

COMMUNITY PLANNING

L WV - SH supports

1. The City government continuously focusing on integration maintenance, expansion of the tax base, maintenance of housing stock, and a high-quality educational system (Adopted 1987)
2. The writing of a short-term (no more than 5 years) city-wide plan that identifies needs, goals, priorities and means of implementation. (Adopted 1987)
3. Scheduled public joint meetings of the three taxing bodies (City, School, and Library) to discuss matters of common interest. (Adopted 1987)
4. Expansion of the tax base with reasonable efforts to assure that the integrity of the surrounding residential area will not be harmed. (Adopted 1987)
5. Maintenance of the City's high quality services, educational system, and public transportation, with investigation of additional needs. (Adopted 1987)
6. Evaluation of residential housing ordinances and inspection procedures. (Adopted 1979)

Positions

LWV-SH believes that:

Integration maintenance, expansion of the tax base, maintenance of housing stock, and a high-quality educational system are the four critical areas for the City to address continuously.

The City needs to write a short-term (no more than 5 years) citywide plan that identifies needs, goals, and priorities and recommends plans for action.

All three taxing bodies (City, School and Library) should communicate in scheduled public meetings to discuss matters of common interest in order to avoid duplication of services and to insure that individual decisions are made for the benefit of the whole community. This will serve to insure the most effective and efficient use of the public's money.

The City should seek to expand the tax base with reasonable efforts to assure that the integrity of the surrounding residential area will not be harmed. Demolition, new construction, and conversion of units in residential areas are acceptable if the character of the neighborhood is preserved.

The high-quality services, educational system, and public transport must be maintained in any development plan. Areas that need to be investigated further are the need for high quality convenient one-stop shopping compatible to the surrounding neighborhood, expansion of the Library, provision for high-quality housing for adult Shaker Heights residents.

Background

In 1971, the Shaker League studied municipal finance and community planning of Shaker Heights. Positions were adopted to (1) evaluate redevelopment proposals and their financing as they affect the tax duplicate and human and physical values, with a focus on revitalization of commercial areas and (2) support long range planning. These positions were replaced in 1987.

In 1977, Shaker Heights introduced a new series of inspection procedures for residential dwellings and in 1979, a short evaluation of these procedures was undertaken.

In 1981, League voted to support the concept of development of the Shaker Boulevard median strip.

In 1987, a League study sought to establish priorities for the evaluation of development proposals. A five-point position was adopted.

In 1989, the LWV-SH opposed the initiative petition to amend the City's plan for development of Shaker Towne Centre. The League felt that it was a band-aid approach, parts of which had been tried by the City over the years with generally unsuccessful results. The citizens of Shaker Heights soundly defeated the issue.

In 1990, the League voted to support the efforts to explore the feasibility of the development of luxury condominiums on the Malvern School property while retaining at a minimum the portion of the property containing the playground for community use.

In December of 1991, City Council adopted a "Vision Statement" or strategic plan to lead the community into the 21st century.

1991-94 the League observed and kept the membership informed of progress on Shaker Towne Centre and alternative uses developed for the City owned Moreland, Malvern and Sussex school properties.

In 1994 - 95, LWV-SH presented a forum entitled "Not in My Back Yard!" which examined issues of community planning in the face of competing and often conflicting interests.

In 1995 - 97, the Board of Zoning Appeals developed and adopted a new zoning code. The U. S. Post Office, a tax exempt facility, bought and is developing land at a prime commercial spot on Warrensville Center Road. The League continued to observe these developments and to encourage joint planning of the three taxing bodies.

In 1997-98, as part of the City reorganization community planning became Building, Housing and Planning. The City is focusing on economic development issues by looking at Shaker Towne Center, updating Vision 2000, stabilization, tax base expansion and housing preservation. An economic development task force will be put together.

Work in Progress:

HUMAN RELATIONS

LWV-SH supports:

Evaluation and continued support of measures designed to promote understanding and responsibility in a diverse and multi-racial community, with a focus on housing. (Adopted 1967)

Position

The League believes that all persons should enjoy equal access to employment, education and housing, regardless of their race, color, religion, or national origin.

The League supports open housing in Shaker Heights and supports measures to enact a Fair Housing Law on a county or area-wide basis.

