**The Lakewood Democratic Club**

**Minutes of Regular Meeting held** **September 30, 2021  
Online space at zoom.us**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by President Erik Meinhardt.

Officers present were President Erik Meinhardt, First Vice-President Maureen Dostal, Treasurer Catie McMahon, Secretary Nicole Parke. The President chaired the meeting. The Secretary took notes.

APPROVAL of the MINUTES -

HOUSEKEEPING - Thank you all for being here. Moment of silence for Judge Nancy McDonnell.

RECOGNITION OF NOTABLES - Lakewood City Council candidate Laura Rodriguez Carbone, Lakewood Municipal Court judicial candidate Sara Fagnilli, Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Tristan Rader, Lakewood City Councilperson and Lakewood Municipal Court judicial candidate Tess Neff, Lakewood School Board candidate Nora Katzenberger, Judge Thomas O’Malley, School Board Member Ed Favre, School Board President and candidate Betsy Shaugnessy, Judge Lisa Forbes, Judge Rick Bell, State Rep mike skindell, Lakewood City Council candidate Kyle Baker, School Board member Emma Petrie Barcelona, Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Sarah Kepple, School Board Member Michael Callahan, Lakewood City Councilperson Jason Shachner, Lakewood City Council candidate Mark Schneider, Cuyahoga County Democratic Party City Leader Karolyn Isenhart, Lakewood City Councilperson and candidate Tom Bullock, School Board member and candidate Ed Favre

**PROGRAM: Lakewood Municipal General Election Endorsement Hearing & Vote**

* Questions not given to candidates ahead of time
* Three categories of races: Lakewood City Council
* will ask non voting members to go in the waiting room when time to vote
* will take 3 minutes to vote; secret vote
* all votes anonymous, we can’t see anything
* then we can go over results
* order of candidates randomly selected

# ​Lakewood City Council Member at-Large Candidates

## Opening Statements (2 minutes each)

### Kyle Baker

grew up in Lakewood, Miami undergrad & Ohio State law school, moved back to lakewood. worked at law firm, felt call to public service. joined cleveland metroparks. preserve over 1,000 acres as well as procurement. lakewood planning commission for 6 years. president of lakewood ranger education foundation. hospital used to produce 1.5-2 million income tax; no one on council has real estate experience.

### Tristan Rader

come from activism, bring social justice viewpoint to everything we do. leading the way with social justice reforms at city level; $15 / hour. since on council, 100% renewable commitment, climate action plan, passionate about environmental justice and works in solar / renewable energy as day job.

### Tom Bullock

public service is calling and profession for 25 years. rooted in upbringing to bring equality for all. since 2008, achieved stable budgets, strong housing market, development. responsive to constituents. led more than a dozen initiatives: urban gardening, sidewalk repair, outdoor basketball, electric vehicle charging, solstice steps, kaufmann park renovations, etc.

### Mark Schneider

proud to be in front of club, second vice president. best club. increased political activism through events and fundraising. take active part in democratic campaigns. executive committee of CCDP. state and central executive committees. served as state rep and democratic activist of 20 years. local prosecutor, law director. given so much to this club. experience making tough decisions, like voting for precursor to ohio fairness act. played part in forming LEEDCo.

### Laura Rodriguez-Carbone

learned from running and not winning. must persist to ensure the best among us are elected to all levels of government. hispanic latino caucus, executive committee, promote what believe in. right to healthcare and inclusion. built career on this, co-chair of lakewood anti-racism task force. worked toward equity in many fields. president biden’s covid response task force. never been represented in lakewood government by a person of color. dedication to shared values as democrats

### Sarah Kepple

lakewood dems encouraged her to apply for open council seat. community organizer, tech entrepreneur, public servant. used to work in county public library system. started tech education programs there, left to start own business. curbside express parking, ABA task force, Hate Has No Home Here rally, Action Together Lakewood. worked together to achieve these goals. Keep Kepple on Council

## ​Q&A (90 seconds per question)​

### Kyle Baker

#### *ERIK: How would you hold developers accountable for completing housing projects when they receive tax abatements and Tax Increment Financing public incentives?*

tax abatements = tax break on difference in value once property improved. when defer taxes, dont receive revenue. need strong development agreement. takes money away from other resources. spreads property value to homeowners.

#### *MAUREEN: What did your experience as an attorney representing the City of Akron against the US EPA for Clean Water Act violations from combined sewer overflow issues teach you about what Lakewood is facing right now and how it proceed to do what’s best for the environment AND the city?*

Akron did not take EPA seriously, did not invest in sewers. need to long term plan. fight with federal government to get clean lake but spread costs over time and utilize new technologies.

