

EVANSTON REFERENDUMS FORUM

October 14, 2018 2:00 PM

Evanston Township High School Auditorium

1600 Dodge Ave., Evanston, IL

- AS REVISED 10/14/18 FOR ONLINE DISTRIBUTION -

Sponsored by:



The League of Women Voters of Evanston

www.lwve.org

PROGRAM

Welcome: Julianne Dieterich, Co-President
League of Women Voters of Evanston

Moderator: Jan Flapan
League of Women Voters of Chicago

I. Real Estate Transfer Tax Referendum Panelists:

Hitesh Desai, Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer, City of Evanston

Joe Roth, Local Government Affairs Director, Illinois REALTORS

Paula Worthington, Senior Lecturer, Harris School of Public Policy,
University of Chicago

II. Harley Clarke Referendum Panelists:

Amina DiMarco, former Parks and Recreation Board member

Craig McClure, Senior Business Analyst

Trish Stieglitz, Vice President of Development and Facilities of Midtown
Athletic Clubs

Brad White, Associate Director, Alphawood Foundation

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. The League works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, observes governing bodies, and provides information for the voters at election time. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidates.

Procedures and Rules for the Forum

Opening statements

- Each panelist will make an opening statement of no more than three minutes for the Real Estate Transfer Tax panel and no more than two minutes for the Harley Clarke panel.
- The order of speakers was determined by agreement with the moderator for the Real Estate Transfer Tax panel and by lot for the Harley Clarke panel.

Questions and Answers

- Audience members may submit questions on cards provided by the ushers. They will be collected throughout each panel.
- Questions should be addressed to all participants on a panel. Questions that are directed to a single panelist will not be read.
- The moderator will pose questions to the panelists. Each panelist will have 1 minute to respond. Panelists are not required to answer every question.
- At her discretion, the moderator may grant additional time for panelists to respond to complex questions; if that occurs, all panelists will be granted the same extension.
- The moderator will rotate the order that panelists respond, ensuring opportunities for each panelist to respond first while also responding at her discretion to the context of the question.
- To make effective use of the limited time available, League members will review submitted questions to eliminate duplicates, combine similar questions, and ensure that questions are germane to the issue.

Audience expectations:

- **PLEASE SILENCE OR TURN OFF ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES**
- **PLEASE, NO VIDEOS OR FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY**
- Signs and posters will not be permitted in the auditorium.
- Out of respect to the speakers and attendees, all audience members are asked to remain quiet during each panel. At her discretion, the moderator may ask audience members who are disruptive to leave the auditorium, or she may end the forum in the case of repeated disruptions.

The decisions of the moderator are final.

Real Estate Transfer Tax Referendum (Binding)

The language on the ballot for all Evanston voters will say:

“Shall the City of Evanston impose a real estate transfer tax increase of forty percent (40%) to establish a new transfer tax rate of seven dollars (\$7.00) for every one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) of value, or fraction thereof, for sales from \$1,500,000.01 up to \$5,000,000.00 AND a real estate transfer tax increase of eighty percent (80%) to establish a new transfer tax rate of nine dollars (\$9.00) for every one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) of value, or fraction thereof, for sales from \$5,000,000.01 or more to be paid by the seller of the real estate transferred?”

The current rate of the real estate transfer tax is five dollars (\$5.00) for every one thousand dollars (\$1,000.00) of value, or fraction thereof, and the revenue is used for the City’s general fund. The revenue from the increase is to be used for the funding of the City’s General Operating Fund, with the increase being used for improvements related to public safety, public health, parks and recreation services, street improvements, and other necessary City services.”

Background information compiled from public documents and City staff

City of Evanston staff estimate that the revised property transfer tax schedule would increase annual revenue by approximately \$850,000. Revenue from the current system was \$3.8 million in 2017, \$3.5 million in 2016 and 2015, and \$2.5 million in 2014. According to City staff, because property sales vary every year, transfer tax revenue can vary from year to year by \$250,000 to \$1 million.

Harley Clarke Referendum (Advisory)

The language on the ballot for all Evanston voters will say:

“Shall the City of Evanston protect from demolition and preserve the landmark Harley Clarke buildings and gardens next to Lighthouse Beach, for use and access as public property, consistent with the Evanston Lakefront Master Plan, at minimal or no cost to Evanston taxpayers?”

Information on the mansion and the City’s deliberations about it is available at: www.cityofevanston.org/about-evanston/arts-and-culture/harley-clarke-mansion

Real Estate Transfer Tax Referendum - Panelist Biographies (as submitted)

Hitesh Desai

Hitesh Desai was appointed in April 2018 as Evanston's Chief Financial Officer and City Treasurer. Desai manages the finance-related divisions within the City Manager's Office, including purchasing, accounting, procurement, budget, revenue, collections, property tax assessment, pension, employee benefits, treasury, investments and risk management, and other public finance activities. He previously held the positions of accounting manager and senior accountant at the City of Evanston, having served for twelve years between 2000 and 2014. He then served for four years as the finance director for the Village of Carpentersville.

Desai has a bachelor's degree in Business from Gujarat University in India. He also is a Chartered Accountant (India), Certified Public Account (USA) and a member of the Government Finance Officers Association, the Illinois Government Finance Officers Association and the Intergovernmental Personnel Benefit Cooperative (IPBC) Finance Committee. Desai has been married for 26 years and has a son and a daughter.

