



Voter

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March Calendar

- March 6, 2012 - 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Host: Aggie Leitheiser
- March 8, 2012**
Empty Bowls
St. Louis Park Rec Center
- March 14, 2012 - 12:30 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Met Council
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- March 15, 2012 - 7 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 3 Meeting
Topic: Met Council
Location: Aquila Commons Party Room
Assigned Dorothy Karlson
- March 24, 2012 - 9:30 am**
CMAL – see pg 4 for more information
Kings Crossing Apts
St. Paul, MN

Upcoming Events

- April 3, 2012 - 7 pm**
LWV SLP Board Meeting
Host: Barb Person
- April 11, 2012 - 12:30 pm**
LWV SLP Unit 2 Meeting
Topic: Gerrymandering Video
Location: Parkshore Card Room
- April 21, 2012**
58th Annual Meeting
Minneapolis Golf Club



Empty Bowls
March 8
St. Louis Park Rec Center

Mark your calendars for Empty Bowls!

It will be held on Thursday, March 8th, for both lunch and dinner. The place will be, as always, the Rec Center. Support STEP by attending this exciting community event.

Mark Your Calendars

58th Annual Meeting
League of Women Voters
St. Louis Park
April. 21, 2012
Minneapolis Golf Club

Speaker: Karen Atkinson
Children First

President's Message

Thanks to Senator Latz who answered questions and participated in a discussion at our annual legislative interview session on Saturday, January 21. It was a topic filled morning with questions from local members and the state league and a great opportunity to have in-depth discussion of upcoming legislative issues. Special thanks to Eilseen Knisely who made the arrangements for the meeting and to everyone who contributed to the traditional chili lunch which followed.

Those of us in LWV SLP were pleased to see that our legislative district and congressional district didn't change with the court drawn districts that were announced in late February. We will need to get used to a new number as we are now Senate District 46.

Unit 3 turned their proposed public meeting on the legislative proposal for Voter ID/suppression into a planning session at the recommendation of the state office. Other parts of the state were finding the public sessions often turned into a debate between those in favor of or opposed to Voter ID and the meetings weren't very comfortable or useful. We are making plans to take our message about no unnecessary barriers for voting to other groups as an alternative strategy. The Board will be discussing next steps at our March meeting.

Please keep April 21 in mind to attend our Annual meeting. It will again be at the Minneapolis Golf Club (which is surprisingly located in St. Louis Park) as it was a great place last year and they treated us well. The speaker this year will be Karen Atkinson, staff for "Children First" which has the vision that: All kids in St. Louis Park get the care and support they need to grow up happy, healthy and successful in a thriving community. Come hear how that vision has supported the children in our midst for the past 19 years.

Highlights from the LWV St. Louis Park Board meeting:

- Revised plans for public presentation about Voter ID to turn it into a planning and brainstorming session based on recommendations from LWV Minnesota.
- Reviewed plans for the March 8 Empty Bowls fundraiser for STEP, an activity supported by LWV SLP
- Reviewed plans for March meetings about Metropolitan Council
- Discussed arrangements for Annual meeting on April 21 at Minneapolis Golf Club with Karen Atkinson of St. Louis Park Children First as keynote speaker
- Appointed bylaws and budget committee members
- Discussed how to select the winner of the Scholarship for a St. Louis Park Senior from LWV SLP. Adequate funds have been raised to move forward.
- Discussed information from LWV US about the LWV logo or message being used in political campaigns without authorization and to encourage everyone to be watching for similar efforts locally.



Worth Noting

Amendment on Limiting Access to Contraceptive Services for Women Defeated! (NEW)

The U.S. Senate voted down (51-48) an amendment to an upcoming transportation bill that would limit access to contraceptive services for women if any employer or insurance plan has a "religious or moral objection" to it. See this [Washington Post article](#) on the close vote. Earlier this week, LWV sent out an [action alert](#) as well as a [letter to Senators](#), urging opposition to this amendment.

