

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
* 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: Kristen Browde
Office Sought (district if applicable): Town Supervisor, New Castle, NY
E-mail: Kristen@strongernewcastle.com
Mailing Address: 604 Quaker Road, Chappaqua NY 10514
Phone: 914 861 9119
Website: www.strongernewcastle.org
Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/StrongerNewCastle/>

Twitter handle: strongnewcastle
Campaign Manager’s name and email: Carol Evans **carolevans1819@gmail.com**
Press Secretary’s name and email: Peter Moses peter.moses2007@gmail.com
Scheduler’s name and email: self scheduled

**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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| In light of Thursday’s announcement from the White House, withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accord, I released the following statement: “The Republicans now in control of our country apparently think jobs that pollute are more important than protecting our environment. But I believe that starting in our town and in every town we have an obligation to do everything we can to blunt the effect of the disastrous and foolish decision announced by the White House today.”Before this full scale assault on our environment, I’d written the following:One of the critical issues in our town is a large scale development expanding a nursing home situated in an environmentally fragile and critical area known as Teatown Lake. Our opponent slate, the incumbents, has fast tracked the expansion, allowing it to proceed without a full environmental review (something that has resulted in ongoing litigation by local residents). Our slate, known as Stronger New Castle, has released the position paper I drafted on the development, which reflects our approach to all such proposals. In pertinent part it reads:"Stronger New Castle recognizes the ecological fragility and social importance of the Greater Teatown Area. We consider it our duty, both as elected officials and citizens concerned about our world, to protect this and other such areas. In order to prevent damage to this important ecosystem, we regard a full review of environmental impacts as a precondition to any development in the watershed."As a long time board member of a union and a trustee of its pension and health funds I’ve encouraged our investment advisors to explore investing in companies and funds that are environmentally friendly both in their conduct and in the products they sell.On a personal level I’ve been an early adopter of energy efficient and green alternatives, from the car I drive, a plug-in Prius Prime to the lighting I use. The Prius Prime replaced a 2013 plug-in Prius, so now I rarely use any petroleum based fuel except on long trips, and obviously I’m well aware of the shortcomings of the current network of charging stations. Years ago I switched to CFL bulbs, and have since replaced all lighting in my home and office with a mix of LED bulbs and low voltage fixtures. I burn biofuel rather than traditional blends of heating oil, and both heating and air conditioning systems in my home are on timers which limit their use of energy. |

 **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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| One of the critical issues here is how to increase density in our central hamlet of Chappaqua without turning a quiet, beautiful town into something garish and traffic-jammed. My concentration at Cornell, where I majored in Government and Philosophy, was urban planning, and our slate has two urban planning advisors. Their advice has led to my support of what’s known locally as the Napoli plan, which calls for construction of one and two bedroom apartments above an expanded commercial area, which would be built either on top of or immediately adjacent to a parking structure which would be partly underground, all across the street from the Metro North station. Above that structure would be lit athletic fields, providing another attraction to bring residents into the area. This kind of development would not disrupt the central business district, would be on existing sewer and water lines which have more than adequate additional capacity, and, critically, would likely promote walking instead of driving, because once someone has parked their car, almost everything they’d need would be within a one-to-two block stroll, from the town government, middle school and library to restaurants, shopping and entertainment.Other areas of our town are less ripe for such projects, and I would be very unlikely to support further expansion of the strip mall created by the incumbent at the former Reader’s Digest property, now renamed Chappaqua Crossing. Not only is the property completely unreachable by any means of transit other than car, it will create large traffic jams including heavy trucks, which will be forced onto two lane local streets because the only arterial access is a parkway on which truck traffic is prohibited. These backups of petroleum burning vehicles will only make our bad air days worse.  |

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

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| We have a flourishing Garden Club (one of our slate is a member) and advisors who are advising us on safe and appropriate ways to limit the incursion of invasive plant species, without the use of massive quantities of pesticides and other chemicals. But this is an area in which my competence is minimal – and I’d rely on people who actually know what they’re doing rather than offer an answer based on looking at your website and cribbing the ideas! As to wildlife the issues are more complex. We have two principal species that regularly are of concern to residents: deer and coyotes. I should note that several years ago a black bear casually ambled down my driveway – but that occurrence was so rare that there has been no real suggestion that any type of bear control is needed.For deer, an integrated approach like that adopted by the Town of Southhampton NY is something I’d seek to implement. That plan balances biodiversity goals with the concerns of some landowners who are understandably upset when their plant life becomes deer salad.For coyotes a similar balancing is needed, and neighboring towns like Pleasantville have been successful in bringing in experts who have used non toxic means to convince coyote mothers to move dens away from populated areas.  |

