

The Voter

April 2022

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Government Transparency; Why it Matters to Me

Those who vote, do so in hopes that the individual that they selected will tackle the issues that they value. Voters look at past history, experience, and what is said and the campaign promises. When the election ends, those selected by the majority take their place on a dais and people go on with their

daily lives and sort of forget about the electeds until a headline appears in the local news that catches their attention.

Fact is apathy is rampant. Very few people pay attention to local, state or county government activity until they are affected by a decision. I know because this happened to me. It was more than a decade ago and while I did read local news, I must confess that I didn't attend council meetings often. I heard news about the city planning to do some rezoning. By the time I became engaged, the decision had been made and the area of the rezone included my property. Like my neighbors, we poured into the council meetings, indignant and certain that if they just heard us speak that they would change their minds. Naïve? You bet.

For me, that moment changed my life. I spent a lot of hours learning about the city's plans and while I was affected, I did come to appreciate the city's vision and I do think it was the right decision for the community as a whole. That being said, this had a profound effect on me. I haven't stopped paying attention since. I subscribe to the various agendas for the local council, committees, tune into meetings from time to time — just reading the agendas helps me stay in the loop.

Since then, I have learned that not every decision and discussion is held in the public eye. When I attempted to find information, I couldn't. Who enforces the Public Records Act, Open Public Meetings Act, Appearance of Fairness Doctrine and other acts that were enacted to ensure that our electeds uphold the law? I learned how challenging it is to get help when you observe something is amiss.

Why is it so hard? This question lies in the complexity of the relationship between voter and the elected. In essence, the public is the employer and those elected, serve us. It is our responsibility to pay attention to how they perform; and, when something goes awry, we must intervene. In most councils, a well written message or spoken comment will suffice – with multiple members on a council or board, there's usually a balance of power.

Problems arise when a board or council is comprised of a majority pursuing a common objective that may not have the necessary public support. Often the minority voice on the council isn't powerful enough to influence the others and without the public paying attention, the majority's power goes unchecked.

This is when we see public records being withheld or overly redacted, Executive Session abuses, communications via private emails, texts and cell phones to avoid public scrutiny. Sometimes the abuses are subtle and sometimes they are overt. A recent example was the City of Lake Stevens'

decision to withhold from public view an investigation of malfeasance by a department head. Lake Stevens was pressured by the Everett Herald and eventually acquiesced. We now see the City of Sammamish attempting to do the very same thing as was recently reported in the Seattle Times. This latest scandal follows two lawsuits brought by private citizens and a former city contractor claiming that the city frequently hid or deleted public comments. The city has settled both of those cases and modified its policies. Isolated cases? Unfortunately, no. Another lawsuit brought by the Washington Coalition for Open Government is pending against San Juan County for overuse of redaction to hide details in its invoices. That case may very well be decided sometime this month.

Each of these lawsuits help ensure that government transparency is preserved but legal action might not be necessary if more took time to observe how their local government operates. Elected officials might be less likely to pursue a path if they know that the public is paying attention. So, when that next agenda is published, take a few minutes to review and see if the individuals that represent you are doing what you want. Check out your local government's public records requests — do you see a theme? Is there grumbling in your community social media groups that is more than just someone disagreeing with direction? Are financial and other decisions being made with the due diligence you expect? Demand that your local government follow the laws that were designed to ensure that government operates in an open and transparent way to ensure public input is weighed before decisions are made. [References cited: Everett Herald, "Lake Stevens releases report on departed public works director" 3/7/22; Seattle Times, "In Sammamish, revolving door of city managers continues" 3/28/22; The Island Sounder, "WashCOG sues San Juan County over Public Records Act" 2/10/22]

Catherine Freudenberg

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League of Women Voters of Kitsap Observer Corps

One way to keep abreast of what is happening in your community is to join our League's Observer Corps and attend the public meetings held by elected

or appointed local government entities such as a city council, the Port of Bremerton, Kitsap Public Health, or Kitsap Regional Coordinating Council, just to name a few. We have members that have chosen a particular entity, attend their monthly meetings, and report to the League any noteworthy discussions or actions. They do not join in any public discussion. The task is to listen and report back to the League.

