

ONLINE PETITION

on behalf of Debbie Hillman and 57 other co-signers

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING for Evanston-Northwestern University GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND

MoveOn Petition by Debbie Hillman

https://petitions.moveon.org/sign/participatory-budgeting?source=c.em.mt&r_by=9085411

June 20, 2017 - Sept. 15, 2017

To be delivered by MoveOn to

Steve Hagerty, Mayor - City of Evanston, IL

Morton Schapiro, President - Northwestern University

PETITION

Halfway through 2017, the result of the 2016 U.S. presidential election continues to highlight opportunities for Americans to focus and invigorate our commitment to implementing our American ideals. At the same time, public policy stalemates abound at every level. In the spirit of a re-activated civic interest, this is a recommendation to engage Evanston and Northwestern University together by using a participatory budgeting process to allocate the next installment of the Good Neighbor Fund — \$1,000,000 for 2017-18.

FIRST STEP: A sit-down neighborly meeting to explore this proposal.

BACKGROUND

A. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

We advocate a full-fledged PB process similar to the one designed and implemented in Chicago's 49th ward by Ald. Joe Moore, ward residents, and the Participatory Budgeting Project over the last 9 years.

We know of no other modern method that (a) so easily implements our American ideals of popular sovereignty, (b) so effectively facilitates practical, informed decision-making, and (c) so quickly cuts through civic stalemates — all at once. This latter is especially important at this moment in U.S. history as impasses are impeding decisions at every level even as resources are more desperately needed, e.g.,

- Federal: health care, gun violence
- State of Illinois: no budget in two years — and counting
- Evanston: divided electorate (mayoral election, equity issues vis-a-vis police department, library, housing)

At the same time, PB provides a profound personal experience of direct democracy in a short time, often to a large number of people all at once. This is because PB is grassroots democracy of the most practical variety — real people coming together to make real decisions about real resources and real issues in real time with real results. The PB process is a proven, flexible method being adopted by local jurisdictions all over the U.S., after years of success in other countries.

- B. RESOURCES** and synergies available to an Evanston-Northwestern PB project are abundant:
- Ald. Joe Moore (Chicago, 49th ward) is a Board member of the Participatory Budgeting Project
 - The Chicago-based PBP staffperson, Maria Hadden, is a senior coordinator of many types of PB projects
 - Great Cities Institute (University of Illinois-Chicago) is a formal partner with PBP
 - The 2016 documentary film on PB, *Count Me In*, was made by Chicago filmmaker Ines Sommer, who is well known to Evanston and NU
 - Additional sweat equity by Evanston PB advocates

Additionally, Evanston has tried a limited version of PB, thanks to City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz's long-standing interest in public involvement. Our previous PB experience will be helpful in designing the full-fledged, in-depth process that has been such a game-changer in so many other locales.

An especially synergistic resource for a 2017-18 Evanston-NU PB project is this year's choice of *One Book, One Northwestern: Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*, by Danielle Allen. PB not only organically defends equality (and equity) but it actually demonstrates the manifestation of equality.

C. GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND

The Good Neighbor Fund itself seems an ideal centerpiece for a first-time Evanston experience of a complete PB process. Created in 2015 by an agreement between the City of Evanston and Northwestern University, the Fund stands as a breakthrough moment in the history of Evanston town-gown relations. The GNF is an annual \$1,000,000 donation to the City of Evanston by Northwestern, allocated each year for "capital projects supporting city infrastructure and facilities, specific support for existing city services, and special projects." During the first two years of the GNF (2015, 2016), allocations were made based on joint deliberation by Evanston's mayor and NU's president — but with no public discussion and little opportunity for direct public input.

D. IMPACTS-UPON-IMPACTS OF A PB PROCESS

The current agreement runs for three more years with the next GNF installment to be made after July 1, 2017. In response to Americans' re-awakened interest in collective decision-making, this third year is an opportunity for even greater impact. Positive, long-lasting impacts of using a PB process to allocate the 2017 Good Neighbor Fund are potentially many, with ramifications far beyond the initial GNF investment:

1. Inclusion: open to everyone in Evanston and at Northwestern
2. Value-added budgeting — more bang for the buck. PB research has shown that the community-at-large is much more creative with limited resources than a single decision-maker or a small group of traditional stakeholders. (Ald. Moore has been especially eloquent on this surprising aspect of PB.)
3. Community education: fun and painless action-learning for all participants, including residents, officials, university, media
4. A living process: rejuvenation of institutions, traditions, people, community
5. Practical, effective communications, including all kinds of checks-and-balances, are built into the decision-making process, minimizing any later need for damage control and maximizing effectiveness of the Good Neighbor Fund.