The League supports action by the total community to maintain Shaker Heights as a truly integrated community.

The League supports action in Shaker Heights to promote education about integration.

The League favors nondiscriminatory hiring practices in the city, (courts, and schools with positive steps to implement this policy.

Background

A four-year study resulted in consensus in 1967 on the above position.

The League supported clarification of the Governing Board's role and the Housing Office's role in the city and has supported a legal opinion, which declared applicability of the city's sunshine ordinance to Board activities. We participated in a national housing Exchange Congress and with HUD block grant observing and citizen advisory committee for the Urban County, which includes Shaker Heights.

Since 1978 the League has observed meetings of the Housing Governing Board. When the Housing Office became the Department of Community Services in 1983, the League continued to observe its Governing Board.

In 1978 the League observed the impact that the traffic diverters separating the communities of Shaker Heights, Warrensville Heights and Cleveland had on relationships within Shaker Heights.

In 1985 the League observed the community's reaction to the city's integration maintenance and pro-integrative efforts by means of an informal survey of the opinions of selected community leaders representing various neighborhoods. Generally the city's efforts were favorably perceived. Also in 1985 the League supported the Fair Housing ordinance through which the Fair Housing Review Board was created in 1986.

The League has supported the Human Relations Commission that was created in November 1985 to

stimulate and improve human interaction between and among citizens of Shaker Heights.

In mid 1990, the East Suburban Council for Open Communities (E. S. C. O. C.) was dissolved for philosophical and financial reasons. In late 1991, the involved local municipalities funded the Cuyahoga Plan and school districts to perform similar services to those rendered by the dissolved E.S.C.O.C.

Locally, in mid 1992, the Shaker Community Service Department underwent major administrative and configurational changes.

In 1993-94 the Committee on the Center for Housing and Community Life (formerly the Community Service Governing Board and Public Relations Committee) was formed. Emilie Barnett was named Director.

In 1995-96 CHCL (The Center for Housing and Community Life) found a home in the old main library building, now named the Shaker Community Building. Under Ms. Barnett's direction, CHCL emphasized initiatives to upgrade and/or enhance housing stock and to celebrate our diversity. In 1995, the League sponsored a forum entitled "A Conversation about Race, Culture and Ethnicity," with a panel of diverse Shaker residents.

In 1996-97 the League co-sponsored "Community Conversations on Race, Ethnicity and Culture" with the City. The city's pro-integrative efforts need to be enhanced and new initiatives developed to reach its goals. Emilie Barnett resigned as Director of CHCL in August, 1996.

In 1997-98, as part of the City reorganization CHCL's functions were integrated into other departments. The Law and Pro-Integrative Services Group now includes the Pro-Integrative Housing Service. The law director is the leader of this group. The Community Life Committee completed a report outlining recommendations regarding the future of the city's pro-integrative housing efforts.

Work in Progress:

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

LWV-SH supports:

1. Continued evaluation of government in Shaker Heights and of its tax resources and allocations. (Adopted 1948)
2. A strong mayor-council structure with a full-time administrator appointed by the mayor with the approval of council. (Adopted 1974)
3. Staggered terms and non-partisan at-large elections for city council. (adopted 1974)
4. Attention to on-going charter review. (Adopted 1984)
5. Adequate financing with emphasis on new sources of revenue to support the city's needs. (Adopted 1971)
6. Public disclosure and accessibility of financial information. (1974)

Position:

The League believes that there should be an on-going evaluation of city government.

League members favor the retention of a strong mayor-council form of government for Shaker Heights, but support the institution of a chief administrative officer (CAO), appointed by the Mayor with the approval of the Council, to assist the Mayor in the administration of the city.

The League supports retaining the non-partisan ballot, election of all council members at-large and staggered four-year terms for Council.

The League favors adding to the charter an explicit statement that meetings of City Council and of city boards and commissions are open to the public and that city records are open to public inspection.

League members favor on-going review of the city charter with the intention of making the operations of city government more efficient and more responsive to needs of the citizens.

Shaker League members support the need for new sources or revenue to enhance the tax duplicate. Members favor some type of graduated personal and corporate income tax at the municipal or state level, or both.

