

THE LAKE FOREST CAUCUS



**Working Together
for Good
Local Government**

The Lake Forest Caucus
presents here
the who, what, and why
of the organization.

Working together
for good local government
demands the involvement of many.
And understanding the process
that works — and works well —
for Lake Forest
is important to all of us.

If you have additional questions,
please call any of
the Caucus Committee members.
Or write The Lake Forest Caucus,
P.O. Box 108, Lake Forest, Illinois 60045

Whether your interest is
in active involvement
or in the continuity of good government,
your participation and your vote are vital.



**Working together
for good government
is our business.**

What is the Caucus?

The Lake Forest Caucus is a non-partisan organization of concerned citizens who work together voluntarily and without compensation in the cause of good local government.

Its by-laws provide that all registered voters in the City are members of the Caucus. While the on-going work of the Caucus is under the direction of its committees, the participation of many is essential to the success of the Caucus process.

What's the purpose of the Caucus?

The Caucus has one goal: the best possible local government. Its work is to identify, interview, and recommend well-qualified candidates for elective and appointive positions in City government. Any Lake Forest voter can suggest names of qualified candidates to the Caucus.

Provisions of the City's special charter, the State Election Code, and the School Code of the State of Illinois guide the Caucus process.

The Caucus holds itself apart from all established political parties. It does not concern itself with the conduct of government at the township, county, state, or national levels. Its focus is solely on sound, efficient, responsible local government.



Understanding the structure of Lake Forest's government is important to an understanding of the role of the Caucus.

Lake Forest's special charter, granted by the State Legislature when the City was incorporated in 1861, provides the advantage of an umbrella government.

This means that there are no separate park, recreation, library, fire, or elementary school districts requiring separate elections, tax levies, or overlapping budgets and administration. This makes Lake Forest government among the most efficient and fiscally responsible of any in the country.

The charter calls for the annual election of the Mayor, Aldermen, City Marshal and Collector, City Treasurer, and City Supervisor. Elections are held in March in even-numbered years, in April in odd-numbered years. The City's fiscal year begins May 1, and elected officials take office on the first Monday in May.

The City Council includes the Mayor and eight Aldermen. Each of the City's four wards is represented by two Aldermen who serve two-year terms on a staggered basis. One Alderman is elected from each ward each year. The Mayor's term is one year, as are the terms of the Marshal, Treasurer, and Supervisor. Because the day-to-day operations of the City are under the direction of a full-time, professional City Manager, these last three positions are now largely honorary.

The only other elected positions are on the District 115 High School Board of Education, which encompasses Lake Forest, Lake Bluff, and Knollwood. School board elections are held every other November in odd-numbered years. Term of office is four years.



Who runs the Caucus?

The two primary committees of the Caucus are the Executive Committee and the Committee on Candidates.

The Executive Committee, six members headed by a President and Secretary-Treasurer, provides continuing leadership to the Caucus, raises funds for its operation, and conducts the Annual Meeting. Members of the Executive Committee serve five-year terms.

The Committee on Candidates includes 34 members: eight from each of the City's four wards plus a Chairman and Vice Chairman. This is the group responsible for seeking out, interviewing, and recommending candidates for elected and appointed offices as well as for Caucus committees. In doing so, Committee members seek the assistance of Lake Forest residents in identifying prospective candidates. Ward committee members serve four-year terms on a staggered basis; the Chairman and Vice Chairman serve one-year terms.

Turnover on Caucus committees is mandatory, as established by the by-laws. Committee members serve one term only and cannot be re-elected.



What City positions does the Caucus find candidates for?

Each year the Caucus recommends candidates for nomination for Mayor and for one Alderman from each of the four wards. Under Caucus policy, as stated in the by-laws, a candidate is recommended by the Caucus for no more than three one-year terms as Mayor or three two-year terms as Alderman.

The Caucus also recommends candidates to fill the elected positions of City Marshal and Collector, City Treasurer, and City Supervisor. Generally, the Caucus recommends candidates for these honorary positions for no more than three one-year terms.

At the Annual Meeting, the Committee on Candidates presents its slate for nomination to these elected positions. Upon approval by voters attending the Annual Meeting, candidate names are then petitioned to be placed on the municipal ballot.

District 115 High School Board members are also recommended for nomination by the Caucus at an Interim Meeting held every other summer. Lake Forest traditionally has four representatives on the seven-member board. The other three are from the Lake Bluff and Knollwood areas, also served by the district. Maximum Caucus recommendation is for two four-year terms.

The Caucus is also responsible for making recommendations to the Mayor for appointments to these City boards and commissions:

Plan Commission
Building Review Board
Zoning Board of Appeals
District 67 Board of
Education (Grades K
through 8)

Recreation Board
Library Board
Cemetery Board
Board of Trustees -
Police Pension Fund



How does the Caucus find qualified candidates?

