

# Candidate Questionnaire on Housing Issues

# 2022



## John Peura

**City/Town:** Moose Lake

**Legislative District:** SD 11

**Party:** DFL

*Candidate responses in italics.*

1. In July 2021, a [national poll](#) found that 68% of the public believes that elected officials are not paying enough attention to the rising cost of housing and ensuring everyone can afford a place to live. **What do you believe is the role of government in ensuring everyone has a place to call home?**

*Public subsidy is one option. Another option is to create pathways for homeownership through block grants. Anyway that we can remove barriers to create opportunities i.e. utilizing vacant hotels/motels or schools. Repurposed properties are a viable alternative to new development.*

2. Nearly all counties in Minnesota (92%) are not able to provide sufficient shelter or temporary housing to those who are homeless. **What will you do to end homelessness?**

*Repurpose vacant properties is a great place to start. I assisted individuals overcome being homeless through strong advocacy with landlords and other community programs. I was able to secure housing for one individual through MAC-V.*

3. Emergency rental assistance keeps people stably housed, as we saw with federal pandemic-related funding. Historically, nonpayment of rent is the most common reason landlords evict their tenants. During times of financial crisis, families without access to financial resources may be displaced, evicted, or even become homeless. **What will you do to prevent evictions?**

*Strong advocacy. I had one person on my caseload was facing eviction. Between the case manager and I we were able to prevent further action. Payment arrangements could be leveraged. Historically, the homeless definition has differed between the feds and state. Regulations are a barrier for certain programs and financial institutions to assist individuals who may not have gotten into a situation of their own. The cost of housing continues to go up and the quality of housing goes down.*

4. Minnesota's housing crisis disproportionately harms families of color, especially Black and Indigenous households. Minnesota is one of the worst states in the nation for racial disparities in homeownership. Additionally, 58 percent of Black renters are paying more than they can afford on housing costs. **What meaningful steps will you take to eliminate racial disparities in housing?**

*Public/private partnership is a critical component. Locking in mortgages and rent payments for 15 years at the lowest rates. Increasing the minimum wages for all positions is a great opportunity to reduce the disparities. Rental properties should be used to meet the current expenses, not as a money maker to build new properties.*

5. There are approximately 170,000 renter households in the state that earn less than \$31,200 per year. But rental assistance is only available to one out of every four income-qualifying households. Even though more than 100,000 lowest income households need homes, the state only supports the production of 100 homes each year for these families. **What will you do to support the housing needs of those at the lowest income level in Minnesota?**

*A couple of options, one is to return to the days of multi generation residential properties. Another option is to leverage public/private partnerships to provide block grants to rental property owners and financial institutions to cover payment "gaps". This would require the individual to prove just cause for a smaller payment that month.*

6. Energy efficiency improvements in multifamily buildings and weatherizing single family homes improve indoor air quality, eliminate drafts, and protect residents from extreme cold and heat—delivering health benefits and lower health care costs. **What strategies do you support to improve housing conditions and reduce utility costs?**

*This is a public/private partnership opportunity. The use of terminal heating to solar panels would be fantastic too. Growing up, we used wood heat. The system heated both the house and garage. We had off-peak heat for the house as a secondary source.*

7. Minnesota's home values are increasing rapidly, constraining low- and middle-income families from achieving affordable homeownership, including more than 64,000 households of color. **What steps will you take to increase opportunities for renters to purchase homes, condos, or cooperative ownership models?**

*In Minneapolis, on Milwaukee Avenue, they were going to raze all the sawtooth houses that were built in the 1880s. A group was created to protect the historic homes. The majority of the sawtooth houses are still standing. So, removing barriers for individuals to collectively come together and create additional districts that the members are responsible for the upkeep. Which should provide the*

*collective members to provide homeownership to interested parties. The collective could leverage their community to provide backing to remove possible barriers.*

8. Including the recommendations of the community when developing policies and programs is a best practice for effective and lasting solutions. **How will you include those most impacted by housing needs in developing and implementing housing solutions?**

*I am a strong advocate for repurposing vacant buildings. I was just talking to a realtor about repurposing a vacant building for a business center. Personally, I support inviting all stakeholders to the table to explore the community needs and wants.*