League members believe that the city should at least annually, make easy-to-understand financial summaries available to the public in a widely disseminated format, and more comprehensive documents available at the libraries and city hall for public inspection.

League members feel the city budget and other financial matters should be presented at Council meetings in a manner which is understandable to all. The League supports adding charter requirements for disclosure and accessibility of financial information to the public.

Background:

The Shaker League adopted its position on continued evaluation of the structure of government in 1948.

The League conducted forums and adopted its support position for a strong mayor-council structure in 1974 as part of a charter review study. Members concluded that there is value in having an elected city head that is directly responsible to the people for providing political leadership and for the operation of the city government. It was also felt that an elected head is seen outside the city as a more significant leader in relations with outside groups and agencies. League members support the provision of a trained city administrator for the following reasons: as the city government becomes more complex, a professional administrator with the responsibility for coordination of city departments becomes more important. Because of increasing complexity, continuity is necessary at City Hall when the Mayor's job changes hands. The institution of the CAO enables the office of mayor to be defined as a part-time job. League members support the inclusion of qualifications as to education and experience in the ordinance establishing the CAO position.

In 1981, League completed a two-year study of the Civil Service Commission, based on a local item Civil Service Commission. The item was then dropped without consensus being taken. If any further study were contemplated, it would now occur within the framework of this item.

In 1982, we took a brief look at the City's budget and reviewed the impact of the recent income tax increase.

At the 1984 annual meeting, Shaker LWV members voted to change the program statement by substituting the wording "support for ... attention to ongoing charter review" for the previous "support for. . . placing the question of charter review before the voters every ten years. . ."

In 1989, the League opposed the 5.5 mill tax rollback issue. While we did not back the issue, we did urge the city government to provide some tax relief to residents of Shaker Heights. The issue was defeated.

In November 1991, an issue placed on the ballot by initiative petition asked citizens to approve the rezoning instituted by City Council on the former Malvern School site to multi-family residential. The City stated the change was necessary to explore the potential development of the property for luxury condominium use. The issue was defeated. The LWV-SH had publicly urged the City Council to consider options for the Malvern site that would increase the property tax base while at the same time maintain a reasonable portion of the land for recreational space and park land.

In 1990-92, in a joint financial venture between the City and the Library Board, the Main Branch Library moved to the renovated Moreland School. The City issued councilmatic bonds to pay for the renovations of the former school and the Library will repay the notes. The City acquired the former library building. Plans for its use are still being developed.

In 1993-95 the northwest quadrant of Towne Centre was developed to include renovation of the former library building into the Shaker Community Building, Karrington of Shaker Heights, and new soccer and softball fields. In response to conflict between the City and the School District over the relocation of the school warehouse in the northwest quadrant of Shaker Towne Centre, the League sent a letter to the City and the School District urging cooperation in joint planning efforts.

In 1995-96, the City joined with inner ring suburbs to address issues of urban sprawl. The City began efforts to reorganize its departments using consultants from the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Implementation of the new structure is scheduled for January, 1998.

In 1997-98 the City reorganized its departments. The City continued its active involvement with the First-Ring Suburbs Consortium. The City, Schools and Library continued with joint meetings on housing issues, joint gym facilities and after school programs. Key issues as seen by LWV observers: regionalism, cooperation with schools and library, and economic development.

Work in Progress:

RECREATION

The League of Women Voters Shaker Heights supports:

1. Cooperation between the City and Schools on the construction of any additional recreation facilities. (Adopted 1989)
2. Maintaining the present level of publicly-owned open space; additional open space should be sought in the more densely populated areas. (Adopted 1989)

3. Maintaining a balance of recreational facilities and publicly-owned open space. (Adopted 1989)
4. A recreation program in Shaker Heights that is operated by one governing body (Adopted 2006)
5. A formal agreement that specifies the relationship between the City and the School District and the responsibilities of each in the programming and facilities for recreation. (Adopted 2006)
6. Financial support for recreation from both the City and the School District with transparency in their relationship. (Adopted 2006)
7. A joint recreation committee composed of representatives from the community, sports associations, City Council and the School Board. (Adopted 2006)
8. A recreation department with clearly defined goals and objectives. (Adopted 1987)
9. Continued evaluation of programming facilities and financing with attention to active playground leadership. (Adopted 1974)
10. Continued evaluation of use and maintenance of open spaces. (Adopted 1974)
11. Cooperation among regional entities to expand recreational offerings. (Adopted 2006)

Position:

The League believes that one governing body should be responsible for the delivery of recreation programs and services to residents of Shaker Heights. This governing body should be tax-based and provide citizens with the best possible recreational offerings and non-duplication of services.

