

LWV CONCORD CARLISLE LOCAL PROGRAM 2008-2009

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Detailed Positions

1. Town Government, Concord

The League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle supports a local government which is based on the fullest possible participation of informed citizens in its policy and decision making processes. The League finds that Town Government as now practiced in Concord is both democratic and effective. To make it more responsive, open, and fair, we would support the following improvements:

1. 1. 1 Increased communications between:
 - a) committees and their appointing authorities, including periodic review and supervision, as well as more explicit definition of committee's charges
 - b) committees and the public
 - c) committee chairmen and members, including once yearly training/orientation sessions, and detailed and written orientation information for new members. (Modified 2001)
1. 1. 2 Increased citizen participation through:
 - a) more publicity of hearings
 - b) early notices of committee meetings and hearings with agendas
 - c) use of all available media to inform public on town affairs
 - d) distribution of town information package to newcomers
 - e) wider distribution of green cards.
- 1.1.3 Committee procedures made more effective by:
 - a) specific term lengths for committee members
 - b) use of sub and ad hoc committees for specific studies and to relieve overburdened committees
 - c) informative minutes, publicly available
 - d) termination process for unneeded committees
- 1.1.4 Adequate clerical and financial support with information given to committees by the Town Manager on services available.
- 1.1.5 Fair and responsible appointment process strengthened by:
 - a) expanding use of green cards, with regular updating and review by citizens and the Town Manager's office.
 - b) posting vacancies with at least two weeks between posting and appointment
 - c) flexible, informal interviews with prospective appointees
 - d) prompt appointments

- e) reasonable use of recommendations from committee members
 - f) geographical distribution of committee members for those committees whose functions warrant it.
 - g) use of the following criteria in appointing committee members: availability for attendance at committee meetings; eagerness to serve; expertise; work and/or volunteer experience; ability to work with others; stamina (not in order of priority).
- 1.2 League members were firm in opposition to:
- a) use of green cards as an exclusive source of appointees
 - b) use of a search committee to nominate appointees
 - c) election of more town committees (adopted March 1977, reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.3 The League supports the continuation of the Town Meeting as the primary deliberative and legislative body of the Town (adopted Feb. 96, reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.4 The League supports open Town Meeting as currently practiced with voting on Town Meeting issues taking place within the sessions of the town meeting. (Adopted Feb. 96, reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.5 The League believes that it is the obligation of the Town to provide all citizens seeking to attend Town Meeting, the opportunity to participate. If it should become impossible, on a regular and frequently recurring basis, to accommodate all of the persons wishing to attend Town Meeting, then the League would support a representative form of town meeting as an alternative to the present open Town Meeting. (Adopted Feb. 96, reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.6 The League opposes any change in Town Meeting Voting that would separate the vote from the deliberative process. (Adopted Feb. 96, reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.7 The League opposes any voting method that would constrain participants from having full access to information about the questions on which they are voting. (Adopted Feb. 96 reaffirmed 1999)
- 1.8 To further ensure that the residents of Concord are informed participants, the League urges that the Town take greater measures to:
- a) Increase the understanding of citizens about their local government.
 - b) Offer a fuller explanation of committee and board duties along with the Green Cards. Advertise committee vacancies promptly and widely.
 - c) Give wider distribution to the Town Report. (Adopted Feb. 1996, reaffirmed 1999)

Town Government, Carlisle

That the town of Carlisle should continue its present form of government, strengthening its effectiveness by improved communication and cooperation among boards and by the use of administrative and technical support when needed.

