

LWV HIGHLAND PARK/HIGHWOOD LOCAL POSITIONS

(2016)

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CITY GOVERNMENT | 2 |
| General | 2 |
| Boards and Commissions | 3 |
| General | |
| Human Relations Commission | |
| Economic Development Commission | |
| Budgeting Procedures | 4 |
| Campaign Practices and Procedures..... | 4 |
| Community Resources..... | 5 |
| Facilities..... | 5 |
| CITY PLANNING | 5 |
| General..... | 5 |
| Central Business District..... | 6 |
| Historic Preservation..... | 7 |
| Housing..... | 7 |
| Neighborhood Character..... | 7 |
| Skokie Corridor | 8 |
| Transportation and Roads | 9 |
| CRITERIA for LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT or DIVESTITURE of PUBLIC PROPERTY ...9 | |
| General..... | 9 |
| Community Goals and Priorities..... | 9 |
| Land Use and Open Space..... | 9 |
| Financing..... | 10 |
| ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION | 10 |
| General..... | 10 |
| Flood Plain and Watershed..... | 10 |
| Open Space, Parks and Recreation..... | 11 |
| Beaches and Ravines | 11 |
| General..... | 11 |
| Beaches | 11 |
| Rosewood Beach | 11 |
| FORT SHERIDAN | 12 |
| HANDGUN CONTROL | 12 |
| LIBRARY | 13 |
| PARKS AND RECREATION | 14 |
| RAVINIA FESTIVAL | 14 |
| SCHOOLS | 16 |
| Consolidation | 16 |
| Referenda Criteria..... | 16 |
| SENIOR SERVICES | 16 |
| TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT | 17 |

CITY GOVERNMENT

I. General

The LWV of Highland Park supports the council-manager form of government, the at-large method of election and home rule status for Highland Park.

We believe that the practices and procedures of Highland Park government, as they relate to:

- 1) appointments to boards and commissions,
- 2) City Council agendas,
- 3) open meetings and
- 4) general standards for good government, should be directed to the goal of maximum citizen participation.

To this end, it is recommended that:

A. The following steps be taken to encourage candidates to come forward for consideration as appointees to boards and commissions:

1. When a vacancy occurs, the mayor should consult with the board or commission chairman, City Council and staff liaison as to needs and/or specific names. These recommendations would not be binding.
2. Notice of a vacancy on a board or commission should be made public through the local newspapers. Civic groups should be notified of such vacancies.
3. Anyone interested in being appointed to a board or commission should submit a written resume. Applicants should be interviewed.
4. All applications and resignations should be promptly acknowledged in writing, and notice given when the seat is filled.

The specific needs of each board and commission vary. However, we believe that certain criteria for the selection of appointees apply to all. Interest and availability are primary, combined where possible with geographical representation, balance between the sexes, and representation of both old and new residents. Members with divergent views are essential for each board and commission. While experts (persons having background or experience in a given field, not necessarily a professional) should be included in each commission, the balance between laymen and experts should be weighted toward the laymen.

B. The City Council agenda should be posted on the Friday before the Monday meeting in City Hall, the Library, on the cable station, website and all available media.

Additions to the agenda by the Council should be made only in cases of genuine emergency. If action is not immediately necessary, it should be deferred, allowing any concerned citizen the right to be heard. League members commend the City Council for its customary practice of allowing the public to be heard on agenda items as they are called.

The opportunity for considering new business should be retained on the agenda so that the public can bring up items before the Council. However, no action should be taken on such new items at that meeting.

C. The City Council should comply with the letter and spirit of the Open Meetings Act by publicizing the time and place of the pre-Council dinner meetings through the newspapers, and by posting notice of it in City Hall and other public places where council meetings are announced. The public should be notified that it is welcome, and adequate seating should be

provided. Boards, commissions and committees should adhere to the same strict interpretation of the Open Meetings Act.

D. The following characteristics are among those considered to be essential standards for good government: innovation, freedom from conflict of interest, good public relations, adequate staff and budget, responsiveness to the public, respect for dissent, and a clear order and conduct of business.

Maximum citizen participation can only be achieved when the public is made aware of the rules, procedures and practices of their local government. The City of Highland Park should make every effort to insure that this information is available and widely circulated.

The LWV of Highland Park wishes to retain the at-large method of election for council members. The League opposes district elections because they would be a divisive factor in the community. Since ward boundaries are drawn according to population distribution, they would not necessarily coincide with area problems. Each council member should be responsible to the community as a whole. A candidate's qualifications and positions on issues are more important than his address.