Have you heard the news?

After several years of decline, membership in the LWV is growing in numerous states across the country!

I believe that the reinvigoration of our LWV couldn't come at a better time – the challenges in our polarized political environment are so great right now.

Here are some of the results:

- 6% membership increases in Alabama
- 5% membership increases in South Carolina
- 3% membership increases in Wisconsin
- 8% membership increases in Indiana

This Week: February 14, 1920 – LWV is founded in Chicago; February 15, 1921 – Suffrage Monument in U.S. Capitol is dedicated

Capitol Letter™ Is Now On-line

The newest issue of the Capitol Letter™, LWV Minnesota's guide to legislative news, is now [online](#). The Capitol Letter™ is published bi-weekly during the legislative session to update our members on issues of concern to the LWV.

According to Wikipedia.org

What is Voter Suppression?

Voter suppression is a strategy to influence the outcome of an election by discouraging or preventing people from exercising their [right to vote](#). It is distinguished from [political campaigning](#) in that campaigning attempts to change likely voting behavior by changing the opinions of potential voters through persuasion and organization. Voter suppression instead attempts to reduce the number of voters who might vote against the candidate or proposition advocated by the suppressors.

The tactics of voter suppression can range from minor "dirty tricks" that make voting inconvenient, up to blatantly illegal activities that physically intimidate prospective voters to prevent them from casting ballots. Voter suppression could be particularly effective if a significant amount of voters are intimidated individually because the voter might not consider his or her single vote important.

"It's not on your Oscar list, but voter ID movie is worth watching"

Gail Rosenblum
Minneapolis, Star Tribune

March 1, 1987 – Congressional resolution designating March as Women's History Month is passed

LWV Minnesota Council
Saturday, May 5th 8:30 am - 3:15 pm

MN Landscape Arboretum

CMAL**Submitted by Dorothy Karlson****CMAL QUARTERLY MEETING
March 24, 2012****Kings Crossing Apartments
University and Dale St.
500 Dale St. No.
St. Paul, MN 55103****9:30 am Registration/Refreshments****10:00 am Program****11:00 am Q & A****11:50 am Announcements**

The third Quarterly Meeting will focus on the Met Council and interactions with cities, watershed districts and other agencies involved in providing safe and adequate water to residents of the metropolitan area. Being discussed will be surface water, drinking water, and waste water and how they are handled to attain sustainability of water use.

A panel discussion will feature:

- **Linda Loomis** - LWVGV, former mayor of Golden Valley, former chairperson of the Bassett Creek Watershed District, and other positions.
- **Blair Tremere** - former Mayor of Golden Valley, former employee of the Met Council and former employee of Hennepin County working with 6th district Commissioner Linda Koblick.
- **Patricia Nauman** - Executive Director of Metro Cities that lobbies the legislature on behalf of those cities. She has been involved with area issues that affect cities and their relationship with the Met Council.

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) was created in 1962 with the goal of increasing knowledge and effectiveness of metropolitan area LWVs and the public in addressing metropolitan governmental issues and problems.

All members of local LWVs in the seven county metro area are automatically members of CMAL and are encouraged to attend Quarterly meetings. The public is invited.

For Information: Geneva MacMillan, 952-934-3000, meandmao2@aol.com

Register today!
For Candidate Forum/Moderator Training
1:00 pm March 10th

LWV Minnesota
550 Rice St.
St. Paul, MN 55103

The 2012 election season will be unlike any other... since 2001, thanks to redistricting and the League of Women Voters Minnesota will be ready. These two trainings are scheduled for early in 2012 so local LWVs will be ready for candidate forums that may be scheduled before the August primary election. At this time, we do not anticipate adding another training in August so plan to join us for Candidate Forum and Moderator training in St. Paul (March 10) or Detroit Lakes (April 14th.) **The deadline to register for St. Paul's workshop is Wednesday March 7th.**

The Candidate Forum and Moderator Training Workshops are all new in 2012. More tips and planning tools for Voter Service Committee members doing all the organizing for candidate forums. For moderators, we'll get you ready to stand confidently behind the podium, representing LWV with poise, confidence and the tools to handle any situation. You will leave this training session armed with a complete toolkit that takes your local LWV from setting a schedule through submitting your final report. Moderators will learn tips for handling those sticky situations and how to prioritize questions coming from the audience. You can expect an active workshop with role-playing, mock forums and a few surprises thrown in.

