



The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria

THE VOTER

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Board of Directors 2018-19

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Important Dates

- **6 p.m. Thurs., Oct. 4,**
General Meeting. **Cancelled.**
- **Noon-1 p.m. Mon., Oct. 8,**
LWVGP board meeting, at 1st
United Methodist Church.
- **Noon-1 p.m. Wed, Oct. 10,**
Housing Committee, speaker
Beth Akeson, Lakeview Library.
- **5-6:30 p.m. Oct. 17,** Drinks &
Dialogue, Peter Kobak on LWV
diversity, at Rhythm Kitchen.
- **10-11:30 a.m. Sat. Oct. 20,**
Candidate Forum - Sheriff &
Auditor, Chillicothe Library.
- **6 p.m. Tues, Oct. 23,** Water
due diligence issue may be
considered, Peoria City Hall
- **6 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 1,** General
Meeting. Topic: "Afford-
able Housing" at AMT

President's Message

Opportunity Knocks

Over the course of the next four weeks, the League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria presents a number of opportunities for you to get involved and for you to invite fellow citizens to get involved. For additional information about these activities, please refer to other articles in this edition of the Voter.

General Meeting: Please note that the General Meeting has been *rescheduled* from Oct. 4 to Nov. 1. The meeting topic will be Affordable Housing and it will be held from 6 to 7 p.m. Thurs., Nov. 1, at Advanced Medical Transport, 1718 N. Sterling, Peoria.

Voter Education: Educate yourself on the candidates running for office by going to www.lwvgp.org where you will find a link to Ballotready, the LWVIL voter guide for Illinois.

Candidate Forum: Learn about local candidates for Peoria County Sheriff and Peoria County Auditor at the LWVGP candidate forum from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Sat., Oct. 20, at the Chillicothe Library.

Drinks & Dialogue: Join the dialogue about how to improve Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity in the League with Peter Kobak, LWVGP member, and Ferris Muhammed, the City of Peoria's new Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer. Please note the Oct. 17 D&D is at a new location: Rhythm Kitchen, 305 SW Water St.

Housing Study Committee: Whether you join the committee or attend the November General Meeting, you have opportunities to study and to share your ideas on our community's housing needs. The next meeting of the Housing Study Committee will be held at noon Wed., Oct. 10 at the Peoria Public Library Lakeview Branch. Beth Akeson, Peoria City Councilperson will speak.

Opportunity is knocking!

Looking forward to seeing you when you answer,

— Farrell Davies, President LWVGP

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: Diversity, Wednesday, Oct. 17

“We have to do better,” said Cecile Scoon, First Vice President of LWV of Florida, speaking to the LWVUS National Convention in Chicago this past summer.

But when it comes to the topics of diversity, equity and inclusion, she is probably not the first Leaguer to make that statement.

Following the 2016 Convention, the LWVUS published a ‘Transformation Roadmap’ – a document that outlined how the League and its chapters might work toward a future with more members fighting for a more perfect democracy. One of the primary challenges identified in the ‘Roadmap’ is building a more inclusive culture. Without losing sight of our history and core principles, making an emphasis on diverse, equitable, and inclusive programming is integral to delivering the League’s mission to a greater portion of our community.

How might we do this here locally, in the LWVGP? We can use data to better understand how successful we are. We know the demographics of Peoria and the Greater Peoria area, but we don’t know the demographics of our membership. An anonymous survey will establish a yearly picture of our diversity – a benchmark to improve upon. Peter Kobak, local leaguer, recently sent out a survey to current membership to gather baseline data. He will share this information at October’s Drinks & Dialogue and lead discussion on how to become a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organization.

The diversity discussion will be held from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wed., Oct. 17, at the Rhythm Kitchen, 305 S.W. Water Street. Social time will be at 5 p.m. Refreshments are available for purchase. The event is free and open to the public.

Join us and bring a friend!

