

## The League of Women Voters of Greenwich

### Introduction:

The League Position Statements are organized into three distinct categories:

1. Active
2. Accomplished
3. Positions Library

### Active:

We will include only those undergoing current study, have an informed specialist, and/or sustain active member involvement. In this way our positions will be understood by members, be relevant and up to date. The two positions to remain active are:

1. Affordable Housing
2. Water; Long Island Sound, Drinking Water Supply Protection

### Affordable Housing (Amended from 1982 Town Plan of Development position)

- Greenwich has long been home to people from many different backgrounds and walks of life. In order to retain this historically diverse population, the town should encourage mixed-income housing wherever possible and make town-owned land available for affordable housing where this is in keeping with other goals.
- The League believes that our community is best served when a variety of residential types and densities are available and when there are housing opportunities for people of low and moderate incomes.
- Mixed Use Neighborhoods - encouraging the mixed residential and commercial use of land in areas zoned for business.

### Historical Preservation (Adopted June 2005)

- Policies and measures that address height, scale and design of new development taking into consideration the character of the existing neighborhood.
- Preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures.

### Planned Commercial Development

- Planning & Zoning Commission efforts to plan and control the growth of the commercial sector.
- Preservation of the small neighborhood character of shopping areas outside of the Central Greenwich Business District, particularly through the review and revision of the zoning regulations to achieve the stated goals of the local business retail zones.

Regional Approaches - Town identification and consideration of regional approaches to land use that will promote local land-use goals.

Plan Implementation - Measures to ensure that the goals of the next Plan of Conservation and Development are observed and achieved.

### Water

- Long Island Sound (Adopted May 1992)

In conformity with the National League's position that natural resources should be conserved and protected to assure their future availability, the Greenwich League affirms the specific need to manage the impact of development on Long Island Sound. The Town should consider the impact of development on Long Island Sound when evaluating development that:

- Has an impact on open space, parkland, or farmland even if at present it is zoned for development.
- Increases suburban sprawl.
- Necessitates more sewage treatment plants.
- Uses open land when densely populated.
- Is available for redevelopment.
- Causes cumulative impacts of development on the Sound.

The watershed or drainage basin of Long Island Sound is the whole area in which all the streams and rivers carry water to the Sound. Since the Sound's watershed extends from the Southern Canada to Long Island, the Town should actively support management of development not only within 1,000 feet from the shoreline (as at present under the Coastal Management Act) but also within all communities of the Sound and Watershed areas including areas that do not immediately adjoin the Sound and areas beyond Connecticut in the region that impacts the Sound.

The League believes the Town should actively support the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) of the Long Island Sound Study. The League supports having local input at the planning stages of land use plans.

The League believes that to manage development effectively, the Town will need to implement a combination of local fiscal measures such as local taxes, voluntary private participation, fines and penalties dedicated to environmental issues, and fees levied on developers.

**Accomplished** - will include Ethics Policy as it relates to Town Employees

### Ethics - (Adopted April 2009)

The League of Women Voters of Greenwich believes that the public should have confidence in the integrity of its government. Town government officials and employees should be held accountable for carrying out their duties in both an effective and an

ethically responsible manner. The Code of Ethics and procedures for its administration should be clear, transparent, comprehensive and effective.

Therefore, the LWVG believes that the Town of Greenwich should:

- Ensure that every newly elected, appointed or employed town officer (as defined by the Municipal Code 2-6a3) read and acknowledge understanding of the Town's Code of Ethics;
- Create an interpretive companion guide to the Ethics Code which could include examples of ethical and unethical behavior;
- Develop a mechanism for the annual distribution of the Code of Ethics Disclosure Form to all town officers and explicit procedures for collecting, evaluating and storing completed disclosure forms;
- Provide sufficient funding and resources (e.g., storage and clerical assistance) to support the work of the Board of Ethics, including annual dissemination and collection of disclosure forms and issuance of the code to town officers.

The LWVG believes that the Town of Greenwich Code of Ethics should be amended to include:

- Non-financial conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest;
- An expanded gift policy section to address "pattern" of gifts, for example, "no town officer should routinely accept any gift or item that could give the appearance of influencing the performance or nonperformance of duties";
- Requiring the appointing authority to acknowledge in a timely manner the findings of the Board of Ethics and report action taken;
- Prohibiting the divulging of confidential information by town officers;
- Increasing the current \$100 threshold for filing a Code of Ethics Disclosure Form;
- Requiring town officers to recuse themselves from deliberations on issues where a conflict of interest exists.
- Prohibiting town officers from representing private interests before the town related to his/her area of service to the Town;
- Prohibiting town officers from using public resources not otherwise available to the public.

The LWVG believes that the Town of Greenwich should:

- Enact a town ordinance that establishes a system to enable disciplinary action as a result of Board of Ethics findings relating to town officers.

All other Local Positions are archived. Any of these positions may be reactivated if or when there is an interest or need.

