



THE

VOTER

November 2006

Visit our Web site at: <http://www.lwvvc.org>

ALTERNATIVE VOTING PROCESSES STUDY CONSENSUS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2006

at

THE PALMETTO CLUB

1000 SOUTH BEACH STREET

DAYTONA BEACH

BRUNCH WILL BE SERVED AT 9:30 A.M.

PROGRAM: 10:00 A.M.

RSVP: ANN SMITH 386-238-7361

or

mail@lwvvc.org

COST: \$10.00

IN ADDITION TO OUR CURRENT METHOD OF PLURALITY VOTING, COME LEARN ABOUT FOUR OTHER ESTABLISHED METHODS OF VOTING AND GIVE YOUR INPUT ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT THERE SHOULD BE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS AVAILABLE. SEE ARTICLE INSIDE VOTER on page ____ FOR MORE INFORMATION.

When you vote on Nov. 7, be aware of the LWV positions.

COUNTY CHARTER AMENDMENTS

- Vote YES: School Planning
- Water Plan
- Comprehensive Planning Districts
- Dispute Resolution Commission
- County Planning Authority

FL CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

- Vote YES: #1
- Vote NO: #3
- #4
- #6
- #7

Please see the President's Column, page 2, for an explanation of the position of the LWV-Volusia County and the LWV-Florida on these proposed amendments. Also, read the Observer Corps Report, pp. 5-6, to help understand the cities' opposition to the County Charter amendments.

President's Column: Making Sense of the Ballot Questions

When the September/October 06 VOTER was mailed, the County Council had not yet submitted the **County Planning Authority** amendment for voters' consideration. We did include in that VOTER the positions of the LWV-Volusia County on the six amendments proposed by the Charter Review Commission. You should be aware, therefore, that at its September meeting, the LWVVC Board of Directors voted unanimous support of this last amendment proposed by the County Council.

To help our members with the confusing issue, the Board of Directors of the LWV-Volusia County offers the following statements regarding the Leagues' **support/no position** of the proposed amendment to the Volusia County Charter:

School Planning: The LWV-Volusia County **supports** this amendment.

Water Plan: The LWV-Volusia County **supports** this amendment.

Comprehensive Planning Districts: While the LWV-Volusia County **supports** this amendment, we believe that the amendment proposed by the County Council, **County Planning Authority**, offers stronger protection for the environment.

Dispute Resolution Commission: The LWV-Volusia County **supports** this amendment.

County Council Vice-chair: The LWV-Volusia County has **no position** on this amendment.

County Council Compensation: The LWV-Volusia County has **no position** on this amendment.

County Planning Authority: The LWV-Volusia County **supports** this amendment.

To help with the proposed amendments to the FL Constitution, we have printed the LWV-Florida statements of support, opposition, and no position.

LWV-FLORIDA STATEMENT OF 2006 POSITIONS REGARDING PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE FLORIDA CONSTITUTION

www.lwvfla.org

AMENDMENT #1: STATE BUDGET AND PLANNING PROCESS

The League of Women Voters of Florida **supports** this amendment. The League supports a state fiscal structure that is equitable in its distribution of the tax responsibility and responsive to public needs. The League also believes that a system is needed to measure effectiveness of expenditures of tax dollars in order to provide fiscal accountability and responsibility.

AMENDMENT #3: BROADER PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS AND PETITIONS

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League strongly supports the right of citizens to propose amendments to the Florida Constitution through the citizen initiative process. In 1996, the League adopted the position that Florida should have both constitutional and statutory initiatives and that criteria should be developed to determine whether an initiative is placed in the constitution or in the statutes. If citizens had the option of passing statutory initiatives in Florida, then the League would favor requiring a supermajority of those voting to pass a constitutional amendment.

AMENDMENT #4: PROTECT PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, FROM ADDICTION, DISEASE AND OTHER HEALTH HAZARDS OF USING TOBACCO.

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that this issue should be addressed by statute rather than by amending the Constitution. In addition, the League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

AMENDMENT #6: INCREASED HOMESTEAD EXEMPTION

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption. The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

AMENDMENT #7: PERMANENTLY DISABLED VETERANS' DISCOUNT ON HOMESTEAD AD VALOREM TAX

The League of Women Voters of Florida **opposes** this amendment. The League believes that there should be no increase or extension of the homestead exemption. The League believes that no source of revenue should be specified, limited, exempted or prohibited in the Constitution.