— Connie Romanus

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, September 18

On September 18, the Peoria County Election Commission held its first meeting at their new location on Brandywine Drive. All commissioners were present except for Sandra Burke. Tom Bride, executive director, is looking into getting a covered bus stop outside the office. The new location gives the employees much needed organized storage space. They will be trained on using all of the smart utilities in the building. The door/wall allowing more or less space in the main part of the facility will not be installed until after the election because it would cause disruption for a whole day.

Vote by mail ballots were to go out on Friday, September 21. The office has already received approximately 5,000 requests. On site voting will start at the satellite locations on October 22. The procedure for the mail-in ballots was explained. Signatures are checked as they come in—within two days. They are scanned and processed when enough come in to warrant calling in judges.

— Irene Pritzker

PEORIA TOWNSHIP, September 18

Township Supervisor Frank Abdnour reports that Peoria Township's budget request will include a 22 percent decrease, and it can meet their client's needs with that decrease.

Discussion indicated property values in Peoria may be expected to continue to decline for two to three years. There are "no indications of the kind of economic stability needed . . . to prevent a continued decline in property values," according to Town Collector Patrick Nichting.

Also discussed was that General Assistance participation has declined since implementation of the voucher system. According to Abdnour, Peoria Township's General Assistance is in line with other townships of similar size with 2019 Budget. And, if the Affordable Care Act were to be eliminated, the township would again need to cover costs (prescription drugs) currently covered by the ACA.

— Cheryl Budzinski

SPRINGDALE CEMETERY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, September 18

Bob Manning chaired the meeting. Chair Steve Kerr and Pat Powers were absent.

Manager Mark Matusak reported:

Burials are down, but burials are down at all cemeteries. Some cemeteries may have relationships with the hospitals to get referrals upon deaths. Kate Pastuka suggested talking to the Co. Coroner.

Cloudpoint GIS is mapping the cemetery. AXIOM's records aren't "pure," but "rebuilt." Jim Stuckel asked about the location audit and was told Springdale owns the information.

There will be eight to 12 more graves for Smith gravesite.

Grass is still growing, so wage costs continue.

The City re-did 3/4-mile of roads with their trial mixture including tar/chip & repaired 2 bridges.

The State's Attorney was given an estimate of \$28,000 to \$38,000 in vandalism damage.

The donated van may be kept or sold. Recent costs came to \$400.

Fundraising for the Shaft project is about at half way. The County will match up to \$5,000 total.

The 2018 Historic Springdale Cemetery Tours presented by Forklore Theatre will be held at 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 5 & Oct. 12 OR noon and 2 p.m. on Oct. 6-7 and Oct. 13-14. The "Fundraising" event will include a light refreshment tent. Cost is \$10 for adults; \$5 for children under 13 or \$25 for a family. Characters include: Amy Manker Van Dyke, Richard Henry, Katie Barr Bush, Walter S. Bush, Dr. Romeo B. Garrett, and Oliver Cloyd. Call 696-0956 or email springdalecemeterytours@gmail.com for a reservation.

The Cemetery does get the City's rate for fuel.

The budget will be presented at the October meeting.

The White Bridge needs to be replaced. The IronWorkers union offered to donate their labor.

Bids for the Scattering Gardens had a huge spread from \$64,000 to \$143,000. The design estimate was way off. The Board discussed avoiding some of the steps on the circular walkway around the garden and discussed using mulch in the center rather than the designed crushed granite specified. The \$21,000 columns may be delivered soon - which were previously ordered. They voted to redirect some Capital funds into the project.

— Cheryl Budzinski and Kathie Raiborn.

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, September 27

Peoria Housing Authority Board Meeting was held on September 27 at Frank Campbell Community Center, 312 S. Merriman.

The meeting was scheduled to begin at 3:30 p.m., but delayed until approximately 3:48 p.m. due to absences. Carl Cannon, Vice Chair, was present; Alma Brown, Secretary, arrived at 3:35 p.m. and Commissioner Tekia Child arrived at 3:47 p.m. One board member was ill; another was delayed and unable to attend. Due to lack of quorum, no action could take place.

Public Comment: Christine Collins, South Side Office of Concern, reported 71 homeless individuals were provided with housing through program supported by PHA. She expressed appreciation that this program has been renewed.

