

Noelle Kischer-Lepper, MPPA

Professional Summary

- ◆ Motivated, responsible, honest, trustworthy, successful, personable, courteous municipal professional with track record of over twenty-five years of quality service to the public in various managerial and administrative capacities, with broad understanding of municipal operations and ability to manage projects and balance competing priorities
- ◆ Diplomatic, tactful, poised, competent, and experienced in working with numerous stakeholders, including elected officials, state and federal regulatory agency representatives, professionals, and taxpayers, with demonstrated ability to easily transcend cultural and socio-economic differences and diffuse tense situations
- ◆ Accustomed to properly handling sensitive, confidential and proprietary information
- ◆ Successful at managing multiple complex projects in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment with tight deadlines
- ◆ Able to comprehend and communicate regulations, laws, and ordinances
- ◆ Demonstrated history of producing quality plans, grant applications, written reports, recommendations, policies, analyses, memoranda, marketing copy, and ordinances
- ◆ Grant applications written or co-written resulted in approximately \$5 million in awarded funds
- ◆ Community engagement and public speaking including media interviews, community meetings, workshops and hearings, City Council meetings, and presentations to large and small audiences
- ◆ Flexible, nible, and versatile, able to maintain a sense of humor under pressure
- ◆ Strategic thinker with excellent problem-solving and team-building skills
- ◆ Adept at building beneficial, productive internal and external relationships and partnerships

Professional Experience

CITY OF WAUKEGAN, ILLINOIS

OCTOBER, 1990 TO PRESENT

- ◆ Director of Planning & Economic Development, Department of Planning & Development – July, 2017 to present
 - Direct the operations of city's Department of Planning & Development
 - Operate four-person department handling planning, zoning, economic development, community development, environmental, and other matters
 - Manage \$1.7 million departmental budget, approve accounts payable, award consultant contracts
 - Manage consultant engagement and community involvement effort to completely redraft City's comprehensive land use plan
 - Partner with other departments on development of capital improvement plan and parking study
 - Worked with developers and business owners to advance economic development projects while representing City and taxpayer interests and goals
 - Work closely with US Environmental Protection Agency, US Army Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Program, and others
 - Represent City in various meetings and events
 - Key member of economic development team, environmental team, waterfront working group, mayor's cabinet, and work cooperatively with other departments
 - Interim role as Senior Planner during mayoral transition, May, 2017 – July, 2017
- ◆ Director of Policy & Projects, Office of the Mayor – May, 2011 to May, 2017
 - Sounding board and advisor to mayor in mayor-council form of government
 - Instrumental policy advisor and developer, and key member of mayor's management team
 - Managed projects on behalf of the mayor, often coordinating involvement of multiple departments
 - Key member of economic development team, environmental team, waterfront working group, mayor's cabinet, and various group projects

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- Worked closely with senior and junior staff, consultants, corporation counsel, boards and commissions, community organizations and the general public
- Made reports and recommendations to mayor and City Council
- Assisted corporation counsel with ordinance drafting, research, communication
- Represented the mayor and City of Waukegan at meetings and events

- ◆ Legislative Liaison, Office of the Mayor – May, 2010 to May, 2011
 - Represented the Mayor and City of Waukegan at meetings and events
 - Coordinated relationships between City and external organizations and lobbyists
 - Served as clearinghouse for all grants-related information citywide
 - Assisted public and staff with problem-solving
 - Staff liaison to City Council and its various committees

- ◆ Senior Planner, Department of Planning & Zoning – September, 2000 to May, 2010
 - Lead staff person on team to develop master plan for downtown and lakefront, winning Metropolitan Planning Council's 2005 Burnham Award, and Congress for the New Urbanism's Award of Excellence
 - Planned and conducted over 30 public meetings to solicit input and feedback from community in development of master plan
 - Prepared comprehensive briefing materials and arranged complex schedule for planning efforts and advisory services panel
 - Worked with developers and business owners on economic development efforts
 - Coordinated staff teams in development of variety of ordinances
 - Member of environmental/brownfields team, worked with regulatory agencies
 - Made reports to mayor, City Council, commissions, colleagues
 - Liaison to Waukegan Renaissance Commission to implement city's master plan
 - Assisted public with zoning issues and application processes
 - Designed and delivered presentations to the public
 - Communicated technical concepts to public to facilitate understanding
 - Represented City of Waukegan at meetings and events
 - Oversaw office operations in seven-person office, trained staff, ensured proper recordkeeping including accounts payable and receivable and payroll, ensured excellent customer service by other personnel