Each fall the Committee on Candidates holds a city-wide Search for Candidates meeting to publicly announce the positions to be filled for the coming year and to encourage resident participation in the search for qualified candidates.

This is the time to indicate your own interest in a City position or to submit the names of those you consider well qualified. This is also the time to meet members of the Caucus Committees and representatives of Lake Forest's government.

All prospective candidates are asked to complete a personal data sheet prior to Committee consideration. Forms are available at the Search for Candidates meeting or from any member of the Committee on Candidates. When data sheets are received, prospective candidates are contacted by their ward chairman.

Ward committees meet to interview candidates in depth, outlining the duties of the position to be filled, and the qualifications sought. They attempt to find the best fit, as any good personnel committee would do. Ward recommendations are presented to the entire Committee on Candidates.

Candidates for Mayor, Aldermen, Plan Commission, and District 115 High School Board of Education are interviewed by the Committee on Candidates as a whole. The interview process is an important element in finding the most qualified candidates.

The Caucus generally recommends to the Mayor two or three candidates for each board or commission opening. While the Mayor has the prerogative of appointing someone other than a Caucus-recommended candidate, he relies on the Caucus to find qualified candidates; with very few exceptions, the candidates recommended by the Caucus are appointed.



The Caucus recommends candidates from every geographic area of the City, providing as broad a spectrum of representation as possible. Balances of geography and background are sought for all boards and commissions.

At times, there is not an immediate opening for a qualified candidate. Or the Committee might find a candidate better qualified for another position. Data sheets are kept on file, and candidates are re-interviewed as openings occur.

Announcement of candidates for elected positions is made prior to the Annual Meeting. Board and commission candidates are presented to the Mayor following the election and prior to the Council meeting on the first Monday in May, when appointments are announced.

The work of the Committee on Candidates is year-round. The search for qualified candidates is ongoing. The Committee recognizes the depth of its responsibility to the community.



What public meetings does the Caucus hold?

The Search for Candidates is held annually each fall to announce openings and receive public input on potential candidates.

The Annual Meeting is held in December or January each year, within 15 days prior to the first filing date for candidates. Because the Illinois Consolidated Election Law, effective in 1981, calls for elections on the third Tuesday in March in even years and the first Tuesday in April in odd years, the Annual Meeting date varies.

An Interim Meeting, as permitted by the by-laws, is scheduled every other summer to nominate District 115 High School Board members, who are elected on the first Tuesday following the first Monday in November of odd-numbered years.

The Caucus also sponsors an annual "Know Your City" bus tour on a Saturday morning in the fall.

City-wide mailings announce all public meetings to residents.

In fairness to all prospective candidates and to permit open discussion of candidate qualifications, Committee interview and discussion meetings are not open to the public.



How are candidates placed on the ballot?

At the Annual Meeting, Caucus members vote to form a political party and adopt a name for that party. The names of nominated candidates are then petitioned for placement on the City or District 115 High School ballots in the manner specified by State election laws.

A new party and a new name each year avoids the time-consuming and costly process of holding a primary election or a convention. One or the other would be necessary every year if a political party formed by the Caucus continued beyond one election.

Under the State Election Code, the Caucus itself is not a political party. It does come under the definition of a "political committee" and must file certain reports and financial statements required by the Code.

How is the Caucus financed?

Lake Forest citizens contribute the funds for Caucus operations. Contributions, not to exceed \$150, are solicited by mail from all Lake Forest residents each year. Such donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.


Caucus expenses are closely controlled and kept as minimal as possible. A part-time secretary keeps the necessary records and handles correspondence. Costs of city-wide mailings, printed materials, and newspaper ads to keep Lake Forest voters informed are included in the Caucus budget.


Caucus leadership recognizes the importance of an informed electorate and works to keep in touch with the City's citizens, both through mailings and personal contact.


The only source of Caucus funds has always been Lake Forest residents themselves. The contributions of those who share the Caucus goal of the best possible local government sustain the system.





What qualities does public service demand?


 People with a genuine commitment to serve the community and the time to give to that commitment.

 People who are willing to share their expertise and talents freely, who are good team members.

 People who can put self-interest behind them when making decisions for the community, who can take a tough stand when necessary, who have no conflicts of interest.

 People who have lived in Lake Forest long enough to understand its special quality of life and who expect to live here for a long time.

 People who are informed citizens, who have been and are interested in community affairs and organizations.

 People without axes to grind, who are objective and honest in judgment.



Is the Caucus system democratic?

It's not a new idea. Nor is it unique to Lake Forest. It dates back to the town meetings of the American colonists and is used in some form or another by many small municipalities.

The Caucus peer group candidate review/recommendation system is a democratic process. No political hierarchy dictates candidate selection.

A broad base of public participation and involvement is also an expression of democracy in action. The Caucus policy of deliberate turnover for both City positions and Caucus committees helps to insure such a base.