(Rev. 1982, 2003)

(Editorial Note: This position is an accumulation of the results of several studies done during the 1970s.)

II. Boards and Commissions

A. General

The LWV of Highland Park supports the board and commission structure in Highland Park.

There is a need for ongoing communication such as the annual commission reports to the Council.

There should continue to be an annual review of each commission by the City Council at the budget meetings to determine whether the function for which the commission was created is still necessary, and whether funding for continued operation should be included in the following year's budget. Members feel that a strong need be demonstrated before any new commissions are created.

(1979, rev. 1980, 1990, 2003)

B. Human Relations Commission

The LWV of Highland Park supports a strong and effective Human Relations Commission and a strong Fair Housing Ordinance.

The Human Relations Commission should play an active and aggressive role in providing leadership for the area of human relations. Human relations problems include affronts to human dignity, or any discrimination or intolerance against groups or individuals because of beliefs or background.

The Commission should be a moral leader, actively informing the community. Commissioners should be divergent in backgrounds but should have broad philosophical agreement.

The Commission should reach its point of view, and educate the community to that point of view. It should look for problem areas, and make long-range goals and plans to settle future difficulties that may arise in the community. When necessary, the Commission should provide the mechanism for handling crises.

The Commission should take an aggressive role in initiating fair housing complaints. The Commission should have the power to issue subpoenas and to instruct the Corporation Counsel to seek relief through the courts without the consent of City Council. If possible, there should be a provision for compensatory damages in the Fair Housing Ordinance.

(1971, rev. 1986, 2003)

C. Business and Economic Development Commission

The LWV of Highland Park approves of the function of the Business and Economic Development Commission. The League recommends that its focus should continue to be promotion of economic development for the entire City.

The League supports incorporation of an Economic Development Director as a member of the City staff. We feel it will be advantageous to have one person coordinating all economic development efforts.

(1984, rev. 1988, 2003)

III. Budgeting Procedures

The LWV of Highland Park believes the budget should be clear enough for an interested citizen to understand. The addition of a budget summary, a salary schedule and an explanation of expenditures for special projects makes the budget more understandable.

Effective citizen participation in the budget process should be facilitated. In order to achieve this, we recommend a well-publicized public meeting to take citizen input in planning the forthcoming year's budget. All budget meetings should be clearly open and accessible to the public because of its importance in the budget process.

(1978, rev. 1990, Rev. 2003)

IV. Campaign Practices and Procedures

The LWV of Highland Park believes that there is wide-spread benefit in creating a climate conducive to more citizens running for public office.

The League recommends the creation of community organizations to address the following:

- A. Develop voluntary candidate guidelines which could include the length of the campaign season; voluntary donation limits and sources; period of active fundraising, etc.
- B. Promote wider dissemination of candidate information through such methods. as non-partisan voters guides; cable TV issue-focused moderated discussions; weekly issue spots from candidates on cable.
- C. Facilitate frequent local publication of income and expense reports required of candidates.
- D. Negotiate group rates for TV/newspaper advertising; and/or
- E. Develop web links for various election-related web sites.

(2002; rev. 2003)

V. Community Resources

The LWV of Highland Park recognizes that the social service facilities and resources of Highland Park are many and varied. We support moderate City funding of private social service agencies in Highland Park by purchase of service if necessary.

The membership of the LWV feels that the main function of city government in the field of social service is in a coordination and referral capacity. Members are reluctant to have the City become more financially involved in social services. However, in the event this City does go into the funding of private agencies, members feel that contracting for services is preferable to giving grants. League members then recommend that the applying agency have a probable need, and that the City be the last recourse for an agency, sought only after exhausting all other funding possibilities. Members suggest that the City's input to the funded agency be limited to a yearly review of their budget and reevaluation of the agency's need for continued City funding at the time of yearly reapplication by the agency.

(1976, rev. 2003)

VI. Facilities

The League supports the use of the Highland Park Community House as a cultural arts civic center to be funded primarily with private funds and limited public monies. The City and Park District could provide in-kind services such as lawn maintenance. Rental fees for the cultural arts civic center should be affordable for community non-profit groups.

(1991, rev. 2003)

CITY PLANNING

I. General

The LWV of Highland Park values the suburban character of this City. The League would like a more unified, active and heterogeneous community with more community spirit and identity, and greater concern for each other's problems. However, League members also want to retain the neighborhood orientation and activities. Members will accept moderate growth as long as it is orderly and well-planned. They feel that a great deal of growth would change the suburban character of the community.

The League's major priorities are environmental preservation and housing. Next in importance are the Central Business District and public transportation.