AMENDMENT #8: EMINENT DOMAIN

The League of Women Voters of Florida has **no position** on this issue.

LWVF STATEMENT OF 2007 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Government in Florida: Promote an open government that is responsive to the people of the state.

Florida Constitution: Support basic law that assures a government responsive and accountable to the people of the state.

Election Law: Support of measures to protect, extend and encourage the use of the franchise and to advocate fair methods of financing political campaigns.

Natural Resources in Florida: Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

Growth Management: Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

Water Resources: Support public policies that promote conservation of freshwater and its availability for environmental, public supply, agricultural, industrial and mining uses on a priority basis with the environment and public supply first.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT STUDY CONTINUES TO BE ON HOLD: WAITING PATIENTLY FOR ELECTION OUTCOME

Members of the Local Government Study for the LWVVC have voted to wait until after the election on November 7th to hold their next Study Committee Meeting. There are several issues that are presently on the ballot which, if passed or defeated, will have an affect on the study results.

Committee members: Larry Moore, Summer Clayton, Rosemarie Gore, Sandra Horikami have been extremely committed to observing both the committee and sub-committee work of the Charter Review Commission and have been observers for some of the municipalities and the county.

With all this background knowledge we hope to tackle this final phase of our Local Government study with the tools needed. Thanks go to the committee members for their hard, committed work for the League.

Jean Snyder

New Website and E-mail

In September the League of Women Voters of Volusia County web site migrated from Betty Johnson's personal space on Stetson University's server to its own domain. We now own the web domain name of [lwvvc.org](http://www.lwvvc.org).

Our new web site is at <http://www.lwvvc.org>.

All of the links and information are still there, but the new url or address will be much easier to remember and to give to others. All information on the web site is still available to members of the public, so we will continue to edit The Voter to remove personal email addresses and phone numbers as desired.

Along with this, we have also established a **new email address: mail@lwvvc.org**. The new site allows us to set up LWVVC mail addresses for our officers if desired. The first one is president@lwvvc.org for mail to be sent to our president by members of the public or others who might not know her personal email. *Betty Johnson*

ALTERNATIVE VOTING PROCESSES STUDY

Is it fair to have someone win an election when they don't have a majority of the vote? Should voters be able to rank their choice of candidates for a particular race? Should voters be able to vote for anyone in a race who they feel could and would do the job? If a voter is rank ordering the candidates in a race, would it be fair to assign a pre-determined number of points to each ranking? Should we have a voting process in place where every candidate is ranked, and if there is no majority winner, the candidate with the least number of votes is eliminated and their second and third choice votes are moved to the remaining two candidates?

Interesting ideas, don't you think? Well, come to the November League of Women Voters meeting and learn about each of these processes. At the end of the explanation and discussion, we will give Volusia's input to the League of Women Voters of Florida.

All of the background information can be found on our website, <http://www.LWVVC.org>. for those of you who would like to get an in depth background of this discussion.

See you on November 18, 2006 at the Palmetto Club for brunch at 9:30 a.m.

ANN SMITH

Central Florida Regional Growth Vision

A seven county region (Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole, and Volusia counties) is engaged in a 15-month study to establish a 50-year vision of Central Florida upon reaching its 3.6 million projected population increase. The planning strategy is to look past county and city boundaries thereby following an element of the 2005 growth management law, and likely becoming a statewide model.

Both the Florida Departments of Community Affairs (FDCA) and Transportation (FDOT) along with the Central Florida MPO Alliance, the East Central Florida Regional Planning Council (ECFRPC), myregion.org, and the Regional Chamber of Commerce join in partnership for funding support.

Work began in early 2006 and its September Mid Project Report was released at the October 12th meeting in Orlando. The result of this report was drawn from a scatter of workshops throughout the seven counties, building consensus from civic leadership and community engagement. Two newly organized leadership groups: the Central Florida Regional Leadership Council and the Central Florida Council of Mayors, represent a significant contribution to regional cooperation. Most remarkable at this point is the participants' preference for greater preservation of green space accomplished by focusing on higher density in urban development and clustering.

Yet to be addressed is the issue of standardizing land use across the state. The University of Florida's Land Use Conflict Information System (LUCIS) mapping tool is being considered and is under close evaluation.

