

30 Broad Street – 30th Floor

New York, NY 10004

212-361-6350

politics@nylcv.org  
www.nylcv.org

**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](mailto: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](mailto:jklainberg@nylcv.org))

**Campaign Contact Information**

Candidate Name: Michael J. Schiliro  
Office Sought (district if applicable): Supervisor, Town of North Castle   
E-mail: Michael.Schiliro@gmail.com  
Mailing Address: 14 Orchard Drive, Armonk, NY 10504  
Phone: 914 643-9017  
Web site: None  
Facebook Fan/Group Page: None  
Twitter user name: None  
Campaign Manager Name (and email): Lori Schiliro (Lori.Schiliro@verizon.net)  
Press Secretary Name (and email): Michael Schiliro (Michael.Schiliro@gmail.com)  
Scheduler Name (and email): Lori Schiliro (lori.schiliro@verizon.net

**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.

|  |
| --- |
| 1. **Zoning: On Friday, June 16th, 2017, Swiss Re had a ribbon cutting ceremony on their 9-acre solar farm. This was facilitated by the North Castle Town Board holding hearings in 2016 to implement zoning on commercial property such as this, and residential property, to encourage and allow for a more aggressive solar initiative, while maintaining the characteristics of our bucolic Town. Former President Clinton, who was the featured guest at the ribbon cutting, lauded the effort. With the help of the Town and NYSERDA, Swiss Re completed their most aggressive and largest global solar initiative, and their Chairman and CEO Eric Smith acknowledged the Town’s efforts at the event. This is a $7M, 9 acre project that will power over 60% of their facility, with only a 7-year payback. We are proud to have been a part of this great success.** 2. **Preserving Open Space: We continue to work with our Open Space Committee and identify opportunities to preserve Open Space. In 2015, we worked in conjunction with our Open Space Committee and other agencies to utilized $500,000 of our Open Space Bond to invest in a Conservation Easement on 73 acres in our Eastern District. The trick part of this deal was that it was brought to our attention only shortly before November 3, 2014. In addition, our 10-year bond referendum expired on November 3, and our next Town Board meeting was November 5. So we worked expediently with our Open Space Committee, and scheduled a Special Town Board Meeting on November 3rd for the sole purpose of authorizing use of $500,000 to preserve the 73 acres, 5 of which would be used for a home, and the other 68 permanently preserved, and contiguous with the balance of open space in the Mianus River Gorge section. In 2014-2015, we worked diligently on the Brynwood zoning application to develop a residential golf community on the former Canyon Club Golf Club site. Again, we engaged our Open Space Committee in the zoning process, and the result, after much work with all parties, was a condition that the project could continue, but only with an acceptable Conservation Easement on the golf course and other property, to be about 120+ acres. An excellent example of furthering economic development but not at the expense of the environment.** 3. **Power of One Day: As in previous years, I am proud to participate in “Power of One” day held at HCC Middle School in the Byram Hills School District (Armonk) for the last 8 years. Power of One Day offers 20+ breakout sessions for 6th grade students to learn about a specific topic, with hopes that they will take action, and for them to understand that there is much *Power in just One person taking initiative*. My topic is Composting, and I provide the students with a hands-on experience to learn how to build an open-air home composter, and learn the environmental and economic benefits of commercial and personal composting, including the reduction of garbage to our landfills. My program has become one of the more popular sessions, as word spread that it is a true “hands on” session. I bring in samples of four different stages of composting material from my own open-air composter at home, complete with worms, etc. In addition, I create competition throughout, by challenging their knowledge and attentiveness. During the last stage, each student has the chance to “screen” the finish compost