



President's Message

August, 2008

Dear Friends,

The new League year begins and we anticipate opportunities to make new friends and learn about the issues of the day. With your in-put at Program Planning last January, the Board has organized a very interesting Program for 2008-2009. You will find the list of League meetings and dates with the color pages attached to this Voter. Please save these pages as they are the Membership Booklet for the year.

This is the time to renew your membership; an envelope has been provided for your use. Ask a friend or new neighbor to join you in attending our fall meetings. Of course, we need you to do more than send us your dues. We need your energy to help us carry out the year's program. Think about joining a committee, helping a Board Member, or volunteering at one of our meetings. Call any Board member for other ways in which you can assist. We really do need you.

Also in this Voter, you'll find important Voter Service dates, reports from League Observers, and Convention meetings.

And now news from the Board:

- Linda Williams was appointed Membership Director (off-Board) for 1 year.
- Mary Jo Clark will continue to be League's affordable housing observer and advocate, conferring with the Board.
- The Education Fund Trustees voted to support the LWVUS member/leader initiative with a donation of \$100.
- The Board approved the '08-'09 program of events.

I look forward to seeing you in September.

Sondra Engel

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August
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Editor

League Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of Oxford, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy. We take action on public policy positions established through member agreement. We are political, but not partisan.

Affordable Housing Update 7/18/08

There are five affordable housings initiatives in Oxford that I have been following.

1. Stewart Landing: A proposed 20 acre single family subdivision on Kehr Road that would be developed by Neighborhood Housing Services of Hamilton and The Miller-Valentine Group. It would contain approximately 35 single family homes for low and moderate income families. Since the land is part of Oxford Township it needed to be annexed by the City of Oxford in order to receive city services. The resolution to annex the property was passed by City Council May 20, 2008.
2. Oxford Community Foundation: The Foundation has endowment funds dedicated to purchasing and renovating property in the Square Mile. After the property is renovated it would be sold to a low or moderate income family.
3. Habitat for Humanity: Habitat is planning a 20 lot development on Hester Road. The property is in the process of being purchased contingent on the approval of the subdivision plan by the city. Homes would be constructed in two phases.
4. Oxford Housing Trust Fund: The City has created a fund that will provide financial incentives to encourage affordable housing in Oxford, particularly in the Square Mile. The Housing Advisory Commission, who will oversee the activities of the fund, collaborated with the Historic and Architectural Preservation Commission to host an open house June 24, 2008 to highlight the housing initiatives of each commission.
5. Mobile Home Park: The owners have hired a management company for the park and have removed approximately 70 mobile homes. The City of Oxford and The Family Resource Center are exploring different options to address the mobile home park issue.

I am continuing to observe City Council, the Housing Advisory Commission and Planning Commission (as needed) for the League and will report the progress of these initiatives as they evolve.

Mary Jo Clark Affordable Housing

Highlights from the LWVUS Convention, June 2008

Each time a delegate attends a National Convention, there is so much to learn. My trip to Portland, Oregon was no exception. At each plenary session, I sat with the Ohio delegation where 13 Ohio Leagues were represented. We learned that there are 67,000 members of League nationwide; what a force we are. There were 675 voting delegates present from 49 states and D.C. Especially noteworthy were the speakers on Climate Change and the Future of Health Care. Both areas will receive attention from League during the next two years.

Business: Discussion, Debates, and Voting

League principles were amended to read: “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that all powers of the U.S. government should be exercised within the constitutional framework of a balance among the branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial.”

- Bylaws changes included: electronic meetings, call for Council meetings to be timely, emergency meetings, nominating committee reduced from 7 to 5 members, provisions for amendments. All of the details can be found at www.lwv.org.
- The Per Member Payment was increased to \$28.00 for '08-'09, and \$29.20 for '09-'10. (Lengthy discussion of budget needs preceded this vote.)
- Program adopted: All current positions were re-adopted.
- A Health Care program to educate members and communities to be better prepared for advocacy.
- A Multi-Level Education and Advocacy Campaign to promote solutions to global climate change.
- A non-recommended study item was adopted, which states: “The advisability of using the National Popular Vote compact among the states as a method of electing the President.” (This will be a quick study with consensus coming next winter. Your Board will help to prepare members in the coming months.)
- Election of officers and Board Members came on the final day.

The business meetings and speakers were very interesting. In addition, private conversations were also fruitful. We will have some new ideas to try out in Oxford. Mary McWilliams, formerly of Oxford, now on the Portland League Board, suggested a book club for members who could extend their knowledge by reading non-fiction related to League program. We'll explore this and some member recruiting ideas as well.

Sondra Engel Oxford Delegate

LWVOxford Local Convention Highlights

Presiding: Sondra Engel.

Present: 29 Members.

Honored: Members of more than 50 years:

***Carolyn Auble

***Louise Griffing

***Helen Snider

***Barbara Whelpton

Discussed and approved:

Local Program

General Fund Budget

Election Slate

Endowment Proposal

Observer Reports

Oxford City Council – 7:30 pm - June 17, 2008, Observer Mary Jo Clark

Work Session – 6:00 pm: Butler County/Oxford Connector Project Update Presentation – History of the project (Alan Kyger, Economic Development Director; Rick Bailey, Transportation Consultant)

Oxford City Council business of special concern to LWV Oxford (problems, proposals/actions that relate to current or possibly future League Program)

1. The impact of the 27/73 connector on land use.
2. From past meetings:
 - a. The City's action on the Mayor's Agreement on Climate Change and the 2010 Campaign.
 - b. Continue to clarify the annexation process and monitor its implementation.
 - c. Monitor the work of the Parking and Transportation Advisory Board and City Council as they explore alternative transportation for the city.
 - d. Continue to monitor the implementation of the zoning code for the UP district and its impact on affordable housing.
 - e. Monitor the annexation of land south of Oxford on Kehr Road and its impact on affordable housing in Oxford.