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 would immediately move to end the moratorium the incumbent has imposed on solar installations. Further, my fuel oil company offers biofuel alternatives at a competitive cost. I would encourage switching to these alternatives until we can move to more environmentally friendly alternatives to burning of any kind of fuel. Another local environmental issue is a mulch plant run by the town. While the mulch is certainly a benefit, the facility was moved to a “temporary” location adjacent to residential housing during construction of a bridge several years ago, but that plant, which produces significant particulate odor emissions, has never been moved back to its former, more protected location. As a result residents around the plant and nearby retail establishments are dealing with poor air quality and odors that we must address. |

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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| I’m well aware of the shortcomings of the current charging station options – I’m currently driving my second plug in vehicle, a Prius Prime. At my recommendation a couple of years ago the town installed electric vehicle charging stations at the Metro North station – but only put in three spaces and did so in a manner that significantly limits their use – charging $2.50 per hour for the spaces (as opposed to 70 cents per hour for a non plug in space). Atop that the Town does not currently enforce a “must be plugged in” requirement. Correcting this bungling of a simple task is something that won’t be anywhere below the top of my easy fixes upon inauguration. But the migration to electric vehicles is something that is going to take time and tax breaks – the latter of which may be very hard to extend given the current anti-environment administration. I’d certainly consider reduced rather than increased parking costs for electric/plug in vehicles.Also, installing solar power generation to charge plug in vehicles is a simple idea whose time absolutely has come. Electricity prices in Westchester are likely to rise given the changes in availability that can be expected in the next few years – finding an economical and environmentally friendly way to replace the lost generating capacity should be a priority. |

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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| I support every item on pages 2 and 4 of the Blueprint for a Greener Westchester and would move promptly to implement each of the points. I’d want to be particularly aggressive in seeking to reduce the town’s fossil based fuel and electricity consumption – it isn’t just environmentally friendly, it’s smart conservation of tax dollars.  |

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

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| This is where our town is weakest. We have almost no housing within walking distance of our sole reliable mass transit option, Metro North. Our sidewalks do not extend to substantial portions of the town – something we need to address rather than “studying” the idea for four years, which is what has happened – at least officially. In fact absolutely no planning has been done to move forward in this area and our draft comprehensive plan merely calls for more studying. Additionally we should be replacing town vehicles and busses with hybrid and/or electric vehicles wherever possible. The additional cost at time of purchase will be quickly repaid by the diminished petroleum fuel cost, and at the same time we’ll be helping to clean the air both here and around locations that have refineries. |

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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| See the answer to point 2. Additionally I’d like to see both affordable and senior oriented housing on available land that is both near the train station and has walkable access to the central area of Chappaqua.  |

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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| This is one of the areas in which our town is strongest, and I would oppose any incursion into our considerable and beautiful natural areas and parks (several such incursions have been proposed). We have pocket parks, large parks, nature preserves and wetlands. The county’s bike trail runs through New Castle on the Millwood side and is a source of enjoyment for all. On the West End Teatown Reservation is a gem which has to be preserved – and a project being fast tracked by the incumbent without proper environmental review threatens the entire Teatown area and its surrounding watershed. This can not be permitted to proceed if it is at all possible to stop it. On our east side we have an Audubon Society preserve and other nature areas and wetlands that also need protection. |

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

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| 1. Our Sustainability Advisory Board has proposed voluntary composting to limit incineration of waste. I support it without hesitation and would hope to incentivize composting if not adopt a mandatory composting program like that used in Portland, Oregon. My only hesitance regarding making such a program mandatory is that it would immediately be unpopular – thus a voluntary program with education and word of mouth about how easy composting is would seem an approach with a greater likelihood of developing a culture of environmental consciousness.
2. I would not permit development without proper environmental review. We’ve seen too many projects moved forward without SEQRA.
3. Encouraging electric vehicle use is a priority.
4. LED lights should replace all incandescent bulbs in municipal facilities and street lights. It baffles me that the incumbent wants to solicit more opinions before simply making the switch.
5. One of the good things my opponent has implemented is the Sustainability Advisory Board’s recommendation to have a plastic bag fee/reusable bag initiative. I support it.
6. Expanding our town’s proposed voluntary composting program would be an important step in limiting both landfill utilization and in cleaning the air, because of the reduced incineration of waste that would result.
7. We need to move away from septic, recognizing that we’re in an important regional watershed. This will require massive and expensive work, but it’s a high priority.
8. Our municipal water supply has the capacity to support extension to areas currently served by well water, and we should do this as funds become available.
9. The Mid Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan should be adapted and applied to every aspect of municipal life.
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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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| This is something that should be addressed both through both Planning Board requirements for new construction and through tax incentives for renovation of existing structures. |

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

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| We don’t have any available land for farming in New Castle, but can and should develop a community garden – there’s plenty of land is available for that kind of project in at least three different areas of the town. In retail: we already have a Farmer’s Market every Saturday and have good access to healthy foods. A good organic/health oriented market is just outside the town line, and two specialty markets are already open in town, both offering fresh and healthy foods. Additionally – part of the Chappaqua Crossing/Readers Digest development is a planned Whole Foods. |