into “Black Gold” (I bring in my full 4’ x 3’ screen, along with a mini desktop version that I made as well. However, it is not just fun and games. I also guide them through an economic equation to show the Power of composting on a Town’s budget. I share with them my personal experience of reducing my home garbage weight by 50%!! (Yes, I conduct weight comparisons at home to evidence impact. I illustrate how, if conducted by residents on a large scale, would not only cost homeowners $0, but also actually save them money by not having to by mulch, etc. The bigger savings is to the municipality – our town alone could save approximately $500,000 per year by reducing our garbage tonnage dramatically. I have had students build home composters with their parents after attending the session, and I have built some with my daughters for residents as well. To me, it is generational; my hope is that as they grow, like my own daughters, composting will be as natural and commonplace as recycling. It is admittedly much more difficult to get the adults to engage.** 4. **Comprehensive Plan Update: We are in our second year of this process, with completion about 12-15 months away. We appointed a dedicated group of volunteers to run the Steering Committee, led by our Town Planner. Our current Master Plan, although alive and well, was last updated 20 years ago, but through prudent budgeting that restored our Town’s finances and a AAA rating, we budgeted the $200k+ needed for this update. This update encompasses all that residents and the Town is concerned with, including Open Space, bike lanes, etc.** 5. **Stash the Trash / Town wide Clean Up Day – I have promoted the concept of Stash the Trash for 10 years, and the cost is $0. The concept is simple; in your daily travels, just pick up ONE piece of trash every day and deposit it in a garbage receptacle – just ONE, wherever you are. If everyone participated, consider how much litter would be off the streets and sidewalks. Multiply by the number of people in the town, then county, then state, then country. In just one week, we could have over 100 million pieces of litter off our streets! And for free – NO cost to the taxpayer. Town wide Clean Up Day was rekindled 3 years ago, and has taken off. And the effort is now chaired by a High School Student, with much youth participation. On our around Earth Day, and in conjunction with our annual Zero Waste Day, residents “clean up the town.” They adopt a section of town, fill of bags of garbage and recyclables, and our Highway Department picks up the bags around Town the following week. It has created a bigger sense of community, environmental soundness and awareness, and Town pride. Having a High School student chair the event is terrific for countless reasons.** 6. **NYSERDA – Continues to be a very successful program in NYS. And as evidenced about regarding Swiss Re, continues to support our Town whether it be large corporate neighbors or residents.** 7. **Leaf Collection – This continues to be a program that we are proud of, despite still fielding complaints from some residents. Over 8 years ago, we passed legislation to change (not eliminate) leaf collection. Instead of vacuuming leaves at curbside, we changed the service to picking up bagged leaves. The previous service, which many municipalities still deploy, creates traffic hazards for cars and children, does nothing to further mulching, etc., and contributes to increased emissions from truck traffic, etc. This change alone reduced our leaf volume from 17,000 cubic yards of leaves to approximately 2000 cubic yards of leaves. The 15,000 cubic yards of leaves not picked up are now kept on people’s property, by using a mulching blade on their mower and providing additional nutrients to their lawn, or blowing the leaves into their wooded areas on their property, etc. We now can cover the entire Town with one truck, in one week! The former service would require five weeks to cover the entire Town, with multiple vehicles. In addition, due to a dramatic reduction in the cost to dispose of the 17,000 cubic yards of leaves, plus labor, the Town reduced its cost by about $450,000 per year. There is still a video on You Tube that details this change in service, etc.** |