6. Stewardship: more people caring about implementation, maintenance, tracking, etc., of the GNF investments

7. Satisfying human experience: Compared to ten minutes in a voting booth every two or four years (voting for representatives who may or may not actually represent one's views on every issue), a single PB process affords numerous opportunities for direct, personal, and extended input. PB is an adult life experience like no other — filled with imagining, speaking, listening, research, writing, arguing, synthesizing. Adults-in-training (children, youth, young adults) can also learn PB and have the same satisfying experience.

8. Foundation for the future: a more nuanced understanding of democracy and government that can create better budgeting at the county, state, regional, and federal levels.

E. RELEVANT LINKS

BLOG by Debbie Hillman, www.FoodFarmsDemocracy.net

Democracy in Action: Participatory Budgeting Petition (July 1, 2017)

<http://foodfarmsdemocracy.net/democracy-action-participatory-budgeting-petition-evanston-il/>

Good Neighbor Fund

— official NU webpage & description of fund

<http://www.northwestern.edu/communityrelations/about/our-partnerships/good-neighbor-fund.html>

— 2015 allocation (news article)

<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2015/10/good-neighbor-fund>

— 2016 allocation (news article)

<https://news.northwestern.edu/stories/2016/10/second-million-dollar-donation-to-evanston/>

Evanston Now op-ed June 21, 2017 (with comments)

<http://evanstonnow.com/story/government/debbie-hillman/2017-06-21/77848/participatory-budgeting-for-nu-good-neighbor-fund>

Chicago Tribune/Pioneer Press article by Brian Cox (July 11, 2017)

“Evanston activist: Let the people decide how \$1M from Northwestern is spent”

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/evanston/news/ct-evr-evanston-good-neighbor-fund-tl-0713-20170711-story.html>

Evanston Roundtable - Letter to the Editor, by Debbie Hillman (July 13, 2017)

F. SIGNATURES + COMMENTS

https://petitions.moveon.org/sign/participatory-budgeting?source=c.em.mt&r_by=9085411

58. **Marion Flynn** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Aug 30, 2017.

57. **William Hutchison** from Skokie, IL signed this petition on Aug 30, 2017.

Former home owner of Evanston, 1993-2014.

56. **Cristina Traina** from Skokie, IL signed this petition on Aug 30, 2017.

As a 25-year employee of Northwestern, and 22-year resident of Evanston, I applaud the Good Neighbor Fund as a wonderful first step. Now, let's create a more participatory process for spending it.

55. **N. Hiltwein** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jul 28, 2017.

54. **Camille Walker** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jul 9, 2017.

53. **Sue Holbert** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 29, 2017.

52. **Peter Nicholson** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 27, 2017.

51. **Courtney reed tanner** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 26, 2017.

Let's make democracy happen!

50. **Caryn Weiner** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 26, 2017.

49. **Jim Parks** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 26, 2017.

48. **Nina Montenegro** from Portland, OR signed this petition on Jun 26, 2017.

47. **Tom Jackson** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 25, 2017.

46. **Andra Nyman** from Santa Fe, NM signed this petition on Jun 25, 2017.

45. **Janet McDonnell** from Arlington Heights, IL signed this petition on Jun 25, 2017.

44. **Karl Androes** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 24, 2017.

43. **Ellen Galland** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 23, 2017.

42. **Bert Menco** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 23, 2017.

41. **Elizabeth Kramer** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 23, 2017.

40. **Trisha Connolly** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 23, 2017.

39. **Jackie Mack** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 23, 2017.

38. **Chuck Wasserburg** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

37. **Judith Gamran** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

36. **Corinne Peterson** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

35. **Julie Winsberg** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

34. **Mike Kelly** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

The money belongs to the citizenry- not the bureaucracy.

33. **Laura Montenegro** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

What an incredible opportunity to experience first-hand the beauties of Democracy! I am so excited about the Participatory Budgeting Project-- Not only will we experience Democracy In action but we will build community and deepen our relationships to one another. Let's do it!!!