The League supports continuous, financially sound planning and zoning which encourages a broad social and economic community. The League:

A. has found, in developing guideposts for evaluating planning and zoning policies, that good planning:

1. is continuous and active;
2. aims at providing housing for all economic levels and keeping a clean, safe, healthful and aesthetically attractive city;
3. supplies adequate services; and
4. encourages conservation and improvement of existing development, including business districts and additional suitable nonresidential development.

B. supports and encourages good planning as a function of city government and of related governmental bodies, such as the school districts and the Park District, with active cooperation and exchange of information amongst them, regional advisory agencies and interested citizens.

C. supports and encourages such types of governmental policies and actions as:

1. continuous updating and strict enforcement of the City plan, maps, ordinances and codes with emphasis on:

a. broad social and economic planning. Government and individuals must promote the development of low and moderate income and public housing in Highland Park.

b. improvement of the zoning ordinances, particularly in regard to the following changes:

- encouragement of the implementation of planned unit developments;
- some of the land zoned 1-3 acre lots should be rezoned to some multiple family use as planned unit developments;
- zoning ordinances should contain statements of intent in which the language is simple and as clear as possible, while remaining consistent with legal requirements;
- the “Non-conforming Use” section should be clear, and provide strict controls;
- out of the ordinary uses (e.g. hospitals, airports, etc.) should be handled by special permit, in order to give the City the power to make special requirements and provisions. The ordinance should strictly limit the use of special permits.

c. continuous updating of the Building Code to allow for more innovative materials and techniques.

2. preservation of open space areas (see also the Open Space and Parks and Recreation positions) by:

a. protection of designated public lands from subdivision;

b. preservation and proper utilization of open spaces such as ravines, parks, golf courses and the lakefront; and

c. careful consideration to the acquisition of additional properties for public use.

3. continued efforts to facilitate and promote nonresidential development such as commercial, industrial, office and research, institutional and recreational.

4. efforts to promote implementation of planned unit developments for high, middle and low income housing.

5. continuous cooperation between the building department and the assessor’s office to ensure proper assessment of taxable properties.

6. the encouragement of citizen participation in planning and zoning matters by:

a. publishing legal notices of public hearings worded in laymen’s terms, along with the legal description; and

b. sending notices of public hearings on any zoning change to a reasonable number of interested parties in the neighborhood, as well as property owners.

(rev. 1982, rev. 2003)

(Editorial Note: This position is the product of several studies done in the mid-1970s. See also the Lake County LWV Land Use position from 1977.)

II. Central Business District

The LWV of Highland Park believes that the Central Business District should be stable and diversified. This is important for a variety of reasons including: 1) financial base, 2) convenience and personalized service and 3) community identity. The Central Business District should not compete with regional shopping centers. It should offer diverse activities and facilities: retail, social, recreational and cultural. Among these could be more restaurants, offices, medical facilities and a privately-funded, multipurpose community facility which would meet cultural and organizational needs.

Members accept the moderate height increases permitted in the 1979 zoning ordinance. There is strong concern for aesthetics, for adequate open space between the buildings, and for limiting the number of tall buildings. Height increases in the fringe of the Central Business District should be less than the moderate height increases in the Central Business District. Members recognize that positive action in the Central Business District is necessary. Private methods of funding should be explored before public monies are expended, and a special service area should be considered.
(1974, rev. 1979, 2003)

III. Historic Preservation

The LWV of Highland Park supports the encouragement of historic preservation through the Historic Preservation Commission. A primary function of the Commission should be educating, advising and assisting landmark owners of the physical and financial aspects of preservation. To that end, a central source of information regarding restoration and preservation should be provided for property owners.

While the League opposes local tax incentives relating to historic preservation, we favor zoning provisions which would encourage preservation and/or prevent demolition.
(1980, rev. 1981, 1984)

IV. Housing

The LWV of Highland Park wishes to maintain and increase the heterogeneous character of the community. This would include housing provisions for senior citizens, young people, persons who work in the community, and people of all incomes: low, moderate and high.

The League feels that the City has an obligation to help meet the housing needs of senior citizens in the area. Senior citizens who cannot afford presently available housing should not be forced either to leave Highland Park or to live in substandard housing. We approve of the use of public funds to achieve adequate housing to meet these needs.

Low and moderate income housing is of particular concern to the League. In order to provide this, members are willing to increase density at currently zoned heights on scattered sites in existing residential neighborhoods (e.g. townhouses, duplexes and quadraplexes). Members want safeguards to assure that rezoning would not set a precedent to change the single family character of the neighborhoods, and want aesthetics to be an important consideration.