- 1.9.1 Support the use of administrative and technical assistance to foster the effective use of volunteers' time and expertise.
- 1.9.2 Support an annual meeting, chaired by the Selectmen at which all town committees present their accomplishments and goals.
- 1.9.3 Support issue-oriented meetings as needed, among pertinent boards. The ultimate responsibility for these meetings lies with the Selectmen.
- 1.9.4 Support timely distribution of pertinent information by committees to townspeople. (Adopted 1980, amended 1983, reaffirmed 1999)

2. Education

Concord and Carlisle in pursuit of quality education in the public schools:

- 2.1 Support a school organization that encourages the following: stability—requiring few major changes and little redistricting in order to preserve a sense of school community; low pupil-teacher ratios with the lowest in the primary grades; respect for parental

- preference among a range of teaching styles; broad uniform program aims; sound fiscal management. (Reaffirmed 1999)
- 2.2 Support for a system of guidance and social work that allows for department flexibility and staff mobility and interaction, particularly with the elementary schools. (Adopted July 1980, reaffirmed 1999)
- 2.3 Support for a system of guidance and social work which has as its primary role maintenance of the climate of learning of the student body as a whole and the consideration of the needs of the individual student; and which communicates openly with parents and provides information through channels such as workshops, written material, PTG meetings, etc. (Reaffirmed 1999)
- 2.4 Support additional, vocational education in the school system. An ideal system would include a) adequate up to date facilities; b) flexibility in time, choice, program, and amount of concentration on vocational or academic courses by each student; c) coordination with instruction in the Concord and Carlisle systems; d) full use of facilities for the whole community after regular school hours, evenings and summers; e) expansion of an improved work-study program; f) career awareness beginning in the elementary grades. (Reaffirmed 1999).
- 2.5 Support at Concord-Carlisle High School a curriculum development process utilizing inputs by departments, cooperation between departments, citizen input, and administrative and school committee review. Curriculum to afford flexible scheduling of student and teacher time to create opportunities for course options. Curriculum to emphasize interdepartmentally a sampling of many areas; development of analytic skills, written and oral communication skills; preparation for citizenship; and requirements for graduation in courses in many disciplines. (Adopted 1971, amended '78, '79, '83, '85 and Reaffirmed 1999)
- 2.6 Support a program of staff development and teacher evaluation to be reviewed regularly by the School Committees (adopted 1971, modified and reaffirmed, 1999)
- 2.7 Support the availability of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities for students of Concord-Carlisle High School and at the Concord and Carlisle Middle Schools. (Adopted 1971, reaffirmed 1999, amended 2001)
- 2.8 Support a budget that includes adequate funding. (Adopted 1971 modified and reaffirmed 1999)
- 2.9 Support efforts by the schools and the parents associations to improve communications with the community. (Adopted 1971 reaffirmed 1999)

3. Public Health: Condom Availability

The Concord-Carlisle League of Women Voters recognizes that AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) has become a major health problem in this country, particularly for young adults and is now the leading cause of death for men between the ages of 18 and 40 and the fourth leading cause of death for women in the same age category. The League also recognizes that sexual intercourse is the most frequent mode of transmission for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), although there are other ways in which the disease may be transmitted. Because of the potential threat to the young people of our community, the League urges the citizens of Concord and Carlisle, in conjunction with their Boards of Selectmen, The Regional School Committee, The Boards of Health, and other public and private agencies to embark upon a program of making condoms available to young people under conditions that include counseling and education as to inherent risks. This program should be undertaken in the knowledge that while properly used, condoms reduce the risk of AIDS, hepatitis B, other venereal diseases, and unplanned pregnancies, they do not remove all risk. The League believes that recognition of such risk falls on the individual. Every individual engaging in sexual intercourse must assess the risks involved and assume responsibility for his/her actions. (Approved by Board January 1995 reaffirmed 1999, language updated 2002)