32. **Emmanuel John Batayola** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

31. **Carole Mark** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

30. **Shuling yong** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

29. **Neal O Sales-Griffin** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

Love the concept of PB, but want to understand the nuance and substance around when it works well and when it doesn't. I'd like to learn more about Evanston's use of funds here and discuss how it's done now, and hear from more of the stakeholders regarding the pros and cons. What's broken about the way it currently works?

28. **Tomer Yogev** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

27. **Pete Aiello** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

26. **Rose adamczyk** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

25. **Marcy Capron Vermillion** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

Good idea!!!

24. **Kendra chaplin** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

23. **Michael McGee** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

22. **Saya Hillman** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

21. **Anna C. Roosevelt** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 22, 2017.

Strong support for the petition.

20. **John Mulrow** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

19. **Hylene & Richard Dublin** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

18. **Nancy Sreenan** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

17. **ANN COVODE** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

16. **Dickelle fonda** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

15. **Pearl Rich** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

All organizations or individuals should have a reasonable opportunity to participate in the expanding of the Good Neighbor Fund

14. **rosalie strom** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

13. **Judy Duhl** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

12. **marcia and jack** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

11. **Marjorie Goldman** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

10. **Frank Koppelman** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

9. **S. Carlson** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 21, 2017.

8. **Steven Sidell** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

A wonderful idea to benefit our community. Something positive in the current negative environment we find ourselves living in.

7. **Pearl Hirshfeld** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

6. **Lesley Williams** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

Should look at Participatory Action Research as well: <http://participatesdgs.org/methods/>

5. **Ginny Holbert** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

4. **Maria Hadden** from Chicago, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

3. **Richard DelVisco** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

I think that it's a good idea to get more people involved with funding!

2. **beth steffen** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

1. **Debbie Hillman** from Evanston, IL signed this petition on Jun 20, 2017.

OFFICIAL LETTER SUBMITTING PETITION

October 2, 2017

To:

Mayor Steve Hagerty, City of Evanston
President Morton Schapiro, Northwestern University
City Council, City of Evanston
City Clerk, City of Evanston

Subject: Petition to use PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING for the GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND

With this letter, I am officially submitting a petition to create a public process by which the 2017-18 Good Neighbor Fund is allocated. The petition specifies a “participatory budgeting” process as promoted by the national organization, Participatory Budgeting Project. The petition itself describes

- the numerous positive outcomes of such a process
- the local (Chicago-area) resources that the City of Evanston can tap into.

You can read the petition and see the signatures in the attached document or at the petition link:

[PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING for Evanston-Northwestern University GOOD NEIGHBOR FUND](#)

The petition is signed by 44 Evanston residents and 14 others, many of whom have Evanston connections (e.g., born in Evanston, graduated ETHS, etc.). Some of the petitioners have Northwestern University connections.

The first step, as designated in the petition, would be a "sit-down neighborly meeting" to discuss the proposal. Such a meeting would include:

1. Representatives of 5 core entities
 - The Mayor’s office, City of Evanston
 - The President’s office, Northwestern University
 - City Council, City of Evanston
 - Evanston advocates of participatory budgeting
 - Participatory Budgeting Project
2. Other parties (if available and interested)
 - City Clerk
 - any other persons suggested by the 5 core entities

I look forward to working with you and other Evanstonians to implement real equity with real resources in real time, so that we can all experience real democracy in action — perhaps for the first time in many of our lives.

Thanks to all the Evanston residents (and non-residents) who signed the petition as an indication of their concern about real democracy and implementing the ideals of the U.S. and the laws of biological communities.

— Debbie

Debbie Hillman
Evanston, Illinois

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www.FoodFarmsDemocracy.net

RESPONSE FROM MAYOR (October 9, 2017)

From: Steve Hagerty <shagerty@cityofevanston.org>

Subject: Re: PETITION: Good Neighbor Fund (NU-Evanston) - Participatory Budgeting

Date: October 9, 2017 at 9:10:06 PM CDT

To: Debbie Hillman <dlhillman@sbcglobal.net>

Hi Debbie,

Thanks for your email and the work you are doing around Evanston. In regard to the Good Neighbor Fund, I have decided to allocate this money based on my (hopefully good) judgment about the needs in Evanston, particularly in light of our overall City budget. This is similar to the approach Former Mayor Tisdahl followed in the past and is consistent with the agreement Northwestern has with the City (i.e., that it's a decision to be made by the Mayor).

