



Suffolk County Voter

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July 2017

LWVSC Board Retreat: 10:30am Wednesday July 19 at Glorian Berk's home

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Observing Your Government in Action

The League has a strong commitment to open government and civic engagement. Protecting our right to know is integral to the health of our democracy. Decisions that determine how our schools will be run, at what level community safety programs will be funded, and how land in our towns will be used impact our lives and are vital to our well-being. These kinds of decisions need to be made with public input and oversight. One important way to ensure that is to observe government meetings.



Observer Corps programs are one of many ways for Leagues to ensure that "sunshine" or government transparency regulations are followed in communities. **For the League of Women Voters of Suffolk County, and our five local Leagues, observing government strengthens us, generates more members and attracts potential members, and builds stronger ties to the community.** It also makes us known to our elected and appointed officials, and fosters relationships with media and knowledge of other groups who also attend and observe. Observing helps the League become a respected, knowledgeable and nonpartisan "go-to" group in the community.

LWVSC is launching a program to engage our board and local League members in observing Suffolk County government. This will include the County Executive and other county-wide elected officials, our Suffolk County Legislature (general meetings and committees) as well as any special working groups/committees and departments as needed.

We encourage you to consider participating to whatever degree you are able: regularly or occasionally, in person or virtually (audio and video of meetings are on the county website).

- Explore and decide what county gov't branch/function you'd like to know more about
- Check their meeting schedule and agenda in advance
- Wear a LWV button and introduce yourself to officials/media
- Take notes- Who was there? How was the meeting conducted? What issues were discussed? What actions were taken/do these relate to League priorities or positions?
- What action is appropriate or needed?

Start by contacting any of the LWVSC board members/specialists/local League presidents listed on the left of this page.

Did you know?

In 2016 the Suffolk County Legislature, after failing to pass a plastic bag ban, passed a "Local Law to reduce the use of carryout bags in retail sales" requiring a 5 cent fee collected by retailers for plastic or paper bags, effective January 1, 2018. To read the bill, go to <http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/resos2016/i1649-16.pdf>.

At the same time, they established the "5 & 5 Education and Effectiveness Working Group" to educate the public on this issue. The working group will be meeting this summer, and welcomes League observers. For more information on the working group go to <http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/resos2016/i1767-16.pdf>