

## City of Lake Forest Leadership Principles

The City Council has adopted the following Leadership Principles for Members of the City Council, commissions and committees, to promote and maintain the highest standards of personal and professional conduct in the City's government. While recognizing conflict and disagreement are often a part of the public process, the City Council acknowledges and values its duty to model ethical and civil behavior for members of the Lake Forest community. City Council and commission decisions and work, therefore, must meet the most demanding ethical standards and demonstrate the highest levels of achievement in following these Principles.

To ensure consistency, members of the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and other commissions or committees, as established from time to time, are held to the same Leadership Principles as the City Council.

### Section 1 - Conduct of Public Meetings

Each member of the City Council, commissions, and committees, has a duty to:

- 1.1 Diligently prepare for meetings by studying the background, purpose, and arguments for and against items of business before a meeting. If non-policy related questions of a background nature require answers, City Council Members, commissioners, and committee members are encouraged to contact and question appropriate staff, through the City Manager or commission/committee staff liaison, prior to meetings to expedite consideration of routine matters.
- 1.2 Show respect for confidences, and information designated as "confidential." Refrain from disclosing information received during any closed session of the City Council, commission or committee held pursuant to State law.
- 1.3 Treat everyone with respect by actively listening to other viewpoints, and not interrupting, ignoring or belittling the contributions of others.
- 1.4 State views briefly and honestly during City Council, commission, and committee meetings. Out of respect for the time and attention of Members of the City Council, staff, and the public, limit comments on non-agenda individual matters to five (5) minutes.

- 1.5 Refrain from abusive conduct, personal charges, or verbal attacks upon the character, motives, ethics, morals, or comments of other Members of the Council, commissions, committees, staff, or the public. Refrain from other personal comments not germane to the issue before the City Council, commission, or committee.
- 1.6 Recognize and observe the right to speak on a question of personal privilege is limited to cases in which a Council Member's commissioner's, or committee member's integrity, character, or motives are assailed, questioned, or impugned. Questions of personal privilege shall be referred to the chair of the meeting, who shall impartially enforce such questions.
- 1.7 Make impartial decisions in the best interest of the City of Lake Forest, free of narrow political interests, financial and other personal interests that impair independence of judgment or action, and are consistent with, but not limited to, the requirements of the Fair Political Practices Act and other state and local laws.
- 1.8 Recognize and accept legitimate differences of opinion. Act with integrity in accepting, supporting, and defending City Council, commission, or committee decisions.
- 1.9 Provide fair and equal treatment of all persons and matters coming before the Council, commission, or committee.

## Section II – Conduct in Office

Each member of the City Council, commissions, and committee, has a duty to:

- 2.1 Support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic; bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and State of California; take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and well and faithfully discharge the duties of office.
- 2.2 Abide by and defend all laws including, but not limited to, the political campaign, lobbying, and conflict of interest laws enforced by the Fair Political Practices Commission, State laws, and the Lake Forest Municipal Code.

- 2.3 Safeguard ability to make independent, objective, fair and impartial judgements by scrupulously avoiding financial and social relationships and transactions that may compromise, or give the appearance of compromising, objectivity, independence, and honesty.
- 2.4 Carefully consider if exceeding or appearing to exceed authority of office for personal and/or financial gain. When in doubt, avoid actions that create, in the mind of a reasonable observer, the appearance of impropriety, ethical lapses, legal violations, or actions inconsistent with the Leadership Principles.
- 2.5 Deter rumors and misunderstandings by making factual information available, answering questions directly, telling the truth, and admitting a lack of knowledge if one exists.
- 2.6 Refrain from making unauthorized commitments or promises of any kind purporting to bind the City. Refrain from any gratuitous comments that may harm the City's position in litigation or potential litigation.
- 2.7 Refrain from using status as a public office holder to influence the outcome of a community meeting. Avoid changing the dynamic of a meeting by remaining a neutral observer, indicating when expressing personal opinions, and referring questions related to City policies to staff.
- 2.8 Attendance by a member of the City Council at a Parks & Recreation Commission, or Planning Commission, or other City meeting regulated by the Brown Act, is discouraged if a matter before either commission will be heard at a future City Council meeting. The same standard applies to commission and committee members.
- 2.9 Utilize City resources, including but not limited to, equipment, supplies, staff time, telephones, computers, and fax machines in a manner consistent with City regulations, the Fair Political Practices Commission, and State laws.