Joe Roth

Joe Roth is the Local Governmental Affairs Director with Illinois REALTORS. In this role, Joe supports REALTORS and property owners in communities along the North Shore. Prior to recently joining the REALTOR family, Joe spent many years working in Evanston for such organizations as the American Massage Therapy Association and Rotary International.

Paula R. Worthington

Paula R. Worthington is a Senior Lecturer at the Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago, where she also serves as academic director of the School's Policy Labs program. At Harris, Worthington teaches courses in state and local government and cost-benefit analysis and advises students completing applied projects for public and nonprofit sector clients. She is consistently recognized for excellence in teaching, having been voted the Best Teacher in a Non-Core [elective] Class on numerous occasions. While on leave from Harris last year, Worthington served as senior economist at the Council of Economic Advisers in Washington, D.C. Prior to joining the Harris School, Worthington taught at Northwestern University and served in a variety of positions at the Federal Reserve Banks of Chicago and New York. Her PhD in economics is from Northwestern University—and all three of her sons were born in Evanston!

Harley Clark Referendum - Panelist Biographies (as submitted)

Amina DiMarco

A 22-year resident of Evanston's 4th Ward, Amina DiMarco has three children in public schools. She is a public school employee. She served a 10-year appointment to the Evanston Parks and Recreation advisory board.

During the 10-year appointment, she:

- Served as Board President
- Participated in the public Lakefront Master Planning process
- Presented and lobbied for the Lakefront Master Plan before City Council
- Served as Subcommittee chair to the Lakefront Special Event Permitting Process
- Elected by Board to serve as representative to the mayor's Special Committee on Harley Clarke

She is currently serving on the Friends of Robert Crown Center board.

Craig McClure

Craig McClure is a senior business analyst with a Fortune 100 company located here in the northern suburbs. In his role, he consults internally with company leaders on strategic technology initiatives that can range into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

He has been an active community lobbyist on property tax issues since he and his partner moved to Evanston in 2004. He has discussed the Harley Clarke issue with many of his neighbors. As an example of his work, in 2016, Craig organized a successful petition drive for his neighborhood of 180 properties to disconnect from the Skokie Park District since taxpayers were paying twice for park district services – both to the City of Evanston and to the Skokie Park District.

Having moved here from Philadelphia's Main Line, Craig and his partner understand and appreciate the value of significant architectural artifacts.

Trish Stieglitz

Trish Stieglitz is Vice President of Development and Facilities of Midtown Athletic Clubs and President of Construction Concept Management Corporation, a woman-owned business that she founded in Chicago over two decades ago.

A 30-year resident, Trish has a steadfast commitment to Evanston as a founding board member of Central Street Neighbors Association and co-

president of Evanston Public Library Friends, where she was instrumental in saving the branch libraries and facilitating the design and construction of The Mighty Twig free lending library, a not-for-profit/public partnership which went on to become CAMS of the Evanston Public Library system.

Trish is a licensed general contractor experienced in all phases of construction and project management for Fortune 100 companies, and other hospitality and health construction clients, including the \$90 million Chicago Midtown Athletic Club and Hotel -- the largest health and fitness resort in the country -- which was recently named Most Exciting New Hotel by Conde Nast Traveler Magazine.

Brad White

Brad White is Associate Director of the Alphawood Foundation. Previously, Brad focused on affordable housing and community development. Brad was appointed by President Obama as a General Public Member of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 2011; he was reappointed in 2014. For the Advisory Council he led the task force on Historic Preservation and Rightsizing, directed development of a policy statement on community revitalization, and managed the drafting of recommendations for the policy initiative marking the 50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. Brad is on the Board of Enrich Chicago, a not-for-profit organization focused on racial equity and inclusion in the arts. He is Chair of the Unity Temple Restoration Foundation and is a board member of DOCOMOMO-US. He is former Chair of Landmarks Illinois, Preservation Action, and the Ely Chapter of Lambda Alpha. Brad is a graduate of the University of Michigan; he received his law degree from DePaul University College of Law.

IMPORTANT VOTING INFORMATION

Register to vote online: ova.elections.il.gov

KEY DATES FOR THE NOVEMBER 6 GENERAL ELECTION

- Oct. 9 - Last day to register to vote by paper application
- Oct. 10 – Nov. 5 – **Grace Period Registration** (at specified locations; must vote at same time)
- Oct. 21 – Last Day to register to vote by online application
- Oct. 22 – Nov. 5 – **Early Voting** at Evanston Civic Center and other selected sites; hours vary
- Nov. 1 – Last Day to request mail ballot (mail ballots must be postmarked by Nov. 6)
- **Nov. 6 – ELECTION DAY** (polls open 6 am to 7 pm; vote in your precinct) Election Day registration is permitted.

For information including verifying your registration; grace period registration, early voting, election day registration & voting; your polling location; vote by mail; and sample ballots:
Cook County Clerk - www.cookcountyclerk.com/elections

RESOURCES FOR INFORMING YOURSELF ABOUT THE BALLOT

Sat., Oct. 20

LWV CANDIDATE FORUMS

9:00 am US 9th Congressional District (Schakowsky, Elleson)

10:00 am Cook County Commissioner, 13th (Suffredin, Hanusiak) & 14th (Britton, Gosslin) Districts

11:10 am IL State Representative, 17th (Gong-Gershowitz, Lee) and 18th (Gabel, Cho) Districts

Wilmette Village Hall, 1200 Wilmette Ave.

- **www.lwve.org** – Forum videos will be posted
- **www.voteforjudges.org** – information and ratings
- **IllinoisVoterGuide.org** – explore your ballot, including a candidate guide and judicial vacancies