At the same time, the League believes that financing for recreation should rest with both the City and the School District, whether in actual dollars contributed or in facilities provided for programming. The City and the School District should have a formal agreement, with clearly defined responsibilities, for programming and facility usage. There should also be transparency in the financial relationship between the City and the Schools to ensure public accountability and so that costs can be evaluated objectively.

The League supports a joint recreation committee that is composed of community members, public officials, and representatives from a variety of sports associations that operate in Shaker Heights. This body can give voice to the concerns of the community and should assume an advocacy role for its needs.

The League believes that any method of structuring a recreation department in Shaker Heights must include the following criteria: clearly defined goals and objectives for recreation; direct management of recreation programming, facilities and personnel by one governing body; clearly defined lines of authority; clear channels of communication; fiscal responsibility; direct accountability to the citizens; specific written guidelines for use of facilities; public identity for the recreation department, and no reduction in the current level of programming and services.

The League supports the idea of regional cooperation with other cities and school districts when developing recreation programs and facilities. Offers of partnerships should be evaluated for their benefits to the Shaker community. Shaker Heights should also be proactive in seeking partnerships with area independent schools.

In the area of teenage activities, the League supports the concept of utilizing existing community groups- their facilities, leadership, and financial resources- to help effect cooperative programs capable of opening new and constructive options to the youth of the community.

The League supports the improvements of the playgrounds and city park areas in Shaker Heights with respect to innovative design, attractiveness, and safety. The League feels that supervision of the

playgrounds is important, and that the most desirable supervision is dependent upon the season, the time of day, the specific playground area in question, and adequate training of the supervisors. The League supports long-range planning for playgrounds and recreational areas geared to all ages and all segments of the community.

Background:

From its beginning in 1947, the Shaker League has been interested in the area of community recreation. League recommendations supported the original establishment of a Recreation Advisory Board (1948) as a joint program of the City and the Schools. Since that time the League has made a wide variety of recommendations having to do with the staffing, financing, and facilities of recreation in Shaker Heights. In 1956, the League cooperated with the PTA in a major study of recreation needs which led to the development of the Thornton Park facilities- swimming pool (1962) and ice rink (1968). In 1968-69 concern about the operation of the recreation program led to a study of the structure and financing of the joint program under the Recreation Board. The resulting consensus provided the basis for support of a strong Board to effectively coordinate a program to make optimal use of the resources of both the City and the Schools. The 1969 consensus also strongly supported the admission of all residents of the Shaker School District to all recreational facilities and programs in Shaker Heights, a principle that is now followed in the recreation program. League activities and recommendations were part of the stimulus for the formation in 1972 of a community wide Citizens Committee on Recreation which resulted in the Lane Report and many recommendations which are still effecting the course of recreation today.

In 1973-74, there was growing concern in the community and among members of the Recreation committee regarding playgrounds in Shaker Heights. Specifically, questions about safety, usage, adequacy of equipment and supervision led to League to undertake a study of neighborhood open spaces of both city and school-owned playgrounds in the spring of 1974. This study was followed by a study of the amount and kind of supervision existing on these playgrounds.

After the 1974 consensus the committee worked to build a broad base of community support for improving playgrounds. The League has seen the establishment of the Community Spaces Committee to develop a long-range master plan for the improvement of playgrounds and other open spaces and has had a representation on this committee. Community support steadily gathered momentum for improving playgrounds and culminated with the passage of a school bond issue in May 1977 that provided money for playground improvement. The years 1978-79 saw the planning and construction phase of the playgrounds.

In 1979-80, an Office on Youth was established, and the selection process for citizen members of the Recreation Board was evaluated. The League position with regard to supervision has been partially achieved in that the Recreation Department has set forth as their goal a flexible balance between active and custodial supervision. However, the League should strongly encourage the Recreation Department to provide quality in-service training for supervisors and a greater degree of supervision of the playground supervisors themselves.

