

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TOWN MANAGER/SELECTMEN

Consensus of 1965

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- administrative measures to strengthen the authority of the Board of Selectmen.

TOWN GOVERNMENT

Consensus of 1971

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- the Open Town Meeting form of local government.
- a call for a show of hands by the Moderator at all Town Meetings unless the voice vote is unanimous.

LEGISLATIVE BODY

Consensus of 1975

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- periodic evaluation of Open Town Meeting with consideration given to these criteria: attendance, population, representativeness.
- holding Town Meeting on consecutive weekday evenings until business is concluded.
- the Moderator working closely with all town committees for a clear and concise presentation of warrant articles.
- a call for a show of hands by the Moderator if the voice vote is in doubt.

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports local government that:

- is responsive to the needs of the community.
- provides knowledgeable leadership.
- is accountable.
- is efficient.
- is representative.
- provides long-range plans.

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- periodic review of the Selectmen/Town Manager form of government.
- administrative measures to maintain the authority of the Selectmen.
- Selectmen's use of expertise of town board members and individuals in the community.
- participation in regional meetings and boards.
- publication of individual votes taken at Selectmen's meetings.
- open Selectmen's meetings and work sessions except for those prescribed by law as executive sessions.
- increased coordination and communication among town boards.
- inclusion of factual background on articles printed in the warrant.
- a procedure for making prompt appointments to town boards that would include:
  - immediate publication of board vacancies,
  - interviews with all applicants,
  - publication of duties of board positions,
  - notice to all applicants of final appointment,
  - public announcement of appointments.

Property valuation

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- an up-to-date, uniform and accurate property valuation.
- methods of raising revenue and budget preparation procedures which are:
  1. professional
  2. operationally efficient
  3. economical
  4. effective
  5. accessible to citizen's input and participation.

Town Treasurer

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- a balanced approach for investing town funds, including the following criteria:
  1. insurability of funds
  2. bank services rendered to the town
  3. rate of return
  4. location of the bank
  5. social policies of the bank (discriminatory hiring or loans)
  6. a complete report of trust funds in the Annual Report, including descriptions of the funds, disbursements, and other pertinent information

Town Accountant

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- modernization of town accounting procedures
- central purchasing for the town and schools of Acton using local, state and regional contracts

Budget Preparation Procedures

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- joint fiscal priority meetings of the Finance Committee, Town Manager, School Committee and Selectmen prior to budgeting time.
- communications among these groups during budgeting time.

### Finance Committee and Moderator

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- submission of standardized minutes to the Finance Committee from all town boards and committees to provide information regarding their philosophies, goals and activities.
- the Finance Committee voting upon and making public all policies and that the members periodically review these policies.
- the orientation of all newly appointed Finance Committee members by the Moderator.
- the requesting of minutes from the Finance Committee by the Moderator so that he is aware of attendance, policies and philosophies of his appointees.

### State Aid and the Cherry Sheet

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- the Town making every effort to obtain state aid with consideration given to the long-range financial impact and limitations of that aid upon the Town.
- the Town Manager and School Business Manager gaining familiarity with state formulas used for the cherry sheet.

### Revenue Sharing

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- the Selectmen's periodical evaluation of current uses of revenue-sharing funds and investigation of alternative uses by the Selectmen.

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### FLOOD PLAIN ZONING

Consensus of 1963

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- protective zoning along six of Acton's streams: Fort Pond, Nashoba, Butter, Nonset, Nagog and Heath Meadow.
- No filling or building below a pre-determined elevation above mean sea level, as established by the U.S. Geodetic Survey level data of 1929, should be allowed except by special permission from the Board of Appeals.

The main reasons for supporting this type of zoning are as follows:

1. to prevent flooding,
2. to provide land surface water storage (natural resevoirs)
3. to lessen pollution problems,
4. for conservation purposes,
5. for control of water for better use in agriculture and industry,
6. to provide possible recreation areas,
7. for esthetic reasons (i.e. to provide green belts which could increase real estate values),
8. the filling of low areas and building thereon that would occur without such zoning decreases the acreage in the town through which surface water can penetrate and return to the soil,
9. to support the regional concept of preserving wetlands.

NOTE: In studying the problem of wetlands in Acton, we found that there are three main methods to combat the problem:

1. a public sewerage system
2. a clean-up of the streams
3. a zoning by-law

### FLOOD PLAIN ZONING

Consensus of 1974

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- strict enforcement of Flood Plain By-law and measures to prohibit permanent building in the Flood Plain.