Our League enjoys working with our local government entities to help address community issues. We have some great relationships with our government entities. At the same time, we believe that the presence of Observers at public meetings helps keep government entities attentive to their jobs, with the proper respect for doing the public's business, and promotes transparency and accountability. Observers are the eyes and ears of the League.

If you are interested in participating, find an agency near you and follow their activities. Joining the Observer Corps is a soft commitment. Submitting a report of a public meeting you attend is done on a website form that you may complete as you see fit. The form is automatically sent to the committee for inclusion in the Voter, on our website, or however the committee deems is most useful. Your comments will be summarized so there's no need to worry about being perfect! Contact Martha Burke if you have questions.

mburke2007@aol.com

Maurie Louis, President

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2022 Annual Meeting — Evening of May 17

Mark your calendar for our 2022 Annual Meeting. Senator Christine Rolfes has graciously accepted our invitation to speak the evening of Tuesday, May 17. The business session will go from 5 to 6:30 p.m. After a 30-minute break,

the webinar featuring Senator Rolfes will be from 7 to 8 p.m. This will include questions after her presentation.

Our League bylaws require that at an annual meeting the members shall a) adopt a local program or focus for the ensuing year; b) elect officers, directors, and members of the nominating committee; and c) adopt an adequate budget.

Detailed information about the annual meeting and the Senator Rolfes webinar will be sent out in the next week or so — stay tuned.

Maurie Louis, LWVK President

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Pendleton Place Ribbon Cutting



Photo Top Right: L to R Mary Beth Pendleton, Lloyd Pendleton's widow; Sherri Pendleton, his daughter; and Gov. Jay Inslee. Photograph by Karlсен. **Photo Top Left:** Left to right, Joe Roszak, KMHS CEO, former Bremerton Mayor Patty Lent and Monica Bernhard, KMHS COO. **Photo Above:** Ribbon-cutting; Joe Roszak, KMHS CEO, center. Photograph by R. Karlсен.



On March 29, Governor Jay Inslee kicked off the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Pendleton Place, Kitsap County's first permanent supportive housing apartment complex, which is expected to welcome its first residents in the next few weeks. The event was well attended by Kitsap County commissioners, city governors, and many other elected officials. The daughter and widow of national housing advocate Lloyd Pendleton, who was the inspiration for

Pendleton Place, also attended. Kitsap Mental Health Services, Bremerton Housing Authority, and the City of Bremerton partnered to construct this facility aimed at providing a home to some of the most vulnerable in the unhoused community who suffer from chronic mental and health issues.

The LWVK Housing Committee also was acknowledged and thanked for the baskets being prepared later this month in time to welcome the new residents.

Rochelle Karlsen

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Left: Customized M&Ms found and ordered by LWVK treasurer Michelle McClure. **Right:** Kitsap County Auditor Paul Andrews and LWV Kitsap President Maurie Louis. Photograph by Kitsap Auditor staff.

**National LWV's "Thank Election Heroes Day of Action"
League of Women Voters National declared April 12 as 'Thank Election
Heroes Day of Action.'**

Earlier this month, I received from our state League president, Lunell Haught, the announcement that the national League was setting April 12 as the **“Thank Election Heroes Day of Action.”** The goal was for every League across the country to publicly thank election officials and show them that the public is with them despite attacks from extremists. When I brought this up at our April board meeting, our Treasurer Michelle McClure suggested a gift consisting of customized M&Ms. She looked into it and found just what we needed. She found we could order M&Ms with "LWV" or "Thanks You" on one side of each M&M. I gave her the go ahead to put in a rush order and the rest is history. On April 12, I presented to the Elections Division of our Kitsap

Auditor's office a thank you card, a large thank you poster, a desktop tripod to hold the poster, a large thank you balloon, and a large bag of customized M&Ms. It was a surprise that the whole team graciously accepted with large smiles all around.

