

HEADLINES

December 2019



December 2020

President's Message

Greetings! These past several months, your League has been busy doing what we do best. Encouraging [civil discourse](#) through our partnership with the Library on the monthly Common Ground program. Working with the youth of our community to teach civic engagement through Students Inside Albany, Running and Winning, Vote 18, and the Marge Davies Memorial Scholarship whose recipient this year, Louis Melendez Sanchez, wrote of beginning "to appreciate the power of respectful listening and a willingness to change" (a good choice if you are looking for a personal mantra).

On the election front, LWVWP worked to promote an informed and engaged electorate with [Candidates Forums](#), [Vote 411.ORG](#) and printed Voters Guide (because you can't know the players without a scorecard), as well as concerted efforts to promote Early Voting, and get out the vote. And we finally have a revised website, [LWVWP.ORG](#). We hope it will be where you turn for information about all things electoral. Also, as coverage by traditional media of local government wanes, [LWVWP.ORG](#) will offer information about the Common Council and the city and school budgets.

Underlying all our activities is the shared conviction that our democracy thrives, grows and is strengthened [when there is](#) participation by all in the community. A model of civil discourse has been LWVWP's Candidates Forums where all the candidates participate, listen respectfully to their fellow candidates, and

offer thoughtful responses to their constituent's questions. There may be a paucity of civility on the national stage but locally your League strives to be engaged with our community and through our work show what is possible when people listen to each other.

And it should be appreciated that all of this is the work of a small group of League members. They are enthusiastic and committed, and they are a pleasure to work with. I am grateful, and in this holiday season, thankful, to all who volunteer their time to the League.

Looking ahead, LWVWP will be working on a number of fronts. We will start the New Year with efforts to promote Census 2020. The League is member of White Plains' Complete Count committee and we hope to work with other local organizations to maximize the response rate to the census. And don't forget that April 1, 2020 is National Census day (no joke!).

In 2020 your League will be actively involved in the primary and general elections. We expect to hold Candidates Forums for state races and for the race to fill Nita Lowey's seat in the 17th Congressional District. And with the Presidential primary scheduled for April 28, 2020 we will start our Vote 18 program to register high school seniors in February.

Common Ground will resume in January 2020 partnering with both the White Plains Library and the YWCA. Each monthly session will focus on a different topic with the unifying theme of community. This is exciting because the notion of what constitutes a community often differs depending upon context. It will be interesting to see what definitions emerge and where there is overlap among different communities.

I hope you will consider all of this when you receive LWVWP's annual fund raising letter shortly. The bulk of our membership dues go to support the New York state and National Leagues in the important work they do. The funds raised now will support, among other things, the costs of sending two students to Albany, the Marge Davies Scholarship, printing and distributing the Voters Guides, supporting the VOTE411.ORG website, and the new and improved LWVWP website, LWVWP.ORG.

In closing I thank all of you who support the League and the work we do. On behalf of the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of White Plains I wish you and your families a warm and joyful holiday season.

In League,
Stephen Cohen
President

Please help further the League's mission of encouraging an informed and engaged electorate by participating in our annual winter fund raising campaign. Watch for the fundraising letter that you will receive in early December or go to LWVWP.org for a donation form.



Common Ground, the community conversation where participants can express their viewpoints and listen to different perspectives in a civic environment will continue in 2020. The YWCA's Courageous Conversations, the White Plains Public Library and the White Plains League of Women Voter's are collaborating in continuing the Common Ground Conversations.

People of all viewpoints are welcome to participate, and we are committed to creating an atmosphere that is safe for everyone who attends. It will be a place to share experiences, opinions and solutions to understand how people in our area are actually affected by the policies, issues and events that we hear about on the news and media.

We believe that together, we can reach across what divides us to create Common Ground.

We will meet 3rd Thursday of every month January-May, 2020 (except for March, which meets the 4th Thursday)
6pm-8PM
Community Room

White Plains Public Library

January 16th- What is a community?

February 20th- Economic inequality/affordable housing and the impact upon creating a larger community

March 26th-Immigration- How to be a welcoming community?

April 16th- Social Media- The impact of social media upon the interaction within a larger community

May 21st-Civic Engagement- How to encourage a political conversation based upon facts?

Did you vote early in the November elections? League of Women Voters of New York State has published a report on its Early Voting Survey. [Read it here.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NOVEMBER 2019 COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

by Clifford Blau

At its November 4, 2019, meeting, the White Plains Common Council:

- Approved a three-year contract ending June 2021 with the Professional Fire Fighters Association.
- Approved a project to repair Longview Avenue and the associated borrowing.
- Transferred \$128,000 from the sale of 146 Orawaumpum St. to the Debt Service Fund.
- Scheduled a public hearing on December 2 for a hospital pedestrian bridge.
- Removed 13 city-owned parcels, mainly on Sunset Drive and Hilltop Drive in Woodcrest Heights, from the tax roll and dedicated them to open space.
- Raised water rates approximately 4%, the smallest increase in years.
- Approved an agreement with the New York Knicks for a youth basketball clinic and other opportunities. Maybe the kids can teach the Knicks to play.

At the Citizens to be Heard session before the meeting there was just one speaker, this was on the subject of health benefits for retired firefighters, which issue will apparently be resolved soon.

The calendar of upcoming meetings for the various boards and agencies can be found at <https://www.cityofwhiteplains.com/853/Common-Council-BoardsCommissions-Mtgs-Ca>

Meetings and Citizens to be Heard can be viewed at <http://whiteplainsny.swagit.com/live/> or on your government cable access channel.

White Plains City School District News:

Here are the [Highlights](#) of the November 2019 White Plains Board of Education meeting, courtesy of Michele Schoenfeld.

Important Dates (mark your calendar!)

2020	
Annual Winter Party	Sunday March 29, 3:00 p.m.—5:00 p.m.
Census Day	Wednesday, April 1
Vote 18	<i>February; dates TBD</i>
WP City Budget Review and Consensus Meeting	<i>TBD</i>
Presidential Primaries	Early Voting: April 18—April 26 Primary Election Day: Tuesday April 28
WP School Board Candidates Forum (if necessary)	Wednesday May 13, 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
WPCSD Budget Vote & School Board Election	Tuesday May 19, Noon—9:00 p.m.
Annual Membership Meeting & Dinner	May 19, 6:30 p.m.—9:00 p.m.
Marge Davies scholarship @ WPHS Senior Awards Night	June 1, 7:00 p.m., WPHS
Candidates Forum for 17 th US CD Primaries	<i>June ?? 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</i>
Candidates Forum for 88 th NYS AD Primaries	<i>June ?? 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</i>
Congressional Primaries	Early Voting: June 13—June 21 Primary Election Day: Tuesday June 23
Annual Picnic	<i>June ??, 6:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.</i>
LWV National Convention; Washington, D.C.	June 25—June 27
Candidates Forum for 17 th CD Election	<i>October ?? 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</i>
Candidates Forum for 88 th NYS AD Election	<i>October ?? 7:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.</i>
General Election	Early Voting: October 24—1 November Election Day: Tuesday November 3

LWVWP Board meeting schedule

Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month from September through June. LWVWP members are welcome to attend. Meetings are held at the White Plains Public Library. If you would like to attend let Stephen Cohen know (lwwwp.president@gmail.com) so he can be sure to provide you the agenda and meeting material. Scheduled meeting dates are: 12/11; 01/08/2020; 02/12; 3/11; 4/15; 5/13; 6/10.

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