4. Recreation, Concord

- 4.1 Support a comprehensive public recreation program in Concord.
- 4.2 Support a master plan for recreation in Concord.
- 4.3 Support the acquisition of land to meet the active recreational needs of the Town.
- 4.4 Support the development and maintenance of public swimming facilities, and the improvement of natural bodies of water. (Modified 2007)
- 4.5 Support the improvement and extension of Concord's present bike/foot path system including the preparation of a long-range construction plan.
- 4.6 Support the additional facilities for bicyclists, including a bike/foot path map, marked paths and street crossings, and safe racks well-placed around Town.
- 4.7 Support recreational activities on conservation lands that do not alter the integrity of the land for conservation purposes.
- 4.8 Support the increased distribution of information on conservation lands to townspeople.
- 4.9 Support making information on conservation land available upon request to visitors to Concord. (Reaffirmed 1999, amended 2000)

Bike Footpaths Carlisle

- 4.10 Support the development of bike/foot ways in Carlisle and the promotion of bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- 4.11 Support a pilot project for the development of bike/foot ways (1982, reaffirmed 1999)
- 4.12 Support a master plan for bike/foot ways for all existing town roads.
- 4.13 Support the Planning Board regulations requiring developers to build bike/foot paths in all new developments. (Adopted 1973, amended, 1980, 1982, reaffirmed 1999)

5. Animal Control, Concord

- 5.1 Support a dog control by-law that: is consistent and easy to understand; defines "under control by owner"; prohibits dogs from school property during classroom hours except with express permission of the principal; included a limited leash law for the business areas of Concord, school property outside of classroom hours, and town playgrounds; includes a "pooper scooper" provision for the business areas of Concord, playgrounds, and school property
- 5.2 Support enforcement of Concord's animal control by-law that: is based on a complaint responsive system; includes limited patrolling by dog officer in problem areas such as playgrounds, business districts, and school property plus areas that have a high number of complaints; encourages dog licensing by charging higher fines for unlicensed dogs; encourages citizen participation by expedient and appropriate response to legitimate dog-related complaints.
- 5.3 Support license fees to be set at a level to encourage neutering. (Amended 2000.)
- 5.4 Support an innovative approach to dog licensing that: encourages licensing by mailing reminders to owners of all dogs reported on the Town census; follows up on known unlicensed dogs; has mail-in license forms; has a flexible licensing schedule—perhaps every three years when dog is due for rabies shot; encourages prompt licensing by charging late fees.
- 5.5 Support educational activities such as: information packets prepared by the town and widely distributed to town citizens explaining law and responsibilities of dog owner; community programs on animal care, possibly through the schools. (Adopted May 1985, reaffirmed 1999)

- 5.6 Support the immunization of cats against rabies (in accordance with state law) and strongly urge the immunization of all domestic animals against rabies and other contagious and potentially life-threatening diseases.

6. Crime Prevention

- 6.1 Support efforts to heighten public awareness about crime prevention, including educating citizens to report suspicious incidents to the police, and establishing neighborhood groups both to prevent crime and as a method of developing a stronger sense of community.
- 6.2 Support efforts to prevent juvenile crime by identifying youth needs and concerns, and coordinating the development and implementation of services for youth. (Modified 2008)
- 6.3 Support police Department crime prevention efforts, particularly educational programs in the schools and in the community at large, including an active “Operation identification” program.
- 6.4 Support increased use by the Concord district court of restitution and alternative sentencing, including the community service work program in Concord.
- 6.5 Support effective methods of identifying and publicizing the costs of vandalism to Town property.
- 6.6 Support effective methods of supervising heavily used Town conservation land. (Adopted December 1980, reaffirmed 1999)

7. Tourism Concord

In order to provide a pleasant experience in Concord for visitors to the revolutionary and literary sites and to maintain and improve the quality of life for residents in Concord, the League

- 7.1 Supports visitors' services with adequate public parking and toilet facilities located in the vicinity of the Milldam and at the West Concord shopping district. (Revised 2001)
- 7.2 Supports improved directional signs. Mini- informational maps of the vandal-proof roadside type are especially needed.
- 7.3 Supports public or private groups publishing maps or tapes which will direct visitors taking walking or biking tours of the Town. (Reaffirmed 1999)