The Caucus does offer only one choice on the ballot. But the Caucus-sponsored names on the ballot are there as a result of a democratic process. And you do have a voice in that process. Your input will be heard, your influence will be felt if you participate at the selection level. If you help to identify qualified candidates. If you get involved.

What can you do if you disagree with the Caucus and its candidates?

You have the right to disagree. And you have several options.

All or part of the slate can be rejected by majority vote at the Annual Meeting. The Committee on Candidates is then charged with presenting a new slate as soon as possible. You can then present candidates for Committee consideration.

You can convene your own party and place your own slate on the ballot by petition. You can file as an independent candidate yourself or support an independent candidate and petition for ballot inclusion.

You may conduct a write-in campaign for yourself or other candidates. However, the Caucus discourages write-in campaigns, believing that all voters have the right to know when and why disagreement exists.



Does the Caucus system work?

Yes. And it works well for Lake Forest. The Caucus began informally in the 1920's and has been a structured organization since 1954. It has provided City government with highly talented, experienced, knowledgeable, dedicated people. The Caucus eliminates the politicking of a partisan system.

Its non-partisan stance is one reason that the Caucus works well. It does not require its candidates to take positions on issues or problems prior to recommendation or nomination. Rather, the Caucus looks for candidates who are capable of dealing with issues in the best interests of the entire community.

There is no dynasty building in the Caucus system. No patronage. No cronyism. Caucus-recommended candidates are free to exercise independent judgment and to use their abilities to the best advantage of the City as a whole.

The Caucus actively supports its candidates for elected offices each year. The Caucus, however, applies no pressures before or after elections and does not attempt to influence conduct while in office.

The nature of the City and the lifestyle of Lake Forest residents would deter many qualified candidates from public service if partisan politics were the norm here.

The Caucus system is not infallible. Its collective judgment depends on the individuals who participate. But its track record over the years is exceptional. It is the reason that Lake Forest benefits from consistently high-quality City government.



What can you do for good government in Lake Forest?

- Attend and vote at the Caucus Annual Meeting.
- Attend the Search for Candidates session.
- Take the "Know Your City" bus tour.
- Recommend friends and neighbors whose background, experience, and judgment you believe qualify them for City government.
- Submit a personal data sheet to indicate your interest.
- Make a financial contribution each year.
- Vote every year in City elections.
- Get to know your Aldermen at the City-sponsored ward meetings held each year.
- Attend Council and Commission meetings to see your representatives in action.
- Get to know your ward's Committee on Candidates members.
- Keep informed about City issues and concerns.

GET INVOLVED.



**Good government
in Lake Forest
is our business.**

LET'S WORK TOGETHER.

The Lake Forest Caucus 1988-89

Executive Committee

Charles F. Clarke, Jr.	Steven L. Seiler, Treasurer
Steven L. Seiler, 23 President 234-3851	Dona Jensen, 23 Secretary-Treasurer 295-2653
Wesley M. Dixon, Jr.	Dona Jensen
Wesley M. Dixon, Jr. 234-0837	Dr. Lionel W. Ganshirt 234-4346
Jean Greene	Heinrich Washburne, Jr.
Jean Greene 234-0058	Philip W. K. Sweet 234-4582

Committee on Candidates

Barbara Beacham	Judy Berglund
James P. Richter 23 Chairman 234-4925	Lorraine Tweed 23 Vice Chairman 295-3199
First Ward	Second Ward
First Ward Richter, Chairman	Second Ward Chairman
William McClayton Chairman 234-1394	Scott P. Smith Chairman 234-5433
Louise Glasser 234-6009	Marilyn Addy 234-5999
Mark Heatwole, 234-1348	Dr. Russell H. Clark, Jr. 234-8434
Deborah K. Henry 234-0137	Valerie Curran 234-4157
Sheila Hoover 234-4945	John F. KcKeon 234-4862
Kathryn Lansing 234-3672	John Remington 234-8431
M. Jay Trees 234-3628	Margaret Vernon 234-3077
Recent Vacancy	Kay Weston 234-3393
Lorraine Tweed, Chairman	234-0318
Third Ward	Fourth Ward
Nancy O'Mara Chairman 234-5593	Kathy Pierson Chairman 234-0849
Michael Camino, D.D.S. 234-2901	Sue Beckley 295-3378
William Crane 234-4805	Pat Hoffman 234-4385
Donald Ridge	234-4385
Stephen J. Rice 234-8762	234-8781
David P. Swarthout	James M. McMullan 234-3812
Donald Ridge 295-5258	234-3812
Virginia Teague	Debbie Reed 234-1525
Marilyn Sandt 295-2160	234-3551
Gardiner R. Van Ness III	Charles E. Ricker 295-3809
Susan Skinner 234-8128	John M. Ryan 234-5449
Patricia K. Wood 234-4384	Karen Vratimos 295-1735

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