

Rep. Jon Hardister
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March 29, 2024

Members of the Nominating Committee
North Carolina League of Municipalities
434 Fayetteville Street, Suite 1900
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear Members of the Nominating Committee:

I'm writing to offer my strong support for Oak Ridge Town Councilwoman Ann Schneider's application to serve on the North Carolina League of Municipalities' Board of Directors. I've known Ann since early in her first term on Council, which began in 2017, and throughout her four years as Mayor. I'm also familiar with the resources, service, and leadership that NCLM provides to towns like Oak Ridge across North Carolina. I believe that Ann's experience as a municipal and nonprofit leader make her an ideal candidate to further the League's ongoing work in our great state.

Ann is a thoughtful and strategic planner who collaborates with constituents, colleagues, and other stakeholders. Shortly after her election to Council in 2017, Ann helped lead the development of the town's first strategic plan which, with periodic updates, continues to guide the town's ambitious agenda. She quickly became a strong voice in communicating with me and other state legislators, often leading the small towns in northwest Guilford to oppose bills that threatened aspects of local zoning.

Her election in 2019 by fellow Council members to serve as Oak Ridge's first female mayor after only two years on Council was unprecedented, and reflected the strength of her leadership skills. As Mayor, she helped raise over \$12M in outside funding – much of it coming from the state – to support priority projects identified in the strategic plan. For example, during 2023, Oak Ridge received \$4.5M through support sponsored by Representative Faircloth on the House side and Senator Berger on the Senate side. This funding will support the development of the town's first municipal water system, something Oak Ridge has pursued for over 20 years, but is only now becoming a reality.

Ann also helped oversee the development of a new 60-acre park in the heart of Oak Ridge, which will include a site to honor veterans, as well as one of the only playgrounds designed for children of all ability levels in northwest Guilford County, and –

soon – state of the art security cameras. Each of these projects also received grant funding, thanks to Ann’s leadership, and has helped position Oak Ridge a model among other small- to mid-sized towns in Guilford County.

Ann’s strong relationships with other area mayors and councilmembers, County Commissioners, and state leaders testify to her ability to work with a wide range of colleagues. As you’re probably aware, Ann was a member of the League’s Mayors Association until she stepped down as mayor in December 2023. She forged valuable connections with mayors across the state and was elected to the Mayors Association board, where she served admirably throughout 2023.

Ann’s long experience first as a senior staff member and later as a consultant to nonprofits continues to inform her municipal service. Her ability to think strategically and to move from ideas to action has characterized her service to Oak Ridge, as has her ability to work collaboratively. Her strong communication skills, both as a speaker and writer, have made her an exceptional advocate for Oak Ridge. I would also add that Ann has a unique ability to inspire and engage colleagues and citizens, as demonstrated by Oak Ridge’s impressive volunteer base, which I understand involves more than 60 residents serving on 10 town committees.

I believe that Ann’s skills and experience in all of these areas would make her invaluable to the board and leadership team at the League as it implements Vision 2030.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my strong support for Ann’s application to serve on the League’s Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Hardister". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "H".

Rep. Jon Hardister