

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS METRO PHOENIX

Scottsdale Team

Meeting Date: October 12, 2017 at 9:30 am at the home of Judy Levine

Members Present: **Judith Levine** (Host), **Pat Bauer**, **Gerry Corey**, **Joan Lowell**, **Paula McKey**, **Doris Perlmutter**, **Alice Stambaugh** and **Katie Wilke**.

Agenda 1 – We welcome our newest member to the Team, **Joan Lowell**.

Agenda 2 - The **minutes** of our last meeting were approved by consensus.

Agenda 3 – Update on Desert Edge (formerly Desert Discovery Center) - Members acknowledged reading some or most of the extensive amount of information found in newspapers and on websites from interested parties and the public pertaining to the proposed Desert Edge (DDC). In addition, some members attended or reviewed the latest DE presentation at the City Council meeting on September 26.

Agenda 4 – Update on Public Vote for Desert Edge - No-DDC and POP (Protect Our Preserve) continue their promise of filing a lawsuit if the Council votes “no” on holding a public vote. The City Attorney still contends that the Ordinance supports the argument for the Council to make the final decision without a public vote. Members had questions regarding a public vote, such as whether there would be a Special Election, and would the vote be held in 2018 or Fall 2019. Council members Korte, Millhaven and Smith are not inclined to support a public vote.

Agenda 5 – League Concerns re costs of project and ongoing maintenance –
Affirmed

Agenda 6 – Introduction of Joan Lowell to speak about the business plan submitted by the Desert Edge commission – Joan is a member of the AZ Community Foundation and has extensive experience and expertise having served on 31 Foundation Boards. Joan reviewed the Executive Summary from DE’s 192-page Business Plan. Their proposed attendance averages 306,000. (Q? Is this number from cars or people?) Off-site parking will be provided in Peak Season. The Capital Campaign is projected to raise \$61,184,466. The projected Annual Operating Budget is \$6.3 million in a stable year. Earned Income from tickets, retail, etc. will be \$4.6 million. \$1.7 million in Annual Fund Development from gifts, bequests, and interest on the \$6.3 million reserve fund is projected.

Joan provided a chart of “Comparisons by Genre” which included the AZ Desert Museum in Tucson, the Desert Botanical Garden, Oregon’s High Desert, the Botanical Cactus Gardens in Las Vegas and the Living Desert in Palm Springs. Information

regarding attendance, earned income, contingency and operating costs was obtained from their annual reports. Joan also provided 2016 attendance figures for 9 locations in the Phoenix Metro Area. The McDowell Sonoran Conservancy (MSC) reported 700,000 attendees in 2016 (admission is free). With this type of facility, it takes a minimum of 12 years to financially break even. DE will hire a private company to run it. **Anne Walsh** emailed the following questions and information. “Q? What is ASU’s commitment to this project? How realistic is the DE’s ability to raise \$1.7 million? The annual salaries for development staff are projected to be \$229,000. Is this a normal ratio? Only one \$35,000 position for Volunteer Coordinator/Trainer is provided. This seems low.”

(Q? Will MSC have office space at DE?) The husband of one of our team members, **Pat Bauer**, is involved in future planning and fund development for MSC. MSC has lost \$150,000 a year for the last 4 years and consequently had to lose their Volunteer Coordinator and the Fund Development Director. They have 650 volunteers. (Q? Why can’t MSC get funding from tourism tax money?) According to Joan, Conde Nast wrote an article on the this Preserve. Members expressed concern that Preserve tax money used for DE will take funding away from the Preserve. Scottsdale citizens voted a tax for acquisition of land only. The City provides the building and maintenance. To obtain more information regarding the Preserve, go to mcdowellsonoran.org.

Agenda 7 – Discussion of Business Plan – Joan acknowledged the overall credibility of the DE Business Plan. A Citizen Science presentation will be held on October 17 from 1-3p at Scottsdale Community College. Members expressed interest in a discussion for more local support of MSC volunteers and concern over the duplication of services between MSC and DE.

Q? What is the time frame for city staff to follow up on important information requested by the Council at the last meeting? **Judy** will follow up on this.

Agenda 8 – Next steps for our Team. – As individuals do we take a stand on DE? The LWVMP, through the Scottsdale Team, has taken a position in favor of a public vote. We encourage citizens to educate themselves and support a public vote. Q? If there’s a vote, do we educate? We will decide later.

Agenda 9 - COGS has provided information through their newsletters regarding the DE.

Agenda 10 – Future events. Alice mentioned the We the People Summit on November 4. The LWVMP Holiday Lunch is on Saturday, December 9 at 11 am. Legislative Day will be on Wednesday, February 7, 2018 at the Capitol.

Agenda 11 – New Business. Do members wish to have a meeting in December? (December 14) **Judy** is focusing her membership recruitment in the Girl Scouts organization, the Pima Indian community and Scottsdale neighborhoods.

After Desert Edge is decided, what suggestions do we have for future focus?
Members made the following suggestions:

1. Recommend attending Scottsdale City Government 101 which is a series of free classes summarizing overall city government and how it works. Class size is limited and will be held again in Spring 2018. To be placed on their Advanced Notification Wait List, contact Christy Hill at 480-312-4126 or email her at chhill@scottsdaleAZ.gov.
2. Observe City Council meetings. There is a current discussion regarding whether Council members should continue to run *at large*, or represent a particular district.
3. **Gerry** inquired about the most effective way to provide voter education and registration for the Salt River Pima Indians. Their reservation is bordering the east side of AZ State Route 101 in Scottsdale.
4. The issue of Fake News
5. Sponsor events, such as a film series.
6. 2018 Voter Registration – LWV Voter Guide ballot issues
7. Candidate Q & A programs
8. Hold public” Meet the Candidate” events
9. National Popular Vote – The NPV Interstate Compact (NPVIC) is an agreement among a group of U.S. states and the District of Columbia to award all their respective electoral votes to whichever presidential candidate wins the overall popular vote in the 50 states and DC. It seeks to get states that comprise a majority (270) of the 538 votes in the Electoral College to agree to award their electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote. It has been enacted in 11 states possessing 165 electoral votes. In Arizona, in January 2017, the NPV bill was re-introduced in the House and remains in committee.
10. Rank Choice Voting versus “winner take all” in each state.
11. School Voucher Bill – National LWV has taken a position.

Next Meeting will be Thursday, November 9 at 9:30 at the home of Judy Levine.