### Tristan Rader

#### *CATIE: In your questionnaire response about affordable housing you said “we need to insist on strong affordability measures in development agreements” – how do we do that and what are the obstacles preventing us from doing that now?*

when developers come to council, set aside money for affordable housing/rent control. make sure people have a place to grow here. partner with developers to stipulate that. 8-step affordability plan currently being adapted. help people stay in their homes

#### *NICOLE: Reflecting back on your time on City Council over the last 4 years, knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?*

wish I’d done more research leading up to Council. once there, learn a lot of things really fast. should have researched rules and responsibilities. we are charter city, dictates what we can do. read administrative section of policies and codes. incoming council members will now get a guide to help them move more quickly.

### Tom Bullock

#### *ERIK: Lakewood’s HOME Program provides financial assistance to encourage home ownership for first-time home buyers; however, its income guidelines and requirements seem impossible to meet given Lakewood home prices. For example, a family of 2 must make under $50,350 to qualify and a single family home must be under $149,000 in value. Is this program obsolete or what can Lakewood do to fix its incentives for first time home buyers?*

also have first time homebuyer assistance, low income loans, etc. all of which are set by the federal government HUD. Community Action committee helps advocate and prioritize. could use reforms, would need leadership from mayor’s office.

#### *MAUREEN: Reflecting back on your time on City Council, knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?*

would slow down. like to move fast and do a lot. been working on electric vehicle support for many years, wish we were farther along. wish we had all-electric trash trucks. need to take time to develop support at all levels for these initiatives.

### Mark Schneider

#### *CATIE: In your questionnaire, you mentioned community policing and regional safety stations in Lakewood? Please explain to us what you meant and how you’ll implement these changes.*

currently have two community policing stations. used to have four. community policing = putting police officers in community setting so we have better relationship with police and neighborhoods. ensure police have training and staffing they need. experience as a prosecutor would help. look at underlying causes too - experience on community advisory commitee

#### *NICOLE: In your questionnaire, you said you wanted to make American Rescue Plan funds available to defer the costs for senior citizens related to sewer and water upgrades. Does Lakewood’s current plan share these planned rebates equally among all Lakewood water/sewer customers and is this fair? How will you make a change?*

seniors feel they are least situated to handle rising property costs and rising cost of living. just received word that property taxes going up again. three sewer problems - financing proposals. must continue working, ten year process. needs our attention.

### Laura Rodriguez-Carbone

#### *ERIK: In your questionnaire, you mentioned Lakewood needing to make investments in its infrastructure, including for communications and power. What did you mean by this and what can the city do to prevent what seems to be more frequent power disruptions?*

infrastructure really important. power outages happening, not getting communication from the city. need to make sure people are informed and aware. need to advocate at ohio public utilies commission to make sure our power structure is adequate.

#### *MAUREEN: Lakewood is a city that’s over 80% white – so even if our culture is one of openness, we face an uphill battle with diversity based on demographics alone. What can Lakewood do differently to encourage more diversity, inclusion, and belonging?*

anti-racism task force is doing a lot! increasingly more business owners of color. continue efforts to build community. include everyone in the conversation.

### Sarah Kepple

#### *CATIE: What can Lakewood do better to bring in small businesses to the city, and how has your experience as a small business owner helped you understand this?*

curbside express parking for restaurants. in budget, want to establish local delivery system. restaurants have been hit hard by pandemic. take away grubhub and doordash charges; help residents shop local. keep money in lakewood.

#### *NICOLE: Your questionnaire talked about a proposed intersectional safety committee to augment the work of “traditional safety forces.” What is your strategy for getting buy-in from these traditional safety forces to get them to work on reforms*

had positive conversations with new police chief in lakewood. redesigning auxiliary police force. awareness among leaders that we address crime by providing mental health resources etc. Already have buy-in from different community groups including anti racism task force

# Lakewood Municipal Court Judicial Candidates

## Opening Statements (2 minutes each)

### Tess Neff

eldest of 7 siblings. father worked at brook park ford plant. mother was waitress. started working at 12 years old. first to go to college. went through undergrad and law school. worked as police officer. in 1997, judge carroll appointed me to magistrate in lakewood. in 2007, Tom O’Malley asked me to be his magistrate. in 2018, 6 judges appointed me to be administrator. always been a democrat. opponent is part time assistant prosecutor and voted as republican in 2016.

