

Candidate Responses for Lisle Township

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR CANDIDATES - vote for 1

Diane Hewitt (D)

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

I personally believe that paid parental leave should be a national and state priority. Compared to other industrialized countries our country is far behind in investing in this pivotal time in citizen development. Yes, I think the township should figure out the feasibility as soon as possible. I would look at models like Naperville developed and see what our budget could handle. I also would wonder why it had not been explored more in the past at the township level.

2. **Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

As a 24 year service care provider, I think there are a lot of simple options for improvement to innovative ideas. We could partner with non profit organizations or volunteers to help seniors sign up for Medicare or the Covid 19 vaccine. We could have a closet of medical supplies that seniors may need to borrow when needed. We could have volunteers help seniors with some technical issues with something like Zoom so they could be less lonely. We could communicate better to those in need and those who may wish to donate more for food insecurity. Most people I have been speaking with have no idea of the services that they do have, so improved communication is key.

3. **Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

I think this would have to be addressed by the county due to jurisdiction on the issue. I would work with municipalities in their zoning committees to better ensure that that happens. Anything that can be done from a state a federal perspective should be explored.

4. **People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

From a purely logical position, the township layer is the most likely to be cut or consolidated. I think this would take time to phase in the changes to ensure that the services are continued without harm to the citizens. I would see the state handling those services through their State Representative's office. That way they could be small enough to be responsive and developed enough to be effective. The state could have an economy of scale that could be very helpful to the citizens.

Robert J. Klaeren (R) - no contact email

HIGHWAY COMMISSIONER CANDIDATES - vote for 1

Drew Bolda (D)

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

Township government needs to match tax levees with township services. If the citizens are open to this benefit for township employees, then it can be implemented. Options such as living close (within 6 miles) from home, federal programs such as FMLA can assist with family care needs. Township government is highly influenced by voters at its annual meeting and ballot referenda.

2. **Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

Communication with residents (especially seniors) needs to be assessed and improved routinely. Technology is rapidly changing the ways people communicate. Even if computer averse, most seniors have mobile devices. There can be an opportunity for younger volunteers (high school) or summer help (college freshmen/sophomores) to share their experiences helping / teaching grandparents to help lead teaching efforts. Selection of a communication platform is important so that this is effective for both the volunteer students and the seniors having difficulty. Some communication may be beyond volunteer grade and needs to be assessed on a case by case basis. Townships do a good job with senior services! Making seniors aware of these services is a high priority. Once communication is improved, township services can be adjusted to feedback from residents.

3. **Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

Affordable housing exists in Lisle Township in the form of apartments and condominiums located close to I88 and I355. Because these are multiple family housing units, all are located within city or village limits and subject to the laws set forth by these governments. Unincorporated areas of Lisle Township are governed by permits and building codes as specified by DuPage County. Lisle Township can make housing more affordable for families with temporary distress through mortgage / rent assistance, Lisle Township food bank, and numerous senior services. If approached by a non profit agency such as DuPage PADS or Habitat for Humanity, Lisle Township can participate as a supportive partner.

4. **People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

Citizens should not think in terms of consolidation vs non-consolidation. Instead it is best to think in terms of effective government with efficient costs. If the township under discussion is too costly or not serving its residents effectively, then residents are encouraged to participate via annual township meeting, making public comments at a monthly meeting, submitting a complaint or suggestion, or running for an office.

In highly urban areas (Chicago), township government functions have been taken over by the city and the township no longer exists except as the name of the city neighborhood. In townships with few miles of township roads, the highway commissioner office has been eliminated. The highway function is run through the supervisors office as an agreement with another entity.

