

Maria DeRose Bio

I am a lifelong Village resident. Before becoming Trustee, I served on the Village's Flood Mitigation Advisory Committee, on the Board of Ethics, and I was the chairperson of the mayor's ad hoc parking committee. I am the Head of North American Operations for a global regulatory life sciences firm, overseeing employees in the US and Canada.

1) We're a Village with a long history of flooding. Please evaluate the progress the Village has made on flooding and what other flood-mitigation efforts you want to see. Flood Mitigation and Army Corps Funding: The Village has successfully secured grant funding for several flood mitigation projects, which is a positive step. However, there remains approximately \$86 million in federal funding for the Army Corps project. Two years ago, Congressman Latimer arranged a meeting with Colonel Young of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At that meeting, Colonel Young committed to working toward having the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA) signed within three years. That presented the Village with an important opportunity toward getting the PPA executed before Colonel Young's retirement. The Village now needs to establish a strong working relationship with Colonel Swenson to keep the project moving forward. Getting the PPA signed should remain a priority. The Village should be actively coordinating with the Corps, our federal representatives to ensure the project continues to move toward construction.

2) You have been involved in two budget cycles in your first term as trustee. What have you learned from the process and/or what would you like to accomplish in future budget cycles? I have learned that the Village budget process involves balancing many competing needs and priorities, and I am grateful for the hard work of the Budget Committee and everyone involved in that process. I believe we still have opportunities to be more disciplined with taxpayer dollars. There continues to be spending that I consider unnecessary. In future budget cycles, I would like to see greater emphasis on eliminating waste and finding efficiencies. My priority is to fund projects that maintain and improve our infrastructure, address flooding and ensure the safety of our residents. The goal of the budget should be straightforward: protect essential services, eliminate unnecessary spending, and make sure taxpayer dollars are invested where they provide the greatest benefit to the community.

3) Please describe one or two accomplishments during your time on the board that you advocated for that improved the lives of all residents. I reestablished the Flood Mitigation Committee, giving residents a stronger voice in keeping flood mitigation efforts moving forward. I have also advocated for updating and strengthening our zoning and building codes so that they better reflect the needs and challenges facing the Village today. Thoughtful regulations can help protect our neighborhoods, improve safety, and ensure that future development is consistent with the quality of life our residents expect. I will continue to work directly with residents to help reinstate policies addressing mosquito control and rat mitigation. These may seem like smaller issues, but they directly affect residents' health, safety, and quality of life. I believe local government should listen to residents when they identify problems in their neighborhoods and work collaboratively to find practical solutions.

4) What are three things you would like to accomplish in your next two-year term?

1. Fiscal responsibility. I want to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely and that we continue to identify and eliminate unnecessary or wasteful spending. We need to prioritize essential services and projects that provide a clear benefit to residents while maintaining a responsible and sustainable budget.
2. Protecting and improving our quality of life. This includes making meaningful progress on flood mitigation and improving pedestrian safety.
3. Improving infrastructure and ensuring responsible building. Our roads, drainage systems, sidewalks, bridges, and other infrastructure need continued investment and long-term planning. New construction and redevelopment must be responsible. We need building and zoning policies that ensure development does not make existing flooding problems worse and maintains the character of our Village.