In 1982, the League recreation committee studied the new leadership, organization and programming of the Recreation Department.

In 1986, the League adopted a new study of recreation: Restudy and evaluation of the structure and financing of publicly-funded recreation in Shaker Heights, with attention to the Joint Contract between the City and School District. This was a year-long study. In the spring of 1987, the City and School District agreed to dissolve the Joint Contract and to operate the recreation program as a department of city government.

In 1989, a series of Recreational Consensus meetings were held. Out of these meetings three new positions were adopted concerning additional facilities, open space and maintaining a balance between recreation facilities and open space.

In 1992 the School District began renovation of several of its playgrounds while the City was discussing how to proceed and obtain community input on renovations of its playgrounds. The City and School administration had several discussions on proceeding with renovations jointly, but no agreement was reached.

In 1993 the Recreation Committee and City administration proposed a master plan for Thornton Park which included a new gym facility, rink and water slide. The League sent a letter to the City urging cooperation between the City and School District in the planning of this expansion.

From 1994 to 1996, the Recreation Department continued to evaluate and revise its plans for Thornton Park renovation. In May 1996, the City put an issue on the ballot for an income tax increase to fund the renovation of Thornton Park. The League did not support the issue because the joint planning process between the City and School District was not completed. The issue was defeated.

In 1997-98 as part of the City reorganization, the Recreation Committee became part of the Community Life Group. Other committees in this group are the health department and community relations which included community support, youth support, and senior adult support. The Recreation Department has begun an extensive internal process to gain accreditation from a national recreation program accrediting organization. Other discussions have focused on youth programming and the ongoing demand for services by Shaker citizens.

In 2003, the League began another study of recreation focusing on the relationship between the City and the School District and the governance of Shaker recreation programs and facilities. This resulted (2006) in several revised position statements concerning good governing of recreation and one additional position statement calling for regionalism where possible in the establishment of new recreation programs or in the construction of new facilities.

In 2004 the City conducted a Recreation and Leisure Task Force public process by which a citizen advisory committee- together with the public and a consultant hired by the City- developed ideas for Shaker's facilities (primarily Thornton Park) and open spaces. The list of recreational priorities contained some renovations, some expansions, and development of new amenities/facilities. The City established a priority list and budget. In 2006, the City held another series of public meetings dedicated to planning a renovation/expansion of the Thornton Park pool. The pool planning phase was conducted in the spring of 2006, and construction of a new pool and other Thornton renovations are expected to begin in August, 2006.

May 2006

SHAKER HEIGHTS PUBLIC LIBRARY

LWV-SH supports: (all adopted 1975)

1. Continued evaluation of financing and future development.
2. Involvement of the library board in city planning.
3. Cooperation and coordination with all levels of government.
4. An active public information and education program
5. Cooperation between public libraries and school libraries.
6. Support for sustaining a volunteer citizen's group with well-defined goals.

Position:

Continued evaluation of library finance is essential, with close attention to the new mechanism of funding implemented in 1986.

The League continues support for an increase in Main Library space in the long range planning for the library.

Also to be encouraged is more interaction between the Library Board and other local governmental bodies - City Council, the School Board, and the Recreation Department and where appropriate, a shared approach toward community problem-solving.

Background:

The League adopted this local item in 1975 after the 1974 passage of a 1-mill operating levy for the Shaker Heights Library.

Ohio's former system of financing public libraries through an intangible personal property tax was unique among the states. While the tax had provided for some exceptionally fine libraries, it also resulted in very real inequities in the amount of funding and services provided to various libraries throughout the state. A share of the County intangibles tax was the major source of support for the Shaker library until 1986.

There was Shaker League agreement in 1976-77 that the tax system should be simplified to make it more understandable and that it should be made a part of the State Income Tax Form to increase citizen awareness of the tax and to aid in the enforcement of the collections. It was felt that any new method of financing public libraries in Ohio should involve a mix of state and local funds but local control and involvement should be maintained. The local option to raise additional tax revenues should be continued so that good libraries are not penalized, while others are brought up to meet standards.

It was also felt that a stable source of income, such as the intangibles tax provided, must be maintained. A state formula was suggested, but there was reluctance to give up established funding until the state legislature put libraries in the budget as a high priority and guaranteed comparable aid.

