

President's Message

Retreat to go forward

I am pleased to report to the membership that on Saturday, Oct. 29, the Board of Directors will meet in a retreat setting to do some strategic planning for the LWVGP. The location isn't confirmed yet but will be announced soon.

Some of the questions and issues that are likely to be addressed are:

1. In our various communications (newsletter, Facebook, website, social media), what is the best balance between serving the needs of members and providing information that is useful to the voting public/potential members?
2. How can we be more effective in promoting our established positions?
3. What can we do to increase membership and, correspondingly, our ability to influence local public policy?
4. Given the 2023 opportunity for the City of Peoria to trigger an appraisal of the public water system and our longstanding position supporting an appraisal, how aggressive do we want to be in advocating our position?
5. What can we do to clarify and strengthen our commitment to be diligently non-partisan in all of our activities?

While I expect that the retreat will be open to all members, I encourage members to suggest other topics for discussion.

Your Board of Directors understands that the past few years have been difficult for all volunteer organizations and especially challenging for those with an interest in good government. The techniques and tactics that worked in the past are less effective in a world where so many meetings are via zoom and social media is increasingly relevant. The good news is that your Board of Directors is comprised of bright people with the insight needed to adapt to the changing times.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Oct. 10: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom
5:30-7 p.m. Wed., Oct. 19: Discussion on the Pretrial Fairness Act, Drinks & Dialogue

Your help is needed

Communicating with you, our Members, and the community, is one of LWVGP's most important functions!

We are looking for a volunteer to assist with our email communications using MailChimp. We can provide training, so no experience is required!

Low time commitment, high impact!

Please email kathleen.kelly613@gmail.com to learn more.

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: Sept. 21

On Sept. 21, Joyce Williams of the LaGrange LWV and Trish Crowley of the Champaign LWV presented a power point presentation on the history of the electoral college and how it was almost manipulated in this last election.

They presented data to support abolishing the electoral college, an LWVUS position since 1970. After the 1968 election, there was support by both parties, but House Republicans killed it. They asked LWVGP to join the national committee which meets on the third Friday of each month via Zoom to discuss this issue. Illinois is the only state chapter to make this presentation amongst local chapters.

Ryan Hidden of Change Peoria and Sarah Staudt of the Appleseed Center for Fair Courts will speak on the new Pretrial Fairness Act at the Oct. 19 D&D.

FYI holidays: We will not have D&D in November or December.

———— Cathy Molchin, D&D Chair

LWVIL issues briefing

The state league is planning topics for an upcoming Issues Briefing to be held in February 2023. This is always an interesting program and the Planning Committee would like input from local leagues on issues you are interested in hearing about. The event will be virtual, on a Saturday and is educational and informative.

Send topics/issues you are most concerned about to Connie Romanus, at: cromanus1249@yahoo.com. She will forward them on to the Committee.

MEMBERSHIP

What an exciting and busy time of year for the League. By the time you read this the candidate forums will be well underway and we'll be moving toward helping to 'get out the vote.'

I had the pleasure of registering new citizens at the Naturalization Ceremony in September. What an experience for the new citizens – and also for me to hear many of our leaders talk about what citizenship means to them. With each new registrant we reminded them that election day is approaching and they should take this opportunity to get involved. What we didn't do was pass out League information, but this might be a group to approach about becoming one of us. Congratulations to all who helped make this ceremony happen.

All non-renewing members have received a reminder email. Next comes the phone calls. So – if you're reading this and you don't want that annoying phone call, go online now and renew! It's easy for you and efficient for the Membership Committee.

As 2022 winds down I am reminded that if you want a letter for tax purposes that you have joined the League, please contact me and I'll see that you get such a letter.

Welcome to our new members! Also, a special thank you to those who have joined at a higher level, thus, giving the League a financial base to provide service to our communities. It's still a bargain to join this illustrious group! \$62 made to League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria, P. O. Box 9786, Peoria 61612-9786. USPS loves us to use their services!

Happy Fall!

—— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

Naturalized Citizens

It was chilly — but a lovely moment for democracy — when Judge James Shadid swore in 95 new citizens from 31 countries at the Peoria Riverfront Museum.

LWVGP Voter Services volunteers registered 39 of the newbies, and talked to even more.

Thank you to everyone who helped.



VOTER SERVICES

I hope you have had the opportunity to attend one of our candidate forums already this year. We held one for the Peoria County Board Districts 13 and 14 on Sept. 20 and one for Peoria County Board Districts 8, 9, and 10 on Sept. 24. Both are available for watching on the League's YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHjdurif6_j7aqNLLlFXzKQ. If you are not sure what County Board District you live in, please go to County/City Districts (arcgis.com) to find your district.