Prior to the completion of this effort, expected next June, another meeting will be held in January 2007 to incorporate the final input from the 7000 participants. Responsible for this incorporation is Shelley Lauten, project director for myregion.org, a regional development group coordinating this project.

Rosemarie Gore

News from the Observer Corps

This has been an interesting two months for those who have been observing the committees, commissions and council leading up to the elections. My heartfelt thanks go out to the members of the Observer Corps and especially Shirley Beleff, Carolyn Creech, Natalie Dix and Gordon Williamson, Sandy Horikami and Helen Johnson. We have witnessed turf battles within turf battles. The cities feel that the county wants to take over “their” territory, and they rightly claim that the voters asked for “home rule” in 1970. Home rule was an innovative move, and many counties across Florida used our lead to vote their own home rule system of government. It does seem intuitively true that the closer to home you get to the elected official and her rulings, the easier it is to see what her decisions are and whether the decisions are in your best interest.

On the other hand, there is a lot to be said about a body of government which can distance itself from the infighting of the separate enclaves and view the county and its people as a whole and yet be still close enough for the citizen (not the lobbyist) to have influence. The pendulum is swinging. Cities compete with each other to grab land needed for their tax base. We rely on the county to protect us from the competition of land and water grabs which adversely effects citizens in divergent communities. Smart Growth Management Commission gave us a good start, but, according to some on the Charter Review Committee, the commission was too large and unwieldy and ineffective for those reasons. Cities were voting to drop out of Water Authority of Volusia despite their major inroads into managing water. Cities wanted to hold onto their autonomy, turf battle were emerging.

This is clearly evidenced by Deltona’s attempt to annex land within the environment corridor. In this case the County moved in to stop this encroachment. The area is part of an arbitrarily outlined area off limits to development known as the Natural Resource Management Area (NRMA- pronounced norma). NRMA was created when the voters across Florida overwhelming voted for Florida Forever to preserve a piece of old Florida. NRMA is contiguous to an environmental corridor which runs 200 miles down the heart of Florida involving cooperation with several counties. The need to have the County oversee land management was clearly evident when the city of Daytona Beach Shores annexed a parcel of land from the county zoned single family, and immediately rezoned it multifamily to put up yet another condominium on the river, much to the chagrin of the neighbors who all live in single family homes. In a moment of great cooperation, Volusia County protested the plan and the mayor, Greg Northrup, withdrew the plan for further study.

Originally Daytona Beach Shores voted to fight amendments Comprehensive Planning Districts and County Planning Authority at the August 23rd meeting and set aside \$2,500. in tax payer money to do so. Councilman Ron Brown voted against spending taxpayer money to defeat these two amendments. At their September 27 meeting Northrup urged the commissioners to vote against all 7 of the Amendments. Again Councilman Brown was the sole negative vote against. At a meeting in Ponce Inlet, he stated that he tried to get the commission to include cities in the process. In cities across Volusia, objections were voiced and money earmarked to defeat the Charter Review Amendments in the name of “home rule”. Unfortunately consensus was the process used in deciding the wording of the amendments. It is difficult to get unanimous agreement under consensus. You go with sacrifices on each member’s wording. In a meeting explaining the amendments to the citizens of Ponce Inlet, Northrup stated that if they would vote against the amendments on Comprehensive Planning Districts and County Planning Authority, he would personally organize a group to come up with more equitable Amendments. If the Charter Review

(Continued on page 6)

Commission couldn't agree on that, I'm wondering how the cities are going to come up with something which satisfies all the vested interest parties. I would like him to try, but if the amendments are approved is when to start that fight. Not approving the current amendments leaves us with a system that isn't working.

Observers read Judy's letter which outlined the many meetings League members attended, over 150, and the League positions. Most cities responded politely with a thank you, including New Smyrna Beach, Holly Hill, South Daytona, and Orange City. Daytona Beach Shores cancelled the meeting at which I was to read Judy's letter, and they don't meet again until the Wednesday following election day. Lake Helen voted to support all of the charter amendments except the Dispute Resolution Commission.

(Sandy Horikami) Ponce Inlet voted not to oppose the amendments. (Pat Gadbow) as did Port Orange (Shirley Belleff) Cile Rice will read the letter to the Daytona Beach Commission next week.

