

League of Women Voters of Appleton
Lively Issues
January 23, 2016
Appleton Public Library
10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Present: Marcia Hittle, Penny Robinson, Gayle Hardt, Jan Quinlan, Stephanie Malaney, Cathy Thompson, Miriam Douglass, Debra Cronmiller, Barbara Kelly, Irene Strohbeen, Janine Knapp, Marcia Engen, Richard Schoenbohm, Cindy Fallona, Shirley Strange, Jeanne Roberts, Jackie Klimaszewski, Elizabeth Laux, Penny Bernard-Schaber, Karen Bachhuber and Colleen Rortvedt.

I. Welcome and Introductions

President Stephanie Malaney called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and welcomed members. Attendees introduced themselves.

II. LWVUS 2014 – 2016 Biennium – Irene Strohbeen

Money in Politics: At the 2014 national convention, the delegates approved a study to update the long-time League position on campaign finance due to recent court rulings, especially Citizens United. The national committee conducted an in-depth study, providing much information and reports that LWV-Appleton's ad hoc committee presented to members over three weeks in January. Based on the information provided, our members provided answers to consensus questions that fell into three broad categories:

1. Democratic Values and Interests with Respect to Financing Political Campaigns
 2. First Amendment Protections for Speakers and Activities in Political Campaigns
 3. Methods for Regulating Campaign Finance to Protect the Democratic Process
- Our league has held meetings to discuss the first two questions with a third meeting to be held next week.

III. State Program for 2016 – Irene Strohbeen

- LWV-Appleton agreed to recommended updates to the existing position on urban policy.
- LWV-Appleton agreed to LWVWI's recommended programs for 2016-17 which will focus on the following:
 - 2016 Election: LWVWI will assist local Leagues in focusing on voter education and voter registration efforts (July-November 2016);
 - 2017 Budget: LWVWI will coordinate stronger public education and lobbying effort on the state budget, focusing on areas which are priorities for the League and may be targeted in the state budget (January-June 2017);

- Storm Water Runoff: Depending on funding, LWVWI will develop a presentation to be hosted by local Leagues around the state to educate people about problems related to storm water runoff and actions that citizens, communities and regions can take to prevent and alleviate flooding. This would be a follow-up to the State Water Position Update.
- Ongoing: LWVWI will continue to advocate for voting rights, redistricting reform, and campaign finance reform.

IV. Local Program

A. Update on Land Use Planning and Urban Development Study

Shirley Strange updated the group on the progress of this study. It will definitely continue into 2017 due to the breadth and scope of the study. The study group has gathered information for and studied a variety of topics associated with the issue. Following Shirley's comments and discussion, those present reached consensus that the study should concentrate on the City of Appleton's downtown to include area neighborhoods.

B. Review of Criteria for Lively Issues Discussion – Gayle Hardt

The purpose of the Lively Issues meeting is to plan for the 2016-2017 program year. Criteria for discussion of proposed issues:

1. Does the issue require a new position?
2. Does the issue fall within LWV principles?
3. Can LWV have an impact? Can government have an impact?
4. Is the issue timely?
5. What resources are needed for study and to take action?

The recommendations from the meeting will be sent to the board for review and clarification and will then be voted on by members at the annual meeting scheduled for May 19th.

C. Open Discussion of Local Issues

Gayle Hardt, VP Program led the discussion. Members were asked to address position areas according to our position statements: local government, natural resources, and social policy. Suggestions may include ideas for a new study or updating any of our current positions. Suggestions may also include any current positions where action may be needed.

1. Local Government

The question of how do we educate, encourage and train citizens to run for political office was raised.

(Recommendation: Refer to strategic planning and board as programming.)

2. Natural Resources

The issue of ground water runoff and protection of water quality was raised. At this time in the state legislature, changes to environmental protections are being voted on. The process is happening as quickly as within a week. This makes it difficult for the league to get information out to members. LWVWI is seeking a grant to be able to hire a temporary director to study and direct the league's efforts.

Many changes are going on along the Fox River corridor. Richard Schoenbohm will keep our board updated on water issues as he has been appointed to the Wisconsin River Alliance state group. The point was made that state legislation can be very important to a local league because the impact on local issues might be significant.

It was suggested that we update our position on PCBs. The original study and position was a regional effort. It would need to be a regional collaboration. One league involved in that effort no longer exists. It was suggested that we explore the possibility of updating the existing position.

(Recommendation: Identify any needed action and recommend to board to assign a board member to oversee the area of Natural Resources.)

3. Social Policy

It was suggested that the issue of immigration and refugees are important in our area.

(Recommendation: Education through programming.)

Alternative Court System was suggested for study.

(Recommendation: Education through programming.)

Mental health delivery system. The league studied this issue in 2008. Specific topics of adverse childhood and trauma experiences, and the practice of mindfulness were discussed.

(Recommendation: Education through programming.)

Education was offered as a timely topic due to drastic changes by the state government to our public education system in the last few years. Our current position is 10 years old.

(Recommendation: Consensus was reached to update position.)

It was suggested that the board review all local position statements and identify where updates to any positions are necessary.

V. Action Discussion

The study group on land use planning and urban development is overwhelmed with the scope and information available on this topic. The group has requested a narrowing of the focus of the study. It was discussed and consensus was reached to narrow the focus of the current local study to downtown Appleton and adjoining neighborhoods.

VI. Update on League

Our position statement on sex trafficking needs to be submitted to the LWVWI Board in order for it to be put on the agenda for the state 2016 Annual Meeting. This is the only way state leagues can vote on the issue. Irene Strohbeen will forward our position statement to the state board.

Meeting adjourned at 12:26 p.m.

Submitted by: Cindy Fallona, Secretary