The League worked to insure passage of the library levy during the 1979-80 year.

The Ohio legislature addressed library financing in June 1983. The legislature set in motion a procedure to change the mechanism of funding H.B. 291, which took effect in January 1986, repealed the county-collected intangibles tax and replaced it with a new state-supported fund.

A special committee to help develop specifics for the new system was formed, Two principle concerns were: 1- that monies be distributed according to a fair formula providing for a gradual improvement of poorer libraries and 2- that no libraries receive less in 1986 than they did in 1985. The Shaker LWV observed development of the new system closely.

The League has continued to observe the Library's financing system In January 1986, HB. 291 took effect. It is a new state-supported fund, the Library and Local Government Fund, which earmarks 6.3% of the income

tax for libraries. In addition to a state monies, the library's other major source of income is local property taxes. This is a static source of funding which does not increase with assessment over time. Rather than opting for additional levies, the Library asks the voters to approve replacement levies. The last 2-mill replacement levy was passed in 1984, with support from the LWV-SH. This levy will be subject to renewal or replacement in 1989.

Locally, over the last 10 years a number of changes in the Shaker libraries have taken place: an addition to Bertram Woods has been built, the parking problem at the Lee Road Library has been solved, hours at both libraries have been increased, a quarterly newsletter was initiated in 1978 to provide better publicity, the Friends of the Library was created and serves as a community support group, and in 1986 computerization of the circulation system was completed.

Although space problems at the Main Library continue to exist, the defeat of a 1982 bond issue and concern over the current level of taxation in the community have put any major building projects on a temporary hold. The LWV supported the bond issue in 1982.

In 1986-87 Shaker Heights has progressed in its plans for the redevelopment of the Chagrin-Lee-Avalon area. Although the Library is mentioned generally in this plan, and the Library Director and Board are involved in current planning discussions for the Towne Centre Project, there are no specific plans for expansion or relocation of the Library at this time.

In 1988 and 1989 the League studied and then opposed the ballot issue asking for the Shaker Library to join the County Library System. Our members strongly support our Library remaining a separate entity. The issue failed.

In February 1990, the Library Board's long-range Planning Committee recommended that the preferred course of action for the Main Library was to proceed with plans for its renovation of and move to the vacant Moreland School building. This would meet the Library's needs for the next 20 plus years. The Library Board voted to pursue this course of action working with the City government in this endeavor.

In 1990-92 in a joint financial venture between the City and Library Board, the Main Branch Library moved to a renovated Moreland School. The City issued councilmatic bonds (such bonds are issued without a vote by citizens) to pay for the restoration of the former school. The Library is responsible for repaying the debt incurred by the City.

In 1993-94 the LWV observed the completion of the Moreland Library Building renovation and its opening in August 1993. The LWV also noted the retirement of Barbara Luton, Director of the Library, and the appointment of the new Director, Francis Buckley. The LWV endorsed the Library's 3-mill replacement levy that appeared on the May 1994 ballot and it passed.

In 1994-95, under the direction of its new director, the Library completed a strategic plan, implemented and expanded new programs for children and adults and updated the Library's organizational structure.

In 1995-96 the new community playground was completed next to the Library. The main library realized 1 million dollars for its second floor renovations from the passage of the 1996 School Bond Issue.

In 1997-98 the library director, Francis Buckley left for Washington, D.C. and was replaced by Edrice Ivory.

The second floor renovations were initiated and will be finished late in 1998.

Work in Progress

SHAKER HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

L WV – SH Supports:

1. Study and evaluation of educational priorities within the school system as they relate to maintaining a high-quality educational program, with adequate budgetary control and long-term financial planning. (Adopted 1976).
2. Adequate financing of the school system (Adopted 1976)
3. An objective to achieve a racial composition at each school which reflects the district racial balance. (Adopted 1985)
4. Cooperation among the schools, public libraries and the city (added 2006).

Position:

The League believes there should be an on-going evaluation of the school system and an awareness of the educational priority-setting process.

The League believes in budgetary control and long-term financial planning for the school system. The League supports adequate financing of the system. LWV-SH supports an objective to achieve a racial composition at each school which reflects the majority/minority composition of the district as a whole.

