



League of Women Voters of East Alabama

<http://lwv-eastalabama.org/>

From the President: Council Forum + LWVEA + O-A News = SUCCESS!

The LWV of East Alabama along with the Opelika-Auburn News hosted an Auburn City Council Candidate Forum on Tuesday, August 12th, in the Fellowship Hall of the Auburn First Baptist Church. The O-A News provided excellent publicity that brought out more than 170 people for the event.

Dr. Jennifer Adams, Associate Professor and Director of the School of Communication & Journalism at Auburn University, did a great job as our moderator. After introductions by each participant, Jennifer asked the panel seven questions that dealt with various topics of interest such as controlled growth, support for schools and attracting new businesses.

So many people helped to make this event so successful! I am writing this from Spain and my list of people who helped is at home! I don't want to forget anyone so I will write up something for October's *Voter*.

Continuing on the success of the city council forum, we have invited members of the City of Auburn Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments to speak at our meeting on **September 22nd beginning at 6:30PM in the Auburn City Council Chambers at 141 N. Ross Street. Please note the change in location.** Trey Rankin and Sarah Brown will be on hand to provide an overview of what each board does and how they function. They will also answer questions from the audience. Please plan to attend this informative event.

We are also planning a state legislator forum on October 20th. The details are being worked out so save the date!

More great news! The League of Women Voters of East Alabama will host the 2015 LWV State Convention in the spring! This is a time to make East Alabama shine. Please consider helping out and attending this wonderful event!

**Respectfully submitted,
Kristen De La Fuente
President, LWVEA**

Auburn City Council Members 2014-2018

Mayor: Bill Ham	
Ward 1: Clemon Byrd	Ward 5: Lynda Tremaine
Ward 2: Ron Anders	Ward 6: Dick Phelan
Ward 3: Beth Witten	Ward 7: Gene Dulaney
Ward 4: Brent Beard	Ward 8: Tommy Dawson

The newly elected council members will begin their terms in November. All city council members are elected every four years. Meetings are held in the Council Chambers at 141 N. Ross St. the first and third Tuesdays of each month beginning at 7PM. Consider joining the LWVEA Observer Corps to follow the council meetings. Contact [Kristen De La Fuente](#) for more info.

Save the Date:

• **September Meeting:
Auburn City Planning
Board and Board of
Zoning Adjustments**

Monday, 9/22 at 6:30PM,
Auburn City Council
Chambers, 141 N. Ross

• **State Legislature
Candidate Forum**

Monday, 10/20; more
information coming soon.

• **Board Meeting**

Monday, 10/27 @ 5:30PM,
660 East Lane

• **General Election**

Tuesday, November 4

See Calendar on Page 4
for more information

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PLANNING IN AUBURN *by Ruth Wright*

The program meeting on Sept. 22 will allow us to understand how the City of Auburn makes and administers planning and zoning decisions. These issues are timely for understanding many comments from the City Candidate Forum, Letters to the Editor, or informal conversations about particular projects.

Our local league last studied the livability of Auburn in the context of planning and zoning in a major local study lasting from the late 1990's to 2000-2001. At that time many were alarmed about rapid and unconsidered growth, such as hasty annexations, developments described as "sprawl" because of the absence of any standards, chiefly on South College and Opelika Road, and complaints from neighborhoods about rentals to groups of students whose lifestyles conflicted with the single families established there.

After the study with the League consensus, the League adopted new positions for action on Growth Issues for Auburn, Green Spaces, and Livable Neighborhoods. Earlier, a small review in 1998 merely updated positions on Land Use and Zoning.

These positions (League's *program*) provide the public policy decisions on which any action or *advocacy* must be based. The program can be found here on pages 3 and 4 and on the League web site (www.lwv-eastalabama.org) with the focus then being on "smart growth." The City enacted a [Growth Boundary Plan](#) with nine principles, including guidance for annexation.

League's position states as a general principle: "As it grows, Auburn should strive to preserve its unique identity, including its traditional college town atmosphere, its sense of community, and the quality of life it has offered." This statement does not, like others from that study, address specific threats or provide particulars for accomplishing its goals. It seems likely the specific threats to Auburn's identity and provisions for livability differ now from those in 2000-01 and would need to be updated.

Our speakers from the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments can answer questions such as the following: How are zoning decisions made and modified? How are regulations, such as variances and incentives, created, applied, and appealed? What is the relationship between the Planning Commission and the Board of Zoning Adjustments? What can be expected in the future, especially with Opelika Road and Downtown? Are new zoning changes being worked on or considered?

