
VOTER NOVEMBER 2017

LWVNPC

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Forum on Affordable Housing

November 4, 2017

Three experts spoke to the need for affordable housing at the Palm Harbor Library on Saturday, November 4. Sponsored by the Poverty Committee, the topic is important because Pinellas County has the highest rental housing costs in Florida where 44 % of the residents live under the Asset Limited Income Constrained (ALICE) level. These residents are employed but not making sufficient income to purchase a home or pay the necessary rent. 14% of Florida residents live below the poverty level.

Holly Bullard, Senior Director of Financial Stability Initiatives at United Way Suncoast, brought the latest ALICE data. United Way accumulates data by state to identify the income needed to live in each state and county. Federal data determines the average cost of housing, food, child care, transportation and health care. Census data determines the percentage of residents in that area who have sufficient income and those who do not. Florida has the same poverty rate as New York City. The cost of housing in Florida for a single adult is \$609. For a family of four, it's \$842 per month, though 44% of the population cannot afford this.

In Florida, the number of households under 25 is decreasing while the number of households over 65 is increasing. Of these 38% are white households, 60% Asian, 59% Hispanic and 60% of African-American.

Angela Rouson chairs the quasi-public Pinellas County Housing Authority which provides low income housing in the non-incorporated areas of Pinellas. With a \$43.9 million-dollar budget, they currently offer housing and Section 8 rental assistance to over 5000 family or 8000 individuals. Recent developments include an assisted living project for elderly and units for low income seniors and very low-income families

Work force housing is being developed. Families are expected to pay 30% of their income for this housing.

Preferences are given to: the homeless, youth aging out of foster care, homeless families needing reunification with their children, supportive housing individuals and families displaced by government action or natural disaster and veterans.

PHA also partners with the Boys and Girls Clubs, Head Start and the Greater Ridgecrest Youth.

Plans include: Redevelopment of Rainbow Village-mixed finance and mixed income; mixed income workforce housing development and additional affordable housing developments.

Both Angela and Anthony Jones, CEO of Bright Community Trust, emphasized the importance of citizens and LWV members advocating for more affordable housing funding and resources to include a PHA set aside for low income housing. The League was encouraged to attend civic meetings and address government leaders to support affordable housing to counteract those who espouse 'Not in My Back Yard'=NIMBY's.

The Bright Community Trust is a non-profit that offers affordable homes and rentals to qualifying individuals and families in Pinellas County. Once household incomes are verified and meet the criteria, the trust shepherds applicants through the process to help them achieve home ownership. The trust owns the land, enabling the renter or homeowner to rent at a reduced rate or have a lower mortgage payment. The trust rehabs the properties before a new homeowner moves in. Should homeowners later decide to sell, they pay the trust for the cost of the land and keep any increased value for themselves. Meanwhile owners are expected to pay a nominal ground lease fee and to maintain the property, inside and out. The Trust offers classes in what to expect as an owner and monitors land lease payments. Should anyone face adverse circumstances Anthony's small staff is there to assist. Those who face foreclosure are guided to the Loan Retention Department at their bank.

All three presenters encouraged the audience to support and be visible in their advocacy for affordable housing.

SOLAR PRESENTATION WITH SUSAN GLICKMAN

November 18, 2017



Susan Glickman comes with

18 years in energy issues in the state of Florida, where solar energy is currently making headway due to the development of Solar Co-ops throughout the state. The state LWV has taken on this project through local chapters.

It is predicted that climate change will increase sea level in Florida by 3 feet by the year 2070, which is not that far away. Florida which prides itself on its access to beaches will have a very different look. In an effort to reduce carbon dioxide, a major factor in climate warming and hence sea level rise, the League has connected with other pro-solar groups to develop solar cooperatives around the state. This is a buying co-op that can give individual property owners purchasing power in reducing the cost of switching to solar by combining purchases and with the assistance of the statewide group, purchase the best available option.

