

Mother of Three: Representing the People

Involvement in any Minnesota township is a great responsibility. Attending meetings, being prepared, and keeping a positive attitude are all key actions in being part of a successful township. Seeing change in your township takes more work than this, however. As an elector, your thoughts and ideas are all your own. Obvious, but true. In a township, the board is the final stop – there is no higher power to consider the addressed issues – just five people in a room. Nevertheless, there are many other voices which can affect the decision-making process. Being an elector gives me this voice.

To pass an action as an elector, you need to have determination and passion for your idea. Regardless, challenges will arise. Let me take the role of a working mother of three young children. At times, entertaining them can be a challenge. I notice a piece of land ideal for a playground. Now I can take action. MN Statute § 365.10, subd. 8 allows electors to authorize the board to buy land (revisor.mn.gov). I want the board to include a playground for the children in my area. To the board, this seems like a daunting task. I truly feel passionate about this idea, though, and I would love to see it come to life.

To pass my action, I would need to concentrate on four set points to bring into the next meeting. The first point would be a specific and detailed plan of the park that I envision. Being too vague could break the pitch of my idea. If I have a solid plan, however, the board will be more willing to listen to my proposal. My second task would be to answer the question: how much will this playground cost? This ties into the third point – another question: where will we get the money? These facts will only help my case and show the board that I am prepared. The final step in this plan would be having committed volunteers who are willing to put in the effort to make this idea flourish. I wouldn't only have a list of their names, but would also bring them to the meeting for the pitch, to demonstrate to the board that his playground will benefit the majority of the people.

Lastly, through these efforts we will have practiced an authority given to us that is 'protecting the good order of the town' (mntownships.org). By using this right, we as electors are given, we would be able to show this new addition to the town, though seemingly useless to some, can encourage town growth and stability. A previous MAT essay winner of 2019 said, 'Creating new attractions and building enduring neighborhoods will encourage people, especially young people, to remain in their community.' (Owen Tonn) He made it clear that helping families in your township goes a long way for the rest of the town, as we are all connected in the long run.