

Denton VOTER

*The League of Women Voters of Denton, Texas
Established 1961*

P.O. Box 424945 TWU Station
Denton, Texas 76204

October 2006

Sue Smith, President
Ken Ferstl, VOTER Editor

www.lwvdenton.org

CALENDAR

Thursday, October 12, 7 p.m. Dorothy Damico presents an information session on the proposed amendments to the Denton City Charter. Environmental Education, Science, and Technology Building, Room 176, University of North Texas, corner of West Hickory and Avenue C. Remember to get your parking hangtag from Peg La Point when you arrive. **LWV-Texas Voters Guide will be distributed to members attending.**

Monday, October 23. Early Voting begins for the November 7 election. There are two early voting locations in the City of Denton: the Joseph A. Carroll Building, 401 W. Hickory or Denton City Hall, 215 E. McKinney. For specific times, see page 3.

Sunday, October 29, 3 p.m. Board Meeting at Peg La Point's, 1900 Highland Park Circle. Members are welcome to attend Board Meetings.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

Treasurer Ann MacMillan reminds those who have not yet renewed that dues are past due. Dues are now \$50 for an individual member. Household memberships are \$50 for the first member and \$25 for each additional member at the same mailing address. Students may join for \$20. Send a check, payable to LWV-Denton, to P.O. Box 424945 TWU Station, Denton, Texas 76204.

OCTOBER MEETING: DENTON CHARTER REVISIONS

by Dorothy Damico

If you were living in Denton and were old enough to vote in 1959 (and many of you were neither of these), you may have voted for the original Denton City Charter. If you were living in Denton and were old enough to vote in 1979 or 1999 (a lot more of you may be willing to admit to that), you may have voted for Charter revisions in those years. Now, before you vote on these third revisions in 2006, I urge you to come to the General Meeting on Thursday, October 12 to ask the questions you need to ask to make an informed vote.

The opening section of the City Charter gives "The inhabitants of the City of Denton" the right to be the "body politic . . . possessing all power, property, and interests . . . and having the duties, obligations, and liabilities . . ." of being a city, and it gives the inhabitants the right to form a "council-manager government." The Charter also lays out the construct of the government of the city so formed. Our Charter, I believe, has served us, the inhabitants, well.

Council Member Jack Thomson asked me to serve on the recent Charter revision committee that would recommend to City Council amendments to the Charter. City Council voted, based on our recommended amendments, to place on the ballot on (continued on next page)

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November 7 twenty-two Propositions for voters to vote on that will make the changes to the Charter.

Some of the changes need to be made in the Charter because of changes in State law enacted since the Charter was written. Some of the other changes will be agreeable to the majority of voters, and some will not. None, I believe, will be hideously contentious.

Changes to be voted on are in areas such as Annexation Procedures, Location for Council Meetings, the Position of City Auditor, Powers of City Council, Procedures for Bond Elections, Powers and Duties of the Planning and Zoning Commission, Actions and Role of the Public Utilities Board, and Slum Clearance and Rehabilitation of Blighted Areas. I'll brief you on the pros and cons of these and the rest of the proposed changes, but space considerations make it impossible to do all of that here. The City Attorney's office is preparing a brochure that will give the wording for each Proposition and a brief explanation of what it means. They plan to send these out in the utilities bills, but they've promised me they'll have some ready for me to bring to you on Thursday to give you a starting point for our discussions and questions. I can also bring some copies of the enabling ordinance which has the actual wording changes that the amendments themselves will make in the wording of the Charter.

Perhaps equally if not more interesting are some of the changes the committee chose not to put forward. We can look briefly at them, too.

Please come on Thursday, October 12 to listen, and especially to add your comments to help us inform ourselves.

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RECAP OF SEPTEMBER MEETING

Denton City Mayor Perry McNeill was our guest at the September meeting. Dr. McNeill gave a presentation on current issues facing the City Council. Some of the topics he covered in his wide-ranging presentation were the four large developments being planned in the city, the proposed changes to the City Charter, the ratio of single-family to apartment developments, and solid waste issues.

The membership had several questions of the Mayor ranging from city budget planning to water use. It was a very informative meeting and we were grateful that the Mayor could take time to be with us.

Peg La Point
Program VP

PRESIDENT'S PODIUM

Thank you to all who attended our first general meeting of the year to hear Mayor Perry McNeill. Good attendance and good discussion as you would expect from our members. A lot of the time was spent on the proposed amendments to the City Charter. These will also be discussed at our Oct. 12 meeting which will be led by Dorothy Damico, League member and a member of the committee appointed by the City Council to make recommended changes to the Charter. Please make plans to attend that meeting before voting in the November election.

At our September board meeting, we discovered how badly we need a Voters Service Chair. As of now, the board will serve as the Voters Service committee. We are making plans to print a local Voters Guide. We have ordered the state Voters Guide for distribution to members, contributors, and public and academic (continued on next page)

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libraries throughout Denton County. Copies of the state guide will be available at the October 12 meeting.

If you have not paid your dues, please take note of the renewal notice in this VOTER. We value your support through your membership and would not want to lose anyone. This promises to be an interesting year and we don't want you to miss any of it.

Sue Smith

WHERE TO VOTE EARLY

In addition to the General Election on November 7, 2006, there will be a Local Option Election on the City of Denton ballot and proposed amendments to the City Charter. Before Election Day, you may vote at either the Joseph A. Carroll Building or the Denton City Hall. (On Election Day, however, you must vote at the location at which your precinct is assigned.)

Early voting by personal appearance will be conducted on the following dates:

October 23 – 27: 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
October 28: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.
October 29: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.
October 30 – November 3: 7 a.m. – 7 p.m.

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