Candidate Forum training will review the non-partisan policy, effective procedures, and various aspects of forum organization and sponsorship including invitations to candidates, criteria for inclusion, location arrangements, greeters, timers, question screeners, etc. Intensive moderator training will follow for new and continuing moderators. At a time when anything can happen at a candidate forum, you'll be ready to handle the unexpected calmly and confidently. For more information and to register <http://www.lwvmn.org/2012voterservicetrainings>

This workshop is free of charge to members of LWV.

For the Detroit Lakes workshop, a box lunch can be purchased for \$10.00

Non-LWV members can attend the training for \$45.00. If you are not ordering lunch and have no non-LWV members attending you can email your RSVP to

awagstrom@lwvmn.org or call the office at 651/224-5445 (1-800-663-9328 outside the Metro area). For questions about the workshop, contact Allie

Wagstrom, awagstrom@lwvmn.org.

LWV Minnesota

In this issue of the Capital:

Voting Rights: The Secretary of State's office testified that the language of a proposed constitutional amendment threatens to do away with Election Day Registration. The Secretary of State also released new information on the number of voters who would be affected by a photo ID requirement.

Budget: Bills are pending in the legislature to use Minnesota's constitution as a vehicle for restricting state budgeting. Read why LWV Minnesota opposes such constitutional restrictions.

In addition, you'll find articles on education, the environment, immigration, firearms, metropolitan issues and reproductive choice.

LWV Responds to Minnesota Election Video Scam

This week, some of you may have seen or heard about a You Tube video put together by James O'Keefe, a prankster with a history of releasing carefully edited and deceptive videos to further a political agenda. Although this video purports to show that Minnesota's election system is weak, what it really shows is that Minnesota has a registration system that is open and accessible and that our state's election officials are helpful to those who come to their offices.

Clean Air Promise

LWV US is still working on the Clean Air Promise and would like to get local elected officials to sign on. We will be sending an email to local LWV presidents and Action chairs about this.

--Sherri Knuth, LWV Minnesota Public Policy Coordinator



Educate. Advocate. Reform.

LWV United States

WE MADE OUR GOAL! (NEW)

Thanks to the passion and hard work of all of our members and supporters, we surpassed our goal of [25,000 signatures on the FEC petition](#) to the White House. This feat was not easy - as many of you can attest. We want to personally thank every one of you who signed the petition and worked to get your friends, family and neighbors to do the same. As we said in a [statement today](#), we are eagerly awaiting the response to our petition from President Obama and to hear about his plans for the government agency charged with enforcing the law and stopping illegal coordination by candidate Super PACs.

LWV Asks President Obama to Respond to FEC Petition (NEW)

LWV and coalition partners sent [this letter to the President](#) to follow up on the WhiteHouse.gov "We the People" petition. The petition was signed by over 25,000 individuals from around the country and called on the President to nominate new commissioners to the Federal Election Commission (FEC) prior to the 2012 elections.

LWV Opposes S.J. Res. 37 (NEW)

LWV and coalition partners sent [this letter](#) urging the Senate to oppose S.J. Res.37, the Congressional Review Act disapproval resolution sponsored by Senator Inhofe that would eliminate the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) life-saving Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants. This resolution puts the health of our children and families at risk and threatens the quality of our air and water.