Maurie Louis, President

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HELP WANTED - DEI Committee

Open Meeting Act Training and Outreach project
Testifying 101 project

- Are you good at Word, Power Point, Adobe, or like to practice them?
- Would you like to write, edit and review presentations?
- Step out of your comfort zone and speak in front of an audience (small, medium size)?
- Like to get in front of the camera?

Please contact Jeannie Allen at jallen360@gmail.com or text her at 317-431-1114 to volunteer your talents and skills to record training videos, create flyers for the two projects. DEI needs all talents until the projects are completed, which is expected by the end of summer.

Jeannie Allen

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Next Steps by LWVWA for Redistricting Reform

Alison McCaffree, Issue Chair for Census and Redistricting, came up with next steps to reform the Washington Redistricting Commission's process. She is putting together five committees to brainstorm and research. They are:

Criteria & Ranking — To explain Washington's criteria; look at definitions from other states on criteria like communities of interest, electoral competition; consider why ranking criteria is important (Brennon Center on Redistricting has good info); and look at how similar criteria has worked in other states (MI, CA).

Transparency & Accountability — Look at the Open Public Meeting Act rules and applications; Research the Public Records Act — overview and application; look at new changes according to Redistricting Commission's WAC 417; look at what other states do for transparency; and look at what the Brennon Center recommends for transparency (they have a model law).

Increased Staffing and Technology Support — Find out how Washington State Departments use Census data (population); find out how the Office of the Secretary of State is involved with redistricting before the commission starts; find out what state resources are available to get a redistricting website updated between commissions; find out what mapping technology are available and what are the advantages and disadvantages of each; interview Lisa McLean, executive director of the Redistricting Commission, and interview the governor's liaison on Redistricting.

Independent Citizen Commission — Look at overviews of the California and the Michigan Independent Redistricting Commissions; look at an overview of the Colorado Redistricting Commissions (one Legislative, one congressional); look at what is special about Washington's partisan nature and how it is or is not different than other states; and look at options for selecting commissioners.

Input & Access — Put together an overview of what LWVWA did for outreach, education and listening sessions in 2021; look at what the Washington State Redistricting Commission did for community outreach; look at what other states' commissions do for community outreach; interview other LWV in other states to see how they do outreach; and consider special considerations that are needed for communities of color and/or communities that speak a different language than English.

These committees meet from 5 to 6:30 p.m. every other Tuesday beginning this month (next is April 26, the third on May 10, etc.). Let Alison know if you want to be on one of these committees. (amccaffree@lwvwa.org).

Susan Griggs

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A Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Community Event

Susan Griggs attended the 2022 Race and Equity Summit hosted by *Up From Slavery* on March 25 and 26. There were various workshops in addition to a panel discussion with various school board members and Kitsap County Municipal Court Judge Tracy Flood. Presentations were videotaped and can be viewed here:

March 25 — <https://youtu.be/SNBsVvw4urQ>

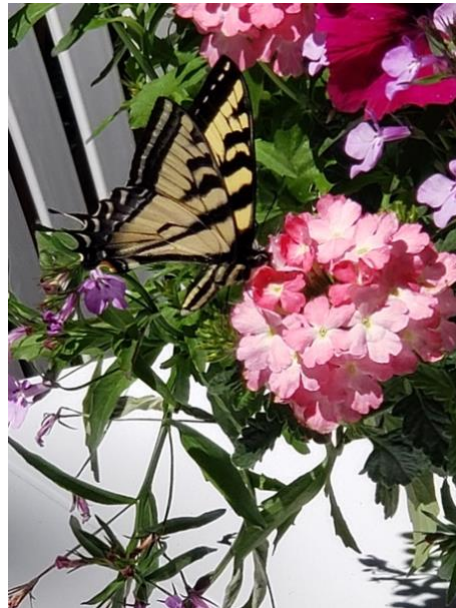
March 26 — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPR5SN3bRPU>

The workshop, presented by Amanda Scott-Thomas, director of the Community Partnership of the Tacoma Public Schools, and Fahren Johnson, in charge of Strategic Initiatives at Greenstrike OSTI, was on how school systems can institute equity. They gave a PowerPoint presentation that gives

much information. If anyone wants a copy of this presentation, let Susan know and she can email it to you. (susan.griggs0803@gmail.com).