LWV-SH supports the Shaker Schools Plan, which consists of voluntary busing to achieve racial balance. League support includes but is not limited to voluntary busing as a means of achieving racial balance.

LWV-SH recommends the exploration of other means to achieve racial balance. A major priority must be to provide equal access to education to all students of the district.

Background:

The Shaker League has a long history of support for adequate financing of our school system. Each time the community has been asked for additional tax levies or bond issues to support the schools, the League has carefully evaluated the requests before endorsing the levy or bond issue in question. In 1976 the local item on the school system was adopted to emphasize our intention to continue to evaluate the school system's financial status and needs and to support "adequate" funding for the schools in the future. This concern is paralleled by the State League's long-standing position favoring adequate funding for schools and their studies and action to achieve an equitable basis for state support of school systems throughout Ohio.

Study and action on education at the State and National level within the League is based on the national Human Resources position which emphasizes "equal access to education, employment, and housing," and action to "promote social justice by securing equal rights for all and combating discrimination poverty." Based on these positions, the Shaker League assisted with the development of the Shaker Schools Plan and has

supported the Plan's goal of ending racial isolation in our school system The League is committed to continued evaluation and support of this program.

In February 1976, the Shaker League developed its position of support for an open elementary school lunch program, available to all who wish to use it. The position includes some suggested attributes of a satisfactory open lunch program, including. well-defined district-wide policies, maintenance of adequate supervisory-student ratios, and implementation within each school of a lunch program which promotes positive attitudes amongst students and staff. In June, 1976, the school system adopted an open lunch policy for all elementary students which was implemented in the fall of 1976. During the 1976-77 and 1977-78 school years the League evaluated the development and status of the expanded lunch program The wording supporting an "open elementary school lunch program," was dropped from the item in 1981, when this became accepted procedure for the Shaker Schools.

In March 1978, the Education Committee reported to the membership on its study of issues relating to state control and financing of education in Ohio. It also reviewed income and expenditures within the Shaker system, and reported on the Shaker Schools Plan.

In March 1979, the Forums addressed the question of school funding. They focused on the financing of the Shaker Schools, particularly on the process of financial planning and the setting of priorities within the system (Developments in school funding at the state level have been updated through 1984 by the local and state education committee combined efforts.)

Committees in 1981 and 1982 focused on the special education programs in our schools and the new and innovative programs being introduced by the Shaker system (including the magnet concept). Support was voted for the levy requests both years.

In May 1983, the local Education Committee met with superintendent and treasurer of the Shaker school system to analyze the need for the proposed school levy. After studying the administration's responses to League questions and meeting with HALT, the group opposing the levy, the committee recommended to League board that LWV-SH endorse the proposed school levy. The L WV Board unanimously supported the levy, and worked in cooperation with the School Board to help pass the levy. Although the levy was defeated in June, it was resubmitted to the voters in August and passed at that time.

During the 1983-84 school year, the local Education Committee's primary focus was to observe the work of the School Facilities Utilization committee and to assist in the exchange of opinion and information via community meetings and a special production of Shaker Life (cable TV) with a panel discussion of the issues involved in school reorganization.

During the 1984-85 school year, the Shaker Schools plan (the voluntary busing program) was studied by the Education Committee. In May 1985, the Shaker League developed its position of support for the objective of achieving a racial composition at each school which is reflective of that of the school district as a whole. L WV - SH reaffirmed its support for the Shaker Schools Plan, but urged the School Board to explore other means to achieve racial balance. League support for integrated education includes, but is not limited to, voluntary busing.

In November 1986, after a thorough interview with the superintendent, the treasurer and the school board president, the League supported a 7.5 mill school levy. After announcing our support the L WV - SH wrote a

letter to the school board outlining some budgetary recommendations. In March 1987, the school board reorganized elementary education into five elementary buildings and one grade-levels 5 and 6 building at Woodbury. During the substantial community debate the LWV-SH made public statements endorsing those elements of the reorganization which supported our positions for a racial composition at each school which reflects the districts racial balance and equal access to education.

In May of 1989, after an interview with the superintendent and treasurer of the school district, the information gathered at that meeting was presented at League forums. There was no organized opposition to this levy issue. The L WV - SH board voted to support the 9.8 mill school levy. The levy passed.

