**Basics for LWV Diablo Valley Observers**

1. Do some homework:
   1. Check on how the public gets information – are agendas online? Do they include backup materials for agenda items, or can those be requested? Are the meetings televised, and if so, where and when are they aired?
   2. Get set up to get information – sign up for agendas, figure out how to find the meetings on TV if they are available, check how to get to the meetings in person, including parking arrangements.
   3. Learn what to look for (this won’t happen all at once!) Bookmark the Brown Act resources, check on League priority issues that may come up during meetings.
2. Represent!
   1. Introduce yourself briefly to the body at a public comment period when you begin observing. You can also present a letter of introduction if the Board has written one.
   2. Wear your League button.
   3. Be ready to talk to elected/appointed officials and to the public about why the League observes the meetings and the role of the observer.
   4. BUT don’t go beyond your role. Observers watch and listen, but don’t speak on agenda items – if that is needed, it’s your job to notify the League members who speak for the League.
3. Gather information from each meeting (and from what goes on around it).
   1. Use the observer report form as a guide to what to note down, such as any problems with transparency or process, particularly if the problems are recurring.
   2. Focus on the issues that are of League concern. Others may be of interest to you, but you don’t need to take copious notes on agenda items that won’t inform the League.
   3. Public comments on agenda items can be repetitive and irritating, but can also suggest potential allies if the League wants to act on an issue. Make note of speakers and groups that may fall into this category. Also note any opponents who may carry weight with decisionmakers for some particular reason and whose influence may provide a hurdle for League advocates (i.e., a neighborhood group or developer).
   4. Pay attention to personal dynamics between individual decisionmakers and between the decisionmakers and the public. This can tell you something about whom the League would lobby and how.
4. Make your time and information count – report back!
   1. Use the observer report form and add whatever additional notes, backup materials, etc. will make issues clear to other League members.
   2. Consider writing a Voter/website article about an issue you have been following in these meetings that the League cares about.
   3. Be ready to participate in advocacy meetings if an issue becomes one that the League wants to influence. Your knowledge of the decisionmakers and the background discussions, including what public comment says about community attitudes, is extremely valuable!