Height increases to meet our housing goals must take into consideration aesthetics, the number of higher buildings and the impact on the surrounding residential area.

The League supports zoning for multiple family housing in the Central Business District fringe area. The League favors a variety of housing opportunities for all income and age groups. To that end, we recognize the need for moderate height increases in this area.

(Rev. 1979, 2003)

(Editorial Note: This position is the product of 2 studies done in the mid-1970s. See also the City Planning position.)

V. Neighborhood Character

The LWV of Highland Park believes it is important to preserve the character of single family residential neighborhoods in our community.

The key items in maintaining a neighborhood's character are: 1) the size and scale of the existing homes, 2) variety of architectural design within a neighborhood and throughout the community, and 3) appropriate landscaping.

To preserve these characteristics, the League would like to see the City use traditional zoning techniques. Regulation should be of measurable criteria, not subjective matters of taste. Therefore, the League opposes any design review process. Dimensional controls should be based on an appropriate average of the immediate vicinity (for example, the block) so as to allow gradual change and avoid sudden large changes in an established neighborhood. The League would also support setting a maximum house size for each zoning district in order to prevent a house that is out of scale with the existing neighborhood. The League favors legislation that encourages landscaping so that new homes will blend in as quickly as possible.

The LWV of Highland Park also believes that a range of housing prices in the community is of great importance and should be considered whenever changes in zoning district regulations are proposed. For example, if changes should be proposed for the R6 zoning districts, such changes should be structured to allow the preservation of the greatest amount of affordable housing. However, there should be a balancing between the community interest in keeping this diversity of housing stock and the rights of the homeowner to change or sell his property.
(1999, rev. 2003)

VI. Skokie Corridor

The LWV of Highland Park supports the controlled development of the Skokie Corridor. We favor the urban parkway concept encompassing traffic and flood control, and general beautification and redevelopment along the Skokie Corridor. We favor the encouragement of commercial, light industrial, hotel and office complexes which would have minimal impact in terms of noise and air pollution. We feel an attractive auto mall would contribute significantly to the City's sales tax revenue.

A. Zoning

The League accepts that zoning must meet both business needs and those of the neighboring residents. Along the Skokie Corridor, some flexibility in zoning may be needed to attract more business and commercial development. Such flexibility in zoning, however, requires strict adherence by the City to notification and other due process measures. One additional safeguard suggested by the League is that neighboring residents, as well as property owners, be given advance direct mail notice of any public hearing on a proposed zoning change.

The League supports the general concept of "Line of Sight" zoning; that is the idea of relating the maximum allowable height of buildings in new developments to the distance from neighboring residences. Thus, the aesthetic needs of the homeowners are taken into account.

B. Financing

Property owners/developers should bear some financial responsibility for those improvements from which they benefit directly. Special care should be taken to assure fair and equitable assessment of residential and business properties.

C. Goals

In considering redevelopment of the Skokie Corridor, the League determined that health and safety, and flood control are of primary importance. Economic development and beautification

priorities must be balanced, and uniform beautification standards should be applied to the entire district.

D. Promotion

The City should act as the facilitator in working with other governmental agencies, the utilities, property owners and developers.

(1986, rev. 1989, 2003)

VII. Transportation and Roads

The LWV of Highland Park supports the concept of designating roads, in the event of future development of the golf courses, as a means of planning. The following road designations were approved: Crofton, Hastings and Vine. Existing residential neighborhoods should be protected from these designated roads by buffer zones as much as possible.

We support the concept of the CBD Transportation System included in the most recent City Plan. We agree that a transportation system for the downtown area should encourage east-west traffic to go around, rather than through, the core area of the CBD. However, we do want Central Avenue to remain a two-way street. Safe crossings near the schools, pedestrian safety, the effects on residential areas and the impact on Sunset Park should all be considered in designating roads.

The League believes that all appropriate means of funding for the CBD Transportation System should be fully explored so that the tax burden on Highland Park residents is not unreasonable.

The LWV supports the proposed extension of: 1) Western Avenue between Half Day Road and Park Avenue, and 2) Edgewood Road from Skokie Highway to Green Bay Road, after the new alignment of Highway 41 is known, to promote unity and better access within Highland Park.

(1975, rev. 1986)

CRITERIA FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION, DEVELOPMENT, OR DIVESTITURE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY

I. General

The LWV of Highland Park/Highwood believes that local government acquisition, development, or divestiture of public property should be subject to the following criteria.