### Sara Fagnilli

for 35 years, municipal prosecutor and focus in municipal law. been on both sides of municipal issues. know what it’s like to be in municipal court room. know how to evaluate witnesses and look at evidence. current with the law. never before run for office, but have endorsements of sherrod brown, kenny yuko, nickie antonio, the plain dealer, cleveland port council. background as management side labor attorney. treat people with respect.

## Q&A (90 seconds per question)

### Tess Neff

#### *ERIK: In your questionnaire, you mention data collection as an imperative to protect against bias and prejudice in the court. How would you implement a data collection process and how would that impact the court’s ability to be more fair?*

easy to implement data collection, did it in juvenile court. in 2015 implemented quality assurance department. partner with research group, possibly case, teach IT dept at lakewood how to pull the data you need. analyze it to guard against implicit bias.

#### *MAUREEN: What are the barriers to night/weekend court, and how would you work to overcome these challenges to expand access to justice?*

could be financially neutral. could have staff flex their schedules; night court could take place on evenings of City Council meetings b/c already have security at the building. would definitely help defendants who are working during the day. should have night court option.

### Sarah Fagnilli

#### *CATIE: In your questionnaire, you mention that you will spend time prior to taking the bench to further your own education on equity and inclusion so that the court can properly address equity if you are elected. Can you explain what kind of education and training you will look to complete?*

could take courses online. important to educate staff as well, so that staff is aware of implicit bias. would educate myself and keep it ongoing; would also want it to be offered to staff. must be intentional and make it continuous. must address biases we have, whether we know we have them or not

#### *NICOLE: What are the barriers to night/weekend court, how would you work to overcome these challenges to expand access to justice?*

No barriers. must work with prosecutor’s office to encourage them to look at cases outside of regular hours. currently, do that in municipal court. call people on weekends and evenings. as judge, you can establish your court time. very doable.

# Lakewood Board of Education Member Candidates

## Opening Statements (2 minutes each)

### Edward Favre

first appointed, then reelected several times. public service in national guard, then lakewood police department. as police officer saw kids in difficult situations. advocated for lgbt lakewood residents. serve all students in lakewood, no matter their ability or background. president of athletic boosters previously. have always passed school levy. new buildings are equipped to handle pandemic, etc. must maintain consistency. advocated for pre- and after-school programming. endorsed by afl-cio, etc.

### Betsy Shaughnessy

longtime club member and longtime school board member. direct financial impact on schools from development and housing. president on board prepares her to deal with current challenges. address learning loss that all children have had, but especially disadvantaged children. republican state legislature is not helping local school districts. expansion of early childhood education, continued integration of diversity & equity & inclusion activities & programs. must also prioritize wellness & mental health resources

### Nora Katzenberger

first-time candidate. communications professional & community and schools volunteer. bring new energy and ideas. two daughters - 7th & 9th graders. insight into schools experience. want to improve communication between all groups in the schools. longtime democrat. helped found lgbt+ parent support group. updated schools’ policy on health education.

## Q&A (90 seconds per question)

### Edward Favre

#### *ERIK: In your questionnaire, you mentioned Lakewood’s ethnic diversity as it has students from families originating all across the world. How can the Lakewood schools do better to be inclusive specifically of LGBTQ kids?*

must be aware of and continue to educate ourselves. students very open and overheard conversations among kids. must keep working on it and now able to discuss much more freely. must enable all students to do their best.

#### *MAUREEN: What is a pressing issue you want to solve as a Lakewood Board of Education member?*

want to advocate for all-day programming, before and after school. not run by outside agency. helps working parents.

### Betsy Shaughnessy

#### *CATIE: In your questionnaire, you mentioned that data was collected to better understand gaps in advanced level classes and gifted program enrollment amongst different populations. What can be done to change the culture and decrease barriers of entry into these programs?*

equity audit in schools. board had opportunity to sit with administrations and principals. saw certain groups were not taking advantage of programs. probable that testing we are basing on does not allow disadvantaged students to succeed. parents may not know about all the programs we offer, would not know to advocate for their students to take advanced classes.

#### *NICOLE: How did Lakewood schools ensure internet access for households during the pandemic and do you foresee this program continuing as connectivity remains extremely important to education, even at home?*

started with 1-to-1 program to ensure all students had a device. younger children got device after pandemic started. provided safe internet space at schools for kids to use. partnered with cable companies to provide families with that access. need to keep doing that. even with full in-person school, some kids did beter at home. offer alternative school at home.

### Nora Katzenberger

#### *ERIK: In your questionnaire, you mention wanting to level the playing field between different neighborhood schools. What did you mean and how can we achieve this?*

walking district, neighborhood schools. creates strong sense of community. also keeps our community divided. differences in level of parent involvement at each school. as PTA president, frustrating when wanting to make sure everyone has same opportunities. want to make sure equity among the schools and support parent involvement, especially neighborhoods that may have more working parents, single parents, immigrant parents, or parents who work different shifts.

