



Volume 76 Issue 1

January 2023

President's Message

Help us focus in '23

On October 29, your Board of Directors held a retreat to make our organization more effective. Some of the most important results were:

We will focus on local issues. National and State issues are reserved for LWVUS and LWVIL, respectively. Local issues tend to be less partisan — and we are committed to the reality and perception of non-partisanship.

We will be a trusted source of information on public policy issues. Local news coverage has declined. Social media misinformation has grown. The need for accurate and complete news has never been greater.

We will make our information available to members and non-members alike, with only a few necessary exceptions. Important news should be shared.

We will partner with media channels to spread that information.

We will focus membership recruitment on logical age demographics. While we welcome anyone interested in public policy, history makes it clear members with time and energy are most engaged and active. (We'd love more young parents, but understand their practical restrictions.)

We will develop clear job descriptions for standing committees, study committees and task forces. Each has a different purposes. "Mission creep" is too easy.

We want to complete a skills survey of our members to be better able to match individual abilities with organizational needs.

We want to host a major event in 2023 to raise our profile. COVID concerns meant we have not hosted an annual dinner since 2019. We hope those concerns have been alleviated enough for us to gather again in large numbers.

Please join us at the Jan. 14 planning program to turn 2022 goals into 2023 accomplishments.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Jan. 9: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom.

10:30 a.m. Sat., Jan. 14: Annual Program Planning, Peoria Public Library North Branch.

8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Sat., Feb. 18: LWVIL Issues briefing via Zoom.

FOMO? THINK LOGO

Dwindling local media coverage means many of us feel disconnected from our own community. If you want to help bridge the gaps, consider joining our Local Government Observers. For decades, LWVGP has had a valuable presence at meetings from the Peoria City Council to the Peoria County Board and beyond. In recent years, we have worked to spread that information via our website and The Community Word monthly newspaper. We'd love to expand. The need is deep — and it's a great way to get to know what's going on in town. The Illinois League will hold a virtual training session March 18.

If you're interested, contact Terry Bibo Knight at terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com

VOTER SERVICES

Candidate forums are on their way!

Petitions have been filed and another election season has begun. There won't be a primary, at least in the City of Peoria or Pekin, in 2023. So mark your calendars: Election day is April 4. Thus far, your League has dates, times, and locations for at least two candidate forums.

From 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Tues., March 7, LWVGP, the Peoria Public Library, and the Peoria NAACP will co-host a forum featuring the ten candidates running for the five at-large City of Peoria Council positions at the downtown library. This forum will be somewhat different because of the number of candidates running.

Each candidate will have the opportunity to make brief opening statements, and each will respond to two questions before the entire audience. After that, the candidates will move from table to table, meeting with audience members to make a further statement or respond to questions. It is anticipated that each candidate will get to each table, thus being face to face with everyone who attends.

From 6 to 7:30 p.m. Thurs., March 9, LWVGP joins the Pekin Public Library and the Pekin Area Chamber of Commerce in hosting a forum for Pekin's mayoral and city council candidates at the library.

Both forums will be live-streamed on the League's YouTube channel and available to watch any time prior to the April 4th election.

Other candidate forums that the League is considering include the Peoria Public Schools Southern District, the Peoria Park District Central District, the Illinois Central College Board of Trustees just to name a few. At press time, we don't have dates, times or locations for any of these potential forums. Stay tuned!

——— Roberta Parks & Eileen Steed, Voter Services Committee Co-Chairs

HOLIDAY GREETINGS from the Climate Change Committee!

Happy New Year!

We hope that you, and all of those important to you, will be well, safe, and climate conscious during 2023.

At the start of a new year, many of us make New Year's resolutions. If you're among these good-intentioned folks, here are three possibilities to add to your list of ways to make life better in 2023.

1. Take stock of your own "carbon footprint" and evaluate what you might do to help reduce the negative impact of your actions on the environment. Think big — like an electric vehicle or a heat pump to warm and cool your home. And think small — like eating less meat and considering the environmental impact of everyday purchases for your home.

Remember that every item that you purchase consumes raw materials in its creation, uses energy in its manufacture, and likely requires fossil fuels to transport it — perhaps from a far-away continent.

All of this impacts our environment.

2. Become politically active in the battle to protect our environment. Many decisions that impact climate change are made at the local level. Is your school district pursuing the purchase of electric school buses that reduce harmful emissions and can reduce operating costs? Is your local municipal government insulating its buildings and reducing energy consumption? Is your county board adopting regulations that will support, or oppose, alternative sources of energy? These are important questions.

Your input can have an impact on the decisions being made that affect the health of our planet. Resolve to do one thing each week — a phone call, an email, a letter — so local officials know you support action to protect our environment.

3. Join us! Become a member of the LWVGP Climate Action Committee. Individual action is important, but individuals banding together can have an even greater impact. Our committee continues to address these issues, but we would welcome more hands, minds, and hearts.

If you're interested in lending your talents and time to this effort, please email us at LWVGPgreen@gmail.com. And consider becoming a member of other groups working in this area as well. The more we work together, the more we can accomplish.

—— John T. Brady, Climate Change Committee Chair

Illinois Consolidated Elections 2023

Illinois Consolidated election season has begun. Some Illinois communities will hold primaries or elections on February 28; for many others, Election Day is April 4.

Once all ballots are finalized, LWV of Illinois will be your resource for nonpartisan candidate information. Be prepared to use your voice during your local elections:

Go to IllinoisVoterGuide.org today to check your voter registration, register to vote, and sign up to be notified when candidate information is available.

Go to lwvgp.org for our candidate forum dates and information.