Thanks to the McLean County League of Women Voters, we have a recording of a forum for the 91st Illinois House race between Sharon Chung (D) and Scott Preston (R). This District picks up parts of Tazewell and Peoria Counties and can be seen at 0831021 House Map v2 - Google My Maps.

There are more forums scheduled. On Oct. 3 at 6 p.m. there will be a forum for the 17th Congressional District featuring Esther Joy King (R) and Eric Sorensen (D). This is an open seat and is expected to be a competitive race. You can attend the event in person at the Hayden Clark Alumni Center on the Bradley Campus (Parking available in the Main Street Deck) or listen on WCBU or watch as it is streamed on WCBU's Facebook page.

Additionally, there will be a forum for the 92nd Illinois House (Jehan Gordon Booth (D) v Benjamin Watt (R)) on Oct. 5 at 6 p.m. at the North Branch of the Peoria Public Library. And finally, on Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. at Hult Health Education Center there will be a forum for the Peoria County Board District 2 race.

Both of these forums will also be streamed on the League's You Tube channel (see link above) and you can check if you are in either the 92nd Illinois House District or the Peoria County Board 2nd District using the links provided above.

We had hoped to provide the voters in the 46th Illinois Senate District with a forum featuring David Koehler (D) and Desi Anderson (R). Unfortunately Ms. Anderson did not respond to our requests to participate.

Early voting started Sept. 29 and you can find the early voting locations by checking your county election authority's website. You can always vote at the Peoria County Election Commission office or the Tazewell or Woodford County Courthouse depending on which County you live in. There is still time to request a Vote By Mail ballot and you can contact the appropriate election authority to request one if that is how you prefer to vote.

Many thanks to all the Voter Service Committee members who organized these forums and to the many League members who moderated, timed, welcomed or collected questions from the audience at the forums. Democracy in action!

———— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

Climate Change never takes a breather and neither can citizens who want to address it. Several meetings have been scheduled this month which could help you become more informed and lend your voice to those seeking solutions.

And don't miss a heads up on another looming challenge to our environment.

First, the City of Peoria and the Peoria Park District are considering creation of a restored forest at the sites of the former Harrison and McKinley schools on Peoria's South Side. Trees can be an important tool in addressing climate change, and the "greening" of spaces can also help address gun violence. PPD will discuss the proposal during an Oct. 10 planning session; the Peoria Urban Forestry Advisory Board meets at noon Oct. 11, at the city's Public Works building located at 3505 N. Dries Lane to review the Park District's information. Both meetings are public.

Second, the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) was touted to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Where do things stand a year later and what's still to come? Heart of Illinois Sierra Club hosts Kiersten Sheets of Trajectory Energy Partners at 6:30 p.m. Wed., Oct. 19, at Forest Park Nature Center.

Finally — heads up — LWVGP members should be aware of the possible construction of pipelines to carry compressed liquid carbon dioxide across Illinois.

The first of these proposed pipelines would transport high-pressure liquified CO₂ from industrial facilities in the western United States through an underground pipeline crossing South Dakota, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, and 240 miles of Illinois, before injecting it underground in Christian County, Illinois. Navigator Heartland Greenway, a subsidiary of a Texas-based oil pipeline development company, petitioned the Illinois Commerce Commission to construct and operate the Illinois portions. Local farmers and community groups have been appearing at county board meetings and township meetings to oppose the pipeline. Hearings will be held before the ICC in coming months.

In addition, Wolf Carbon Solutions, a different entity, has announced plans to construct a pipeline from Cedar Rapids, Iowa to Decatur. Up to 12 million tons of high-pressure liquified carbon dioxide per year could be piped through Peoria and Tazewell counties under this proposal, before the liquified CO₂ ends up in a central Illinois sequestration site, where it would likely be pumped underground for storage. This pipeline is too newly-announced to have generated much interest locally at this point, although opposition can be anticipated.

The nonpartisan Congressional Research Service notes high concentrations of CO₂ can be harmful to human health, particularly because the gas is colorless and odorless, making it hard to detect. A 2020 CO₂ pipeline rupture in Satartia, Miss. led to the hospitalization of 45 people and an evacuation of that community.

———— John T. Brady, Climate Change Committee Chair

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: August 23

An ordinance regarding operation of recreational cannabis business was presented to the council. Changes relate to social equity applicants, those who have conviction for cannabis possession and are eligible for expungement. These individuals may apply for dispensary license and are not restricted to 1,500 feet of another cannabis store. These businesses are not eligible for sale or transfer, which has been issue in the state. Annual renewal of license is required as with non-social equity dispensaries. Currently, there is one social equity license pending in Peoria.

Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka explained changes are necessary to define eligibility as social equity applicant, prevent sale or lease to non-social equity applicant and clarify 1500-foot rule. Councilor Andre Allen reminded council of need to ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion principles are observed, as well as ensuring social equity applicants are in compliance with operating business within statute guidelines.

