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2007 Questionnaire for Local Candidates

OVERVIEW

The science on climate change is in: Global warming is happening, and the enormity of the problem requires action at every level of government. Comprehensive solutions for climate change exist, but the years of refusal at the federal level have left the U.S. government behind the curve. Because of this, the real innovation on climate change in this country is happening at the local level. It's the mayors, county executives, and town supervisors in New York who can lead the way on climate change.

By “thinking globally and acting locally,” the New York League of Conservation Voters (NYLCV) is calling upon all candidates for local office to put the issue of climate change at heart of their campaign. Our sister organization, the New York League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (NYLCVEF) has compiled a list of actions state and local governments can take to address this important issue with examples of what’s been either done or proposed elsewhere in New York State.

Before responding to the questions on this questionnaire, we recommend you review this document.

PROCESS


After receipt of the questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our local chapter board. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to present your credentials and vision for combating climate change on the local level, elaborate on your questionnaire responses, and respond to questions.

The completed questionnaire and interview are mandatory for endorsement consideration.

NYLCV will endorse and work to elect candidates who can demonstrate a willingness and capacity to advance a comprehensive climate action agenda for their municipality.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

 Please submit questionnaire responses via email to: politics@nylcv.org

 Questions or extension requests may be directed to:
Joshua Klainberg, Political Director (jklainberg@nylcv.org)

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please provide us with the following information:

Candidate: *William K Schmidt*

Office: *Mayor, City of Peekskill NY*

PERSONAL INITIATIVES

During my two terms a Peekskill councilman (1997-2005) I introduced several important environmental initiatives:

- 1) *The Utility Pole Local Law of 2005 fines utility companies for unnecessary utility poles (double woods) left abandoned on city right of ways. Many have now been removed.*
- 2) *I led the move to revoke special permit of Karta Recycling Co, which was causing serious environmental degradation to surrounding neighborhoods in southwest Peekskill (dust dirt & noise) as a result of their violations of city codes. A new special permit settling the resulting lawsuit put stringent conditions on their operation and scaled it down by 80%. An adjacent company L & L Scrap was bought by the city under threat of eminent domain, which I supported, after they were cited for criminal violations of DEC laws for cannibalizing vehicles and draining oil and gas sludge into in ground pits. They are now gone. During my terms on the city council and now on the Peekskill IDA, I supported the environmental remediation of our contaminated former city dump and replacing it with a certified LEED office building. (See NY Times 8/1/07: "Peekskill Finds New Use for an Old Landfill". I am a supporter of the smart growth models of redevelopment of both our downtown and waterfront that are currently in progress, while preserving open space wherever possible.*

COMMITTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE PRINCIPLES

I am agreeable to supporting all of the initiatives you have outlined (ITEMS 4 & 5) with appropriate legislation to implement it by our Peekskill city government.

LEADERSHIP

Air Quality:

I support reviewing the entire fleet of city vehicles to make sure that 1) all of them are really necessary, and 2) that those that we do need are operating with maximum fuel efficiency with as few toxic emissions

as possible.

Energy Efficiency:

We should encourage public and private property owners to install incentives that conserve energy consumption and use disincentives to discourage energy proficiency (eg per unit charges for energy usage rather than by building where practicable) and other similar models.

Green Building Development:

The city can and should encourage more construction of LEED certified buildings and structures (including use of tax incentives where possible, as we have already done)

Smart Growth:

I favor the smart growth models for development of our downtown and waterfront that are currently in progress and which concentrate quality residential and commercial development in already populated areas with existing infrastructure while preserving our remaining open spaces and parklands. These models were implemented by our current retiring Mayor John Testa and were recognized by NYLCVEF as proper examples of smart growth when endorsing him in 2005. I want to continue these plans.