Susan Griggs

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Photographer C. Freudenberg

In Memory of Lois Curtis

Lois Curtis, lifetime League member, died in February and a family memorial was held earlier this month. Lois lived on Bainbridge Island for 59 years and was very active in local government. She served on the school board and later as a member of the City Council. She strongly believed that a vibrant community depended on economic diversity and donated land to provide affordable housing on the Island. Lois was a generous, compassionate woman who made a significant contribution to her community and will be greatly missed. To honor Lois, donations can be made to the Bainbridge Senior Center.

Sue Hughes

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GET INVOLVED!



Committee and Unit Reports

Climate Solutions Committee

The LWVK Climate Solutions Committee worked hard on the Climate Roundtable Webinar with Kitsap County officials at 1 p.m. April 13. The theme was “What are we doing in Kitsap County to Address Climate Change?” Elected officials included Suquamish Chairman Leonard Forsman; Bainbridge Island Mayor Joe Deets; Poulsbo Mayor Becky Erickson; Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler; and Kitsap County Commissioners Charlotte Garrido and Rob Gelder. Martin Gibbins, Climate Chair for LWVWA moderated and Maurie Louis opened the webinar.

The Committee has started reading another great book! On the 4th Tuesdays of April and May at 7 p.m., we will discuss a hopeful and brilliant book by United Nations “Champion of the Earth” Professor Katharine Hayhoe, *“Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World.”* Contact Anita Rose or Marty Bishop. We’d love to have you join us!

Anita Rose created an April Climate newsletter for the State League’s Climate Affinity Group — loaded with significant local, state and national events as well as a digital library stuffed with useful climate articles. Take a look! <https://tinyurl.com/535xp6jv>

Anita Rose, Co-Chair

Health Care Committee

The Health Care Committee conducted our “Access End-of-Life and Reproductive Health Care Services — What’s Available in Kitsap County?” program on March 16. The recording is on our website, and a handout of resources related to the forum soon will be published. At our April 9 committee meeting, we debriefed on the forum, brainstormed ideas for future projects, and discussed potential speakers for future committee meetings. We will continue our discussion on potential next steps at our May 13 meeting. If Voter readers have any feedback on the forum share with the committee, or

want to join a committee meeting, please contact Leni or Jessica.
Jessica Guidry, Co-Chair

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

The DEI Committee met on April 1 and discussed many projects under way:

Testifying 101 — We are working on modifying the workshops from the Speak Up School to educate citizens about how to write a testimony and testify at a local school board, city council, commissioner, or other governmental meeting. Officials of these meetings are hearing various positions on issues that are not consistent with those of many members of the public. Greater public participation is needed so that public officials can know what their constituents want them to do about these issues. The committee wants to provide a workshop in the fall.

Voices of Kitsap County with the Indigenous Tribes Webinar is postponed until the fall so that the tribes can enlighten League members of the support they would welcome for legislation in 2023.

Factual Evidenced-Based History — Committee members believe it is important for public school students to get history that is factual and evidenced-based. Schools are being pressured to avoid teaching subjects that may make some people uncomfortable because they highlight actions inconsistent with American values. The committee wants public school teachers and board members to receive letters thanking them for teaching factual evidenced-based history. The committee requests that League members write letters of appreciation to teachers and school board members in their districts.

Open Public Meeting Act — the committee is contacting the Attorney General's office asking them to collaborate with the League to put on a workshop informing us about the rules and applications of this act.

Land Acknowledgement Statement — the committee wants committees and units to acknowledge at the beginning of their meetings that we are meeting on land that is within the ancestral territory of either the Suquamish People or the S'Klallam Tribe. The committee is collaborating with the LWVK Board to come up with a Land Acknowledgement Statement that is agreeable to both tribes.