**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

|  |
| --- |
| Our Comprehensive Plan specifically recommends clustered housing where applicable. The above Brynwood example is a perfect example of that. On over 160+ acres, we limited the residential approval to 16 acres of clustered housing for 73 units, far below the original request of 242 units. We have had downtown development flourish in the Armonk Hamlet; the Armonk Square development, which houses Deciccos and Fortina among other businesses, has been a boon to the downtown. A complete redevelopment of 3.5 acres of undeveloped or poorly developed property. With enhancements in streetscape, sidewalks, etc, and the encouragement of walkability, it is win-win. We have several downtown projects in downtown Armonk, either already permitted, or zoning approved, all walkable to downtown, and all include Affordable Housing components. On that note, although initially sited by the Housing Monitor as one of 31 communities targeted, with active engagement by us with the Monitor, a letter was by the former monitor complementing our efforts to further Affordable Housing, and Judge Cote also made specific mention of our Town’s efforts to further AFFH housing. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| We admittedly have more work to do here. It has not been a priority, as everything cannot be a priority, but we do manage Town property with respect to this issue, as staff and budget allow. And we have discussed developing town-wide communication to educate the public. Our Town is a true rural town, and much open and protected space. This will receive attention in the near term. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| 1. The legislation that was passed several years ago to limit automobile idling time has worked. Although the goal was not to create a profit center, once it was enforced, drivers (residents and non-residents) became conditioned to cease wasting unnecessary fuel and creating additional pollutants and emissions. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| We have converted several Town vehicles to Hybrid, and we have conducted discussions on expanded this effort to electric vehicles for employees and encouraging resident’s purchase of such vehicles via charging stations with convenient parking. However, we are currently wrestling with a good problem; the Armonk downtown has had a renaissance, and thus more parking is needed. We need to solve this problem first, to continue the vibrancy of downtown, and then incorporate electric vehicles in the dialogue. However, our residents already embrace this technology as many electric vehicles can be seen regularly around Town, including Chevy Volts and a large amount of Teslas. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| We constantly promote access of public and open space conservation, and data supports that. Our Parks and Recreation Department received a 10 out of 10 in a recent survey by an independent source. As mentioned above, we are immersed in our Comprehensive Plan Update. And what we continually hear from our residents is how enamored that are with our parks and open space, and want more if possible. (But of course keeping their taxes manageable.) In addition, simple decisions like converting whatever streetlights we do have to LED. So whenever replacement is needed, we spend more now, but the savings is in the future in hard cost, but savings is current with energy cost. We are reviewing possibilities of bike lanes as residents request it. We are continuing our downtown Armonk walkability, with more new sidewalks and streetscape enhancements on Old Route 22, where a 10 unit AFFH complex was completed. This will include plantings, parking, LED streetlights, etc. And connect this area with downtown Armonk via sidewalks. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| Through are Comprehensive Plan Update, we are listening to our residents with the hopes of enacting many positive changes, as budgets allow, and Bike Lanes continue to be a desire. Because of our Town’s age, and the age and width of the roadways, this is a constant challenge. And as mentioned above, electric vehicle charging stations will be explored as we develop our enhanced parking plan for Downtown Armonk as the retail district continues to flourish. Metro North recently completed their parking garage project adjacent to the North White Plains station, North White Plains being one of our hamlets. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| We have been very active in creating clustered housing, diversity in our downtowns, protecting our open space, and preserving history. Many examples were given above (Brynwood, etc) but a few that were not. We have been actively been working to finally restore the dilapidated Elijah Miller House (George Washington’s HQ) in North White Plains for almost 10 years. We finally have a commitment from the County that they are willing to complete the project that should have begun 10 years ago, but the Town needs to engage in an ownership agreement to facilitate the completion. The Town Board is willing to take the risk, along with two nonprofit entities that have agreed to provide the financial support to operate. Our old lumberyard property on Bedford Rd in downtown Armonk has been approved and a permit to build has been issued. In total, approximately 150 units of compact-style development are either approved, proposed, etc., all in walking distance to downtown Armonk. In addition, we just set a public hearing for a mixed-use development in North White Plains for several residential units above a commercial space, on a dilapidated property. We have also been conducting an environment review of a proposed compact-style residential development in North White Plains on Old Orchard Street for 150 units. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| Many examples exist above, from zoning changes to allow for solar initiatives like Swiss Re, to conservation easements on the Brynwood project to protect 120+ acres, etc. We are currently reviewing another potential opportunity to protect about 50+ acres geographically centered in Town, mainly because I have continued a constant dialogue with the owner, so as to provide the Town with an opportunity to acquire some or all of the property to avoid as of right development, or encourage compact-style development (clustered housing) in an effort to provide new assessables yet protect valuable open space. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| Again, many examples above. We never engage in alienation of parkland. We are in the process of expanding our downtown Armonk sewer facility, after recently completing an approximately $5 million upgrade to manage nitrogen removal. The expansion will cost approximately $11 Million, but will aid the demand for in-fill and compact development in downtown. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| We promote Energize New York and Energize North Castle. We promote the free audits provided by NYS, and encourage our community to participate. Although most improvements require money, NYSERDA still does an excellent job of making them affordable and manageable. We need to improve our local communication on this front. We do need to rebuild or reshape our sustainability committee in Town to aid in furthering this effort. |

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

|  |
| --- |
| I continue to be a big supporter of shopping local, especially local farmer’s markets, and of restaurants that practice using local growers, cheeses, meats, like Restaurant North in Armonk. We did vote to approve a local farmer’s market in our town about 8 years ago, but unfortunately, there was not enough community support to sustain it. Nevertheless, the area farmer’s markets in Pleasantville, Mt. Kisco, Chappaqua, etc. are all supported by our residents. In addition, the organic markets within our local stores continue to be strongly supported (Stop and Shop in N. White Plains, DeCiccos and Cherry Blossom in Armonk). |