Agenda and packet information is available on website. Additional copies of agenda were available at the meeting. No reporters were present. Jackie Neuman, Executive Director Springfield Housing Authority was also present and reported the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development conducted a recent review of the agency and a written report is expected within 45 days. PHA will continue to review and update policies, procedures and operations to be in-line with HUD.

No fines were received. No ordinances or resolutions were presented due to lack of quorum. No reports given by staff. Adjournment was at 4:08 p.m. Asked when June and July meeting minutes would be posted on website, Ms. Neuman said she will follow up.

— Connie Romanus

WATER DUE DILIGENCE NEWS

The Due Diligence issue regarding Peoria's water utility is anticipated to be on the Oct. 23 Peoria City Council agenda. There has been some suggestion of a special meeting of the City Council to specifically deal with this issue, but that meeting is not on the website calendar yet.

There are some notable points:

- While Oct 23 is the last scheduled regular council meeting within the legal timeline for consideration of Due Diligence, a special meeting for this issue could be Oct. 16 or Oct. 30. League Water Committee will notify League members if there is a special meeting. We anticipate Illinois American Water Co. will show up in force to lobby the Council to vote against Due Diligence. Your attendance at the Council meetings this month would be appreciated.

- Due Diligence starting also notifies IAW officially that the process will begin. The notification deadline for this five-year period to consider purchase is Nov. 2.

- The Memo of Understanding (MOU) has been received by the city after much back-and-forth by the City and the CEO Council.

- Some council persons question whether excess revenue (current profits are estimated at \$15 million annually, sent back to IAW's parent company and shareholders) can be used for anything but water utility expenses. This has been addressed in the 2005 public finance consultant report which included "city oversight" expense of over \$1 million, as well as repayment to PAAG. Water issues here —the combined sewer overflow project (CSO) with the U.S. EPA and stormwater utility — are intertwined.

- The city needs new revenue sources to consider at this time when our property values are stuck. What are the council's suggestions?

Please call your councilpersons and ask them to do Due Diligence. Council meetings will be held at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 9 and Oct. 23.

VOTER SERVICE, September

We conducted seven mock elections in September.

Brimfield HS voted 79 student; Farmington HS voted 120 students; Quest Academy voted 59 students; Notre Dame voted 100 students; Peoria Central, we do not know how many students voted; Limestone HS voted 167 students; and Peoria Christian HS voted 80 students.

We did coordinate the 658 person Naturalization Ceremony with registration of voters afterward. 22 League volunteers and 6 members of Sigma Delta Theta sorority registered 267 of them. It was a very good morning.

We conducted a forum at First Baptist on Sept 22 for the neighborhood group. It went well. Russ Crawford moderated for us.

We will conduct a forum at Chillicothe library and Connie Romanus will moderate for us.

We are in the process of organizing a Tazewell forum for probably Oct 29. It is not finalized yet, but the candidates are being contacted and responding well.

The scholarship check we were awarded and did not receive is now on its way. (We did not receive it earlier because I had not clicked send after I got all of the info that was wanted on the reply e mail.) We will have to figure out how to spend that wisely now. Originally we were going to place an ad for National Voter Registration Day. The organization appreciates the work we have done and what we did this time, so they want us to have the money to defray our expenses for the day. We really had no expenses. We may have to pay \$50 for the room for our Tazewell forum, perhaps we could put some toward that. Suggestions are welcome. We could wait and place an ad for voter registration or related events at a later time.

The committee will meet on Thur Oct 11 at 2:30 at 1630 NE Glen Oak.

— Mary Jane Crowell

MEMBERSHIP REPORT, October

Memberships continue to come in slowly. We sent a personal e-mail to all members and were able to collect a few more. We have received 86 memberships as of this date, but any long-time members have not yet. We continue to work on that. Phone calls are next. Members are encouraged to renew their memberships as soon as possible to assist the Membership Committee so the focus can be on new members. Thanks to all who have renewed.

General Meetings and Drinks & Dialogue have begun. It is hoped that members will attend and bring friends to these meetings. Remember, our best recruitment is done by our members. Check the website for updated information.