8. Hanscom Field

- 8.1 Oppose extension of Hanscom field into a major airport
- 8.2 Support maintenance of general aviation activity at Hanscom Field at no higher than the 1973 level.
- 8.3 Support the participation of Concord and other Towns in the solution to problems associated with Hanscom Field

9. Long Range Planning

- 9.1 Support of local and regional long-range planning. Cooperation in the development of comprehensive planning criteria for the towns. (Reaffirmed 1999)

10. Town Facilities

- 10.1 Support for the re-use of surplus buildings: (a) consistent with the character of the neighborhood; (b) consistent with the current zoning; and (c) consistent with the preservation of architectural features.

- 10.2 Support for the reuse of surplus buildings which: (a) use private funding whenever possible; (b) satisfy a need within the community; (c) are sound economic investments for the community; and (d) which are planned to be self-supporting when possible.
- 10.3 Support for rehabilitation of Stow Street surplus buildings for: (a) elderly housing; (b) low income and family housing; (c) recreation; and (d) education.
- 10.4 Oppose extensive retail or commercial development on Stow Street. (Reaffirmed May 1999)

11. Housing, Concord

- 11.1 Support housing at all income levels in Concord. In particular, there should be a supply of low and moderate income housing in Concord to ensure inclusion of the elderly, those on fixed incomes, young people, families, disabled/handicapped persons, teachers, and town employees.
- 11.2 Support the following criteria to support implementation: (a) sound planning should be the basis of such development; (b) private and public efforts to provide such housing should be encouraged, especially if they provide economic mix within neighborhoods; (c) low rise, low density, multi-family dwellings would fulfill the Town's need and would be most in keeping with the desire to preserve the "open land" character of Concord. (Revised and reaffirmed 1999, modified 2007)

Housing, Carlisle

- 11.3 Support mixed income housing (low, moderate, and fair market) in Carlisle with priority to housing needs for the elderly. We recommend that consideration be given to rehabilitation and/or conversion of existing buildings and new construction of housing units that will be in keeping with the rural character of Carlisle. We further recommend the use of rent subsidies and tax abatements where applicable. (Adopted 1978, reaffirmed 1999)

12. Growth

- 12.1 Support development of a land use plan in Concord that 1) has land capacity as a key component, 2) defines specific principles and policies, and 3) utilizes appropriate data maps.
- 12.2 Support positive action towards the achievement of Concord town planning goals in the conversion of any municipal buildings.
- 12.3 Support the regular updating of the Concord accessory apartment conversion bylaw as a means to provide housing alternatives within existing housing stock. (Modified and affirmed 1999, modified 2007)

13. Land Acquisition and Management, Concord

- 13.1 Support Town acquisition of land for
 - a. affordable housing, including subsidized housing
 - b. municipal use
 - c. stewardship of our historic and literary past
 - d. recreation-active and passive (conservation)
 Decisions about purchases should be made by weighing acquisitions against an overall plan with attention to balance, location, and possibilities for multiple use. (Modified 2007)
- 13.2 Support land taking by eminent domain only as a last resort and when it satisfies the public need and the public good; this could also be useful in clearing title to a property when ownership is unclear. (Modified 2007)
- 13.3 Support the concept of land banking

- 13.4 Support a land transfer tax. (Note: This position was adopted prior to Concord's and Carlisle's approvals of the Community Preservation Act real estate property tax surcharges.) (Modified 2008)
- 13.5 Support the principle of acquiring land with the intention of later leasing or selling parts of it if the intent to do so was made clear at the time of purchase or if the land was found to be surplus to Town needs.
(Criteria to be considered for Town land acquisition include the ability to be developed, location, linkage, potential uses, preservation, access, public safety and health. Each parcel of land is unique, therefore it is difficult to establish priorities in criteria for purchase, but the ability to be developed may be the most important.) (Adopted 1987, reaffirmed 1999, modified 2007)