II. Community Goals and Priorities

Consideration must be given to the impact on the character of the community as a whole and on immediate neighborhoods. In addition, consideration must be given to the potential long range impact, if it is decided not to go forward with an acquisition, development or divestiture. (Would the community be impacted negatively by not being proactive?)

III. Land Use and Open Space

Consideration must be taken of the effect on goals for growth and development of existing properties as defined in the Master Plan and zoning ordinances.

IV. Financing

Consideration and examination of the full range of financing options and costs, including but not limited to public/private partnerships, cost sharing with other local government bodies, bond issuance, costs of consultants and third party contractors, and cost/benefit analyses must be taken into account.

Note: Existing League of Women Voters of Highland Park/Highwood positions including but not limited to City Planning, Environmental Preservation, Parks and Recreation, etc.; state and national positions; the League's Mission, Purpose and Principles; and the procedures that require and implement active citizen participation also apply.

(2012)

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION

I. General

The LWV of Highland Park feels that the lakefront and open space are irreplaceable assets to Highland Park. We support the expenditure of public funds to purchase lakefront property. Building on the floodplain should be controlled by strict zoning. When a parcel of undeveloped land that is all or in part in the flood plain comes up for development, the League is willing to accept moderate height and density increases in the non-flood plain land in order to preserve the flood plain. Regarding other undeveloped lands, limited increased density at currently zoned heights is acceptable in some areas in order to preserve open space. Such density increases would help achieve the League's housing goals.

(Rev. 1979, 2003)

II. Flood Plain and Watershed

The LWV of Highland Park supports public acquisition of flood plain land for open space purposes, a strong flood plain ordinance and regional management of the Skokie River watershed.

The League recognizes that the only way to totally protect against increased flooding problems in the future is not to develop the flood plains. Realizing that currently proposed developments will encroach on the flood plains, League members want as strong a flood plain ordinance as possible to insure minimum impact.

Members encourage the implementation of methods, such as dedication for open space and classification of real estate, to relieve development pressure on the flood plain lands. Members want the League and the City to initiate action on a county or state level to achieve this goal.

(Rev. 1982, 2003)

(Editorial Note: See also the Lake County LWV Watershed Management position from 1975.)

III. Open Space, Parks and Recreation

The LWV of Highland Park supports the acquisition of land for open space, and believes that the following criteria should be used when evaluating a site for possible purchase as open space:

A. Natural Resource Criteria:

1. flood plains and wetlands
2. land with severe soil and/or geological limitations for urban development
3. sites of historical significance
4. time factor for acquisition

5. possibility of other recreational agencies acquiring the site

B. Recreational Criteria:

1. Recreational demand -
 - a. present local user demand
 - b. future local user demand
2. Recreational opportunities -
 - a. estimate of surplus or deficit of other classifications of open space
 - b. possibility of other recreational agency acquiring the site
 - c. no conflict with urban systems
 - d. accessibility
 - e. expansion of, or linkage to, existing open space
 - f. availability of other vacant or undeveloped land in the area

If a site is under consideration specifically for purchase as open space, it should meet the criteria. However, not all land which meets the open space criteria need be purchased. There is a limited amount of vacant land available, and there are many varying demands upon it by the community.

The League looks upon the acquisition of lakefront and flood plain property as of primary and clear-cut importance, and also supports the purchase of new land as it becomes available in those areas not now adequately served.

(1974, rev. 2003)

IV. Beaches and Ravines

A. General

The LWV of Highland Park expresses concern over the erosion of our beaches, bluffs and ravines. We feel that tax monies should be expended for public beach maintenance and sand control.

We support the present City ordinance which establishes a special taxing district for storm water management systems to help reduce ravine erosion.

We support legislation pertaining to steep slope erosion. Such legislation would be most effective if it included all ravine and bluff property (improved and unimproved) in its scope, and required existing individual drainage pipes to end at the bottom of the ravine.

(1978, rev. 2003)

B. Beaches

The League believes the City, the Park District and the State of Illinois have the responsibility for comprehensive shoreline protection in Highland Park. We want a commitment from the City and the Park District to solve the sewage problem at Moraine Beach and to guarantee that the other public beaches will be kept clean, attractive, and maintained so that they are safe and usable recreational facilities.

C. Rosewood Beach

The Park District should solicit donations from the community for specific amenities such as playground equipment, park benches and landscaping. Nonresidents should be required to purchase seasonal parking stickers for the beach in order to offset the cost to the taxpayer for operating and maintaining the beach.

