



Important Dates

Holiday Party Dec 7

Legislative Breakfast Jan 10

Committees

Citizens Academy
(open)

Communications

[Maggie Carini](#)

Development

Lisa Carroll

Education

Ginna Mashburn

Land Use and Environment

Mary English

Membership

Faith Yandell

Naturalization

Lisa Mixon

Special Events

City Sign Ordinance Update

Mary English, Chair, Land Use & Environment Committee

Revamping Knoxville's on-premise sign ordinance is mired in controversy. In early 2012, the City Council created a task force to work with the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) on changes to the ordinance. They worked diligently over the next two years but hit an intractable sticking point: the allowable heights of new on-premise business signs. (New off-premise signs – i.e., billboards – have been banned in the city for more than a decade.) In its November meeting, the MPC voted 10-5 to send the proposed sign ordinance with its unresolved sign height issue back to City Council, with the recommendation that the city hire an outside consultant to carry the ball forward.

League member is Local Representative to State Board

At her first conference call meeting of the TN Advisory Committee on Open Government, Vivian Shipe (recently appointed by Governor Bill Haslam) was welcomed with the news that the committee has a very favorable opinion of the League of Women Voters. From there the conversation focused on issues that may be associated with non-voters in Tennessee, including *what does it mean to be a voter, why does it feel so hard to go vote, and having no idea how to vote.*

Vivian reported that the committee also discussed ways that "technology is going to greatly change how we communicate and receive information from government".

**Farewell and Best Wishes To League Stalwart,
Elizabeth Brister Franks**

by Carol Krauss

Debbie Sharp

Voter Services

Contact [Ann Strange](#)

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Quick Links

[LWVKKC Public Policy Positions](#)

[LWV TN](#)

[LWV US](#)

[TN Economic Council on Women](#)

Contact the League

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Membership: membership@lwvknoxville.org

Voter Services: strangersrus@gmail.com

Announcements

The Land Use & Environment Committee needs League members

Our beloved Elizabeth Franks is leaving Knoxville for the second time. She and her husband Don will be moving to a retirement community in Harrisonburg, Virginia, to be more strategically located to their family.



Elizabeth has been a devoted member of the League of Women Voters for over 50 years. In 1963 she first joined the League in Augusta, Ga, where her husband was teaching at an historically black college. She had heard of the League from watching a League-sponsored televised forum. She promptly signed up and began editing *The Voter* and serving on the board.

Her next move was to Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, where she served as board member and unit organization chair, followed by a move to Philadelphia, Pa., and a stint as board member and housing chair.

With husband Don's next academic appointment to the staff at the University of Tennessee, she came to

Knoxville and headed the local government committee during the 1978 campaign for consolidated government. She was president of the Knoxville-Knox County LWV 1978--1981. Their next stop was Baton Rouge, where she served as LWV Voter editor, president (1993-95) and state LWV president 1993-1995. During a temporary assignment to Washington, D.C. for Don, Elizabeth was with the LWVUS Volunteer Lobby Corps.

From 1996 to 1998, the ever indefatigable Elizabeth held a national board position. She served on the Diversity Implementation Task Force which produced the publication *Diversity Tool Kit*.

Following their next move to Montgomery County, Maryland, she served on the LWVUS Volunteer Lobby Corps, made up of members living in the D.C. area. After her stint on the national board, she continued as a

The Land Use & Environment Committee needs League members to monitor the agendas and minutes of the regularly-scheduled meetings of four key local government bodies: the Knoxville City Council (Stephanie Hall has volunteered for this), the Knox County Commission, the Metropolitan Planning Commission, and the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Commission. The City Council meets bi-weekly; the other three meet monthly.

This work is **not** the same as serving on the League’s Observer Corps. It primarily entails checking the agendas posted on-line before the meetings and contacting committee chair Mary English if there is a key upcoming issue. If you’re interested in helping, please contact Mary: menglish@utk.edu; 865-584-2747.

The 2014-2015 LWVKKC Yearbook will be published and mailed by the end of the year. Only dues-paying members’ contact information will be included. If you have been receiving dues reminders and you wish to remain a member in good standing, please send payment online via PayPal or by mail to LWVKKC, P. O. Box 31825, Knoxville, TN 37930.

Save the morning of Saturday, January 10 for the 2015 Legislative Breakfast. Details to follow.

The Federal Election Commission is now receiving public comments about steps they should take “to address corruption in the political process.” National League President Elizabeth McNamara asks all members [to tell the FEC](#) to act and enforce the law.

member of the Diversity Task Force and was for a time chair of that body.

In 2006, she and Don returned to Knoxville, where she has continued her very active interest in the League.

Elizabeth considers that the highlight of her 51 year career in the League has been her involvement in issues of social justice and diversity, going back to her pioneering work in civil rights issues at the University of Arkansas. “The appeal the League had for me in 1963 was that I could go comfortably to an inclusive meeting even though those were very difficult times.” In the late 60’s, while living in Champaign-Urbana, she was instrumental in organizing a League unit in a predominately black neighborhood. She sent one of her children to a newly desegregated school, and teachers from that school attended the LWV unit that she had helped organize.

In Philadelphia from 1971-1976, her family lived in an integrated neighborhood. There her children attended public school and she represented the League as housing chair. She worked in that capacity with other fair housing groups such as The Housing Association of the Delaware Valley. She testified before City Council in favor of the first Urban Homesteading Program in the country, and organized testing that validated that there was racial steering in housing sales.

As for the future, she believes that the League should continue to fulfill its historical missions of getting out the vote, informing voters, opposing voter discrimination, and now, voter suppression. She urges us to redouble our efforts in the area of voter suppression and continue to lobby for important League positions.

She has been disappointed that we do not have League meetings except for the annual meeting. While we cannot go back to monthly unit meetings in different parts of town, she would like to see something like the brown bag lunches at the Beck Center with information and discussion prepared by League committees on issues of League concern and an occasional outside speaker or panel. Elizabeth believes that this would help create a LWV community, maintaining the interest of the older members and providing an opportunity for them to pass on their knowledge and experience to younger members.

As might be expected, Elizabeth will continue her work with the League. Harrisonburg is the first place she has lived since joining in 1963 that does not have a League.

However, she plans to be a Member at Large (MAL) of the Virginia League. “Perhaps I will attend some state meetings and I will continue to keep up with LWV through emails from LWVUS. I will be a member until my dying day.”

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