The Illinois Voter Guide will cover the municipal offices for all Illinois municipalities with populations over 10,000 people (mayor, alderman/council member, clerk, treasurer, police district council member), as well as all Illinois school boards.

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: December 13

Upcoming public hearing on proposed Medina Plains-Allen Road business park tax increment financing (TIF) district to be held 6 p.m. Tues., Jan. 10 at City Hall council chambers.

Highlights of meeting:

Approved annual legislative agenda to include sponsorships of public safety pension reform, traffic, extension of 911 surcharge, Peoria stadium TIF for required improvements of ball park, economic development incentives, funding for Main St. and Riverfront development, fire station on south side, and law enforcement response model.

Approved grant award in amount of \$2,045,017 for HOME-ARP funding to Phoenix Community Development Services, Phoenix Manor (District 3). Development of former Ramada Inn will house families and individuals.

Deferred amendment of ordinance regarding operation of cannabis business until February. Discussion included strengthening restrictions on transfer of social equity owner license, special use requirements in local zone districts, distance requirements for non-social equity dispensaries, and limits on total locations in city.

Denied short term rental in District 4. Owner and representatives from neighborhood home owner's association spoke. Issues included HOA covenant, which was not updated prior to applicant filing for zoning approval and owner renting home before zoning meeting.

Citizen's opportunity to address council: several East Bluff residents asked Council to assist in extending time to vacate rental homes owned by Darwin. Tenants were given 30 days notice to vacate and cited lack affordable housing and lack opportunity to save down payment on new rental.

Andres Diaz spoke to praise Peoria Police for decreasing guns in community with recent buyback, but also addressed issue with illegal dumping and prostitution in north side neighborhood. Problem reported to police department but not resolved in timely manner. Requested same standards be applied to this area as other districts in community.

You can view agenda and video of meetings, as well as minutes at www.peoriagov.org/council-meetings/council-meetings.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

ELECTION COMMISSION: December 13

Peoria County Board of Elections held its regular monthly meeting December 13. The one public comment was that any issues with the November general election seemed to be due to the amount of resources available to staff.

There will not be a primary election in Peoria County this year because there are no contested primary races. There are ten candidates for the five at-large City Council seats. The eleventh candidate, which would have triggered a primary, has dropped out after his petitions were challenged. Park districts, libraries, school boards, and fire districts in the County do not hold primaries. They will have their elections during the General Election on April 4, 2023.

Early voting will begin on March 8 at the Election Office, with Vote By Mail ballots going out on March 10. Early voting locations will be decided at the February meeting. There may only be one or two in the County, depending on how many larger ballots will be needed

—— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: December 5

Peoria County Board held its organizational and regular meeting on December 5 with all members present, but Member Steve Rieker participating by phone.

With the certification of recent election results, five new board members were sworn in: Camille Coates (Dist. 2, D), Nathan Hoerr (Dist. 8, R), Danny Phelan, (Dist. 9, D), Daniel Kelch (Dist. 12, R) and Terry Ruhland (Dist. 13, R). Democrats retained their majority with ten of the eighteen seats. Jimmy Dillon (Dist. 5, D) was elected board chair on a 17-1 vote, and Sharon Williams (Dist. 1, D) was elected vice chair on a 14-4 vote. All members were appointed to one or more of the board's nine standing committees.

There were five citizen comments all related to a Radnor Township zoning case that was approved on a 17-1 vote. Updates to the county zoning code related to event centers, health clubs, fitness centers and indoor shooting ranges were approved. A resolution to purchase the currently leased building housing the Election Commission was deferred to a future meeting.

The Consent Agenda passed unanimously. Among items approved:

Acceptance of a bequest to PCAPS in the amount of \$143,821.

Write-off of over \$620,000 in uncollectible Hedington Oaks receivables.

Five-year agreements with West Peoria, Hanna City and Dunlap for police services provided by the Peoria County Sheriff's department.

New speed limits on North Ivy Lake Road and for the Wheatfield and Cobblestone Estates subdivisions.

Engineering contracts for bridge or road repairs on Pulsifer Road, Maxwell Road, Dickison Lane, and Old Galena Road.

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

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

Peoria Housing Authority: December 13

Board accepted consent agenda without discussion. Resolutions passed include review of closed session meeting minutes and audio recordings in accord with Illinois Open Meetings Act, change in electricity provider for better rates, 2023 mainstream voucher program, 2023 house choice voucher program and tenant accounts receivable collection write offs of \$135,178.00 as allowed by Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

During CEO report, Director Armeca Crawford asked departments to give overview of recent activities including update on Providence Point construction project, recent coat drive for families, participation in home owner program, and upcoming workshops for financial literacy with Busey Bank.

Eviction notices were sent to 60 families, resulting in 28 evictions. Staff worked with clients to reduce evictions and pay off housing debt.

PHA Board of Commissioners meetings are held in person and zoom. Note change in meeting schedule to 4th Thursday of month at 4:30 P.M. for 2023. Minutes of past meetings 2022 have been posted to website.

Website lists upcoming meetings on January 24: Fair housing clinic for landlords and owners will be held from 10 a.m. to noon to learn air housing rights compliance in new statewide law, Source of Income Law. Fair housing clinic for tenants will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. to learn about housing rights and actions to take if discrimination occurs.

———— Connie Romanus, 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

Terry Kolbuss, President
president@lwgp.org

Connie Romanus, 1st V-P
Sean Koors, Treasurer
Jim Runyan, Secretary

Hind Abi-akar Kim Armstrong Terry Bibo Knight John Brady Jan Deissler Andy Diaz Kathleen Kelly Cathy Molchin Roberta Parks
Kathie Raiborn Sokonie Reed Couri Thomas

Newsletter

Terry Bibo Knight
terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com