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- changes in the zoning by-law to allow more flexible approaches to land use, such as cluster zoning and planned unit development out of concern for:
  1. the preservation of open space
  2. the protection of the natural features of land
  3. the possibility of achieving a better range of housing costs in Acton.
- a by-law that would be very specific as to the conditions under which such development should be permitted and that it specify in particular:
  1. a fixed limit on the amount of marginal land permitted to be included in the land reserved as open space
  2. controlled density, so that the density of the total tract of land in a cluster subdivision not exceed what it would be in a conventional subdivision on the same tract.
- the requirement of an environmental and social impact statement to be submitted by the developer at his own expense.

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- paid administrative assistance for the Planning Board in order to achieve:
  1. better long-range planning
  2. greater efficiency in the day-to-day planning process and in handling of administrative details.
- the formation of citizens' advisory committee to assist in planning for the Town of Acton.

## RECREATION

Consensus of 1976

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- the principles of conservation and recreation with the development of natural resources in the public interest.
- a comprehensive plan for the acquisition and preservation of open spaces and the flood plains; for the development of green belts using the multiple land use concept; and for the retention of the natural beauty of our town.
- the Recreation Commission arranging to purchase, lease or to develop land and/or facilities necessary for an adequate recreation program. Such land or facilities need not be limited to Acton proper.
- further participation at regional levels of planning for recreation.
- application by the town for state and federal assistance to implement recreation goals, and the seeking of other sources of funding for recreational programs and facilities. The responsibility for this search should belong either to the Town Manager's office or to the Recreation Director.
- the coordination by the Recreation Commission of its activities with other town groups offering similar programs and offer programs to meet uncovered needs.
- the Commission providing assistance to private groups offering recreational programs through publicity such as providing residents with a master list of all available programs and facilities, where feasible.
- periodic up-dating of the Master Plan.
- the Recreation Commission's review of existing standards for safety, supervision, and instruction.
- both subsidized and self-supporting recreation programs.
- an evaluation and exploration of the alternatives to current summer playground program. This evaluation should be done through the combined efforts of the Recreation Commission, the Recreation Director, the Director of Community Education programs and interested citizens.
- expanded use of the schools for recreation and community affairs.

The League of Women Voters of Acton will apply the following criteria when determining support of future Recreation Commission proposals for facilities, programs or increases to staff:

1. Is there a demonstrated need or desire?
2. Has a full financial plan been submitted by the Commission?
3. Has the Commission submitted alternative plans to the current proposal?



## CONSERVATION

Consensus of 1978

The League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- the principles of conservation and recreation with the development of natural resources in the public interest.
- a comprehensive plan for the acquisition and preservation of open spaces and the flood plains, for the development of green belts using the multiple land use concept, and for the retention of the natural beauty of our town.
- an emphasis on a balanced approach to conservation through wider geographic distribution of conservation land; balance between land purchases and less costly alternatives such as conservation restrictions; financial planning which provides for both land purchases and land management; and the acquisition of land for a variety of uses.

In the area of land purchases, the League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- active seeking of land for conservation by the Conservation Commission.
- the purchase of both conservation land and land for recreation.
- the acquisition of park land to provide usable green space in highly developed areas of town.
- less emphasis by the Conservation Commission on the acquisition of agricultural land and wetlands, as these lands can be preserved by means other than purchase.
- the Conservation Commission presenting the town with the potential or intended use of proposed land acquisitions prior to Town Meeting vote.

In the area of land use, the League of Women Voters of Acton supports:

- having the use of conservation land determined by the characteristics of the land itself. Use may be regulated, but should not be prohibited.
- the use of conservation land for such things as active and passive recreation, bicycle paths, skiing, skating, fishing, picnicking, nature and hiking trails, garden areas, and swimming. The use should be appropriate to the features of the parcel of land.

With regard to the funding of conservation land, the League supports:

- active seeking of federal and state funding for land purchases by the Conservation Commission, when appropriate to the potential use of the land. We would support the use of local funding when feasible.
- the use of alternatives to land purchase to preserve Acton's open land. These would include the purchase of development rights, wetlands, zoning, conservation restrictions, accepting gifts of land, and any other land preservation techniques developed in the future.

The League further supports:

- the Conservation Commission working with other town boards to continue close inter-relationships that have developed, and to strengthen others.
- joint meetings for the discussion of topics of mutual concern, e.g. land purchases.
- conservation plans for Acton which include programs for both land preservation and land management.
- hiring someone who is qualified to develop and direct a land management program.

The League would support efforts to regain the use of Lake Nagog from Concord.