Ed Young (R) - no email contact

TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR CANDIDATES - vote for 1

John Trowbridge (R) - no email contact

TOWNSHIP CLERK CANDIDATES - vote for 1

Claire Goldenberg (D)

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

As we are stewards of the community's tax dollars we are required to look at expenditures in a manner that is responsible to the community as a whole. If the issue of PPL becomes an issue for Lisle Township the board would need to consider the merits, the costs and the benefits of providing the leave to its employees. It is a known fact that providing paid parental leave results in happier more well adjusted staff so if it something we can responsibly provide I would do what I could to make it a reality.

2. **Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

I believe Lisle Township could have done a lot more to help Seniors during the pandemic and since we are not through this time; we hope to have a chance to improve what is offered before it's all over. Due to the fact the Seniors are often not up on the internet and how to navigate all that is available through the internet, I see that the Township could have been a center point for information dissemination. They could have initiated a call to the seniors, arranged to be a focal point for vaccines or at least vaccine information. They could have a distribution point for: PPE and sound information to help educate our most vulnerable citizens. Additionally we have heard that the federally funded program Meal on Wheels lost some of that funding and as a result hundreds of seniors in DuPage County are going hungry, a need that the Lisle Township could help in filling.

3. **Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

In order to increase affordable housing I believe educating our community about what exactly affordable housing actually covers would help. It can be as simple as renting to people who are getting Section 8 vouchers. There is negativity when Section 8 is mentioned but this a fine program that benefits landlords and lower income tenants; it is our job to remove the stigma through better education thereby removing barriers.

4. **People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

Overall I agree that IL has too many layers of Government, but we aren't going to fix that problem overnight by just trying to eliminate layers without a very well throughout plan. The General services that are provided by the township would be the first that would just be forgotten if this was the layer that was rolled into the village or county. The Highway Department and the Assessors Office have very specific jobs that must be carried out and I can see these functions being rolled into other offices with little to no impact to the public. However, if we were combined, when it came time to balancing the budget of a county or a village it will be the general services that will see the AX, mark my words on this point. This is why I believe in the mission of the Township government and am looking forward to serving my community.

Debbie Pawlowicz (R) - no email contact

TOWNSHIP TRUSTEE CANDIDATES - vote for no more than 4

John DeCanto (D)

1. **The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

I support Naperville's 12 week paid family leave. I would like to see Lisle Township match the best paid leave program of any nearby governmental body. The initial bonding time between child and parent(s) in the start of a child's life is of the utmost importance. At the organizational level, this would require cross training staff to cover absences during family leave.

2. **Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

The current Lisle Township website does not do a good job at explaining the services available to seniors. I would like to see Lisle Township actively send literature to senior residents that tell of the assistance available to seniors. There are many great

non-profits in DuPage County with services targeted to seniors. I want to see Lisle Township do a better job at connecting seniors to these non-profits. I especially want Lisle Township to increase assistance offerings to low income and travel-restricted seniors. I support partnering with the local Meals on Wheels and would like to see additional financial assistance to seniors experiencing financial hardship, who may be struggling to afford utilities or medicine.

- 3. Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

I support the use of Community Development Block Grants from the federal government to purchase, construct, and manage affordable housing within Lisle Township. Most housing developments are for-profit. A government does not have to operate at a profit. Therefore, the government has an advantage of offering affordable housing over a private entity. As a community banker, I am well versed in rental breakeven analysis.

- 4. People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

I believe Township services could be absorbed by the city and county level governments. Before any such consolidation occurs, it is important to study the effects to ensure services are not reduced and long-term costs are not increased. The Township provides important services and I want to see that they are protected for the residents who rely on them.

Autumn Geist (D)

- 1. The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

Naperville has made a move that demonstrates an understanding of our changing society and the need for employees to prioritize their families. It is consistently proven by the companies that are awarded "Best Places To Work" to have compassionate policies that enable and empower their employees to have a healthy work life balance. More balance creates loyalty and more productivity. I suggest adopting the same guidelines for implementation.

