

OPINION

EDITORIALS



Laura
LaPlaca



Kevin
Camden



Keith
Chval



Robin
Gonzales



Nancy
Pollak

LaPlaca best choice for next village president

✓ Laura LaPlaca
Tom Cauley

It's nice to have a choice. It's a bonus when, as in the case of the race for Hinsdale village president, that choice involves two high-caliber options.

Such a luxury, of course, also requires a thoroughly considered decision.

The Tuesday, April 4, election pits two-term incumbent Tom Cauley against two-term trustee Laura LaPlaca. Both have demonstrated a strong aptitude for municipal stewardship and a penchant for getting things done. They have been steady-handed public servants during an eight-year stretch that has seen profound village-wide infrastructure upgrades, the largely externally funded replacement of the antiquated Oak Street bridge in favor of a far more functional two-lane span, a commitment to fiscal stability and the cultivation of an economic climate that has brought a number of downtown-revitalizing eateries to town.

Both took office in 2009 — Cauley had been a trustee for two years prior — and helped establish a remarkable spirit of village board unity after a season of division and acrimony.

From the start, Cauley pushed for development of a desperately needed master infrastructure plan and for the politically risky sales tax hike to pay for it.

Meanwhile, LaPlaca was leading the Oak Street Bridge project, shepherding its complex design and engineering issues.

Their positions on many policy matters have been aligned, although Cauley has rarely voted because the board's near unanimity has obviated the need for his tie-breaking authority.

What it comes down to for us, in a sense, is style and staying power. Cauley has demonstrated a tendency to advance his positions during discussion of action items before trustees have a chance to speak. That practice serves to press trustees toward an outcome and force those who may have another view into rebuttal mode. And, to reiterate, the village president only votes in the event of a tie.

In that vein, we were troubled that Cauley attached his name exclusively to a village-paid advertisement opposing the potential expansion of the Tri-State Tollway. All board members oppose it, from our understanding, and having all of their names listed would have been appropriate. The fact that the ad ran during this election smacked of political gamesmanship.

Cauley wants a third term, primarily, he says, to continue fighting the Tollway Authority. To be sure, there are a number of suburbs whose top elected official is in his or her fourth or fifth term, or beyond. Cauley set a new precedent with his second term, and we're glad he did. Now is the time for transition to an equally capable steward, lest an unhealthy pattern of preserving the status quo sets in.

In serving as trustee LaPlaca has shown the kind of leadership that seeks input and listens first. Once in command of the full picture, she has the skills



to tackle issues thoughtfully and productively, as with the Oak Street Bridge and in riding herd on the Woodlands road improvements.

We appreciate LaPlaca's more open-minded approach to appropriate development in the village, reflected in her solid support for the Hinsdale Meadows empty-nester housing at 55th and County Line Road and in being an early proponent of a larger parking deck as part of the Hinsdale Middle School construction project. She exhibited the same common-sense analysis of projects while serving as a plan commission member for seven years and chairman for five years.

We must also point out that LaPlaca has been the only woman on the board since 2011, and her departure would leave the village with no female elected officials. That, we feel, is worth noting, and underscores our choice of LaPlaca, who also has been endorsed by the Hinsdale Village Caucus.

In the final analysis, we come down on the side of renewal and fresh opportunities. While we do not foresee a major shift in the village's trajectory with LaPlaca at the helm, we are confident the results will be the fruit of an inclusive and intentional approach in which all can take pride.

Vision 86 slate receives our endorsement

✓ Kevin Camden
✓ Keith Chval
✓ Robin Gonzales
✓ Nancy Pollak
James "Fred" Koch

For the four open seats on the Hinsdale High School District 86 Board in the Tuesday, April 4, election, The Hinsdalean endorses Kevin Camden, Keith Chval, Robin Gonzales and Nancy Pollak.

The four, who have organized as a slate under the #Vision86 banner, have pledged to work together to unify the district and bring more a more professional, respectful tone to board meetings.

Camden is 19-year district resident who has worked with public entities in his law practice and as a foundation board member in Cass Elementary District 63. As the sole Hinsdale South representative on the slate, he brings an important perspective to this group and the board as a whole. The

four newly elected members will join a group that has one resident from Hinsdale Central, one from Hinsdale South and one from the buffer zone.

Chval brings a wonderful knowledge of the district and what it takes to be an effective board member from his time with Caucus 86. He has sound ideas to help the board function more effectively, in part by getting out of the way and allowing the administrators to do the job they were trained and hired to do.

Gonzales has devoted her career to working in education and brings a unique viewpoint as a result. A resident of the buffer zone, she has interesting ideas about how to better unify the district. We encourage her to avoid micro-managing, which she might be tempted to do given her strong educational background.

Pollak also is a trained educator who has spent years volunteering in Hinsdale schools. We appreciate her desire to better educate district residents



about board business and to conduct more effective board meetings. Of all five candidates, she has been the biggest advocate of looking at all potential options (even some unlikely ones) for balancing enrollment between the two schools.

Koch seems to be running out of a genuine desire to do what is best for students in the district. His decision to enter the race late as a write-in candidate puts him at a great disadvantage. He would be a much stronger choice if he got more involved in the district over the next two years and ran with his name on the ballot in the spring of 2019.

This and other election coverage is posted online at thehinsdalean.com