LOCAL STUDY AND SUPPORT POSITIONS

GROWTH ISSUES FOR AUBURN (May 2000 and May 2001)

The League of Women Voters believes it is essential that the planning efforts and policies for addressing local growth issues by the City of Auburn be founded more fully on the active involvement of informed citizens. Therefore we have adopted the following:

1. To implement the Nine Principles of the Growth Boundary Plan and to guide budget decisions, the City Council should establish more specific policies to address changes since the adoption of Auburn 2020 in 1998.

We favor the development of an integrated plan for growth that includes an inventory of natural resources and regular review of best planning practices for the control/stimulation of new development, for revitalization of existing development, and for preservation of environmental and cultural resources.

2. Auburn should practice "smart growth."

3. The city should strive to preserve its traditional college town atmosphere and the quality of life it now offers; it should emphasize the recruitment of small, research-oriented companies with sound industrial practices.

4. The LWV supports increased emphasis on aesthetics in both new development and redevelopment, including landscaping requirements, sign regulations, and design standards where appropriate.

5. The League favors two additional considerations for Auburn's current annexation practice:

(a) Annexation on request of property owner should be contingent upon such considerations as the ability of the city to provide services by a stated time.

(b) Forced annexation by legislative action should be sought (1) when a parcel is totally surrounded by the city, and (2) when development plans are incompatible with surrounding development or with city planning policies.

6. The League of Women Voters strongly supports the establishment of a Planning Commission for Lee County to write and administer land use regulations.

GREEN SPACES (May 2000 and May 2001)

The provision of green spaces as a quality of life issue has become increasingly important as Auburn continues its rapid growth; therefore, the League advocates these measures:

1. The City of Auburn should adopt the proposals of the Green Space Task Force Report for:

(a) a permanent Green Space Commission of citizens and public officials and

(b) a city position of Greenways Coordinator.

2. The Greenways system proposed in the Task Force Report should be adopted and implemented.

3. A natural resources inventory of the city and the proposed Growth Boundary area, including wetlands, waterways, flood plains, forested areas, and large tracts of pasture land, should be conducted.

GREEN SPACES (May 2000 and May 2001) (Continued)

4. A review of green/open spaces regulations in the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations should address availability, quality and configuration of the open space.
5. The League of Women Voters also supports an ongoing effort to secure green spaces through:
 - (a) city purchase of land for parks and green spaces with the ultimate goal that no citizen will live more than two miles from a dedicated public open space;
 - (b) enactment of a zoning regulation that requires developers to provide landscaped open spaces in subdivisions with small lots when housing density reaches a specified number; and
 - (c) development and use of strategies for the preservation of small vacant lots as green oases in established neighborhoods.
6. The Land Trust of East Alabama, a private, non-profit organization, should be supported by individuals and by municipalities.

LIVABLE NEIGHBORHOODS (May 2001)

1. As Auburn grows, the League of Women Voters of Auburn encourages attention to preserving and increasing the livability of neighborhoods by individual citizens and developers and through city regulations.
2. Developers should be encouraged to address neighborhood livability through such measures as remediation of parking problems, improvement of road design, attention to neighborhood security and to the safety and enjoyment of pedestrians and bicyclists, enhancement of aesthetics, and provision of ample green spaces.
3. The League supports a cautious attempt to allow a mix of small commercial and residential uses in both old and new neighborhoods. Criteria for such small commercial uses could include limitations on size and types of businesses, design standards to accommodate aesthetic concerns and ensure compatibility with the surroundings, safeguards to mitigate possible negative effects such as traffic from disparate uses, and a planning/approval process that includes notification of the neighborhood, negotiations to address concerns, and a means of ensuring that developers adhere to the conditions negotiated.

LAND USE AND ZONING (April 1998)

1. The LWV of Auburn reaffirms its long-standing support for long-range planning in land use and zoning, including support for the principle that no large area should be rezoned outside of the triennial review.
2. The LWV of Auburn reaffirms its long-standing support for the protection of Lake Ogletree and the Chewacla watershed. In addition it supports protection for others sources of drinking water in the Lee County, the Saugahatchee watershed and the Halawakee watershed. (Amended April 1999)
3. The LWV of Auburn supports efforts to limit the City's financial burden for subdivisions built without adequate infrastructure outside the city in areas subject to annexation.
4. The LWV of Auburn affirms its support for the principle that government is responsible for the well-being of the community as a whole in planning decisions.