Councilors expressed concerns regarding the number of dispensaries in the area and how to plan ahead for new dispensaries. The original lottery of social equity dispensaries in Illinois was 185 and 177 have been issued.

The Council discussed feasibility of red light camera use to control drivers running traffic lights. In 2006, eight counties in Illinois were approved for this. They council will request state legislators sponsor amendment to automated traffic law enforcement system. Speed-lite cameras were also discussed, but require population of one million or more; they are used by state police and on tollways.

For more information, check www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: September 13

Councilors deferred a vote on cannabis licenses and miscellaneous business regulations for social equity owners. (Proposed changes available on line by opening link in Agenda for this item, 22-293).

On a 10-1 vote, they allocated up to \$100,000 from the general fund for the Federal Rail Administration Corridor Identification and Development program; remaining funds to come from Tri-County Planning Commission and North Central IL council of governments. Councilor John Kelly voted nay.

Community Development Director Joe Dulin explained application process and guidelines for 2022 Utility Assistance Program. Program will cover up to \$150/per month (November – February) for qualified applicants, those below 80% median income.

The 2021 financial audit by CliftonLarsonAllen LLP was deemed clean/unmodified and included federal grant funds and pensions. Councilor Denis Cyr addressed Finance Director Kyle Cratty regarding issue of taking on new debt vs, living within city's means. City issued \$12 million in new debt in 2021. Cyr noted council will be going into budget sessions in near future.

The city Council meets at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Meetings are available on cable access channel 22, livestream on city website or in person at City Hall. Our city council members work hard to represent citizens and this is a good way to get involved in your community and know what is happening. See <https://peoriail.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>.

————— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: September 8

The Peoria County Board held its regular meeting Sept. 8 with all present.

On a 13-5 vote, board members approved a budget amendment to permit a \$50,000 contribution towards the proposed Passenger Rail Corridor Identification and Development Program application process that could within a decade bring passenger rail service back to Peoria.

Proclamations were read recognizing the Veteran's Assistance Commission team and September as National Emergency Preparedness Month.

The Consent Agenda passed unanimously. Among items approved:

- o Peoria County Sheriff's annual salary of \$151,008.
- o "As-needed" media buying and advertising services from qualified vendors.
- o Animal control services for Princeville through 2024.
- o Guard rail repair and installation throughout the county.
- o Single Bidder rule for the Annual Tax Sale.

The regular agenda consisted of two items other than the passenger rail application contribution, and included:

- o Approval of a zoning request in Chillicothe Township.
- o A proclamation extending the Declaration of Emergency due to COVID-19.

This proclamation is required every 30 days to ensure that the county is reimbursed for expenses incurred due to the pandemic from state and federal funds. Since its inception in March 2020 the proclamation has made more than \$35 million dollars available to the county.

You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

————— Jim Runyon, Observer

A special note about the Peoria County Auditor position

Peoria County voters will see this question on Nov. 8:

“Shall Peoria County eliminate the office of the internal County Auditor, effective December 1, 2024, because Peoria County has an external auditor as required by state law. This would be a cost savings of approximately \$150,000 annually.”

LWVGP has a long-standing position calling for non-policy county officials to be appointed rather than elected. This includes the auditor, coroner, and recorder of deeds. The Peoria County Clerk’s office absorbed the Recorder of Deeds office a few years ago, and the position was eliminated.

In 2017-2018, LWVGP undertook a study committee to again review reducing county elected officials with non-policy positions. The study committee recommended eliminating the position of County Auditor consistent with its previous position. A 2018 referendum failed by 19 votes, and the County Auditor position remained in place.

LWVGP stands by its historical position and supports the elimination of the Peoria County Auditor position on the Nov. 8 ballot. ——— Jim Runyon

ELECTION COMMISSION: September 13

After a few public comments, Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners Executive Director Elizabeth Gannon reported on progress toward the November general election at the regular board meeting.

New voting booths will be similar to the ones used in the June primary, which were borrowed due to supply chain issues. About 5,000 Vote By Mail requests have already been processed, and the office still has many more to process. Anyone who has permanent Vote By Mail can vote provisionally on election day until no other ballot arrives or the voter surrenders the Vote By Mail ballot.

Sample ballots are ready, and overseas and military voters were to have ballots mailed Sept. 16. Early voting began on Sept. 29. Judges are already being trained. Some citizens had asked for live feeds from the drop boxes. North Branch Library will not consider them because of privacy issues; Peoria Civic Center would need a live feed to fit into their security system. The bigger question is who would monitor them?

The Board approved moving Peoria precinct 06 from Proctor Center across the street to Sovereign Grace Missionary Baptist Church in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

P.O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2021-2022**

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