

The Village Manager Association of Oak Park

Mission and Guiding Principles

Mission

The Village Manager Association (VMA) is a diverse group of informed citizens who may not all think alike but are committed to these guiding principles: accountable and responsive government, ongoing and inclusive diversity, and balanced and sensitive economic growth. The VMA will speak out on issues related to these principles. The major focus of the association is to find and select the best candidates who support these principles to run for elected office. The VMA endorses these candidates as a slate, aids in the creation of a party, and supports their election.

Accountable and Responsive Government

The VMA is committed to the Council-Manager form of government because we believe that it leads to honest and open decision making. The Village Manager, who is the sole employee of the Village Board, directs a professional staff and is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Village. We support an elected, citizen volunteer Village Board that makes policy responsive to the needs of the whole Village, free from even an appearance of dishonesty or corruption.

Candidate selection is based on choosing individuals who are knowledgeable, trustworthy, ethical and not influenced by special interests. Our candidates will listen and learn from members of the community, support the guiding principles of the VMA, and make informed decisions for the benefit of all Oak Park.

Oak Park has many other talented citizens who give of their time and expertise freely to assist their Village government. The VMA supports the Village Commission and Committee system because it utilizes the talents of these citizens, aids the Village Board by studying various proposals and programs, keeps the Village Board in touch with the needs and concerns of citizens, provides an opportunity for citizens to learn about local government, and develops future Village leaders.

Ongoing and Inclusive Diversity

The VMA has grown from our initial commitment to racial integration which began in the early 1960s. We understand that achieving diversity is an ongoing and ever changing process affected by influences from within and outside of our

Village. The diversity that we espouse today includes more than race. The VMA respects the differences in all, including: gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, abilities and economic strength. We support the Oak Park Regional Housing Center, Oak Park Residence Corporation, and other organizations whose work supports the diversity goals of the Village. The VMA is committed to open and inclusive diversity which we believe creates an environment for embracing change and makes Oak Park a unique community.

Balanced and Sensitive Economic Growth

The VMA is committed to economic growth in order to maintain and improve our school systems, parks and continue to replace our aging infrastructure. Positive economic growth occurs when policy created by the Village Board produces a climate of cooperation between government, residents, businesses and property owners, to the benefit of all.

The VMA supports growth which recognizes the significance of historic preservation and good architectural design. We believe that projects should be judged on their own merit and contribution to the community. To balance these qualities, the VMA supports the utilization of Village Commissions and Committees, Oak Park Development Corporation, as well as open forums which request and respond to considerations provided by residents, property and business owners.