



The League of Women Voters of Wilmette (LWV-W) has been working to identify ways to enhance communication, understanding, and civic engagement in our community, not only among village residents, but also toward the friends and neighbors who volunteer their time as our local elected officials. We believe that civil public discourse is crucial to making our community, our state, and our country the type of place we are all proud to call home.

Lately, LWV-W has become quite concerned about growing incivility in our local civic discourse. This alarming trend was apparent during the campaign period leading up to the April 2015 Park District Referendum, and was even more pronounced during last November's Plan Commission Meeting on the proposed affordable housing development at 1925 Wilmette Avenue. Since that meeting, civil discourse has disintegrated and incivility has grown, including such behaviors as name-calling and innuendo and misinformation being spread throughout the community. We find this type of behavior and disrespectful treatment of fellow citizens to be unacceptable and obstructive to effective democracy.

Many of the points of contention seemed to revolve around the developer's use of the Planned Unit Development Process, or PUD, to petition the Village for certain zoning relief requested for their initial proposal. Although that proposal has been withdrawn, LWV-W sought to educate ourselves on the exact purpose of the PUD, to understand how it is used to more efficiently process complex project applications in Wilmette. To that end, we submitted a list of "plain English" questions to the Village, and they were gracious enough to respond in detail. We found the answers to be illuminating and helpful, and hope that all who read them will feel the same way.

To be clear, LWV-W adopted a position in 1980 that calls for "support for increased opportunities for housing for senior citizens and low- and moderate-income families." We also support the 2000 Comprehensive Plan of the Village of Wilmette which explicitly outlines Wilmette's *"ongoing commitment to a pro-active but reasoned approach to providing additional affordable housing."* Whatever opinion any resident may hold on this or any matter, we all must strive to ensure that civility, respect, and integrity inform all discussions moving forward.

We thank the Village Board for taking the time to answer these questions, and hope the answers will result in a more substantive and useful public feedback process should new plans for the property be submitted for review. The questions and answers are presented here in their complete and unedited form.

League of Women Voters of Wilmette, July 2016