Finally Some Good News! Photo ID Bill Dies in Maine

Democrats and Republicans joined together in Maine last week to defeat legislative language that would have required photo ID at the polls. In the second year of this unprecedented assault on voting rights, it's good to report a win for democracy

President's Corner

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear LWV Leader:

Anonymous sources of information are problematic in journalism and the law, but appear to pose no dilemma for members of Congress who oppose the DISCLOSE Act. Representative Chris Van Hollen (D MD) has introduced a sleek new version of DISCLOSE focused solely on requiring disclosure of the identities of their donors from big money outside groups like Super PACs.

LWV and its partners are supporting the bill, and last Friday we were invited to a meeting with Rep. Van Hollen, Representative Charlie Gonzalez (D TX), Representative Keith Ellison (D MN) and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi at the Capitol. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss strategy for passing DISCLOSE.

In Washington last week for the LWV Budget Committee, I was among those who attended the meeting. The focus, it turned out, was not just on DISCLOSE but also on longer-term solutions to the devastation created by *Citizens United*, including an unspecified Constitutional amendment. As we went around the room describing our various approaches to campaign finance reform, each group, including LWV, supported DISCLOSE. On behalf of LWV, I was the only one raising any questions about the potential for unintended consequences in the current proposals for an amendment. The response to these concerns can only be described as the same as if we had said the emperor has no clothes. Many in the room quickly began to qualify their support.

We should take great confidence from this that LWV's voice matters as does our thoughtful approach to complex issues. Recently, an [article appeared in *The New Republic*](#) that captures many, if not all, of the issues discussed by LWV Board at its January meeting. Perhaps the most telling comment in this article is the suggestion that any Congress willing to pass a Constitutional amendment will also be willing to pass DISCLOSE or even public financing. In the meantime, we have a lot of work to do to educate ourselves and the public not just on ways to reform the system, but also on ways to cope with the system until reform is achieved.

In League,

Elisabeth

Editor's Note: The New Republic article is printed on the following page

The Wrong Way To Fix Citizen's United

Mark Schmitt – The New Republic
www.thr.com

At the second anniversary of the Citizens United decision, there can no longer be any doubt—the political world has been changed in profound ways, and for the worse. If there's a general sense in this election cycle that anything goes—at least in terms of political money and advertising—it's in part because that Supreme Court decision, which struck down limits on independent political spending by corporations. Lax enforcement of other campaign laws, and the Court's hint that it might go even further, have also contributed to what is sure to be an ugly, big money election.

Is there any way to correct for the damage Citizens United has wrought? There's little chance that the Supreme Court will reverse course, not before at least one of the five Justices in the Citizens United majority is replaced. Faced with that reality, a handful of organizations have begun to push for an amendment to the Constitution to reverse Citizens United. On Tuesday, the country's best-known campaign finance reform group, [Common Cause](#), joined the amendment movement, proposing to place initiatives on the ballot in several states calling on Congress to pass such a constitutional amendment. Unfortunately, this is not only a futile project, but an idea that poses a danger to the cause.

The long-standing movement for campaign finance reform has often been weakened by its tendency to pull in several different directions. A decade ago, reformers were squabbling over whether to focus on limiting contributions to \$100, banning soft money at the federal level, or enacting full public financing in the states. In recent years, however, a welcome consensus has emerged in favor proposals for public financing, drawing on successful programs in Arizona, Maine, New York City and Connecticut. A majority of Democrats and a few Republicans co-sponsored the Fair Elections Now Act, based on those successes, in the last Congress. The constitutional amendment movement will be yet another distraction from these efforts.

The main problem isn't that the effort to pursue a constitutional amendment would be futile—though it certainly would be. Advocates know that, and point out correctly that futility has never, in itself, been an argument against pursuing a constitutional amendment. After all, most efforts to amend the Constitution fail, but the efforts to pass them can have residual benefits, by giving supporters a long-term vision along with incremental steps that can be achieved through legislation or cultural change. The Equal Rights Amendment is the classic example of an amendment that fell short, but gave its advocates an organizing principle and clear goal that allowed them to achieve incremental wins along the way. The legal framework for gender equality is arguably as strong now as it would be if the ERA had been ratified.