The cities which voted to oppose some or all of the amendments ranged in taxpayer expenditure from the high in Deltona of \$80,000 down to the low in Daytona Beach Shore of \$2,500. See Mark Lane's News-Journal column, Friday, October 27. As noted above, Ponce Inlet, Port Orange, and Orange City is using 0 dollars. There may be others. I scoured city agendas trying to learn what each city had done, but I was not successful for every city According to James Miller of the News-Journal, Daytona Beach and Deltona have together put \$183,000 taxpayer dollars into a political action committee that opposes all the amendments.

Volusia School District is disseminating information at school and community events detailing the impact of the Charter Amendment on School Planning. The School Planning Amendment will ensure that when residential development is increased, school crowding is addressed. This Amendment will insure that the pace of residential development coincides with the availability of public school facilities. "The school planning amendment is necessary to prevent our public schools from being surprised with a flood of students, thus impairing the ability to serve the community. Schools are an essential part of any community, and for that reason, must be involved early in the planning process," says Pat Drago, Executive Director of Facilities Services, Volusia County Schools. Flyers, video, Frequently Asked Questions, and a PSA (public service announcement) on Amendment #1 are available at the Volusia County Schools web site. (Ann Harrell)

The cities were approached to sign onto a petition circulated by the Volusia League of Cities. The following is from <http://www.citiesagainstconsolidatedgovernment.com/> about who they are and why they oppose the Charter Amendments.

"We are a coalition of Citizens, Home Owners Associations, Chambers of Commerce, Civic Organizations and Cities who opposes changing the County Charter. We believe transferring this enormous amount of power to the County Council is a move toward consolidated government like Miami-Dade or Jacksonville."

"It's not about growth, it's about power. Currently city officials make planning decisions inside city borders and county officials make those decisions for unincorporated parts of the county. That's the way it should be. But these Charter Amendments take authority away from city officials and give that power to the County Council." (from their website)

In other news, the Orange City Commissioners voted to give ACT \$12,500 as a special, one-time allocation to be matched by the county. (Betty Johnson)

Patricia Gadbow, Chair

Observer Corps

VOTER SERVICE

To my knowledge, this has been the busiest year for Voter Service that I can recall. We have conducted candidates forums and/or information sessions about amendments to the Florida Constitution and the County Charter all over Volusia County. We have partnered with the Daytona Beach News Journal, AAUW in New Smyrna and Daytona Beach, and the Citizens of Ormond Beach. Bishop's Glen, the Unitarian Church, The Cloisters, and Woodland Towers in Deland, the Southeast Volusia chapter of the NAACP, and Bear Creek, to name a few, asked us to present our information on the amendments. Thank you to all of the volunteers who gave up their valuable time to be moderators, question screeners, timers, helpers, and presenters. A special thank you to Judy Moore, Sandi Horikami, Nancy Ryan, and Betty Johnson for presenting the amendments to so many groups. Having said that, this truly has been a total League effort. By the time you read this, the election will be over, and hopefully we will like the results. Regardless, be proud to be a League of Women Voters of Volusia County member and know that we have made every effort to fulfill our mission of educating the citizens of Volusia County. *Amm Smith*

Progressions

We regretfully accepted the resignation of Sue Johnson, LWVVC Secretary, at our October board meeting. Sue has done an outstanding job the past three years of taking minutes and getting them to board members before each meeting. We will miss her.

We are happy to report that one of newest members, Karina Kedzierska, a Daytona Beach Community College student, has joined our board. She is a very active board member, assisting with three candidate forums to date and volunteering for the Alternative Voting Systems study. Yea, Karina!

Yvette Giles has recently joined the LWVVC board as the Public Relations Chair. Both her bachelor's degree and master's degree are in media communications. How lucky can we get!

As a result of her active role in partisan politics, Nancy Ryan has resigned her board position as Legislative Action Chair. She will be replaced by Mary Derr, until the end of this LWVVC year, as the off-board Legislative Action Chair. Mary is a seasoned League advocate working primarily in the areas of child welfare and the environment. We are glad that Mary could help us out, and we'll miss Nancy.

Lois Filipic has kindly agreed to serve as secretary until the end of the LWVVC year. We're most indebted to Lois.

Join the League of Women Voters Today!

It's easy! Just send your check to:

LWV of Volusia County, P.O. Box 9695, Daytona Beach, FL 32120

\$ 50 Individual Membership • \$25 Student Membership • \$75 Family Membership

Name _____ Phone _____ Business Phone _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email address _____ FAX _____

Email: mail@lwvvc.org

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Website: <http://www.lwvvc.org>

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