



Suffolk County Voter

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October 2015

LWVSC Board Meeting: 10:00 am Wednesday Oct. 21 at SCCC, Main St., Riverhead

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Background: In 2013, LWVSC spoke out against the process of Suffolk County financial consolidation of the offices of Comptroller and Treasurer – we felt that there was a lack of transparency and information and a flawed procedure. In 2014 it was back on the ballot, and was approved by voters in a referendum. (Former SC Leg) John Kennedy was elected to the position of Suffolk County Comptroller in 2014, SC Treasurer Angie Carpenter resigned in February and the process of consolidation has now been embraced and moved forward at an accelerated pace, to be completed by January 2016.

Mary McLaughlin, Nancy Marr, and Lisa Scott met for over an hour with Comptroller Kennedy and his senior staff on September 14 to get an update on consolidation as well as a better understanding of the responsibilities and challenges of the Comptroller's office.

The Comptroller's office audits county departments and nonprofit agencies that are funded by the county, is the chief borrowing authority, processes payroll and invoices, and prepares yearly financial statements. We received copies of the "Popular Annual Financial Report" for Suffolk County, a user-friendly version of the (200 page) "Comprehensive Financial Report" for local Leagues to review. LWVSC plans on more actively engaging in reviews of county budget / financial issues, and welcomes any League members who might be able to assist or share their analytical expertise. The County Executive is releasing the initial 2016 operating budget on September 18, and it will be studied by our Legislators. Comptroller Kennedy offered to assist the League if we have questions moving forward in our financial explorations. (Please contact lisawscott@gmail.com if you can help.)

YOUR VOTE COUNTS PARTICULARLY IN LOCAL ELECTIONS THIS YEAR	ELECTION DAY IS TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2015 POLLS ARE OPEN 6 AM TO 9 PM	Look for these Suffolk Bus Ads In Oct.	SU VOTA CUENTA ESPECIALMENTE EN ELECCIONES LOCALES DE ESTE AÑO	EL DÍA DE LAS ELECCIONES ES EL MARTES, 3 DE NOVIEMBRE, 2015 LOS CENTROS DE VOTACIÓN ESTÁN ABIERTOS DE 6 AM A 9 PM
Visit www.vote411.org to find out where to vote, and who is running in your area.		Visite www.vote411.org para saber dónde debe votar, y quiénes son los candidatos en su zona.		
Questions? Call the Suffolk County Board of Elections: 631 852-4500		¿Preguntas? Comuníquese con la Junta Electoral del Condado de Suffolk: 631 852-4500		
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Peconic Baykeeper Dan Gulizio Meets with LWVSC Board on Water Issues on September 16

Dan focused on the link between water quality declines and the region's increasingly unsustainable development patterns. If we are to improve water quality and restore local environmental resources, we must understand that these issues are directly related to a toxic combination of unsustainable development patterns, ineffective sanitary standards and a regulatory process driven by special interest needs instead of the desire to promote environmental quality or to protect public health.

Take-aways from the discussion included:

- Can protecting our water be removed from the political process? The focus and mission should be: to protect public health and protect water quality (ground and surface).
- Suffolk County's standards for minimum lot size to mitigate nitrogen are among the least restrictive (weakest) standards in the country, and 60% of our lots don't even meet these low standards.
- "Grow the economy to stabilize taxes" has been the mantra, but it hasn't worked- SC is 8th highest county in taxes.
- Increasing sewers in SC is used to increase density– yet actually adversely affects groundwater.
- Under both CE Levy and CE Bellone, Suffolk County cut Dept of Health staff related to inspections, monitoring, testing and cut funding for open space acquisition.
- Suffolk County has 33 villages and 10 towns- these individually make decisions regarding land use, development, zoning- but the permitting process is dual- all require SC Dept of Health Services approval before any building can be done.
- We have \$100M a year in taxpayer spending (as a result of funding open space through taxation) but this is negated by unsustainable development practices- especially zoning changes, as well as transfer of development rights (TDRs).

These are not technical problems- they are regulatory problems (land use has caused problems). We need proactive protection, not reactive treatment. A combination of carrots and sticks to incentivize Suffolk County to confront these issues at their root cause, not only via treating symptoms/problems, is needed now. Dan is available to meet with local Leagues/Natural Resource committees. Contact him at dan@peconicbaykeeper.org.