The Wrong Way To Fix ... continued

A [proposal](#) to amend the Constitution to establish a right to vote would have a similar movement-building value. Most people assume the right to vote is in the Constitution, and understanding that it isn't can lead to a healthy discussion about why we restrict voting in so many ways. A movement for a right-to-vote amendment would give focus to efforts to overturn voter identification laws and allow same-day voter registration.

A movement to overturn Citizens United by amendment, however, would take a different form, because it would be retracting rights rather than expanding them, and thus would have few residual benefits. State, local, and federal laws limiting corporate political spending would still be considered unconstitutional until the day the amendment, after passing both houses of Congress with supermajorities, was ratified by the legislatures of 38 states. By reinforcing the misconception that nothing can be done about the current condition of money in politics until the Constitution is amended, the amendment movement would undermine progress on other solutions, including public financing, improvements in corporate governance to give shareholders more say in political contributions, disclosure improvements, and better enforcement of existing laws by both the Federal Election Commission and the Internal Revenue Service. If it were possible to pass an amendment through Congress and get it ratified by 38 states, it would also be possible to enact full public financing—the optimal solution—at both the federal and state level.

The case against the amendment movement also isn't based on the text of the amendment—not least because we don't know what the amendment would say. I've found at least five different versions of an amendment, and in introducing its initiative on Tuesday, Common Cause President Bob Edgar said the organization would be "neutral" among the alternative proposals because now was not the time for "wordsmithing." Call it a movement to pass an amendment to be named later.

That said, the various amendments currently in circulation would all create their own problems. Most of them focus on dismantling the complicated and dubious doctrine of corporate personhood—the idea, which was prominent in judicial decisions in the 1880s, that corporations, despite being artificial creations given certain privileges by government, have all the same rights as individuals. Here, for example, is the key section of an amendment proposed by a coalition called [Move to Amend](#): "Artificial entities, such as corporations, limited liability companies, and other entities, established by the laws of any State, the United States, or any foreign state shall have no rights under this Constitution." Another one, from a group called Abolish Corporate Personhood Now, declares that corporations "are prohibited from any influence upon the electoral/political system of these United States."

The Wrong Way To Fix ... continued

There's quite an irony here. After all, what is Common Cause? What are most of the organizations that make up the Move to Amend coalition? They are corporations. Not just corporations, they are corporations that have been created for the explicit purpose of organizing and amplifying political speech, or of influencing the U.S. political process. Sure, most of them are non-profits (as was Citizens United itself), and another version of the amendment, the one introduced by Senator Bernie Sanders, limits its denial of rights to for-profit corporations. But the distinction between non-profit and for-profit corporations is a blurry one—Blue Cross and Blue Shield insurance companies, as well as many large hospitals are structured as non-profits, too, and pay their CEOs, and their lobbyists, millions of dollars. The corporate form is simply how we organize any collective effort in the United States.

And while corporations aren't people, and they can be and should be regulated, such efforts to regulate ought to at least begin with the presumption of a right to free expression. Regulations on corporate speech, just like limits on speech by individuals, have to be justified as serving a valid public purpose. A law, for example, barring all corporations, including Common Cause, from speaking out in favor of campaign finance reform would be a disgraceful encroachment on free expression—but perfectly permissible in a world in which corporations have "no rights." Are corporations such as Common Cause really willing to endorse the idea that they have no basic right to speech?

Further, "corporate personhood," while a significant focus of Justice John Paul Stevens' dissent in Citizens United, is not actually the key to the decision. Lawrence Lessig points out in his recent book, *Republic, Lost*, that the Court reached its decision in Citizens United "not because it held that corporations were 'persons' and for that reason, entitled to First Amendment rights.

