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2017 Environmental Candidate Questionnaire
for Westchester Candidates

Thank you for taking the time to fill out the New York League of Conservation Voters Questionnaire.

The New York League of Conservation Voters is the only non-partisan statewide environmental organization in New York that fights for clean water, clean air, renewable energy and open space through political action. This questionnaire is designed to elicit your views regarding what environmental, public health, clean energy and transit and environmental justice groups consider to be the most important issues of the day. Responses may inform NYLCV’s educational and legislative programs and actions NYLCV takes in the election cycle.

Responses should be considered public. Although NYLCV may choose not to publicize responses to every question, verbatim responses may be reproduced and distributed publicly. If so, your responses may be shortened, if necessary, but will not be edited in substantive ways. If you choose to refer us to a position paper or website, please indicate exactly what text you would like us to cite. For candidates choosing not to respond to the questionnaire, NYLCV will note as much in its public materials.

NYLCV and its partners in the environmental policy arena believe that New York’s voters are determined to make the environment a voting issue this year. Candidate positions on issues such as protecting public health, building a clean energy future, and mitigating climate change will help voters decide how to cast their ballots this election cycle. This questionnaire is one of the primary ways the public will get this information.

After receipt of your completed questionnaire, you will be invited to participate in a formal interview with our Chapter Board. The interview will provide you with an opportunity to present your credentials, elaborate on your questionnaire responses, and respond to questions. Here are a few more guidelines:

* Questionnaires are due **Friday, June 2**
* The completed questionnaire is mandatory for endorsement consideration and must be submitted via e-mail as a Microsoft Word file to: politics@nylcv.org
* To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2016-17 Westchester Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17WestchesterAgendaFINAL.pdf)
* Questions or extension requests may be directed to Joshua Klainberg (jklainberg@nylcv.org)

**Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate Name: Dana Levenberg
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Press Secretary’s name and email:
Scheduler’s name and email:

PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Please share your accomplishments or experiences that indicate your commitment to advancing a pro-environment agenda. These experiences may be professional or personal.

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| **My number one accomplishment is becoming a NYS recognized Clean Energy Community. This was achieved by identifying two already completed actions, which included joining Sustainable Westchester and offering Community Choice Aggregation (through Westchester Power) to our community, and two new actions, which included Benchmarking the Town’s energy usage and purchasing an electric vehicle for our municipal fleet. We have received a grant for $50k through this program and will now embark upon a planning initiative to further improve our sustainability efforts.****Additionally we applied for and were awarded a grant to add three electric charging stations in the Town (in three Town Parks, one by the train station, one by our newly opened art center, and one near our main business corridor).****We are in the process of updating some of our environmental codes to include a requirement for more biomass replacement when trees need to be removed for building purposes, and will increase setbacks and screening requirements between commercial and residential structures to allow for more green and protected wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas. (The environmental code had recently been updated just prior to my taking office regarding wetlands, steep slopes, trees, etc.)****I was able to secure a grant from the Hudson Valley Greenway to study a bike lane-open space corridor-commerce connector for $30k, one of the largest single amounts they awarded to date. We are working with Westchester County Planning, NYSDOT, neighboring municipalities and stakeholder groups to establish a plan for an east-west connector that would make it easy and safe to bike from downtown Ossining to the North County Trailway, connecting with the main business district in the Village of Ossining, the Old Croton Aqueduct, the Briarcliff Peekskill Trailway and other business hubs along the way. As the project matures, it looks like we will end up devising a map similar to that for ski trails, which will identify paths that will have signage for various levels of cyclists, from commuters, to families to expert cyclists (beginner, intermediate, expert.)****I am on the board of Energize NY working to make PACE financing available throughout the state for clean energy building improvements. We successfully lobbied NYSERDA to fund the EIC in order to secure this important product’s availability in the near term until the financial model will ultimately support itself.****I have been participating on the Task Force of Planners4Health, through the American Planning Association NY Metro division to establish a toolbox for communities, planners, architects and public health organizations to use to incorporate health into planning, which includes access to healthy food, clean air, and walkable/bikeable environments with open space.****I established Mind Body Spirit Ossining in our community as a way for local wellness organizations to take advantage of our outdoor public spaces and showcase their expertise while at the same time demonstrating to participants how they could utilize our parks to get in shape. These are free programs offered by yoga, Zumba, fitness and wellness businesses on weekends in our parks. The program is in its second season having attracted many community members last year.****We have been exploring the municipal solar buyers program to identify a best fit for solar in Ossining.** |

 **ISSUES**

Please indicate your level of commitment to, and if applicable your recent personal and professional activity with respect to, the following issues:

(To ensure your responses address the issues NYLCV and its partners are most concerned about, please review [NYLCV’s 2016-17 Westchester Policy Agenda](http://nylcv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2016-17WestchesterAgendaFINAL.pdf))

1. Sustainable Development: Advancing modernized zoning to encourage mixed land use and compact development

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| Very committed. We are in the midst of a moratorium to update the Town Code and as part of that, have introduced mixed use to our Neighborhood Commercial zone, including artist live/work spaces, which have the ability to almost function as micro-housing. |

1. Invasive Species: Educating the public on this problem and implementing better management practices

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| We recently agreed to allow Clearwater to place a steward at the Ossining waterfront to make sure boaters know how to clean their boats to protect from spreading invasive species from one water body to another. We have an active EAC as well as Green Ossining, a committee initially appointed by both the Town and Village of Ossining to support sustainability, which includes education components on issues such as invasive species. We actively participate in meetings to address Hydrilla in the Croton River and share information about treating for this invasive species through web blasts with our constituents. We share information through our Highway Department mailings, eblasts, and at annual events such as the Ossining Village fair. |

1. Cleaner Air: Speeding up conversions and retrofits of home heating oil No. 6 and No. 4 to more efficient heating systems

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| I am committed to cleaner air but have not actively pursued this particular issue, however I am very interested in learning more. Our highway department does share information about this in their annual mailer. |

1. Expanding Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure: Facilitating the development of a larger network of charging stations that will encourage more municipalities, businesses and individuals to switch to EVs in the coming years

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| We are building three new ones in Ossining parks (on the waterfront near the train station, in a park near our main business district, and in a park which contains our Community Garden and new Arts Center), and are hopeful that this expansion will incentivize our residents to consider purchasing electric vehicles as well as visiting our Town because we have places for those with electric vehicles to charge them. |

1. Sustainable Public Access Management: Making significant impacts on energy use and the environment simply by deciding to spend money and deploy resources wisely

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| We continue to look for more efficient ways to operate our government. Specifically we are working on a grant application through the NYSDOS Local Government Efficiency program which would work towards consolidating the Village of Ossining’s DPW and the Town’s Highway Departments as well as the Village and Town Parks Departments. With our already consolidated Courts, we are exploring the introduction of a traffic diversion program which has the potential to bring in more money for both local governments and save 800-1000 disposition hearing with judges if it were to be successfully implemented. |

1. Transportation: Maximizing environmentally friendly mobility options in and around residential and commercial centers

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| Our Greenway Grant application to study a bike lane connector would be looking at ways for commuters and eco-tourists alike to utilize bicycles when travelling from public transportation all around town. |

1. Sustainable & Transit-Oriented Development: Creating livable and sustainable communities that permit increased density and diversity in our downtowns and neighborhoods

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| We are attempting to introduce denser zoning and a mixed-use district in part of Crotonville, in the unincorporated part of town, which has bungalow-style homes on a fairly steep slope. At the bottom of the hill, there are some light industrial/general business parcels which we are looking to zone as Neighborhood Commercial which has artist live/work space, residential, mixed use, multi-family, and service oriented businesses included in it. |

1. Open Space Preservation: Planning strategies such as clustering, creating pocket parks in developed areas, and encouraging biotic corridors in less densely populated areas

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| We are making an effort to work with our newly established arts center on an easement that would essentially open up a path from one of our Town Parks through to a protected corridor, which leads to the Briarcliff-Peekskill Trailway which ultimately leads to Teatown Lake Reservation. The bike lane connector would also achieve this goal. |

1. Natural Resource Protection: Comprehensively managing and protecting regional natural resources (i.e., air, water and land)

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| The Town recently undertook a lighting replacement so that we have LEDs in most of our streetlights. Next up: Lighting in our Town Parks. We are always communicating with our public about ways to not negatively affect the water table through good storm water practices. We have invested in capital projects to improve all of our Town Parks. We have updated our environmental codes and went even further this year to include more significant requirement for biomass replacement.  |

1. Energy: Achieving energy efficiency in residential and commercial settings, in existing and new buildings, and with cutting-edge technology and the smarter use of older technology

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| We were one of the first municipalities to introduce Energize and Solarize and have had a local business utilize PACE financing to add solar to their property. They claimed that with the savings they would achieve from solar electric they would be able to support an additional employee, which would help them be even more successful. I am also on the board of Energize NY with the hopes that through the good work we do, we can make PACE financing available to everyone. |

1. Farms and Local Food: Managing development and providing access to healthy, fresh foods

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| As a member of the Plan4Health initiative we are looking to bring in ideas from other municipalities in the region to discuss what works, so that we can develop a toolbox of best practices. As an active farmers market shopper, I go every Saturday to Down to Earth markets in the heart of Ossining and do not use plastic bags. I hope I lead by example.  |