Thursday October 12, 2017

“Is there Enough Housing in Our Valley?”

Vacancy rate for rentals in Medford is 2%. Median rent for a one-bedroom home is about $1200 a month. Buyers who qualify for loans cannot find affordable homes with a median home price of less than $200,000. Cara Carter of the Jackson County Housing Authority and Connie Saldana of the Rogue Valley Council of Governments present the challenges and issues of area housing and the Lifelong Housing Certification Project.

11:30am — 1pm
Oregon Education Assoc. Bldg
2495 South Pacific Highway
[Hwy 99 across from Harry & David and The Grange Co-op]

Brown bag lunch. Coffee & tea provided.
Presidents Message……

“We live in interesting times” seems to be an under-statement these days. Constantly we hear phrases such as “never before,” “worst ever recorded,” “we’re in new territory,” “unpredictable” and so on. It’s enough to send us all into deep depression. Being a member of LWV may increase our concern because we cannot disconnect; we have to know what is happening in the world. On the other hand, as LWV we have the skills to make a difference. And we do, as a group and as private citizens. Carry on.

President Jackie Clary

October 2017

Book Exchange

I would imagine we all read voraciously, for information, for entertainment/escape. I do and have a surplus of good books I would like to share. If anyone else would like to join me in an exchange venture, bring a book to our October general meeting. If it is a book you would like to have returned, leave a note inside. Please – bring a book you would like to share, not just get rid of, and maybe include a line or two about why you like the book enough to share.

November General Meeting Plans

Planning is going forward on the LWVRV healthcare event on November 9, “Universal Coverage – How do we get there?” It will be held in the Presentation Hall at Rogue Community College in downtown Medford from 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. We will show the video “Health Care: We Can Fix It” and follow that with two speakers: Dr. Jim Shames, Medical Director for Jackson County Health & Human Services, and Lauri Hoagland, Nurse at La Clinica and member of the Rogue Valley and State Health Care for All Oregon (HCAO) Boards. This will be open to the public as an educational event so we will ask your help in advertising and promoting this event. We will send out flyers to you when they are ready. A LWVUS Healthcare Position history and summary will be available for distribution.
September 7  A lengthy agenda with two public hearings, numerous ordinances and resolutions, and several staff reports. While most agenda items were acted on quickly with little discussion or opposition, four items got much attention:

Item 80.4 – An ordinance amending Articles I, II, III, IV, V, VI of Chapter 10 of the Medford Municipal Code pertaining to procedural requirements and substantive criteria for land use review. If you click on the agenda attachment for this council meeting you’ll find over 300 pages current code language, deletions and new language associated with Chapter 10. Most of the proposed changes are related to Article II, specifically the duties and responsibilities of various city commissions. The city’s planning staff determined that the functionality of Article II could be improved through a reorganization and update of language to meet current planning practices. While the proposed changes had been reviewed by the Planning Commission and recommended to the City Council for approval, this agenda item sparked numerous questions and a lengthy discussion. Clearly, the council was not comfortable with taking action. The item was postponed and will be scheduled for a study session in October.

Item 100.3 – A staff memo seeking council guidance regarding the leasing of the Carnegie Building. There is process prescribed by Medford Municipal Code for leasing a historic building such as the Carnegie Building. A number of options were proposed and discussed, including: parameters/criteria for interested parties; notice announcing the property’s availability; would presentations be required; and would a public hearing be held. After much discussion that seemed to go around and around, the staff indicated that they thought they had the guidance needed. Quite frankly, the public will probably have to wait for the approved minutes of the meeting to know what was finally decided.

Item 100.4 – A staff memo seeking guidance for leasing or selling former Fire Station #2. While there is a procedure prescribed by Medford Municipal Code for the sale of city-owned property, as noted above, there is no process for leasing a city-owned building. Since the council had just had this discussion regarding Item 100.3, this discussion was slightly shorter but covered the same questions. Again, wait for the minutes of the meeting for details.

September 21  An agenda with several proclamations, a public hearing (that was continued over to October 19th), and multiple ordinances and resolutions was moving along rather well until Agenda Items 80.2, 80.3 and 80.4. The three items involved adoption of a vision and mission statement, core values, and biennial goals for the City of Medford. These items are the results of a visioning process that occurred over several months and 3 study sessions (May, June and August). But still generated a lengthy discussion.

The vision statement, after a minor amendment reads, “Medford will offer an exceptional quality of life for all generations. Residents and visitors alike will experience a vibrant community, safe and connected neighborhoods, and exemplary cultural and recreational opportunities. As the center of the Southern Oregon economy, businesses and educational institutions will find a collaborative environment encouraging partnerships, growth and innovation.” The vision statement was approved 6-0.