- ◆ Special Events Director, Office of Special Events – March, 1992 to August, 1993
 - Managed all special events sponsored by City of Waukegan, including pre-event planning, marketing, soliciting sponsorship, hiring talent, recruiting volunteers
 - Negotiated contracts with performers, vendors and contractors
 - Managed accounts payable and receivable, personnel and payroll
 - Represented City of Waukegan on event committees for outside organizations
 - Emceed events and participated in promotional interviews for various media
 - Managed staff and volunteers, up to a dozen or more people per event
 - Pageant director 1992-1993, 1996-1999 for Miss, Junior Miss, and Little Miss Waukegan pageants, trained contestants and worked with county pageant coordinators
 - Held position concurrently with position in Community Development department

- ◆ Compliance Coordinator, Community Development Block Grant – October, 1990 to September, 2000
 - Managed federal grant programs on behalf of City of Waukegan with approximate \$1 million annual budget
 - Reviewed grant applications, made funding recommendations, developed and awarded contracts for subgrants
 - Monitored subgrantee performance and Davis Bacon Act compliance under contracts via site visits and document reviews
 - Developed consolidated grant application for nonprofits to apply for funding through four funding sources: cities of Waukegan and North Chicago, Lake County, and United Way of Lake

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County, streamlining the application process and making it significantly easier, efficient, and more cost-effective for applicants

- Created and managed the Stakeholder Participation Panel to involve members of the community in reviewing grant applications, conducting interviews, and awarding funding to the most qualified applicants
- Created innovative programs to receive federal funding, including Waukegan's Mobile Police Substation and Waukegan Fire Safety House
- Worked closely with City and US Department of Housing and Urban Development staff, other government and non-profit agency representatives, and the general public
- Promoted from budgeting assistant to community development assistant to compliance coordinator during tenure in department

ENTREPRENEURIAL ENDEAVORS

1993 – 2010

- ◆ Midwest Mediation 1996-1998
 - With a partner, operated mediation practice specializing in divorce situations and development of parenting plans that would benefit the children over a long period
- ◆ Grants Consulting 1993-1998
 - As a sole proprietorship, offered grants consulting services including grant research, grantwriting, training, and review of applications prior to submittal, with a specialization in public safety grants
- ◆ VibrantVoice 1993-2010
 - Provided voiceover work for business and government clients including radio commercials and corporate recordings and voicemail systems

Education

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY – Evanston, Illinois

Master of Arts, Public Policy and Administration (MPPA)

BARAT COLLEGE – Lake Forest, Illinois

Bachelor of Arts, Management & Business, Marketing concentration, English & Psychology emphasis

Training & Certifications

- Illinois Open Meetings Act
- Illinois Freedom of Information Act
- Grant writing (several)
- Federal grants management
- Standard training including customer service, sexual harassment, workplace safety
- Brownfields and environmental remediation
- ADA compliance
- Mediation certificate (40-hour)
- Management certificate

Boards & Associations

CURRENT

- Lake County Workforce Development Board (LCWDB) – board member, 2004 – present
- LCWDB Employer Connections Committee – committee member, 2004 – present

PREVIOUS

- Waukegan Police Pension Board, trustee, 1998-2010, vice president 2005-2010
- Waukegan Community Council, committee member, 2003-2009
- Lake County Fighting Back Coalition, board member, 1997-2000, chairperson 1998-2000
- Waukegan Community Partnership, conflict resolution trainer, 1996-2000
- Lake County Coalition for the Homeless, committee member, 1997-2000
- Waukegan Municipal Employees Credit Union, board member, 1994-1997
- Lake County Community Action Project, board member, 1993-1996
- Management and board of director roles in various youth sports organizations, scouting, and school (elementary through high school) organizations
- Various others