The DEI committee meets on the first Friday of the month, with the next meeting from 11 to 11:30 a.m. on May 6. Contact Susa Griggs with questions or a request for the link (susan.grigs0803@gmail.com.) The link also is posted

on the Members Only Calendar on our website at lwv-kitsap.org.
Susan Griggs, Chair

Housing Committee

On March 29, Governor Jay Inslee kicked off the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Pendleton Place, Kitsap County's first permanent supportive housing apartment complex, which is expected to welcome its first residents in the next few weeks. The event was well attended by Kitsap County commissioners, city governors, and many other elected officials. The daughter and widow of national housing advocate Lloyd Pendleton, who was the inspiration for Pendleton Place, also attended.

Kitsap Mental Health Services, Bremerton Housing Authority and the City of Bremerton partnered to construct this facility aimed at providing a home to some of our most vulnerable unhoused persons who suffer from chronic mental and health issues.

The Housing Committee of the League of Women Voters-Kitsap was acknowledged by Monica Bernhard, KMHS COO, and thanked for the baskets that will be prepared later this month in time to welcome the new residents.

The Housing Committee thanks everyone for their basket donations.

Rochelle Karlsen, Chair

Early Childhood Committee

The 0 to Three Committee continues to update its power point presentation to reflect recent statistical updates and legislative action. In addition, its informational, early child care flyer was translated into Spanish. The committee is working on creating a distribution list for both the bookmark and the flyers with plans to continue and intensify its outreach efforts.

In March, we made our first presentation to Bainbridge Island/Poulsbo Interfaith Council and are looking forward to speaking to a joint meeting of the LWVK Bainbridge Island and North Kitsap units later this month.

Rosalind Renouard, Chair

Bainbridge Island Unit

On March 23, the Bainbridge Island unit hosted a Zoom meeting with City Manager Blair King. We especially appreciated his openness in his comments and his willingness to listen to and then answer questions from the group. In February, we heard from the Mayor of Bainbridge Island, Joe Deets. His presentation is available on the LWVK website. The meeting with City Manager King will be available on the website soon.

On April 27, the Bainbridge Island unit will share a Zoom meeting with the North Kitsap unit. This meeting will focus on the Kitsap League's 0 to 3 project led by Rosalind Renouard and Rhonda Fairgrieve. The 0-3 Early Childhood Education Report is available in the documents section of the website and is downloadable. Join the April Zoom Meeting <https://tinyurl.com/nint> .

Meeting ID: 993 960 4218

Passcode: Olympic

Delight Willing and Colette Crosby, Unit Leads

Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit

On Saturday, April 16, B/CK Unit member, Amy Lawrence, presented an overview of Olympic College's Earth Week activities in an in-person meeting. Amy gave insight on the Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board for our *Know Your County* booklet. Amy is the environmental studies instructor at Olympic College. In 2017, she received the Women of Achievement Award in Environmental Sustainability from the YWCA of Kitsap County. Amy's volunteer efforts include representing Central Kitsap District 3 on Kitsap County Parks Advisory Board; lead faculty member for OC's Barner Learning Landscape; participant Chico Salmon Park Stewardship Group; collaboration with Clear Creek Task; and board member for the 466-acre Rhododendron Preserve.

On Thursday, April 28, Karen Goon will give an introduction to her role as Kitsap County Administrator. Since she was not able to join us at a regular unit meeting, we decided to make this presentation an evening webinar and hope that many of the League members will attend. Karen was hired by Kitsap County in 2014 to oversee internal services and departments with the county and to be a liaison between the county commissioners and the public-facing departments. The role of the County Administrator is huge. According to the 2022 county organization chart, Emergency Management, Administrative Services, Human Resources, Information Services, and Facilities Maintenance all fall under Karen's purview. Please join us at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, April 28. **Link to join Webinar:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86880268143> If you have questions for Karen, please send them to Maureen Cervinsky.

In March, Monica Bernhard, Chief Operating Officer for Kitsap Mental Health Services, presented an introduction to KMHS. The mission statement is "Offering hope and opportunity for people of all ages through comprehensive recovery-oriented behavioral health care." Monica outlined the

range of behavioral health services. She provided an overview of KMHS programs, location of facilities, and a virtual tour of its main campus at 5455 Almira Drive NE in Bremerton. Monica provided us with an example of what a journey to recovery looks like. She also gave an update on the opening of Pendleton Place and emphasized that housing is recovery. She encouraged us to contact her if we have questions. A recording of her presentation may be found at <https://youtu.be/g_j0CTyDoJk>.