For the mission statement, there were two options: (A) Medford – A fantastic place to live, work and play, or (B) Medford – The place to live, work and play. After more discussion than you would think was necessary, a motion to adopt Option B failed, 2-4. A motion in support of Option A passed, 6-0.

The Core Values (Integrity, Caring, Courage, Accountability, and Teamwork) help both Council and staff make choices along with a clear commitment to how the organization is to operate. Approved 6-0.

Adoption of the City’s biennial goals again generated considerable discussion. Under housing strategies, several councilors wanted to include language for a homeless mitigation action plan. Others felt this language would be in conflict with a community task force that the City was already participating in. One issue being around who should be assuming leadership – the City or the larger community? A motion to include the action plan failed 3-4 (the mayor voting as a tiebreaker). A second motion to provide some compromise language (have to wait for the meeting’s minutes for exact language) was approved 6-0.
Update of Local Governance Study November 7 Meeting

Rogue Valley League voted to do an Update of the Local Jackson County Governance Study from 1999. A preliminary planning meeting was held Sept. 26. Olena Black is making the background materials about the original study which were reviewed at the meeting available on the Rogue Valley LWV website. Members interested in attending the next study meeting are encouraged to 1) read the sources on the website lwvroguevalley.org; 2) recommend people that should be interviewed for the new update, and 3) pose questions for the interviews. Committee chair Dr. Barbara Klein reminds us that this process is investigative and not pre-determined—many outcomes of a study are possible.

LWV
Tuesday, November 7, 2017 at 5:30-7:30pm
Phoenix Public Library Meeting Room

LWVOR Fall Workshop October 21 Eugene

The state League will be holding a Fall Workshop on Saturday October 21 at Lane Community College in Eugene. Register by October 13 at http://lwvor.org/event/fall-workshop-2017/.

The workshop is entitled “Marketing the Message: The League’s Role in the 21st Century”.

Attendees will enjoy a morning workshop and can choose from two afternoon workshops. A buffet lunch will be served from noon to 1pm and will feature a presentation by Lorena Reynolds. Ms Reynolds is an attorney based in Corvallis, who will present “Empowering the Next Generation of Women Leaders.”

The morning session is Professor Regina Lawrence who will discuss current trends in media and how we can improve our own practices to support a well-informed public.

You may attend one of two afternoon workshops:

Peggy Lynch—Come prepared with a charged laptop to learn how to navigate the Oregon Legislative Information System

Norman Turrill and Alice Bartelt—The League is undergoing a transformation that will ensure continued success in our 2nd century. Learn more!

Cost for registration and lunch is $35.

Consider carpooling!
Impending Healthcare Threat in Oregon: Referendum 301

Right now, Oregonians are being asked to sign petitions to get Referendum 301 on the ballot in a special January 2018 election. With few days left to collect signatures, Rep. Julie Parrish and the Oregon GOP are ramping up their efforts to get signatures. Petitions provide NO explanation of what Referendum 301 would do!

Proponents are trying to sell the measure as a way for people to stop a tax on individual health care premiums and a sales tax on medical services. They ignore the resulting serious impacts if funding is withdrawn. Referendum 301 has the potential to remove 375,000 adults from the Oregon Health Plan, reduce benefits for one million Oregonians, reduce healthcare jobs and reimbursements to providers, and make private insurance more expensive.

—Bill Walsh  Healthcare portfolio

- INITIATIVES: Registered voters can bring issues to the ballot, to change Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS), or to amend our state constitution.

- REFERENDUMS: With this category of petitions, registered voters can try to reject (veto) bills passed by the legislature by placing a referendum on the ballot.

- REFERRALS: The Legislature can refer an undecided bill or issue to voters for approval. Any bills that amend the Oregon constitution must be referred to voters. Only referrals don’t need petitions.

9-Month Countdown to Convention!  

June 28 – July 1  
2018 in Chicago

2018 is a National Convention Year, and planning has begun to make this an event you won’t want to miss. Delegates from Leagues across the country will convene to vote on national items such as program and budget, elect board members and more for the 2018-2020 biennium. As always we’ll work before Convention with Leagues from all over to build information sessions, workshops and events showcasing the best League ideas, projects, and advocacy. How to prepare? Later this Fall, our Convention webpage on the LWV forum will be developed. Bookmark this page and look for convention news as it emerges, including:

- The official First Call to Convention, and the Program Planners’ Guide.
- How and when to make hotel reservations at the Chicago Hilton on S. Michigan Avenue’s Museum Mile, a short walk from the Lake. Rooms blocked for the League’s use are $209 + tax per night, single, double or triple.
- This room rate will be available for a few days after July 1 for those who wish to spend 4th of July in this amazing city – described by residents and visitors as charismatic, diverse, cultured, and vibrant.