Instead, the opinion hung upon the limits of the First Amendment." The Court's true error was in its narrow definition of corruption. Whether it comes from individuals or corporations, the Court held, independent political spending, not coordinated with a campaign, had little potential for quid pro quo corruption, and thus was protected by the First Amendment. But quid pro quo is not the only kind of corruption there is. The general dependence of elected officials on donors and outside supporters (such as this election's Super PACs), Lessig argues, creates a broad and unspecific corruption. It results, for example, in members of Congress hesitating to regulate financial firms simply because they spend so much time with financial executives and rely on them for their campaigns.

The Wrong Way To Fix ... continued

A broader view of corruption would permit some regulation not only of corporate political spending, but also of spending by individuals. We can't know for sure, but most of the notable Super PAC funding in the 2012 primaries seems to have come from wealthy individuals, such as casino mogul Sheldon Adelson, on behalf of Newt Gingrich, or Jon Huntsman Sr., on behalf of the recently departed candidate Jon Huntsman Jr. And in the case of privately held corporations such as Koch Industries, it really doesn't matter much whether the Koch brothers contribute from their personal fortunes or from the corporate treasury they control. Restricting only corporations, while it would undo the specific legal change wrought by Citizens United, would actually do little to change the wild west culture of money in today's politics.

It's corruption, not "corporate personhood," that needs to be at the center of our efforts to change the post-Citizen's United world of money in politics. The way out would be to build a public and legal case for a broader and more accurate concept of corruption, starting from Lessig's framework, while continuing to expand workable and constitutionally secure reforms such as public financing. Anything else, such as a campaign for a not-yet-written amendment to the Constitution, is just distracting mischief.

Mark Schmitt is a senior fellow at the Roosevelt Institute and former editor of The American Prospect.



A Cure for Voter Suppression and Voter Depression: Occupy the Vote

Christine Pelosi, Attorney; Author; Activist

2012 will come down to a handful of votes in key races swayed by voter suppression and voter depression. To win, progressives must overcome both. This will require courage in calling out the acts of our opponents and in changing our own patterns of advocacy in order to succeed.

Voter suppression is catalogued by many voting rights groups such as [Rock the Vote](#), the [Democratic National Committee's Voting Rights Institute](#) and the [Brennan Center for Justice](#) -- election codes to limit the voting rights of students and movers, reduce early voting days, and restrict voter registration and "get-out-the-vote" mobilization efforts that all told could restrict voting rights of 5 million Americans in 2012 and [disability rights advocates](#). When it comes to voter depression, the challenges are external and internal to the progressive movement.

External forces will simply blame everything on President Obama, claiming that change has not come or come fast enough because of him. In classic projection, the Republican party of "no" that blocked more robust stimulus, healthcare reform and Wall Street reform, will blame the cleaning crew not the wrecking crew.

They also engage in the not so subtle dog whistles that seek to "other" the president and progressive Democrats. For months we have heard Republicans complain about Mitt Romney and say conservative dollars will be spent on congressional races instead of the presidential. Karl Rove and company will swoop in and pollute the airwaves with ugly dog whistles about LGBT Americans ("San Francisco"), African Americans ("food stamp president"), Latinos ("illegals") and Jews ("Alinsky").

Internal forces include the purists who see their role as attacking elected officials rather than supporting them. My inbox is full of pledges and petitions from groups seeking political reform but precious few actually lift up elected officials who need to cast the tough votes for reform. Over and over they will say "tell Congress" or "tell the president," but very rarely will they say "praise Congress" or "thank the president" for taking action. Talk about depression! To read their notes is to think there is no hope for change -- when I know that there is.

Simply put, if you are going to amend our tax code in the face of Republican threats to impeach the president as [Grover Norquist](#) just threatened or pushing for Citizens United Reform, it takes votes from legislators to do so. Expecting people to take tough votes for reform without a whiff of public support is ludicrous.

What is to be done? Occupy the vote. Cure voter suppression with a commitment to participate in the civic sacrament of voting and to protect others' rights to do so. Cure voter depression by calling out the "othering" and smears from opponents and by pushing and praising progressive politicians. We know the problem and we know the cure -- now we must summon the courage to act and the courage to change.