Certainly, if you or others have specific thoughts on how the NU money should be allocated next year, you can always email me your suggestions. Additionally, on Saturday, October 28th at 9 am at the Civic Center the City Council will have a special budget meeting seeking citizen's input into the 2018 budget. I would welcome your feedback and that of others at this meeting. Lastly, each year the Grants Committee at the Evanston Community Foundation allocates hundreds of thousands of dollars using a grant application and community review process. I know they select community members to be on that Committee, if that's an interest of your's or others, I recommend that you reach out to ECF directly.

Again, I appreciate all that you are doing to better Evanston and increase citizen engagement.

Regards,
Steve

Stephen H. Hagerty
Mayor, City of Evanston

THANK YOU NOTE TO MAYOR (October 10, 2017)

From: Debbie Hillman <dlhillman@sbcglobal.net>

Subject: Re: PETITION: Good Neighbor Fund (NU-Evanston) - Participatory Budgeting

Date: October 10, 2017 at 2:38:19 PM CDT

To: Steve Hagerty <shagerty@cityofevanston.org>

Cc: Maria Hadden <maria@participatorybudgeting.org>,

To: Steve Hagerty, Mayor of Evanston

cc: Maria Hadden, Participatory Budgeting Project — Midwest
4 petition signers who want to help take this the next step

Hi, Steve —

Thanks for your response to the petition to use Participatory Budgeting for allocating the Good Neighbor Fund. I am naturally disappointed in your decision not to use a PB process for this year's Good Neighbor Fund. I knew that the timing would be tricky -- in terms of NU's fiscal year, your new position in Evanston as an agent and keeper of public process, not to mention the financial and time management problems in the City of Evanston (and every other American municipality).

I think that we — the signers of this petition — can take satisfaction from the fact that awareness has now increased in Evanston, both about the PB process itself and about the resources that already exist right here in the Chicago area. Evanston would not have to re-invent the wheel! In response to the petition, two current City Council members expressed support for the idea of using PB in Evanston. Journalists are also starting to get interested. I have also met with our new City Clerk (Devon Reid) as he has some excellent ideas about using PB in Evanston.

Alternative “participatory” budgeting outlets for Evanstonians?

Thanks also for your suggestions about other ways that people can “participate” in Evanston’s current and future budget processes. As a 66-year old, lifelong activist, and 40-year resident of Evanston, I can assure you that I have tried all of those things and many, many more. Like many other Americans who have been disappointed in the manifestation of America’s ideals, I have done my homework and have come to the following realizations:

1. Sunset clause. The U.S. Constitution needs to be amended to include a periodic sunset clause, e.g., 5 years, as in the Iroquois League’s Great Law of Peace (the model for the U.S. Constitution). The purpose of such a clause would be twofold:

- Create a living document and an American culture more resilient to unforeseen circumstances, including changes in technology, climate, biodiversity, and even consciousness
- Facilitate more regular and more active civic engagement by all Americans, especially those who were systematically excluded from the original writing and ratification -- First Americans (indigenous peoples), women, African-Americans, and unpropertied men.

2. Monetary & banking reform. The U.S. government needs to (a) nationalize the Federal Reserve system, (b) outlaw fractional reserve lending, and (c) create (and define) U.S. money as the only legal money in the U.S.

3. Real democracy in all jurisdictions. Government processes in every U.S. jurisdiction — federal, state, county, municipal, school board, library districts, soil & water districts, etc. — need to be reviewed and re-codified based on real democracy — AKA participatory democracy, direct democracy, 100% inclusion. (State Sen. Daniel Biss’s recent “Rewriting the Rules” announcement is on the right track.)

4. Participatory budgeting is the easy first step for local learning, building grassroots consensus for national policies, and effective, efficient government at the local level, far into the future. Compared to the 24/7 cycle of damage control that our current representative “democracy” has created — especially in a place like Evanston where so many people want to be involved — PB is no-brainer.

Good Neighbor Fund in 2018-19?

If, after another year as mayor, you consider using PB for the 2018-19 allocation of the Good Neighbor Fund (or some other fund under jurisdiction of the Mayor’s office), I would be happy to help organize an exploratory conversation for that purpose.

Thanks again for your note. I will be forwarding your response to
— the petition signers
— other people who have been following this petition

On this email, I am copying the five people who had expressed interest in moving PB forward in Evanston (vis-a-vis the 2017-18 Good Neighbor Fund). Again, thanks to Maria, [removed for privacy purposes] for your support — maybe next year, or maybe another fund. Stay tuned....

— Debbie