We feel the Park Board should begin to explore options for providing additional parking in the future if it is needed. The League would also like to see playground equipment and a refreshment stand on the beach and sufficient trash receptacles, including recycling bins for aluminum cans. (1988, rev. 1989, 2003)

FORT SHERIDAN

Support redevelopment of military property at Fort Sheridan in a manner that does not place additional financial burdens on local taxpayers. The responsibility for military housing is a federal responsibility. Any actions taken by the Navy to redevelop their housing should not shift this financial responsibility from the federal government to local governments.

Support increasing federal impact aid to North Shore School District 112 (District 112) and Township High School District 113 to pay for the cost of educating students from Navy households. Impact aid, which established the federal government's responsibility to provide financial assistance to school districts on which the government places a financial burden, is intended to compensate school districts for lost tax revenue. When the Navy's Public Private Venture (PPV) is completed, District 112 will receive from the combination of currently expected impact aid and PPV household taxes significantly less money than the estimated total operating costs to educate Navy children from the PPV. An increase in impact aid levels is needed to alleviate the financial burden being placed on our local school districts by the federal government's actions.

Support requiring that military land and/or other resources be made available for a school (or other educational facilities) for District 112. The additional children attending District 112 from the PPV and related private development are likely to exceed the existing space capacity of the neighborhood schools and, independently or combined with additional future development, may trigger the need for a new school. By federal law, PPV funds cannot be used for land acquisition or construction costs for school facilities. The capital costs associated with the land acquisition and school facilities construction attributable to the PPV are likely to pose an additional unreimbursed financial burden on District 112.

Support requiring development to pay its equitable share of all services provided by local taxing bodies. Local taxing bodies will not receive the same tax revenues from the PPV redevelopment as they would from comparable developments built on private property because the Navy-owned land on which the private PPV housing is built will remain tax exempt. Without adequate leasehold tax revenues, or other contractual options, local taxpayers essentially will be subsidizing the services that are provided to the PPV housing at Fort Sheridan.

(Note: Existing LWV positions, such as City Planning, Environmental Preservation, Parks and Recreation, etc., also apply to Fort Sheridan redevelopment issues.)

(2006, rev. 2012))

HANDGUN CONTROL

The League is in favor of a ban on the possession, manufacture, assembly and sale of handguns and ammunition in Highland Park. The League recognizes the need to exempt police officers from any such ban.

People exempt under the handgun law should register their guns with the police and obtain a license to possess a handgun. A license to possess should only be issued after a comprehensive background investigation, including a fingerprint check and documented proof of appropriate training in handgun safety.

While defenders of handguns speak of self-protection, alarming rates of suicides and homicides due to the presence of handguns in homes convinces us that better controls are necessary.

The League is aware that handguns will always be available to those who want them, but we wish to make a grassroots statement to legislators at all levels that we want to see stricter controls on such weapons.

(1988, rev. 1990, 2003)

LIBRARY

The LWV of Highland Park believes that the Library should be strong and diverse, and its services and collections should continue to reflect these needs. We also support the Library offering many and varied cultural services as well as the no-charge policy for all Library materials.

The League believes that the purchasing of books and periodicals should have the highest priority in the acquisition of new materials. The Library should maintain a media collection which reflects the interests and needs of the community. The League urges the Library to continue giving a high priority to children's, historical and less popular films in the video cassette collection. The Motion Picture Industry's rating for each film should be placed on the display boxes. We support the practice of not circulating periodicals.

The League supports the Library's practice of establishing some circulation limits by subject or time. This particularly benefits groups of students doing research in one subject area.

The League feels that all Library personnel should continue to receive a job description, annual evaluations, incremental salary increases based on length of service and/or merit, and continuing education.

We support the Library's efficient use of available space, audio-visual and reading rooms, private and group study areas, and study carrels. We support continuation of employment of a monitor during peak use hours to assist the Library in enforcing its discipline code.

The League recognizes the physical limitations of parking in the vicinity of the Library, but we do not wish to see the Rose Garden or the lawn adjacent to the Library dislocated for parking. The Library should continue using its parking primarily for patrons with most staff parking in nearby public lots.

(1986, rev. 1990, 1996, 2003)

PARKS AND RECREATION

The LWV of Highland Park supports park and recreational facilities and services throughout Highland Park. Quality instruction in basic skills should be provided by public recreational bodies, with advanced training left to private sources.

The League supports the financial system by which fees as well as taxes, supplemented by available state and federal funds, support the operating and acquisition costs of park and recreation programs.

