

2015-2016 NORTHFIELD VILLAGE CAUCUS PLATFORM

Ratified on October 1, 2015

Purpose

The Village of Northfield Caucus Platform is a statement of expectations setting out the basic policies and goals for our elected Northfield Village officials and serves as a guide for administering Village affairs. The Caucus develops a platform with views and opinions from residents, and it seeks to create the vision of Village residents on Village direction and administration. The platform is general in nature with the goal of maintaining and enhancing the small-town character of the village as a predominantly single-family residential community. The Caucus addresses specific actions or policies in the platform when they find a majority of residents surveyed support a particular action or policy. The Caucus expects Trustee candidates to concur with the Platform prior to slating.

A. Administration Strategy

1. Representation and Communication

The Village Trustees should fully inform residents concerning Village affairs (including current studies and proposed projects) through all appropriate communication channels, such as e-news, appropriate social media, newsletters, and press releases, as well as face to face interaction. They should also promptly post notices in public places such as the Village Hall, the Community Center, the Library, and the Village Website, in addition to using local access cable television channels. Official notification, meeting schedules and agendas need to be posted

in advance, as provided by law. The Village Board should post approved minutes in the same location(s) within one business day after approval.

Over time, changing circumstances may create significantly new perspectives and dictate markedly different approaches to issues referred to in this Platform. Prior to adopting any such new perspectives or approaches, the Trustees should solicit the views of the Caucus and the community in general to ensure full understanding of the proposals and identify any unintended consequences in advance. It is important that each Village Trustee attend a Caucus meeting annually in order share thinking and seek input from Caucus members and residents on Village issues.

Village Board members acknowledge their duty to follow the majority opinion of village residents; while respecting the rights of all.

2. Financial Responsibility

Residents expect that the Village Board will assure maintenance of the high investment grade quality of Northfield's debt obligations as a reflection of sound fiscal management and to assure continued access to liquidity. This objective is attained through ongoing balanced budgets and strict control of costs without detracting in quality of such essential services as Police, Fire and Public Works services.

B. Planning, Development and Land Use

1. Planning and Development

The Caucus strongly encourages the Village Board, as well as its various commissions, to follow the Comprehensive Vision Plan and Northfield Village Center Design Study, refining zoning and other requirements, to continue to project the small-town character of the Village.

The Caucus recognizes that a vibrant community must include a suitable combination of work related, entertainment and residential facilities. The residents support mixed use, ground-level retail space with office or condominiums above in low rise structures within the central business area. The Edens corridor is seen as appropriate for continued development of taller buildings thereby increasing commercial office space in the Village. There continues to be great interest in suitably located family-style restaurants, specialty food, wine and ice cream type establishments attractive to worker traffic during the week day as well as to families in the evenings and weekends. Residents are sensitive to higher and larger buildings being close to single family and low rise housing and impinging on the residential nature of the Village..

2. Building and Zoning Density

Northfield should be dedicated to remaining primarily a residential community. Large commercial developments, such as shopping malls, large and complex mixed use or large chain stores are not appropriate for Northfield, relative to the size of the Village. Buildings should be constructed in a style consistent with neighboring properties. Impact on traffic congestion and local travel patterns (e.g., presence of school children) should be carefully analyzed before building.

The Caucus supports strict enforcement of all building codes and zoning ordinances, and encourages the Board to enforce setback and floor area ratio restrictions that are consistent with surrounding properties. The Board should regulate tear-downs or subdivision of existing properties to maintain the character of the neighborhood and to preserve property values. The Board should enforce property maintenance codes which are violated by abandoned properties and ensure compliance with applicable life safety standards. Significant policy exceptions should be carefully evaluated with a high degree of transparency.

3. Traffic

The Village should continue to explore various ways to enhance traffic flow and make Northfield attractive to pedestrian and bicyclist. Pedestrian safety is the priority.

4. Drainage and Flooding

Replacing, maintaining and improving Village infrastructure for drainage management and flood prevention are critical to Northfield residents and should continue to be a high priority. The Village Board should comply with the high-level guidance of the current Storm Water Management Plan Report. Since this plan is a living document, timely updates should be performed reflecting changes in problem areas, technology and regulations. Necessary maintenance and repair of the storm water system should be diligently performed. System enhancements should be explored and sources of funding actively pursued for the installation of recommended improvements.

C. Resident Services

In the 2012 Northfield Caucus survey, a majority of respondents rated the services provided by Village administration, police, fire, public works and garbage collection as “good to excellent.” This is a positive reflection on the effort and quality of work performed by all Village personnel. The Village Board should manage its human resources in order to maintain the existing level of professional service delivery.

The Village Board should actively engage with other governments to identify areas of cooperation and coordination that improve services and/or reduce costs. Any time an issue involves local parks or schools, the Village Board should actively cooperate with the Park District(s) or School District(s) to ensure that the interests of Northfield citizens are protected.