

## City of Marquette Commission Application

### Applicant Name as it Appears on License

Jerme Lee Ottaway

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

### Occupation

Insurance/Claims

### Business Name

Farmers Insurance Group Inc.

### Business Phone

(248) 974-2451

### Business Address

PO BOX 4363  
Woodland Hills, CA 91365, Michigan  
United States

### Are you a registered voter in the City of Marquette?

Yes

### Have you been a City resident for at least 12 months?

Yes

### Are you currently in default to the City of Marquette?

No

### Are you related to any elected City Commissioner (including by marriage)?

No

### Do you have any pending litigation against the City?

No

### Are you currently serving or have you served on any City board or committee?

Yes

**Please list and give approximate dates of board/committee service.**

2018-Present - Marquette Board of Zoning Appeals

2019-Present - Marquette Downtown Development Authority

**Please describe your education/credentials:**

2002 Graduate of MSHS

2006 Graduate of NMU, BS in Political Science

**What are your professional activities that relate to the City Commission?**

I have worked for Farmers Insurance Exchange as a Claims Professional for almost 16 years.

I have been extremely successful in my roles with Farmers due to my commitment to being a leader and go to person among my peers. I have expertise in empathy, people leading, teamwork, problem solving and understanding complex policy.

Additionally, I have extensive experience working with attorneys and client representatives. This has given me the ability to make difficult decisions in high pressure situations. It has also helped solidify my ability to ask the right questions to have a proper understanding of a situation.

Ultimately, I work in a customer service industry. The most important trait my career has taught me is how to help people when they are at their most vulnerable.

**What community activities are you involved in that relate to the City Commission?**

I have been on the BZA since my appointment in 2018 and have been the elected Chairperson since 2019.

- I have heard and had to rule on numerous variance requests, special land uses and appeals in public hearings. Acting as chair I follow the rules of parliament and run the public meetings. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to present annually to the City Commission.

I was appointed to the DDA in 2019 and have been the elected Chairperson for the last two years.

- My core responsibility on the DDA is oversight of the Executive Director. Additionally, with the board, I have been responsible for high-exposure financial decisions, managing and implementing parking, review of community and state-sponsored grant applications, design and maintenance of the DDA district and oversight of the Farmers Market among numerous other things.

**What talents or experience would you bring to the City Commission?**

I am well experienced in the oversight of public officials. While serving as the Chairperson on the DDA my most important task/role has been the oversight of the Executive Committee and directly supporting the DDA Executive Director. This year, I oversaw a changing of the Executive Director and the process to hire a replacement. While doing this I worked with staff to completely and successfully reorganize the DDA staff roles and urged and convinced the staff and board to utilize 2023 as a reinvestment opportunity back in the DDA.

I have a great understanding of the planning process and working with consultants. I worked on the Downtown Plan process from start to finish offering an abundance of feedback to our consulting team and am comfortable offering input to any portion of the Master Plan that is necessary and welcomed.

I am well versed in Brownfield Redevelopment Plans. While serving on the DDA I have reviewed and oversaw numerous discussions regarding Brownfields and am comfortable negotiating the terms of a Brownfield Redevelopment Plan. Additionally, I understand the delicate balance between the importance of these plans and the cost they can have to a municipality.

Serving on the BZA has given me a baseline understanding of planning and helped me understand how to interpret the

**Any other comments or information you wish to provide to the Mayor and City Commissioners?**

I have an extremely good working relationship with City Manager, Karen Kovacs. Karen, as you know, also serves on the DDA and is familiar with my dedication to the city of Marquette. I believe this relationship is an important piece to my resume as it makes for a more seamless transition for both the Commission and the City Manager.

One of the most-important roles of a City Commissioner is oversight and support of the City Manager. With my experience doing this at the DDA level and my already established relationship with Karen, I believe this is a true outlier in my candidacy.

**Please provide a statement on why you are interested in serving on the City Commission**

I have had a passion for our city since I was a kid. I remember driving down Lakeshore Boulevard with my mom drinking a cup of tea, gazing out the window in amazement of all the lake, forest and rocks offered. I remember how proud I was when my grandparents visited from downstate and they let me play tour guide and show them all the spectacular things Marquette had to offer, that I knew they didn't have at home. That same amazement I had as a child only has continued to grow.

As I got older and was getting ready to go to college, I chose to go to NMU. I couldn't bear the thought of leaving the area or the woman I loved. Funny enough, I proposed to my wife at one of my favorite places, Picnic Rocks. Anyone who knows me, knows my love for that area as I continue to frequent it today often utilizing it as an office space while I work in my car and enjoy all the views it has to offer.

When I started my career, I began traveling across the country. It was obvious the harder I looked, there wasn't another Marquette out there. Trips across the South and up and down the Coastlines quickly made me realize how unbelievable Marquette is. Where else can you find the perfect blend of big-city magic and small-town feel with a picturesque view everywhere you look?

In recent years, I've had the opportunity to leave, but I can't and I won't. Marquette has become a part of my identity. I've fallen in love with everything about it, including our downtown. I even take staycations making it a point to shop at local shops and frequent the places that make others want to visit. Marquette is truly unique. There isn't another place like it and I want to do my part to ensure it only continues to become more magical.

It was in late 2016 when I realized I wanted to start doing more to support the community I loved. I ran for City Commissioner in 2017 and again in 2018 and 2019. During that time, I was also heavily considered for appointments to seats that were awarded to Commissioner Smith and Commissioner Schloegel. During my final unsuccessful run in 2019, I realized I was already contributing in a meaningful way, serving on the BZA and DDA and decided to dedicate myself to those boards.

My terms are now coming to an end and the timing is right. I have gained knowledge by serving in my previous capacities that make me the ideal candidate to be appointed. I have a great understanding of the needs of the city and the upcoming challenges we face, because I'm already part of the solution.

It has been one of my goals to serve Marquette in this capacity and I have proven to have gained the expertise to be a successful and affective Commissioner immediately.

**Uploads**

- [Letter-of-Support-from-DDA-Director.pdf](#)
- [City-Commission-Resume.pdf](#)
- [City-Commission-Cover-Letter.pdf](#)

**Are you involved in any personal, professional or business pursuit that would affect your ability to make fair and impartial recommendations as a member the City Commission?**

No

**Are you aware of the meeting schedule and are you available to attend regularly scheduled meetings?**

Yes

**Signature**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'J' or similar character.

***Signature certifies that there are no misrepresentations, omissions or falsifications on this application and by signing this application consent is given to the City to conduct a background check to verify the information provided.***

**Application Date**

12/07/2022