There are currently 60,000 solar units at work in the state. One in 50 developing jobs in the US is in solar energy and the price has been reduced by 80% since 2007. Florida remains one of the three states in the US that does not allow the third-party sale of solar. So excess generation can be stored in batteries and used for other purposes such as an electric car. Solar folks still have to be connected to the energy web and cannot operate when the energy supplier is not on. To build a system that would work in a blackout would require complete independence from the grid which is expensive.

Energy companies are using a business model that requires additional coal and gas plants even though Florida is one of the top three states where solar could be widely used. Consumers are required to pay for whatever the Public Service Commission determines is reasonable. Rate payers are currently being assessed for a broken nuclear plant and the cost of not building two others. Though power companies are required to

develop ways to reduce usage, efforts are minimal as they earn their profit by the amount of electricity used.

Susan is working with others to legislate that power companies are required to do net metering, buy back energy from solar providers. Community development financial institutions are working to assist low and middle income families to finance solar.

David Sillman talked about the Solar United Neighborhood Co-ops, the third best solar resource in the nation. Florida Citizens Trust is a non-profit offering info and assistance to communities on developing solar. Solar has 10-25 year warranties and installers offer a 5-10 year guarantee.

Cities such as St. Pete are moving to 100% sustainable fuels by a certain date. Encourage your local government to do so also. Technology may be the answer to global warming.



The League and others are cooperating in a NEW CAR PLEDGE: MY NEXT CAR WILL BE ELECTRIC. Tesla is coming out with an electric truck.

Susan Glickman is the Florida Director of Southern Alliance for Clean Energy (SACE) and the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy Action Fund. SACE works to promote smart energy

choices to ensure clean, safe and healthy communities throughout the Southeast.

Susan is also a longtime consultant to The Natural Resources Defense Council. She was the US Southern Region Director for The Climate Group, a London based NGO working with Fortune 500 Companies. Susan also developed and directed The Florida Business Network for a Clean Energy Economy, a coalition of business leaders working together to advance the low carbon economy working with CERES whose mission is to weave environmental and social challenges into company and investor decision-making and the capital markets.

Working to advance public health, Susan was a consultant to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids to press Congress to grant the Food & Drug Administration the authority to regulate tobacco; to The National Prostate Cancer Coalition to advocate for prostate cancer research funding; and the Trust for America's Health to fund nationwide health-tracking to collect data to understand the impacts of pollution and other environmental hazards.

Susan is currently a Commissioner with the Florida Commission on Volunteer Service known as Volunteer Florida. She was awarded "Best of the Bay" by Creative Loafing for Best Fightin' the Utility Companies. She was Founding Chair of The Florida Commission on the Status of Women. A Florida native, Susan holds a Bachelor of Science in Speech Communications from the University of Texas at Austin.



Calendar

Monday, December 4, 6-8 PM. SOLAR CO-OP MEETING FOR INTERESTED PINELLAS COUNTY CITIZENS, Safety Harbor Public Library, 101 2nd Street N

Two additional important dates: I'd like you to "Save the Dates" for our Legislative Preview with Dr. MacManus on January 13 and our Annual Meeting on April 28. Please be sure to put these on your calendar!

- **Saturday, January 13, 11-1. GENERAL MEETING & FLORIDA LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW:**

Dr. Susan MacManus, at Countryside County Club, [3001 Countryside Blvd, Clearwater, FL 33761X](#), [727-796-2153](#). General Meeting followed by luncheon. Cost \$30 for luncheon.

Free valet parking. Additional information and reservation information will be website: [LWVNorthPinellas.com](#)

- **Saturday, April 28, 10-1. LWVNPC 2018 ANNUAL MEETING:** Jeff Johnson, Florida AARP State Director, at Countryside County Club, [3001 Countryside Blvd, Clearwater, FL 33761X](#), [727-796-2153](#). 10 Annual Meeting open to all LWVNPC members at no charge. Luncheon and speaker follows at a cost of \$30.00. Free valet parking. Additional information and reservation information will be sent to all members and available on our website: [LWVNorthPinellas.com](#)

Looking forward to seeing you at the above events.