There were 16 people in the audience when the meeting began. Most left after their issue was brought up. A reporter from the Oxford Press was present. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 pm. Prue Dana, Mayor, was absent and council member Doug Ross left at 8:35 pm.

Talawanda School Board 7:30 pm July 14, 2008 - Observer Sue Jones

1. Highlight of the Meeting:

The meeting was called as a work session to determine what should go on the ballot in November. The decision was made to put a 4.74 mil bond issue on the ballot to build a new high school on Rt. 27 south. The bond issue will be a property tax for \$46 million.

The second decision was that the 24% rebate they will receive from the State Facilities Commission will be used to build a new elementary school at the Kramer site as soon as those funds are available.

2. Special Concern of LVW Oxford:

The board has spent a great deal of time in getting public input into this decision. They have been frugal in their assessment of what is necessary and what is a “frill” in the building. There were more parents at the meeting supporting the decision.

3. General Comments:

Board president, Darrell Smith, commented that although this is a difficult time financially for people, the cost of the buildings will only increase if the board waits. Putting more money into the high school now seems a waste since it must be replaced. The district also stands to lose the 24% rebate from the State if they do not build soon and build according to the state master building plan. The portion of the Middle School roof which needs to be replaced will be done over two years.

Oxford Township Trustees 7:30 pm May 12, 2008 Observers Jane Fryman & Carol Wilson

1. Highlight:

Oxford Township Comprehensive Lane Use Plan was presented by Jim Rubenstein. The graphs, maps and drawings from the public input meeting were displayed prior to the meeting and Jim was available to answer questions. Some members of the township committee were present along with other interested residents. Following discussion several revisions were proposed to the plan. The plan needed to be in the packet for the June 10th meeting of the Butler County

Planning Commission. The trustees approved the changes subject to Jim Rubenstein polling the committee members and receiving their agreement.

2. Special Concern of LVW Oxford:

Observe interjurisdictional solutions for growth management.

Jane Fryman Observer Chair

Statehouse Day/Council

LWVOxford delegates for Statehouse Day/Council in Columbus were Donna Hofmann and Sallie Killian.. They are pictured in the LWVOhio Summer VOTER with delegates from other local Leagues which donated to the Hannah Report which provides information on the Legislature to lobbyists in various locations in Ohio. Steve Dana's article on the feasibility of public transportation in Oxford is also featured. During the day, we examined and voted on the new budget. In addition, we learned about one of LWVOhio's exciting ongoing projects: Political Accountability for Citizens Today--imPACT--addressing campaign finance reform, redistricting, accountability to citizens and voters, and judicial and election law reforms. Access this at www.ohioimpact.org

Election Administration Reform OSU Moritz College of Law Assoc. Prof. Daniel Tokaji, who had experience with ACLU and Common Cause in California, fielded questions on the recent Supreme Court ruling on Indiana's photo ID requirement. Issues identified by League Election Law Specialist Peg Rosenfield include 1) whether Ohio primaries are open or closed, 2) optical scan ballot validation of voter choices, and 3) encouraging students to become poll workers.

School Funding Paolo DeMaria, from the ODE-Center for School Options and Finance, gave an overview before discussion of levies and property taxes, weighted funding for economically-disadvantaged, limited-English, and gifted students, students with disabilities, and teachers' salaries. Later Rep. Stephen Dyer outlined a new funding proposal incorporating elements from funding systems in New Mexico, Iowa and Indiana. Iowa's system provides a high level of State support. Indiana's General Assembly controls the rate of property taxes through a State Board of Tax Commissioners and sets a maximum local tax level for school districts. School budgets in Indiana are approved by local school boards and are not subject to voter approval. New Mexico's system for determining state operational support for schools is considered by some to support high levels of equity and autonomy for school districts.

Donna Hofmann and Sallie Killian

Spotlight on Talawanda School District

The League of Women Voters of Oxford will host a meeting to spotlight Talawanda School District education programs. Assistant Superintendent, Kelly Spivey, will share highlights of new school programs and activities, as well as the successes and challenges of the current school offerings. The meeting will be held at the LCNB Community Room on September 11, at 7:30 p.m. The public is invited. Please ask a friend or new neighbor to come with you to our first meeting of the year.

Sue Jones Social Policy Director

Dates to Remember

August 1 (F)

Voter Registration Drive at Presbyterian Seminary Bldg.

9:00-3:00 p.m.

September 11 (Th)

Spotlight on the Talawanda Schools

7:30 p.m. LCNB Community Room

October 3 (F)

Voter Registration Drive at the Oxford Kroger store.

9:00-3:00 p.m. In partnership with NAACP.

October 15 (W)

Children in Need - What You Can Do

11:30 a.m. LCNB Community Room

Attendees are urged to bring a brown bag lunch. Presentation at noon.