

LOCAL ACTION AGENDA 2012-2013

Voter Participation in Weston Town Meetings (2001) amended 2008, 2010

The League of Women Voters of Weston, with the objective of increasing voter participation in town meetings, urges Weston Town Government to take the following measures:

1. Provide for secret balloting (for example, by paper ballot, machine ballot, absentee ballot, and, if permitted by the State, on the internet).
2. Provide an additional opportunity to vote, on a weekday or Saturday following a Town Meeting.
3. Provide full and current information about upcoming Town Meetings through the use of various media/communication tools, including:
 - a) Print (newspaper, signage, etc.)
 - b) Public access television
 - c) The Internet (Weston's town web site, email alerts, etc.)
4. Provide for regular public access television coverage of Town Meetings.

Land Use in Weston (1996)

We, the Weston League, support the establishment of a process for active implementation of the Town Plan of Development, with special emphasis on long-range land use and acquisition planning.

This process should include, but not be limited to:

1. Coordinating the involvement of relevant agencies, consistent with the Town Charter.
2. Periodically reviewing use of existing town-owned lands.
3. Creating and maintaining an inventory of remaining open space within the town.
4. Evaluating land for possible acquisition to meet future town needs.
5. Creating a financial plan for future land acquisition.
6. Developing alternate plans for land acquisition (obtaining gifts, easements, rights of first refusal, etc. for remaining parcels of potential interest to the town).
7. Periodically holding a public review of the progress of Town Plan implementation.

We support ongoing long-range land-use planning specifically designed to meet current and future public needs and promote a sense of community. Planning, with extensive public input, should include, but not be limited to, consideration of parcels for uses such as:

1. Town and school facilities.
2. Active recreation (playing fields, an ice skating rink, etc.).
3. A multigenerational community center.
4. Alternative housing.

5. "Green ways" interconnecting existing town and/or other open space for preservation of habitat and use for walking, biking, and riding trails.
6. Neighborhood "vest pocket" parks.
7. A town cemetery.

Ethics in Government (1995)

Recognizing that public office is a public trust, the League of Women Voters of Weston advocates adoption of a local code of ethics by ordinance. A code would create a board of ethics, establish minimum expectations of behavior, clarify public responsibilities, help prevent abuse of public office, and provide a framework for public understanding of proper conduct.

The League further advocates that a code in Weston should:

1. Contain a Preamble to set the proper ethical tone;
2. Cover all town officials, whether elected or appointed, and all town employees;
3. Include disclosure requirements as appropriate;
4. Delineate ethical standards, which are not to be taken as all-inclusive;
5. Include definitions of terms;
6. Require distribution of the code to all covered officials and employees as a *minimum* education requirement.

The League believes that the board of ethics should:

1. Consist of an odd number of members, appointed by the board of selectmen for staggered, limited terms, with minority party representation; and exclude those currently serving on boards or commissions, town employees, and members of political town committees;
2. Draft rules and regulations not already included in the code itself, adopted by the board after a public hearing, providing for hearing and decision timelines to assure fairness for all and for confidentiality;
3. Establish a procedure for advisory opinions;
4. Provide for a clear complaint procedure;
5. Report recommended penalties and sanctions to the board of selectmen for action or referral to the appropriate supervisory official or board.

Affordable Housing in Weston (1991)

Weston has a responsibility to expand its efforts to promote and provide affordable housing options within the town. All efforts must be predicated on environmental soundness with the understanding that the quality and quantity of the water supply be protected, and the town's commitment to sewer avoidance is maintained.

Weston Town Government should form, or support, a housing committee with broad-based community participation to assess the need for, and if necessary, to

encourage the planning, development, and administration of a program to increase the stock of local affordable housing. This committee could investigate Weston's possible participation in the Connecticut Housing Partnership Program.

Alternative Housing in Weston (1989)

The Town of Weston should adopt zoning modifications within the parameters of two-acre zoning to allow for: *

1. Cluster-zoned housing where the current overall density of one house per two acres remains the same in principle.
2. Cluster homes with a common wall where two-acre zoning remains the same overall.
3. An apartment loosely connected to the main house.

*All recommendations are supported with the understanding that the quality and quantity of the water supply in Weston be protected and the character of the Town is preserved.

The Town of Weston should:

1. Promote expanded awareness of current housing options and available government housing assistance programs.
2. Offer town-coordinated advice on financial, technical, and other concerns for planning accessory apartments.
3. Continue to study the special housing needs of the elderly and develop additional programs to meet any such needs that may have been identified.

Water Supply Protection in Weston (1987) amended 2006

The League of Women Voters of Weston recommends action to protect the quality and the quantity of the water supply in Weston, a town almost entirely dependent upon well water. We are concerned about groundwater sources and flow, waste disposal, and pollution control.

The League specifically recommends:

1. Encourage testing of well water at reasonable time intervals
2. Mandatory periodic cleaning of septic tanks
3. Adoption of water pollution control and aquifer protection ordinances to help insure a safe and sufficient potable water supply
4. Documentation of the location of the well, septic system, and fuel storage tank, (including any inspection records), to be presented to a home buyer by the seller at the time of sale
5. Continuation of town funded household hazardous waste collections
6. Education of the local residents regarding their responsibility to safeguard the quality and the quantity of Weston's water supply