

February 1, 2022

Dear Mayor Shubert, Council President Foster, City Council and Administration,

The League of Women Voters Hudson is celebrating Sunshine Week, March 13-19, 2022. Sunshine Week occurs each year in mid-March, coinciding with James Madison's birthday and National Freedom of Information Day. It is a national initiative spearheaded by the American Society of News Editors to educate the public about the importance of open government and the dangers of excessive and unnecessary secrecy. It was established in March 2005, with funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. During Sunshine Week, media organizations, civic groups, libraries, nonprofits, schools, and other participants engage in public discussion on the importance of open government. The purpose of the week is to highlight the fact that "government functions best when it operates in the open". Each organization and or citizen chooses the ways they want to participate. The Sunshine Week website, <http://sunshineweek.org/>, offers a list of suggested activities and events.

Since 1967, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has provided the right to request access to records from any federal agency. All states have since created some version of Sunshine Laws. In Ohio, Sunshine Laws come under the purview of the Attorney General; the AG website contains the Manual of Laws and training for public officials which is free and open to the public. Ohio's Sunshine Laws cover both the Open Meetings Act and Public Records Act. Each public body creates their own policies that make them compliant with the Ohio Revised Code for Sunshine Laws.

LWV has long been a champion of government transparency since our founding in 1920. It is one of our core principles and a vital part of our mission. Our efforts in this area reinforce our reputation of fairness, nonpartisanship, and trust. It serves as the foundation for League action in promoting good government and in our lobbying and advocacy.

League of Women Voters Hudson has designed a local Observer Corps program based on LWV resources and Ohio's Sunshine Laws. Our members are encouraged to take the free Sunshine Laws training from the Attorney General's office, the same training required for public officials. LWVH trains and mentors our members in how to observe City, Library and School District public meetings as defined in the Laws. Regular observation and reporting provide our League with knowledge of local issues and the ability to take timely action; it builds our expertise in interfacing with local government and serves the community by monitoring Sunshine Laws compliance.

Our observations have shown that Hudson is fortunate to have local government that goes above and beyond basic Sunshine requirements. Hudson's public officials have adopted many best practices that enhance transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement.

We invite and encourage Mayor Shubert and City Council to participate in Sunshine Week in whatever way you choose. Thank you.

Best Regards,

Pat Simons and Maura McCaughey, LWVH Observer Corps Program Co-Managers
pjsimons@hotmail.com, mauramccaughey@roadrunner.com