## **Archival Positions/Local Positions**

### **Government**

#### **Board of EStimate and Taxation (BET) - adopted June 2007**

Currently in Greenwich each major political party nominates no more than six candidates for the BET; all twelve are automatically elected unless there are write-ins or candidates from other parties. To promote accountability to its citizenry, the LWVG supports:

- Choice in electing the BET
- Terms of the BET members being staggered rather than the entire BET being elected in one year (this would require at a four year term.)
- Selection of the chair and vice-chair of the BET by the current BET members.

#### **Executive Branch of Town Government - adopted May 1983, Expanded May 2000, Amended May 2007**

In order to promote efficiency and accountability, the LWVG supports the strengthening of the executive branch of town government by:

- Making the First Selectman responsible for all town administrative functions where permitted by state statute, including supervision of the staff of the current independent agencies, their boards then becoming advisory;
- Establishing a permanent position of professional director of administration reporting to the First Selectman;
- Requiring the First Selectman to prepare a five-year long-range plan for the town;
- Electing the Board of Selectman for a term of four years instead of two.

#### **Town Budget Process - Adopted August 1992, Revised November 1992, Reviewed 2008, Revised 2009**

The LWVG agrees with the LWVCT position on Fiscal Policy with the regard to the state budget which states in part: "a budget should be an effective policy making tool. The budget should be based on uniform accounting and reporting procedures and should identify all money available for allocation. The budget should contain clearly stated goals accompanied by enough detail to enable priority setting among programs; financial data on past performance in meeting goals; economic impact data and program costs."

The League believes that the Greenwich budget should reflect the requirements and priorities of the community as a whole. Timely formal public input is needed at appropriate phases of the budget process. Budget information and documents should be adequate to allow the public's informed participation in the budget process.

The budget process should include formal mechanisms:

- To develop town-wide long-range and short-range financial plans.
- To determine priorities among programs at levels of service agreed upon by the public.
- To set management goals and objectives.

As part of the budget process, productivity and efficiency of the delivery of Town services should be reviewed. It is desirable to institute measures to encourage productivity and efficiency on the part of Town departments.

The League believes that Charter revision is necessary to make the preceding changes a permanent part of the budget process. For several years, the above recommendations have been imbedded in the BET annual budget message and calendar. However, they have not yet been incorporated in the CHarter to become a permanent part of the budget process.

### **Natural Resources**

**Greenwich Land-Use Planning** - Adopted June 1995, Amended 1999, Amended 2004, Amended 2005

Effective town planning outlines projected development, formulates policies to preserve resources and prepares the town to meet anticipated needs. The town's primary land use planning tool is its plan of conservation and development. The plan sets forth the type and extent of development desired by the community - its goals - and the policies and strategies - the blueprint for action - to achieve those goals. The plan itself is not a law; rather it is a guide for the Planning & Zoning Commission and other town bodies as they formulate policies, draft laws, review regulations, and make budgetary decisions.

As the town undertakes periodic reviews and updates of the Town of Greenwich Plan of Conservation and Development and the regulations that support it, the League recommends that the Town:

- Review and update existing land-use goals in light of current development pressures and the irreversible impact of development.
- Coordinate land-use actions among all branches to town government.
- Educate and actively involve residents in land-use planning.
- Formulate and/or strengthen town policies and measures to achieve the plan's stated goals.

**In planning for Greenwich's future, the LWVG supports the following land-use planning positions:**

Citizen Participation

Increased, timely, and expanded opportunities for public participation and education on land use planning.

Drinking Water Supply & Protection (Adopted 1982, Amended 1985, Amended 1996, Amended 2006)

Policies and measures that ensure an adequate and potable water supply for residents served by the public water supply and those using private wells. Measures can include but not necessarily limited to:

- An Advisory Water Supply Committee comprised of town representatives, e.g., Department of Health and Conservation Commission, and volunteer to make recommendations regarding the supply and protection of all drinking water resources.
- Town development programs and/or regulations to safeguard water quality and water quantity. In particular, the Town should keep abreast of weather patterns as well as the amount of residential and commercial development in the town, particularly in the watershed area.
- The establishment of a formal working relationship with all towns within the public water supply watershed to address our common watershed and/or water supply distribution problems.
- If necessary, the Town should engage a professional engineer, knowledgeable in water supply issues, as a consultant.

We further recommend that the Town Plan of Development include specific provisions to assure the adequacy of supply and the protection of all drinking water supply sources.

Open Space Preservation (Amended 1986 LAND BANK position)

The League believes that diminishing open space is a problem in Greenwich and that the Town should actively intervene to change this trend. We encourage preservation through existing or additional zoning incentives.

We also support the continuation of the Selectman's Land Acquisition Committee which has responsibility for compiling suitable criteria and planning for the acquisition of desirable properties. Upon approval by the Board of Selectmen, this agency may negotiate, on behalf of the First Selectman, to acquire these properties including easements, development rights and other lesser interests. Land should be acquired primarily for open space but the League feels that the Town should have the option of using the land for a variety of community purposes, as needed. Properties acquired for open space in the past or future should be dedicated to preserve them from future development.

