

## **E.L. resident Hans Larsen bids for seat Hopes to give residents voice in City Council decisions**

By Kate Jacobson (Last updated: 18 hours ago)



East Lansing resident Hans Larsen is running for one of two open seats on the East Lansing City Council.

Larsen was born in East Lansing and graduated from East Lansing High School. He also received a master's degree in anesthesia from Columbia University School of Nursing in 2002. Currently, Larsen said he works as a clinical instructor of anesthesiology for MSU's College of Human Medicine and College of Nursing, but is not on MSU's payroll.

As an outspoken opponent to the City Center II project, Larsen said the City Council has engaged in irresponsible budgeting and reckless spending to the detriment of the taxpayers. The City Center II project is a \$116.4 million project that would bring a mixed-use development to the corner of Abbot Road and Evergreen and Grand River avenues.

Larsen said he would be a good candidate for council because of his character and ability to change East Lansing's practices.

"I have the character and the courage to expose the deceptions in City Hall, to stand up against the group thinkers on council and to return City Council into a responsible, responsive voice of the people," he wrote in an e-mail.

Alan Fox, a political consultant with East Lansing-based Practical Political Consulting Inc., said because Larsen is relatively unknown in the city, it will be a hard election for him to win.

"It's not really a contested race," he said. "The incumbents are pretty well-known. Unless something happens in the next week, it's hard to imagine that it's even going to be close."

Larsen declined to be photographed and said he told friends and family to not respond to interview requests from The State News.

If elected to City Council, he said he would make institutional changes in the city and restore honesty and transparency.

"We must fire City Manager Ted Staton because he has recklessly and deceptively led our City Council to throw millions of taxpayer dollars at an insolvent private developer while failing to budget responsibly and causing us to be in an 'emergency financial' condition," Larsen said.

Staton said the process to plan and review the City Center II project has been entirely transparent and the city gathered more public input on this project than any other in East Lansing's history.

"It's been guided carefully," he said, adding that care has been taken to minimize any risk for the city and its taxpayers.

As to the financial state of East Lansing, Staton said its bond ratings have improved in recent years and experts have given the city's financial practices extremely positive reviews.

“Every school district, every local government and university could be described as being in an emergency financial condition,” he said.

Other than altering the makeup of City Hall, Larsen said one goal he hopes to accomplish is for East Lansing to improve the relationship between the city and MSU.

“City Hall fails to recognize that East Lansing is nothing without the energy and the vibrancy that students and staff bring to our community,” Larsen said.

East Lansing resident Bert Seyfarth, who also is a supporter of candidate Phil Bellfy, said Larsen pays attention to detail in the city.

“Both Phil and Hans really look at things,” he said.

Larsen said he would like to focus more on a responsible budget for the city, essential public services and to be a voice of the people.

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