In May of 1990, after meetings with the superintendent, treasurer and business manager of the school district and holding forums for League members the board voted to support the \$10 million bond issue. These funds were needed for building repairs, modernization, and additions of classrooms, labs, playgrounds and athletic facilities. The repairs will take place over a three to five year period.

In June 1992, after meeting with the superintendent and school treasurer, the LWV-SH board voted to support the proposed 9.8 mill operating levy.

In 1993-94 the LWV looked at community/school board interaction. The League sent a letter to the School Board and Superintendent encouraging the Board to allow for public comment and questions at their monthly board meetings. In May 1994 the Board began taking and answering questions at their monthly meetings.

In 1994-96, the 8.7 mill levy on the November 1994 ballot failed, resulting in cuts for the 1994 and the 1995-96 school years, An 8.9 mill levy was placed on the ballot in February 1996 and it passed. The League evaluated both levies and supported them. Project Achieve, a district wide effort to improve the academic performance of students was established. A \$12.7 million bond issue was placed on the ballot in November 1996 and passed. LWV-SH supported the bond issue.

In 1997-98 Joint meetings were held with City Council and Library Board. They developed a model for working together, rated issues of mutual concern: youth issues, academic achievement, and recreation/sports facilities, and investigated whether it was feasible for the joint bodies to pursue a joint collaborative sport facility effort. It was decided that the Schools should go ahead on their own and the District decided to expand the High School's South Gym. An architect was hired. The front of the High School will be altered to meet ADA requirements and to add parking. At Woodbury the library is being moved and the front of the building is being altered. No levy was put on the ballot.

Work in Progress:

TRANSPORTATION

LWVSH Supports:

Continued evaluation of issues relating to transportation in and through Shaker Heights, including roadways, freeways, and public transit facilities, so that Shaker Heights is maintained as a desirable residential community. Support of mass transit as a public service, publicly controlled with operating costs subsidized, to meet the transit needs of all residents of Cuyahoga County, including the special transit needs of senior

citizens and handicapped persons. (adopted 1972, updated 1979) (second sentence from ILO position?)

Positions

The Shaker League supported the establishment of a regional transit authority in the area. The League supports the need for cities to plan integrated transportation systems which, because they are a public service, should be publicly subsidized.

Background:

The broad transportation item was adopted in 1972 and updated in 1979. It incorporated three areas of transportation concern: mass transit, roadways and freeways.

In 1972-73 a study was done locally on the Shaker Rapid system that coincided with a study by the County League for the needs and future of mass transit in Cuyahoga County. Both took a position in support of the establishment of a regional transit, authority. That same year the National League developed a policy that supported the need for cities to plan integrated transportation systems which, because they are a public service, should be publicly subsidized. Based upon these positions and upon its own local study, the Shaker League supported the integration of the Shaker Rapid into an area-wide Regional Transit Authority and the passage of a one per-cent sales tax for its support.

The League gave support to the bond issue passed in June 1978 whose purpose was to replace some water lines, perform sewer repair and accomplish major resurfacing of several streets.

The Lomond-Sussex Plan, an extensive traffic diverting process, subsequent enforcement was closely observed by the League. Lawsuits against the closing of some streets to adjoining cities were taken to trial. The Ohio Supreme Court ruled in 1986 in favor of Shaker Heights' right to put up traffic diverters.

Several years ago, two major proposed freeways threatened to dissect the city. The League took a strong stand against the Clark and Lee Road Freeways and combined with other protesting citizen groups. The plan was thwarted. The League desires to continue to maintain a position that would make it possible to move quickly and to react to any new freeway plan that might develop.

In June, 1973 the Shaker League proposed to the Cuyahoga County League that a committee be set up to evaluate the operation of the Greater Cleveland RTA. This proposal was approved.

In 1980, The Shaker League applied for and received a grant from the Gund Foundation to hire a consultant to review a proposal by RTA, NOACA and ODOT to extend the Green Road rapid line to 1-271. The study was completed in June 1981 and results were published. No action is anticipated, because the proposal is no longer a priority item.

1986-1996 this item was inactive.

In 1998, the County ILO (Inter-League Organization), with LWV-SH participation, embarked on a study of transportation and outmigration issues.