

NAPERVILLE SUN

Indian Prairie D204 board president running for Naperville council



Laurie Donahue, president of the Indian Prairie District 204 School Board, has announced she's running for a Naperville City Council seat in 2027. (Randall Studio)



By **CAROLYN STEIN** | cstein@chicagotribune.com | Naperville Sun

PUBLISHED: August 11, 2026 at 9:58 AM CDT

Another school board member has entered the race for Naperville City Council.

Indian Prairie District 204 School Board President Laurie Donahue says she will be a candidate in the 2027 council race, joining Naperville District 203 School Board members Marc Willensky and Kristine Gericke as well as council incumbents Josh McBroom and Nate Wilson, appointed Councilwoman Supna Jain and newcomer Xavier Sims.

There are four, four-year seats open. Two-term incumbent Patrick Kelly is not seeking reelection.

Donahue picked up candidate petition packets last week as did Jain and Naperville Sister Cities Commission Chair Arun Vijay Mani, who said he is undecided if he will ultimately seek a council seat.

Donahue was elected to the Indian Prairie board in 2017 and reelected in 2021. In her time on the board, she has helped navigate the school district through a [\\$420 million tax referendum](#) and the [selection of a new superintendent](#).

"I came to Naperville when it was a relatively small community and I've seen it grown to where it is today and thriving," said Donahue, who moved to Naperville in the mid-1980s. "I want to make sure that we continue to make decisions and have a long-term view where businesses are attracted to coming here and can be successful, and that people want to live here and retire."

Like other candidates, the city's energy future is top of mind for her, she said. She was supportive of the council's decision to look at other energy options instead of renewing the contract with Naperville's current energy provider, the Illinois Municipal Electric Agency.

"On the school board, we recently decided to purchase about \$2 million worth of [solar panels](#) and they are only going in Aurora schools," she said. "That's because we couldn't create a favorable payback period on the Naperville side and that's due to IMEA and how we pay for our energy on the IMEA side."

Not being able to install solar panels in Naperville schools was “troublesome,” Donahue said.

“We do want to try and put in more sources of energy that are alternative and that’s one that was kind of a problem,” she said.

Another issue Donahue said she is focused on is affordable housing. She would prefer to see more smaller-sized units in Naperville and less high-density housing. Similarly, effectively balancing green space with development is another important issue, she said.

“I think it’s really important for us to preserve those kinds of spaces,” Donahue said. “I’m very fortunate. I live by the Springbrook Prairie and I feel like that’s an important, essential element of being in a thriving community: that there’s parks and there’s spaces for you to enjoy outside.”

Sustaining Naperville’s current businesses and attracting new ones is also a top issue, she said. While she is against tax incentives for businesses due to their impact on schools and homeowners, she supports actively recruiting companies to Naperville and ensuring the city continues to be a destination city, Donahue said.

Lastly, the 68-year-old Naperville resident said she feels like she can bring a perspective that she believes is missing from the current council: the voice of retirees in Naperville.

Donahue worked at Nokia before leaving behind her decades-long career in the telecom industry to commit herself more fully to the school district. As a retiree, she’s sensitive to the tax burden and other issues for people in her demographic, she said.

Outside of her time as school board member, Donahue sits on the board for the Alive Center, an organization dedicated to creating teen-led and teen-driven centers. She has previously chaired the Naperville Sister Cities Commission, volunteered as an Indian Prairie substitute teacher and served as a director for the the Indian Prairie Educational Foundation.

The mayoral seat is also up for election in April. Incumbent Mayor Scott Wehrli and Councilman Benny White have [announced they’re both running for it.](#)

Sign up for the Naperville Sun newsletter: News updates from the Naperville area delivered twice a week.