- 2. Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

The Township services for seniors are primarily collaborations with other agencies and not for profits. A priority for me would be to make sure we identify the gaps in meeting their needs and how we can improve. A few areas I would like to focus on are food insecurity, isolation and technology support. It was recently reported that over 300

seniors are on a waiting list in DuPage for Meals On Wheels. I see this being a community crisis and would like to explore how area restaurants, grocery stores and even Churches can assist in filling this need. There is so much food wasted that could possibly be used. The isolation of seniors can be difficult in non pandemic times so, it is compounded by covid. I would like to see more support by partnering seniors with local high school and college students to volunteer their time to read, play cards, converse with these seniors. There is a similar program between students at St. Francis HS in LaGrange and a neighboring senior community. And technology training is so important as many support resources require seniors to have working knowledge of website navigation.

- 3. Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

Rental demands are increasing among millennials who are opting to rent over buying. This is driving rental costs and making it unaffordable to lower income residents. There are several funding sources available from local municipalities, land gifted by cities or counties, and LIHTC (Low Income Housing Tax Credit). Government doesn't have to be for profit and could develop this affordable housing on unincorporated property that they manage. We also need to educate our communities and reduce the stigma attached to low income housing. In DuPage County for example, according to the HUD Income limits, that income is determined at 54,600. Township services are not designed to be long term solutions but are definitely critical tools for helping people who are struggling with the expenses of the cost of living.

- 4. People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

The Township fills gaps in services not covered by other governing bodies. That dedicated focus is required to ensure that our communities are as healthy as they can be from food insecurity, to job coaching to crisis support, etc. A community is only as healthy as its weakest members. We all benefit from having a community with thriving neighbors.

Christy McGovern (R) - no email contact

Kitty Murphy (R) - no email contact

Jean Page (D)

- 1. The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

Paid family leave is optimal, if it's possible. But what happens if the office staff isn't large enough to easily cover the work of the employee who is on leave? It's something the board would have to study.

- 2. Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

Yes, I believe the township has adequately addressed the seniors' needs during the pandemic. Improving communication, improving the township website by making it easier to navigate for residents who aren't experienced with using the computer.

- 3. Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

That's not an easy question to answer. Affordable housing is very important & has become an issue across the entire country. Apartment rental costs have risen faster than incomes, and it's no longer possible to afford the average rent, based on minimum wage. I live in Naperville, where it's common for some to purchase a house for nearly a half-million dollars, spend more to knock that house down and then build a new million-plus dollar house in its place. Lisle and Downers Grove are having the same experience.

- 4. People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?**

Dissolving Townships is a popular topic around municipal election season. Is it possible to roll all of the services offered by a Township into local government? Sure. But, my fear would be those who need the most help could fall through the cracks of larger local governments. Or, if they live in a smaller town, perhaps there would be a lack of services offered. Using Naperville and Lisle as examples, Naperville has a population of nearly 150k. Lisle has 25k. Given its size, the Naperville government could probably easily offer more services to its residents, should a Township be dissolved. However, Lisle, at one-sixth the size of Naperville, would likely struggle to provide the same services. The county would have to fill in, but that's not an easy answer either. The DuPage County building complex is not convenient to reach for people with transportation limits.

Lisa Rose (D)

- 1. The City of Naperville approved a paid parental leave. Do you feel the township should consider a similar benefit for its employees? If so, how do you see it working? If not, why not?**

According to the Naperville Sun/Chicago Tribune 1/23/2020, Naperville city employees can take up to 12 weeks paid parental leave. City officials believe offering paid parental

leave and adding sick time off will improve the city's commitment to employees' work life balance and keep city benefits competitive. According to 2018 data, City of Chicago and Cook County offered paid parental leave and is probably why Naperville became the first large suburb in IL to offer PPL.

This works for Naperville because of its size. Lisle Township has a much smaller staff and, in order to offer this kind of benefit, would either burden other staff members for the 12 week period or the Township would have to add staff during that period, which would increase costs. Since paid parental leave is important, and I believe that it benefits maternal bonding during that initial 3 month period, perhaps a scaled-down version would be appropriate? Not knowing the inner workings of Township management and staff, or having a copy of the employee handbook, this would be something to assess and possibly work out with an employee on a case by case basis or bring it to the residents for a possible referendum.