#### *MAUREEN: You mentioned wanting to address inadequate compensation, but also talked about the challenge of declining enrollment leading to possible cuts to staffing levels in the future. How can we better compensate Lakewood educators and stop cuts to staffing levels?*

create stronger ties between city government and school leadership. potential for declining population due to higher cost of living, could create funding shortages and affect quality of schools. want city and local government to be engaged.

### All School Board Candidates

#### *ERIK: Yes or no? Should vaccines be mandated for teachers in Lakewood Schools?*

##### Edward Favre - would face challenge with union contract. currently at 85%. would like to do everything we can to get to 100%. not sure we could legally mandate, but not opposed to it.

##### Betsy Shaughnessy - yes, would have to work through the “traffic”

##### Nora Katzenberger - yes. president of national teachers association supports it. fortunate that Lakewood teachers have been enthusiastic towards vaccine

(Non members moved into waiting room)

Vote process:

66 voting members

63 will vote via zoom

gladys favre, erik meinhardt, maureen voting manually

A candidate must get 40 votes to get an endorsement

(Vote occurs via Zoom poll)

(let people in from waiting room)

City Council:

one endorsement - Sarah Kepple got 44 votes

Kyle Baker - 39 votes

Tom Bullock - 33 votes

Tristan Rader - 24 votes

Laura Rodriguez-Carbone - 22 votes

Mark Schneider - 19 votes

Judge:

Tess Neff endorsed - 43 votes

Sara Fagnilli - 23 votes

School Board:

Nora Katzenberger endorsed - 50 votes

Betsy Shaugnessy endorsed - 48 votes

Ed Favre - 21 votes

**REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President: thank you for participating tonight and at Summer Supper! requiring vax cards made people feel comfortable

First Vice President: Thanks to Erik and all candidates! October meeting - likely update on fair districts. November - Mayor Nan Whaley will be speaker. December hoping to have holiday party!

Political Activism: Jay Ketchaver - encourage Senator Brown to pass the Freedom to Vote Act as well as John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. Write letters to Virginians. Really successful postcard campaign in fall of 2020 - Vote Forward. Big midterm elections next year

(from chat):

Call Senator Brown every day and say “We need to pass both the Freedom To Vote Act and John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act to save our democracy.” Sherrod’s Cleveland number is (216) 522-7272. You’ll just be leaving a voicemail. Easy!

Write letters to Virginia! Early voting has already started and we need to protect the Democratic trifecta there as we prepare to head into the 2022 midterms. https://votefwd.org/

Book Club: Carol - AI 2041 visions for our future. Movie on New Yorker Channel on Youtube for free: Nightskills. About Edwins group in Shaker Heights. Helps ex-cons get back into workforce. Meet at bottlehouse October 19th

Second Vice President: (on leave of absence)

Treasurer: 106 current members. $15,421 in bank account. thanks to summer supper!

Secretary: no update

UPDATES

Karolyn Isenhart: early voting will begin October 7th at the BOE (not October 5th). if anyone wants to challenge or do recount of primary election, could be pushed back.

Maureen Dostal: we are socializing at Sauced after the meeting. hope to see everyone there.

Sarah Kepple: thank you & having fundraiser two weeks from today at El Carnicero

Tess Neff: thank you for the support!

Betsy Shaugnessy: thank you, means a lot!

Nora Katzenberger: thank you for the endorsement!

Mike Callahan: Lakewood Ranger Education Foundation Purple & Gold Gala on October 16th. Lakewood High School having showcase night on October 5th. Recently approved MOU that outlines responsibilities between city and schools regarding athletic fields & the pool.

Chitra Walker: we should be so proud that we have such wonderful set of people willing to serve our city & community!

Tom Bullock: This Monday night very busy council meeting. Lakewood Hospital site development conversation

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING - Thursday, October 28, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 8:56pm.

Event notes prepared by Nicole Parke on September 30, 2021.

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Secretary Approval: sign date

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President Approval: sign date

Notes from Chat:

Kira Krivosh: My CMBA Racial Equity and the Law group is doing a Hot Talk on September 2nd at noon on Race and Redistricting,. <https://www.clemetrobar.org/?pg=events&evAction=showDetail&eid=109010>

Cynthia Strebig:  Add to you calendar: Lakewood Chamber of Commerce and League of Women Voters hosting Candidate Forum, Tuesday, September 28 7-9P. City Hall Auditorium