In February, you’ll be able to register as a convention delegate ($450 fee). This follows the January 2018 submission of your local League membership numbers. Your membership count determines the number of voting delegates you may have at convention. In the meantime, for guidance on how delegate representation is determined, see Bylaws Article IX. Finally, be sure to read upcoming League Updates for more Convention news!
With wildfires raging in the west and hurricanes and flooding disasters in the southeast and Caribbean, the role of climate change seems to be coming up more frequently, but the uphill battle against denying minds in high places in the government and elsewhere is far from over. Both the national and Oregon Leagues have made addressing climate change a high priority and the Rogue Valley League has a history of, and future for, action as well. Here are what appear right now to be the major issues we will be dealing with in the coming year:

**Juliana v. the United States** (AKA the federal Our Children’s Trust suit) has been scheduled for trial in federal court in Eugene on February 5, 2018, but is currently confronting another attempt by the Trump Administration to prevent the case from being heard at all. Recall that one of the 21 youth plaintiffs was among presenters at our April General Session, “Nature’s Trust, Our Children’s Trust.” Advocates for this important lawsuit are lending their support by submitting *amicus* briefs. The national and Oregon Leagues just released their second brief in early September ([http://lwvor.org/2017/09/07/immediate-release-league-files-amicus-curiae-brief-federal-climate-case/](http://lwvor.org/2017/09/07/immediate-release-league-files-amicus-curiae-brief-federal-climate-case/)). The NR/CC Action Committee will be watching this closely and looking for ways to lend a hand.

The 232-mile **Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline** and Jordan Cove Liquified Natural Gas Export project denied by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in 2016 is back for a third round. Last year, FERC specifically ruled that the extensive use of eminent domain that would be required to build the pipeline was not justified by the very limited public good it would serve. That situation has not changed, but the attitude in Washington has. The Canadian Corporation pushing this project officially filed its new application with FERC on September 21. We need to expect that new Trump appointees to that federal agency will reflect the White House’s announcement of support and priority for increased fossil fuel development, including specifically the Keystone XL, Dakota Access, and Pacific Connector Pipelines. So the fight is on. The Rogue Valley League has a history of opposition and has already taken the first step in this round by testifying during the FERC scoping period last June. We expect our involvement in the vast array of federal and state permitting processes to be intense.

Two high profile legislative strategies to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions are known generally as a **carbon tax** and **cap and trade**. Each has its complexities and staunch supporters. The Oregon Legislature will be taking a hard look at a cap and trade bill, SB 1070, the **Clean Energy Jobs Bill**, between now and the 2018 Session. The state League is part of a Coalition working for passage and we are involved with that, including by working with local advocates such as Rogue Climate and Southern Oregon Climate Action Now (SOCAN).

There is more and our involvement will vary. We will be watching at least two positive energy bills and one detrimental one with serious implications for climate change. Several landowners in Virginia have just filed a lawsuit against FERC for approving a pipeline project that, like the one planned through southern Oregon, will allow a private corporation to use eminent domain against landowners without a public benefit. If it comes to it, we will probably see a similar lawsuit filed here. Stay tuned.
Please welcome new members:

Catherine Katz [Ashland]
Lynda Stevenson [Medford]
Annie Takaha [Central Point]

Regional Solutions Observer Corps needed

If you are interested in Observer Corps, you may want to investigate the Regional Solutions meetings held quarterly during the year. Alan Campbell, staff director for the Southern Region, has assured us that we are invited to observe. The first meeting occurred on Sept 19. The work of this governor-appointed team is the moving force behind development and problem-solving at the multi-county level. Meetings are extremely interesting, and the local team is made up of knowledgeable civic leaders. Visit the website:

www.oregon.gov/gov/admin/regional-solutions/  This experience would be an excellent introduction to the region for new members.

Call Kathleen Donham at 541-772-5044 for questions.

Directory available in October

The new Directory will be available at the October General Meeting. Please let membership know immediately at 541-772-5044 if you have updates to your mailing, phone, or email addresses.

In memoriam........

Long-time League member Bettie Henry died June 25, 2017. As a university trained home economist in Ashland, she worked for the Extension Service and SOU. A celebration of Life will be held October 8. We gratefully acknowledge her support and participation in the League for many years.

Membership Anniversary Changing

Many thanks to those of you who paid their dues at the Annual Meeting in May. We will be moving to a new system for yearly dues collection that now will be staggered across the calendar. Those who paid in May this year will have that month as their anniversary date. Others will get individual notices right before their anniversary month. If you have a blue star by your name on the newsletter, it means your dues are now payable.

Membership Application

Name_________________________________________
Address_______________________________________
City___________________________________________
Zip______________Phone________________________
Email__________________________________________

Single membership — $65.00  Spouse/student—$32.50

May we publish your information in the LWV Directory?  Y N

Send check /application to P.O. Box 8555 Medford OR 97501
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