14. Land Use

- 14.1 Support the protection of wetlands and lands in the flood plain through strong enforcement of legislation regulating wetlands, flood plains, and conservation lands; through such methods as percolation tests and Town acquisition of such Concord lands.
- 14.2 Support acquiring open land in densely populated areas of Concord. Support visibility of land as an important criterion of Town Acquisition.
- 14.3 Support a mix of housing to meet the needs of a variety of age and income levels.
- 14.4 Support strategic land management to achieve: preservation of open space, a diversity of housing types, and land for municipal uses

15. Agricultural Land Use

- 15.1 Support preservation of farmland in Concord by the following methods: The Farmland Assessment Act, conservation restrictions, purchase of development rights, land trusts, and tax reform.
- 15.2 Support Concord acquisition of farmland where other methods of preservation could not be used and the alternative would be the likely loss of the land to development.
- 15.3 Support the agricultural use of MCI-Concord agricultural land, and public education on the problems and potentials of farming in Concord (Reaffirmed 1999)

16. Environmental Health

Solid Waste Disposal

- 16.1 Support a solid waste disposal method that is safe and protects the health of the community and the environment; any method must be economically feasible and well managed.
- 16.2 Support improved methods of operation at existing landfill sites.
- 16.3 Support regionalization of solid waste disposal facilities
- 16.4 Support recycling education programs in the schools

Sanitary Sewage Facilities

- 16.5 Support improvements needed to maintain present systems at their peak performance.
- 16.6 Support first priority for tie-ins for those areas contiguous to the existing collection line, which are in dire need of service. (Reaffirmed 1999)

17. Wetlands

- 17.1 Support preservation and/or acquisition of wetlands and related uplands in the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord River Basin as well as other actions by appropriate federal state and local agencies.
- 17.2 Support the preservation and/or acquisition of the wetlands and related uplands in the Shawsheen River basin in Concord (Elm Brook). (Reaffirmed 1999)
- 17.3 Support strengthening Concord flood plain and wetland bylaws. (adopted March 1981, reaffirmed 1999, moved from 12.4 2007)

18. SUASCO River Basin

The SuAsCo River Basin Group represents nine Leagues in the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River Basin. The SuAsCo River Basin Group allows the Leagues to approach water resource problems on a regional basis.

- 18.1 Support (a) comprehensive long range planning and coordinated action for use of water and related land resources in the SuAsCo Basin (b) measures to protect and maintain water supply, flood control, fish and wildlife, state and local agencies to accomplish the above; (c) adequate funding for federal, state and local agencies to accomplish the above; (d) federal, state, and local action to achieve flood plain zoning, stream encroachment planning, conservation easements, and the improvements of river flows.
- 18.2 Oppose high power transmission lines running overhead through areas zoned for residence. (Reaffirmed 1999)

LWVCC Program as Modified and Reaffirmed at 2008 Annual Meeting

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED AT 2008 ANNUAL MEETING:

STUDIES: None

RECOMMENDED INITIATIVES:

EVALUATION OF SINGLE-TOWN POSITIONS

Form a committee to (1) identify any LWVCC positions now limited to just one of the two towns (Concord or Carlisle) that could be applicable to both Towns under existing positions and (2) propose appropriate modifications to such positions for consideration by the members at an annual meeting.

EDUCATION AND ACTION ON GREEN INITIATIVES

Support education efforts about green initiatives, including green buildings and energy conservation, using League positions (e.g., growth, environmental health, bike paths, agricultural land use, Town facilities, etc.). Such support and action could include information in the bulletin, open meetings, and collaboration with other groups that share the goals of protecting the environment and reducing carbon footprints.

EXPLORATION OF TOWN PLANNING

Review the town planning process and issues in Concord and Carlisle. This initiative could include one or more open meetings on town planning issues, member and community education about town planning, and action based on our League's existing related positions (e.g., long range planning, town facilities, housing, growth, land use, etc.).