- 2. Townships are known for their senior services. Do you feel the township has adequately addressed seniors' needs, especially during the pandemic? If not, what would you suggest to improve the services?**

The current Township website is not very good at highlighting senior services, which makes me think that rather than run services, they partner with other local groups to promote them. For example, my idea about the Township offering senior check-ins to make sure residents living alone did not require help was implemented by the Triad Program in coordination with the Lisle Park District. Triad is not a service that the Township offers but their own entity that works as a collaborative partnership between law enforcement, senior citizens and community groups. During Covid, the Township also offered Senior Meal distribution in conjunction with the DuPage Senior Citizen's Council.

Within the Township, I would further suggest that seniors could also use an advocate to help pre-register for Covid vaccines. Many are not computer savvy and this service will not only connect them with the vaccine, but also diminish the frustration of the process. Outside of Covid, the SHIP program could be useful in helping seniors with Medicare enrollment and secondary insurance questions. This is a free service with the state of Illinois and is popular in other Townships. Looking to other Townships to see what they have offered in terms of services for seniors will be helpful in determining what we could offer in our community. Once in office, I would like to see how the partnerships work and broadly promote them to the community on the website and in mailings to senior residents.

- 3. Naperville is the only IL town with a population of 50,000 and above that has been cited by the Illinois Housing Development Authority for its shortage of affordable housing. What do you recommend be done to increase affordable housing in non-incorporated areas that fall within the township boundaries?**

This is something that has needed to be addressed for some time. I understand the need for affordable housing. There are many young adults who grew up within the Township and would like to raise their families here. People who live here and then retire, should be able to remain here on their fixed income. According to the Township Officials of Illinois Laws & Duties Handbook: A township may receive funds under the Federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 and may expend or contract for the expenditure of those funds and other township funds for certain specified activities. The "specified activities", would need to be clarified further. The TOI further references a "Township Senior Citizens' Housing Act": A Township may construct, purchase, improve, extend, or equip senior citizens' housing. This does not specify any affordability provision, though. Townships should be able to work in coordination with county, state or federal projects to pursue affordable housing objectives, as long as they conform to Township guidelines. I admit, this is something that I would need to research more as a Township Trustee, with regards to feasibility in unincorporated areas.

4. People often cite IL as having the most layers of government. Why do you feel the township form of government should be retained? If not, who do you see handling the services and programs the township currently provides?

According to "Town and Township Governments, National Association of Towns and Townships, 2002", Typically, this (Township) board is directly accessible to the people with no layers of bureaucracy in between. The board serves as the town or township's legislative body, setting policy, enacting local ordinances, adopting budgets, and levying taxes. The town and township form of government has recently been looked at with an agenda to merge their functions with cities and counties. The theory is, larger local governments are more efficient than smaller ones and cost less in taxes. In order to merge Lisle Township with a nearby city or DuPage county, there needs to be a conversation about the delegation of authority, access to services, and what the eventual cost would be to voters. This would need to be studied and discussed with voters and phased in over time. This will take years.

Personally I can see why people would want to consolidate into larger cities, especially in our area. For one, most have limited knowledge of what the Township does other than to levy taxes through the Assessor's office. In the meantime, better education, communication and transparency about the what and how of their Township could possibly change minds. As Trustee, I would promote the Township services and work to create more ways to engage residents by keeping them informed and making information more digestible, especially in relation to how it affects them personally. With this knowledge, the community will have a better understanding of what their Township can do for them. And having direct access to officials and ease of expressing what residents want and need, would be more appealing than having to get through to city or county officials. Either way, I would respect the wishes of the community.

Tony Signorella (R) - no email contact

Scott Silver (R) - no email contact