Maureen Cervinsky, Unit Lead

North Kitsap Unit

The North Kitsap Unit meets the fourth Wednesday of the month. We usually have no guest speakers as we enjoy updating ourselves on League activities, legislative issues and topics of interest. We will, however, join the Bainbridge Island unit with speakers from the Early Childhood Committee. The postponed zoom meeting with Dr. Laurynn Evans, North Kitsap Superintendent of Schools, will be May 25. There will be a meeting in June (but not July) and a picnic in August. We will register voters at the Poulsbo Farmers Market and possibly the Kingston Market. Contact Pam Hamon for information.

Pam Hamon, Unit Lead

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Mark Your Calendar

Note: The dates, times and locations listed below are correct at the time the Voter was published but may change. Check the League Calendar for the most up to date information at Protected: Members Only - League of Women Voters of Kitsap County (lww-kitsap.org)

April 2022

April 25: Climate Solutions Committee business meets, 7 p.m. via Zoom; Marty Bishop

April 26: Climate Solutions Book Club, 7 p.m. via Zoom, discusses “Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World” by Katherine Hayhoe; Marty Bishop

April 27: Bainbridge Island/North Kitsap Units meet, 10 a.m. via Zoom, “0 to Three” committee presentation, followed by BI unit meeting; Colette Crosby/Delight Willing/Pam Hamon

April 27: North Kitsap Unit meets, 11 a.m. via Zoom; Pam Hamon

April 28: Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit meets, 6:30 p.m. via Zoom, guest Karen Goon, Kitsap County Administrator; Maureen Cervinsky

May 2022

May 4: Housing Committee, 5 p.m. via Zoom; Rochelle Karlsen

May 6: DEI Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Susan Griggs

May 7: LWVK Board meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Maurie Louis

May 9: SK Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Janet Stegemeyer

May 9: Voter Services committee meets, 2 p.m. via Zoom; Alicia Vause/Colette Crosby

May 13: Healthcare Committee meets, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom; Leni Skarin/Jessica Guidry

May 16: Planning Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Robin Muir

May 17: LWVK annual meeting; keynote speaker, Sen. Christine Rolfes

May 17: “0 to 3” Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Rosalind Renouard

May 21: Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit meets, 10 a.m., hybrid via Zoom and Kitsap United Way conference room; Maureen Cervinsky

May 23: Climate Solutions Committee business meets, 7 p.m. via Zoom; Marty Bishop

May 24: Climate Solutions Book Club, 7 p.m. via Zoom, discusses “Saving Us: A Climate Scientist’s Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World” by Katherine Hayhoe; Marty Bishop

May 25: Bainbridge Island Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Colette Crosby/Delight Willing

May 25: North Kitsap Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom, guest Dr. Laurynn Evans, superintendent of schools for North Kitsap School District; Pam Hamon

June 2022

June 1: Housing Committee meets, 5 p.m. via Zoom; Rochelle Karlsen

June 3: DEI Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Susan Griggs

June 4: LWVK Board meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Maurie Louis

June 10: Healthcare Committee meets, 12:30 p.m. via Zoom; Leni Skarin/Jessica Guidry

June 13: SK Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Janet Stegemeyer

June 13: Voter Services committee meets, 2 p.m. via Zoom; Alicia Vause/Colette Crosby

June 18: Bremerton/Central Kitsap Unit meets, 10 a.m., hybrid via Zoom and Kitsap United Way conference room; Maureen Cervinsky

June 20: Planning Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Robin Muir

June 21: “0 to 3” Committee meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Rosalind Renouard

June 22: Bainbridge Island Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Colette Crosby/Delight Willing

June 22: North Kitsap Unit meets, 10 a.m. via Zoom; Pam Hamon

June 27: Climate Solutions Committee business meets, 7 p.m. via Zoom; Marty Bishop

June 28: Climate Solutions Book Club, 7 p.m. via Zoom; Marty Bishop
Rochelle Karlsen, Publicity

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