Actions in reference to park lands should include:

1. development to reflect a wide variety of citizen interests, ranging from accessible natural areas to sites well-equipped for specific activities.
2. superior maintenance of park and recreational properties and equipment.
3. continuous evaluation of properties and equipment, and appropriate action to encourage optimum citizen use.
4. park lands adjacent to schools should be developed for broader neighborhood utilization. School buildings should be made available for an increased and wider range of community purposes. Full use of existing public facilities is preferable to new construction.

With regard to the present Park Board structure, the membership sees no need to increase the number of commissioners, but does feel the length of terms of office should be decreased to four years for the following reasons: 1) a shorter term might be more attractive to future candidates and 2) a shorter term might encourage greater diversity of input and expertise.

The League supports the philosophy of “purchase of service” to help meet cultural and recreational needs. The League feels that criteria should be established regarding the dispensing of public funds to private agencies.
(1979, rev. 1986, 2003, 2012)

RAVINIA FESTIVAL

The LWV of Highland Park believes the Ravinia Festival Community Relations Commission should be held to a strict interpretation of commission ordinance empowering it to oversee the application of the special use permit covering the Ravinia Festival. Meetings need to be held more frequently, and at regularly scheduled and advertised intervals. At least one summer meeting should be introduced into the schedule to deal with problems as they arise. The League recommends that the Commission’s meeting schedule be more widely publicized. This could be accomplished by mailing the schedule out with the Ravinia Festival parking permits and by including it in the schedule of commission meetings in the *Highlander*.

The League strongly believes that better communication between the Ravinia Festival Commission, the Ravinia Festival and the neighbors needs to be developed. Newsletters, well advertised meetings and participation in Talk of the Town meetings should become regular events.

The League recognizes the problems inherent in operating a world-renowned outdoor festival in the midst of a quiet, residential neighborhood, and suggests that aggressive outreach by the Ravinia Festival could improve community relations. Recommendations for bridge building

activities include, but should not be limited to, providing music appreciation activities for the community and assisting the local schools in providing music enrichment. The Festival should also continue, and possibly expand, the distribution of free and reduced price tickets to local students and senior citizens.

The League supports the following actions to deal with issues raised by the community:

1. The Ravinia Festival should improve publicity about the Park 'n' Ride program and how to get to the Central Avenue and Roger Williams Metra stations.
2. A third Park 'n' Ride site should be created at Northbrook Court.
3. A "reversible lane" should be utilized on Lake-Cook Road to reduce traffic congestion.
4. The Ravinia Festival, the City of Highland Park and the Illinois Department of Transportation should work together to create better signage marking the routes to the Ravinia Festival grounds and the Park 'n' Ride facilities.
5. Parking enforcement should include such approaches as more aggressive ticketing, increased ticket fines and towing of violators' vehicles. Ravinia Festival employees at street barricades should be equipped with walkie-talkies to contact the police when necessary.
6. Limited, indirect lighting should be installed along the Green Bay Trail north to the Roger Williams Metra station to facilitate pedestrian access to the lot.
7. Stronger enforcement procedures need to be implemented to prevent the continual running of charter bus engines in the parking lots during the concert.
8. The hours of operation of mechanized equipment used by the Ravinia Festival for garbage disposal and landscaping near residential areas should be limited to reduce noise intrusions on the neighbors.

The League applauds the recycling efforts begun by the Ravinia Festival. We encourage the Festival to expand their program to include glass and to closely monitor their usage of paper for programs.

The League believes that being home to the Ravinia Festival provides both direct and indirect benefits to the City of Highland Park. These benefits are:

1. an enhanced community reputation as the home of an esteemed cultural organization.
2. enhanced real estate values in the Ravinia neighborhood.
3. drawing outsiders into the City who may return to shop, eat or live in Highland Park and increase the City's tax base.
4. providing summer jobs to approximately 750 people.
5. providing open space, thereby preventing residential development and the influx of more children into the local schools.
6. creating profits from the Park 'n' Ride program which subsidize the other unprofitable Pace bus routes in the City.
7. providing sales tax and license revenues to the City.

The League believes that the Ravinia Festival has a responsibility to pay for all direct services provided by the City of Highland Park. The City should make every effort to bill the Festival for these costs.

The League is opposed to the imposition of an admission/amusement tax on any not-for-profit cultural institution by the City of Highland Park.

(1992, rev. 2003)

SCHOOLS

I.Consolidation

The LWV of Highland Park and of the Deerfield Area do not support reorganization into a unit district for District 113 and its elementary feeder districts. These Leagues would consider reexamining the issue of school reorganization if there are significant financial inequities in any of the districts or if significant financial incentives or disincentives are provided by the State.

