

Two vying to lead town share positions

Cauley, LaPlaca square off in front of voters at The Hinsdalean's candidates night

By Ken Knutson

kknutson@thehinsdalean.com

On March 15, the two candidates for Hinsdale village president — incumbent Tom Cauley and village Trustee Laura LaPlaca — participated in The Hinsdalean's candidates night forum at The Community House. Below are questions they were asked and excerpts from their answers.

A video of the event is available online at facebook.com/thehinsdalean.

What new ideas would you bring to the office?

LaPlaca: I think we need to improve communication between the chamber of commerce, the business owners and the economic development commission ... I would like to encourage the use of social media.

Cauley: I think it's important to keep focused on the basics ... Work to consolidate police service and fire service to save the village money.

Is there any hope of negotiating with Tollway Authority over expanding I-294?

Cauley: This is more of a political issue ... We can raise enough of a voice about this that we can either stop the expansion, or, if it happens, to make sure that it doesn't impact negatively the residents of Hinsdale.

LaPlaca: I think that we will be included in (Tollway Authority discussions) to the extent that we continue to work with these people. I don't think we can stonewall the project ... I think we have to engage them, and I think we have the opportunity to do that.

How would you stimulate new revenue to meet the village's fiscal needs?



Tom Cauley

LaPlaca: We really have to be clear that there are opportunities in the Ogden (Avenue) corridor and in other areas of the village where we can promote commercial revenue-raising enterprises.

Cauley: If we add the parking deck, we will fill the remaining empty storefronts ... We should take opportunities to look at developments where they make sense, but we should not endanger the uniqueness of our community.

What steps would you take to attract businesses to downtown?

Cauley: We hope to have (store employees) park (in the parking deck) to free up parking all around the village, and I am convinced that that would go a long way to increasing the viability of our downtown further than it is now.

LaPlaca: The parking deck will be a significant advantage to downtown Hinsdale and the businesses there. The parking by itself will promote the growth of businesses in downtown whether they're existing businesses or bringing in new businesses.

What is your vision for the for-



Laura LaPlaca

mer Amlings site? Do you have any conflicts of interest with that property?

LaPlaca: I have no conflicts of interest with that site ... I don't know how it's going to be developed. I do know that when we get a proposal for development that we need to look at it carefully ... and we need to have debate on what is the appropriate development for that parcel of property.

Cauley: My home backs up to that property ... I have a very cordial relationship with the owner of the property. He realizes the property's an eyesore and he's agreed to take the (building) down ... We have to respect our zoning code.

How is the gender of village president relevant to village business?

Cauley: I don't think it is ... I think there is not a gender bias or a gender issue associated with the office of village president. I think we all work together for the best interests of the village, and I think that there aren't issues that are gender specific in the village.

LaPlaca: I don't think gender has anything to do with whether you should



be village president or not ... There are only men on the village board other than me ... I do think that women have a unique perspective and point of view in our community, and I just think it would be unfortunate if there were no women in our local elected village positions.

What are the plans to repair more village roads?

LaPlaca: I don't think we've necessarily been fixing (the streets) at the pace that people have been wanting us to fix them at ... I think we need to reevaluate the (master infrastructure plan) ... I think we have to take a chance to have a fresh set of eyes look at that and figure if maybe we need to make some changes.

Cauley: We instituted a \$90 million road program ... Sometimes we can't do the worst road because we have to stage it with sewer repair work ... You borrow as little as you can and you do it on a pay-as-you-go basis ... In the next four years we will have fixed every failed and poor road in the village.

Do you support term limits for village president?

Cauley: If there's term limits, I think it should be after three (terms) ... I wouldn't be running again if I didn't think we had serious problems that faced the village.

LaPlaca: Hinsdale is full of talented people, and Tom is not the only person who can do this job ... He can volunteer four more years of his time — he can help me on the I-294 expansion project ... You should not be president for 12 years.