Purchases for open space preservation should be financed from a dedicated fund subject to a "release of funds" by the BET and the RTM. Sources of this dedicated fund are not limited to but could be any one or a combination of the following: (1) through a

percentage of the Town capital budget which accrues annually or (2) through state enabling legislation allowing the town to dedicate funds through one or any combination of the following:

- Conveyance tax on the sale of real estate.
- Surcharge to the regular town property tax.
- Retroactive capture tax or a flat-rate tax on the sale for development of tax-exempt property, or of property taxed at less than full rate.

*\*Open Space is defined as, "Any area of land, including but not limited to, forest land, tidal and inland wetlands, and farm land, the preservation or restriction of the use of which would:*

- Maintain and enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources.
- Protect natural streams or water supply.
- Promote conservation of soils, wetlands, beaches, or tidal marshes.
- Enhance the value to the public of abutting or neighboring parks, forests, wildlife preserves, nature reservations or sanctuaries, or other open spaces.
- Enhance public recreational opportunities.
- Preserve historic sites.
- Promote orderly urban or suburban development."

Property Acquisitions by the Town of Greenwich (Adopted April 1985)

The League believes that the Town should consider all of the following questions in determining the desirability of acquiring property for the Town:

- Reasons for acquiring the property, including but not limited to:
- Type of property in short supply.
- Unique needs, including the examination of potential future benefits or useful life of property.
- Need to relieve overburden on existing facilities.
- Protection of resources, such as watersheds, open space, etc. - enhancement of existing needs and uses.
- Protection of significant historic, cultural, anthropological, or aesthetic features.
- How could or would the property be used by the Town or by other owners?
- Could the Town adequately control the use of the property, including but not limited to: exchange for another property owned by the Town; lease, gift; condemnation:
- How would the acquisition be financed and what would be the impact of the financing package on the tax rate?

Transportation Management (Amended 2004)

Land use policies and decisions that provide for the coordination and planning of transportation, including:

- The establishment of an entity within Greenwich government, including community representatives, which would have the authority to plan, coordinate, implement and enforce transportation related initiatives.
- Support of numerous alternative modes of travel to improve circulation and reduce the number of automobiles on Greenwich roads.
- Measures to promote better parking management in the downtown business areas and other shopping areas.
- Measures that support the use of clean motor fuels where appropriate and stricter emission standards where possible.
- Road, bicycle and sidewalk path design that protects the landscape and character of Greenwich and provides for safe and convenient travel choices, taking into account factors including, but not limited to, distance from common destinations, density and topography.
- The same review process for all municipal road improvements projects as that required for commercial sector projects.
- Preservation of the small neighborhood character of shopping areas outside of the Central Greenwich BUiness District, particularly through the review and revision of the zoning regulations to achieve the stated goals of the local business retail zones.

#### Regional Approaches

Town identification and consideration of regional approaches to land use that will promote local land use goals.

#### Plan Implementation

Measures to ensure that the goals of the next Plan of Conservation and Development are observed and achieved.

**Waste Management** - Adopted March, 1985, Amended 1998, Reviewed 2008, Amended 2009

The League believes that there should be regular collection of solid and household hazardous waste financed by a combination of public and private sources. The League supports continuous education on the need to properly dispose of household hazardous waste.

#### **Social Policy -**

**Greenwich Public Health Care Services** - Adopted June 1997, Amended 2003, Amended 2004, Amended 2009



Public health care, according to the most widely accepted definition, is “the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health and efficiency through organized community agencies. Some services are for special groups such as infants and children, the physically or mentally disadvantaged, alcohol and drug abuses, and people with AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. Other public health services are for the general public. These include such things as the prevention and control of the spread of disease by immunization programs, sanitary disposal of sewage and solid waste, and protection of the quality of drinking water.

In conformity with the National League’s health care position that “every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes the prevention of disease, health promotion and education, primary care (including prenatal and reproductive health), acute care, long-term care and mental health care,” and to strengthen existing public health services in Greenwich, the League of Women Voters of Greenwich supports:

- Policies and measures that promote accessible and consistent health care for Greenwich residents.
- Measures to insure periodic monitoring to determine how well the Department of Health is meeting the changing healthcare needs of the community (e.g., an increase in the aging population; preparation for chemical, biological or nuclear disasters).
- Steps to maintain and improve home health care services in Greenwich.
- Recognition of respite care as a growing community need and efforts to find ways of providing it for the increasing number of caregivers for elderly, physically or intellectually disabled, or mentally ill individuals at home who need periodic release from their responsibilities.
- Measures to provide a level of local and regional mental health care services that is consistent with the National League of Women Voters position that every U.S. resident should have access to a basic level of care that includes mental health.
- Measures to educate the public about the dangers of underage drinking and measure to combat the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse by providing local and regional residential services and outpatient treatment to meet the needs of substance abusing women and their children, pregnant women, adolescents, and other addicted persons who are dependent on public services for treatment.
- Adequate care for people with intellectual disabilities, including provision of sufficient community residential and therapeutic services for those individuals not appropriately cared for in state institutions.