**Voter ID
Does Not
Belong in Our
Constitution**

No need for
Voter ID -
Checks and
balances
already exist
to ensure the
integrity of
our elections

Voter ID
Increases
costs for
local,
county and
state
government

Voter ID
creates
barriers
for
eligible
individuals
to vote



The League of Women Voters grew out of a 70-year effort to gain the right to vote for women. Today, every citizen's right to vote is important to us. That is why we oppose legislation that would require registered voters to show a government-issued Voter ID. For more information visit our website at www.lwvsouthtonka.org.



Serving Deephaven, Excelsior, Greenwood, Shorewood, Tonka Bay, Woodland

Observer Reports

Observer Coordinator: Judith Cook 952-928-9846

St. Louis Park School Board Meeting Monday, Feb 27, 2012 – Deb Brinkman, Observer

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm and the agenda was approved. All School Board members were in attendance.

At the Open Forum, Girl Scout Troup 131193 presented a skit to “Smash negative stereotyping” as their “Take Action” project. Also a SLP student’s mother (who is a Wayzata teacher) spoke regarding the train re-route. She noted SLP schools need to be competitive and sited technology concerns from vibrations if high-speed trains were to run beside the high school.

The superintendent’s report noted a new program being promoted by Governor Dayton, “Leap Into Reading”. Also preparations for snow are in progress, it takes extra work to coordinate 2 bus companies and notify child care before 5:30 am.

The Sleep Study Update reviewed statistics from high school times that have been changed to be later. Julie noted that there are 6% of those surveyed feel hopeless every day and requested a reminder be sent out to remind kids who they can contact.

The Technology Update presented a video and noted that in Year 3 of the referendum, that adding technology to classrooms engaged the students, enhance communications because teachers are not stuck at the front of the room, and immediate feedback with the clickers gives immediate feedback to the teach so they know if students understand the content.

The Quarterly financial update report noted that it is similar to previous years.

The Internet Acceptable Use and Safety policy will be amended. It will include additional verbiage for cyber bullying, and the kid’s safety. The technology team is also evaluating BYOD (Bring Your Own Device). Before we allow other devices we need to ensure we have the infrastructure to support them.

Communications noted that The Music Man is playing, August 25 from 11 – 2 is the SLP All School Reunion. And they held a listening session for the rail issue. Joe suggested that viewers click on AMSD.org to vie the bills being considered by the legislature.

The Action Agenda was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Observer, continued ...**City Council, January 17, Aggie Leitheiser, Observer**

Economic Development Authority met with all present from 7:15 to 7:25 with the agenda item to establish the Oak Hill II Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. Motion passed to send to the Council meeting

City Council convened at 7:30 with all present. Major issues were:

Public Hearing to establish the Oak Hill II TIF recommendation. This is the 21,000 square foot building for Anderson- KM Builders Construction Company near the intersection of Louisiana and Walker streets. They plan to occupy half the building and rent the other half. This is an updated plan from 2007 which was delayed due to the economy and financing issues. The proposed building is about 6,000 sq ft larger than the original proposal and is to be completed by December 2012. Anderson-KM Builders applied for up to \$300,000 in tax increment assistance to offset a small portion of the construction costs associated with the proposed building. As a percentage of total project cost the requested amount of financial assistance is approximately 7%. The project is not economically feasible without some public financial assistance. The EDA's participation would leverage approximately \$4.3 million in new investment. No comments during the public hearing. Motion to approve passed 6 to 0 with Hallfin abstaining. He explained he did not feel he had enough background to vote on this issue but is meeting with city staff to learn more about TIF issues. Santa commented that she was glad to see this building happening as it gave a glimmer that things are starting to get better.