We received our first Eleanor Defender of Democracy Member. Thank you, Elliott Murray for supporting the League with your generous dues!

If you have questions, please contact one of us:

Linda Millen – 645-2542

Tchkids2@sbcglobal.net

Jan Deissler – 635-1872

jdeissler@sbcglobal.net

Defenders of Democracy

Carrie Chapman Catt

Cheryl & Ron Budzinski

Susan B. Anthony

Beth & Jeff Akeson

Bettsey Barhorst

Colleen Callahan

Katherine Coyle

Farrell Davies

Jill & Pedro De Alarcon

Jan & Emil Deissler

Gary & Linda Millen

Roberta Parks

Irene Pritzker

Connie Romanus

Carolyn Shepherd

Rick & Tracy Fox

Mary & Al Harkrader

Sherry Hillman

Raymond Keithley

Ted Mathews & Sharon Maule

Terry & Larry Matthews

Steve Sonnemaker

Sandra Steiler

Eleanor Roosevelt

Elliott Murray

PLEASE HELP STUDY PEORIA'S HOUSING NEEDS!

At our first meeting on Sept 12, the Housing Study Committee had six members and one citizen.

What is involved in a League study? The study committee determines what issues/questions will be studied; if a report or proposed position will be pursued; and, how findings will be interpreted into community action.

League positions can be national, state, or local League positions. The committee has to be respectful of our national League (LWV) position. That position: "... the conviction that every person and family should have decent, safe and affordable housing."

Does everyone in our community have decent, safe, and affordable housing?

Notes from first meeting:

- o Our community is 2,000 units short of having enough "affordable housing" units as defined at 30 percent of income, according to Jane Genzel of Peoria Opportunities ("Affordable" for a two-bedroom unit with a \$31,120 household annual income is \$778 a month rent + utilities, according to "Out of Reach - 2018.")

- o In a similar situation as depicted in the book "Evicted" (which is recommended reading), an East Bluff tenant's bathroom plumbing was totally stopped up and the landlord wouldn't fix it. (He/she said the tenants' kids had put something in the toilet which stopped it up.) The tenant also wasn't inclined to pay to fix it.

- o Committee discussion included the need to check with state and local jurisdictions including: DCFS Guidelines, judicial guidelines for juvenile safety, "housing court", County Health Dept. guidelines regarding lead and health code violations, city Code Enforcement, school districts with high mobility and truancy, Housing Authority issues, etc.

Committee persons' thoughts on the housing issue, speakers, and topics included two questions:

- o Is it important to have decent, safe, affordable housing? Effects on community, children, families.

- o What are five to 10 doable things to make a difference and be aware?

At-Large Peoria City Councilperson Beth Akeson will speak at our 12 noon Wed., Oct 10 meeting at Peoria Public Library, Lakeview Branch.

You are invited to come and bring a friend. The public is welcome to participate.

— Cheryl Budzinski



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

623 W. Stratford, Peoria, IL 61614

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

ON THE WEB:

www.lwvgp.org

IMPORTANT DATES

- Oct. 4** 6 p.m. General meeting cancelled.
- Oct. 8** Noon-1 p.m., LWVGP Board Meeting, First United Methodist Church, 116 N.E. Perry, Peoria.
- Oct. 10** Noon-1 p.m. Peoria City Councilmember Beth Akeson meets with the LWV Housing Study Committee, Peoria Public Library, Lakeview Branch.
- Oct. 17** 5-6:30 p.m. Drinks & Dialogue, Lariat Steakhouse. Board member Peter Kobak discusses diversity, inclusion and equity in LWVGP, Rhythm Kitchen.
- Oct. 20** 10-11:30am, Candidate Forum including candidates for Peoria Co. Sheriff and Peoria Co. Auditor, Chillicothe Library.
- Oct. 23** 6 p.m. Peoria City Council may consider Due Diligence for the water utility.
- Nov. 1** 6 p.m. General meeting. Topic: Affordable Housing, AMT, 1718 N. Sterling.