polling location for the 2022 Spring Election on April 5
- › Marked poll books, processed absentee ballots, and assisted with on-site registrations

Communications Lead

Dane County Voter ID Coalition
February 2022–Present

- › Lead communications strategy for projects and activities
- › Write messaging for voting outreach materials
- › Manage social media accounts

Advisory Team

OWN IT: Building Black Wealth
May 2021–Present

- › Provide advice on communications, operations, and program processes
- › Write and edit press releases, marketing copy, and website content
- › Contribute to the coordination and oversight of volunteers

Secretary / Board Member

Rolling Meadows Neighborhood Association
March 2021–Present

- › Manage and write monthly newsletter distributed to over 300 residents
- › Organize meeting agendas and take minutes for Board and public meetings
- › Design marketing and outreach materials and manage social media accounts

Letter on Dog Free Park Processes

December 2021

- › Letter submitted to Board of Park Commissioners and City of Madison Parks Division
- › Drafted letter after Kingston-Onyx Park was designated dog free in November 2021
- › Advocated for specific changes to the process for designating dog free parks
- › Recruited several neighbors and Madison residents to sign on to the letter

Letters to the Editor

September 2019–Present

- › Regularly submit letters to the editor of *The Capital Times*
- › Nine letters have been published in the past three years
- › Letters have addressed a wide range of social and civic issues

WORK EXPERIENCE

Principal Consultant

Prime Root (Madison, WI)
June 2015–Present

- › Provide communications and management consulting for science organizations
- › Support organizations developing strategies and improving communications practices
- › Lead projects communicating complex topics to public and professional audiences
- › Navigate various organizational cultures, bureaucracies, policies and practices
- › Help develop capacity and processes to create content and build community
- › Work with people who have a wide range of professional experience

Communications Director

International Neuroethics Society (Remote)
September 2014–Present

- › Manage communications and projects for an international association
- › Coordinate committee meetings and activities initiated by members
- › Direct and oversee work and contributions of part-time interns
- › Lead data collection, reporting, and creation of reports

Communications Manager

Scientific Societies (Eagan, MN)

February–June 2015

- › Managed communications and member relations for multiple agricultural associations
- › Coordinated newsletters, wrote articles and website content, and edited reports
- › Departed to start my consultancy, now under the name Prime Root

New Media and PR Specialist

American Association for the Advancement of Science (Washington, DC)

January 2013–August 2014

- › Managed websites and social media for the world's largest general scientific society
- › Coordinated online publishing process for feature articles written by staff and freelancers
- › Contributed to multiple website redesign projects and content migration efforts
- › Organized a cross-departmental social media practice group for staff

Marketing Consultant

Red Root Publishing (Milwaukee, WI)

March 2012–January 2013

Marketing Coordinator

Giant Campus (Seattle, WA)

January 2011–January 2012

Website / Communications Coordinator

National Anemia Action Council

Executive Director Inc. (Milwaukee, WI)

May 2007–May 2010

Valet

CPS Parking (Milwaukee, WI)

August 2006–May 2008

Communications Coordinator

Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (Madison, WI)

September 2004–May 2006

Records Assistant

Wisconsin Historical Society (Madison, WI)

September 2003–August 2005