We're 70!



The LWV North Pinellas Chapter will celebrate its 70th anniversary in 2018. This is a prime opportunity to highlight our chapter's achievements, past leadership and its role in the future of our county.

To bring many voices to this effort, Barbara Letvin has volunteered to steer the planning committee. She is interested in involving members who can suggest ideas, lunch venues, a prominent speaker, fundraising options, sponsors and anything that will personalize the celebrations. Barbara prepared fundraisers for the Resource Center for Women in Largo and the Connections Job Development Program in New Port Richey where she also advised women on job search skills. Prior to her move to

Florida in 1998, she was the director of International Student Services at Rochester Institute of Technology, taught fourth grade and served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand.

"I prefer to talk to members on the phone for ideas, email too, and occasional short, crisp meetings," she said. "Members have busy lives, so I will be flexible."

Barbara would like to hear from you! Call her at 727-858-1402 or email her at bletvin64@hotmail.com with your thoughts. If you're interested in a short-term project and want to lend a hand, this committee might be for you. Your participation is important to bring greater visibility to our chapter, attract new members and strengthen its fiscal stability.

GRANT, Vivien Skinner



104, of Dunedin, died peacefully October 21, 2017. Her Memorial Service will be held at First Presbyterian Church in Dunedin, Saturday, Nov. 25, 2 pm, with a reception following immediately. She is survived by her daughter, Wendy Miles; and her granddaughter, Vivien Lamar Harper. Vivien was born into a family of Dunedin pioneers with a history of public service. Her grandfather, Lee Bronson Skinner, served as mayor from 1901-1914, and her aunt, Elizabeth Skinner Jackson, was the first woman commissioner in Dunedin. Vivien graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northwestern University's School of Speech in 1935, then went to work for Young and Rubicam in New York City on radio programs such as "We the People" during the Golden Days of Radio, interviewing and writing scripts for guests that included Bob Hope and Charles Boyer. In the early 1950s, she returned to Dunedin with husband, Jack Miles; settled into her beloved home on Edgewater Drive; gave birth to daughter, Wendy; and became actively involved in community affairs. She served on Dunedin's Planning and Zoning Board for eight years; was President of the League of Women Voters and honored by them as Citizen of the Year; was named "Lady Citizen of the Year" by the Jaycettes; was a founding member with second husband, E. Reinhold Rogers, of the Dunedin Historical Society; served five elected terms as Dunedin City Commissioner; was a driving force in relocating Andrews Memorial Chapel to Hammock Park in 1973; assisted with acquiring the land for Pioneer Park, now called John R. Lawrence Pioneer Park; and was honored by having Vivien Skinner Park dedicated in her name. As a member of the Dunedin Junior Service League, she helped raise \$5,000 toward the construction of the first Dunedin Fine Arts Center building and served on their first board of directors. She received both the Matt Forsyth Citizen of the Year Award from the Dunedin Jaycees and the Delightful Dunedin award from the Greater Dunedin Chamber of Commerce. In 1981, Vivien married childhood friend, Bob Grant, and both continued to be actively involved in the community, receiving the Senior Hall of Fame award in 1999 as the first recipients of this award. Vivien continued to serve on boards and committees well into her nineties, including chairing the Hammock Advisory Committee. Vivien loved the Florida wilderness and recalled riding her bike and playing hide and seek with her brother on this property, known for decades as Skinner's Hammock, as it had been acquired by her grandfather, L.B., from the state after he arrived in Dunedin in 1883. The City of Dunedin recognized her life-long service with proclamations designating Vivien Skinner Grant days on both her 90th and 100th birthdays, and a nod to her as the 'City Mother' during a proclamation for Mother's Day in 2011. Truly, she was a mother to the community, and to all who were fortunate to know her. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Dunedin Historical Museum or to Friends of the Hammock, Inc., benefitting Hammock Park are welcome; both organizations were very dear to Vivien's heart.

View Guest Book at www.tampabay.com/oblts