(1987, rev. 2003)

II. School Referenda Criteria

I. Referendum funds sought are critical for essential educational needs

The district has established clear educational objectives reflecting the expectations and desires of the community. (These may be expressed in a variety of forms, including, a mission statement, strategic plan, statement of goals, etc.)

The district can show the linkage between the objectives and the request for additional funding because --

A. For proposed bond issues --

Without the bond issue, the district's physical plant will be one or more of the following:

1. Overcrowded
2. Unsafe
3. Inadequately maintained
4. Lacking facilities or aspects of facilities key to meeting educational objectives

B. For proposed operating tax rate increases

Without the tax rate increase,

1. Educational objectives are seriously jeopardized and/ or
2. Programs could be cut below the level acceptable to the community

II. Referendum process has been transparent and inclusive

A. The process used to arrive at the referendum proposal has provided sufficient and meaningful opportunities for public participation.

B. The process has been open, and the district has made material information available and accessible to the public in timely manner.

III. Referendum funds sought are justified by adequate, reliable financial analysis

A. The district has undertaken thorough and reliable analysis of financial factors, and made that analysis available and accessible to the public, including analysis of:

1. Past, current and projected expenditures, revenues and fund balances
2. Cost-effectiveness of use of referendum funds
3. Comparisons with comparable districts
4. For proposed bond issues, estimated bond fund details -- interest rate, term, impact on property taxes

B. The district has demonstrated that responsible spending reductions do not provide an alternative method of obtaining the funds sought.

IV. Referendum proposal is consistent with other LWV positions.

(1999, rev. 2003, 2014)

SENIOR SERVICES

The League of Women Voters of Highland Park believes it is important to have quality senior services that accommodate current and future senior populations in Highland Park.

These include social, educational, recreational and cultural services provided by governmental and non-governmental agencies.

We believe senior services and facilities should be provided by the City of Highland Park, Park District of Highland Park, Moraine and West Deerfield Townships, Lake County, Highland Park Public Library, schools including College of Lake County and District 113 Continuing Education, and other appropriate levels of government. Specialized social services such as health, shelter, safety and legal should continue to be referred to appropriate private agencies and governmental service providers.

The League supports coordination of programming and sharing of facilities with other senior centers and organizations within and outside of Highland Park.

The League believes it is important to have a regional approach to transportation services for seniors within Highland Park, within Lake County, and within bordering communities in Cook County that would include reasonable response times and handicapped accessibility. A fee-based structure should be considered.

We encourage the monitoring and consideration of opportunities that continue to support quality senior services.

(2005)

TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT

Moraine and West Deerfield Townships, serving Highland Park and Highwood residents, administer public funds to provide service and support for residents in need (General Assistance) as well as distributing grant monies to Social Service agencies serving the Highland Park and Highwood population. Elected officials of Township government include a Supervisor and four Trustees, a Clerk who assists voters and an Assessor who is responsible for property tax assessments.

The LWV of Highland Park desires locally written General Assistance guidelines, allowing for flexibility in determining the criteria for eligibility and specifying the minimum dollar amounts with a flexible maximum. Recognizing the difference between eligibility criteria and procedural criteria, we desire specific written procedural guidelines to insure equitable treatment to all applicants. We support a local Advisory Committee that includes representatives from the area's social service agencies to assist the Supervisors in developing these guidelines.

If there is no Township personnel with appropriate social service skills, the LWV of Highland Park recommends the employment of a professional caseworker to help those who come for General

Assistance. We also believe that assistance should be locally accessible and promptly available. Therefore, these funds should be handled through our local Township offices.

Caseload statistics, descriptively broken down, should be reported as a matter of public information and made part of the Supervisors' Annual Reports

Township offices should post multilingual signs advising applicants of their rights and provide the necessary forms to appeal according to the State formula for appeal, if necessary.

We support a Citizen Advisory Committee, representative of diverse social interests, to advise the Townships in the distribution of grant funds to social service agencies serving their residents. Information on the meetings where applicants make their presentations for this funding should be published in advance and open to the public.

The Townships should maintain regular evening schedules for their meetings and agendas for these meetings should be published in advance.

The League feels that the elected Township officials should be limited to compensation commensurate with the intended part-time nature of their offices and similar in amount to that of Townships found to be comparable in size and General Assistance caseload. Compensation for expenses such as auto and other travel, should be limited to documented expenses.

The League is concerned about the percentage of administrative costs in Township budgets and feels that these disbursements should not be disproportionate with those found in other Townships.

(1982, rev. 2007)