Community Recreation Facility Task Force members:

The Council approved all those who applied to represent various groups for membership on the Task Force:

- Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission: Tom Worthington and Jim Beneke
- Planning Commission: Claudia Johnston-Madison
- Youth: Sophia Flummerfelt
- Community Education Advisory Committee: Gregg Lindberg
- Lenox/Older adults: Shirley Zimmerman
- Business/Financial: Chuck Souvignier
- Youth Associations: Laurie Hynes (Girls Fastpitch softball)
- School District: Andy Ewald (Athletic Director) and Lisa Greene (Community Ed Director)
- CVB: possibly John Basill (Mr. Basill is requesting direction from his board of directors)

The mission of the Community Recreation Facility Task Force is to consider community input that was received from previous surveys, gather additional information and input, and make recommendations to the City Council regarding the addition of future recreation facilities or programs. As a part of this process, the Task Force will also look at possible partnerships and locations.

Resolution to approve the Final Plat for ELLIPSE II on EXCELSIOR; the final Planned Unit Developed for "e2" with conditions and the major amendment to the Final Planned Unit Developed for Ellipse on Excelsior, subject to conditions. Ellipse on Excelsior is a five-story, mixed-use building with 132 residential apartments and 16,394 square feet of commercial uses on the ground floor located at 3900 Excelsior Boulevard. Both the residential and commercial spaces are fully leased.

Adjacent to Ellipse on Excelsior is the former American Inn hotel property located 3924 Excelsior Boulevard. The St. Louis Park Economic Development Authority (EDA) purchased the American Inn hotel and demolished the building in 2009 in preparation for redevelopment. The proposed Ellipse II on Excelsior ("e2") redevelopment is a five-story, 58-unit apartment building with structured underground and at-grade parking. The proposed second phase does not include commercial uses. The resolutions were approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55.

Observer, continued ...

City Council Meeting, February 6, 2012, Barb Person, Observer

All Council Members were present. The meeting began at 7:30 p.m.

The only Council business took place under Resolutions, Ordinances, Motions and Discussion Items:

- Three Union contracts were discussed pertaining to Local #218 Police Sergeant's Labor Agreement, Local #220 Public Safety Dispatch Labor Agreement and Local #993 Fire Fighters Labor Agreement.

Following successful labor negotiations between the City of St. Louis Park and the individual labor unions, 3 Union contracts were changed as follows:

- 2% increase in wages,
- Added long term disability (after 6 months) @ 60% of current wage replacement for \$150 per year per employee and
- Incentives for employee savings. If one saves \$50 per month, the City will add an additional \$10.

The City and Union Representative both mentioned that the relationship between the Union and City were very good.

- Communications – Mayor Jacobs encouraged everyone to attend political caucuses on February 7th.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

CITY Council Meeting 2-21-2012, Deb Brinkman, Observer

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm. All council members were in attendance. The minutes from the February 6 meeting were approved with 2 changes. The Agenda and the Consent Calendar were both approved.

Public Hearings:

- The Liquor License for Doubletree Park Place Hotel was approved unanimously
- The First Reading of the Ordinance amending the City Charter pertaining to Civil Penalties was approved. The process will be reviewed in May. It will not require additional staff.
- Submit an Application for the Community Development Block Grant was approved.
- Approved use of the 2012 Urban Hennepin County Community Development Block Grant Program Funds was approved.

Resolutions

The Motion to approve the Planned Unit Development for a three-story 22-unit assisted living building was approved after discussion. Motions were also approved to approve the Final Plat and the Zoning Variance to the rear yard setback.

The 2012 – 2013 IUOE Local #49 Labor Agreement Resolution was approved with Councilmember Santa abstaining. They receive a 2% increase.

Communications

Home Remodeling Fair is next weekend. Visit www.treetrust.org to order a tree.

The meeting adjourned.

Judy Cook is coordinating the 2011 – 2012 Observer Reports. If you can attend a City Council Meeting or School Board meeting and type up a brief review of the meeting, please contact Judy at 952-928-9846. Remember to wear your pin at the meetings – our presence at the meetings is noted and appreciated.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

LWV Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. <http://www.lwvmn.org/local/Leagues/SLP>