

Presentation to Community Participation Team

May 4, 2020 Building F Board Rm 4-6pm

## **League of Women Voters- Williamsburg Area (LWV-WA):**

### **Origins**

The national League of Women Voters started when women won the right to vote. LWV-WA has served the area of the City of Williamsburg, James City County, and upper York County for over 50 years. We currently have a membership of 277 individuals.

### **Our Mission and Roles**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government, influencing public policy through education and advocacy. **We never support or oppose any political party or candidate.** The League of Women Voters has two separate and distinct roles.

- **Voters Service/Citizen Education:** we present unbiased nonpartisan information about elections, the voting process, and issues, as a **nonprofit public policy educational organization**. For voter service and citizen education activities, we use funds from the League of Women Voters **Education Fund**, which is a **501(c)(3) nonprofit educational organization**.
- **Action/Advocacy:** also nonpartisan, but after topical study and position creating, advocate for or against particular policies in the public interest. The League of Women Voters, a membership organization, conducts action and advocacy and is a nonprofit **501(c)(4)** corporation. Our **Visions, Beliefs and Intentions** guide our activities.

### **Vision, Beliefs, and Intentions: The principles that guide our organization**

The goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political membership organization which:

- acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels
- builds citizen participation in the democratic process
- engages communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy

### **The League's Land Use Position**

The League welcomes the opportunity to provide input to the Community Participation Team as part of the review of the James City County Comprehensive Plan. Our national, state and local positions (see excerpts below) provide the guidelines for the management of our lands.

The League supports:

- Management of land as a finite resource not as a commodity, since land ownership, whether public or private, carries responsibility for stewardship;
- Land-use planning that reflects conservation and wise management of resources
- Identification of areas of critical concern such as:
  - Fragile or historic lands, where development could result in irreversible damage (such as shore-lands of rivers, lakes, streams, estuaries, and bays; rare or valuable ecosystems and geological formations; significant wildlife habitats; unique scenic or historic areas; wetlands; deserts)
  - Renewable resource lands, where development could result in the loss of productivity (such as watersheds, aquifers and aquifer-recharge areas, significant agricultural and grazing lands, forest lands)
  - Natural hazard lands, where development could endanger life and property (such as floodplains, areas with high seismic or volcanic activity, areas of unstable geologic, ice or snow formations)

### **Desired Future Outcomes:**

In order to meet the above position elements, the LWV-WA urges:

1. Reestablishing the JCC Preservation of Development Rights (PDR) program, which would provide for the acquisition of land through conservation easements for the protection of historic resources, scenic by-ways, and agricultural lands
2. Providing adequate funding for the management of programs such as PDR, agri-tourism or eco-tourism to ensure that the issues relating to open space, agriculture, transportation, recreation, and historical site preservation are addressed
3. Instituting a Rural Economic Development Committee to identify various rural economic development uses (examples: equestrian facilities, alpaca farm, tours of historic sites, fishing, kayaking, and agri-tourism – visits to a brewery, farm and vineyard tours, and corn mazes). These would be alternatives to residential development of our rural lands.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Schilling  
President, LWV-WA