ICYMI: Protecting "The Loveliest Village"

Recently, Auburn citizens made their voices clear to members of the Board of Zoning Adjustment (BZA) about proposed changes to the "Heart of Auburn" area on Gay Street. [They said no and the BZA agreed.](#) It was great to see the citizens fired up about something. Public hearings are important but attending those hearings is critical! The Planning Commission meets on the second Thursday of each month at 5PM in the Council Chambers. BZA meetings are held every first Wednesday at 4:30PM also in the Council Chambers. The Historic Preservation Committee meets every second Tuesday at 4PM, currently in the Auburn Public Library. Check out the [city website](#) for more information including meeting minutes and agendas. Keep in mind that most of the appointments to these boards are done by city council. (ICYMI, In Case You Missed It)

Voter Registrations - We need you!

The LWVEA will be hosting several voter registration events leading up to the November 4th election. Please consider volunteering to pitch in and help out! Contact a Voter Services Director to volunteer.

Date	Event	Location	Coordinator
September 17, Wednesday	Naturalization Ceremony	Foy Hall	Kim White
September 23, Tuesday	National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)	TBD	Kim White and Ann Moss

Observer Corps

Observers are needed for every meeting.

- [Auburn City Council](#) - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 7PM at 141 N. Ross St.
- [Opelika City Council](#) - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 7PM at 204 S. 7th St.
- [Auburn City Board of Education](#) - 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6PM in the Multi-Media Room at Auburn High School, 405 South Dean Road
- [Opelika City Schools](#) - 4th Tuesday of each month at 4PM in the Conference Room of the Opelika City Schools Board of Education Office (300 Simmons Street)

If you are interested in becoming an Observer, contact [Kristen De La Fuente](#).

Calendar of Events

We want to see you! Add these events to your calendars and get involved!

September 17 (Wednesday) - Naturalization Ceremony at Auburn University The LWVEA will be on hand to register new citizens! Volunteers are welcome!

September 22 (Monday) – Planning Commission and Board of Zoning Adjustments The LWVEA will host Trey Rankin and Sarah Brown in the Auburn City Council Chambers at 141 N. Ross Street beginning at 6:30PM.

September 23 (Tuesday) - National Voter Registration Day The LWVEA will be at a few locations to register voters and update voter addresses. Volunteers are welcome! More info to come...

Five O'Clock Socials We are looking for a new location near downtown Auburn to continue our social events. Updates soon!

Gubernatorial Debate Update

The following is a message from the LWVAL Co-Presidents Scarlett Gaddy and Leonette Slay:

The gubernatorial debate the coalition of sponsors, including LWVAL, had been working so hard to plan, has officially failed to materialize as the Governor has announced he will not debate his opponent Parker Griffith. Many thanks for the hard work of all the individuals involved in the planning. It is a disappointment for us and for the citizens of Alabama that their choice will be less informed than we had hoped. Kathy Byrd and Hatti Kaufman, we appreciate your dedication to Voter Service and the League of Women Voters of Alabama. It is inspiring to us all! We also appreciate the work invested by Bob McCurley, the University of Alabama and its Student Government Association, as well as the Elizabeth Brock and the hard-working folks at the Center for Public Television. We look forward to working together in future endeavors to assist the citizens of Alabama.

The League of Women Voters of Alabama will continue to reach out to voters to insure they are prepared for the upcoming elections with voter registration and accurate, non-partisan information.



LWVEA

660 East Lane
Auburn, AL 36830

E-MAIL:
president@lwv-eastalabama.org

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:
<http://lwv-eastalabama.org/>

Facebook:
[League of Women Voters of East Alabama](#)

Twitter:
[@lwveasta!](#)

LWV of East Alabama Board of Directors, 2014-2015

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<i>Secretary</i>	<i>Carol Daron</i>
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<i>Co-Directors - Social Media</i>	<i>Kim White & Cory Unruh</i>
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<i>The Voter Editor</i>	<i>Ann Moss</i>
<i>Auburn University Liaison</i>	<i>Sara Wood</i>
<i>League Consultant (off-board)</i>	<i>Charlotte Ward</i>

Membership Dues - Any time of the Year

Your dues go towards the functioning of the League of Women Voters at local, state and national levels. Locally, we use our portion of dues to send members to state and national conventions and councils as well as funding for voter services literature and registration drives.

Individual members \$55.00 ~~~ Students \$10.00 ~~~ Household of two \$82.50

Please send checks made payable to "LWVEA" to our Treasurer:

Cory Unruh, 549 Sherwood, Auburn, AL 36830

About the League of Women Voters of East Alabama...

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan, political organization that "has fought since 1920 to improve our systems of

government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy." Membership is open to men and women 18 or older.

Individual, family and student memberships are available. Join us today and help make a difference in the East Alabama area!

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF EAST ALABAMA**
660 East Lane
Auburn, AL 36830

