



# VOTER'S GUIDE – CANDIDATES

## For Portage County, Ohio

### MAY 2, 2017 PRIMARY/SPECIAL ELECTION

This voter's guide is a joint venture of the *Record-Courier* and the League of Women Voters of Kent and Northern Portage County.

The League of Women Voters of Kent and Northern Portage County are non-partisan political organizations that encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government, work to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to all—voting members are citizens of voting age, male or female; associate members are citizens under 18 or non-citizens. The League is funded by members' dues and contributions from members and non-members. Donations are welcome.

There are two parts to this GUIDE:

1. Local races prepared by the League of Women Voters of Kent.
2. Issues 1-8 prepared by the League of Women Voters of Kent with information provided in most cases by the entity placing the issue on the ballot.

All local candidates who filed their intent to run for office with the Board of Elections of Portage County were sent questions relating to the office they were seeking by the LWV of Kent, as well as instructions on how to complete the candidate questionnaire. The candidates were asked to participate by either entering their responses on the vote411 website or submitting their responses to the LWV of Kent in accordance with the following guidelines.

**The League of Women Voters of Kent reserves the right not to publish any material determined to be libelous, damaging to a person or group, or offensive in accordance with the League's values and as outlined in its publishing policy. It reserves the right to offer alternative wording to the candidate. The League will not correct spelling, grammar or punctuation. Each candidate is solely responsible for the text they submit, including the truth of his/her statements. Each candidate is advised in writing to carefully note the word limitations listed on their questionnaire since no text beyond the word limit will be included. A candidate's answers are accepted and printed only with the understanding that the material will not be used in any way that may be deemed to be an endorsement by the League of his or her candidacy or views.**

Visit [www.vote411.org](http://www.vote411.org) to view a side-by-side comparison of the candidates' biographical information and answers.

The League of Women Voters of Kent and Northern Portage County thank the *Record-Courier* for providing the print version of the Voter's Guide. We also thank Faith Lyon, Director, Theresa Nielsen, Deputy Director, and the staff at the Portage County Board of Elections for their valuable assistance in compiling this material. The information contained in this publication may not be reproduced without consent of the League of Women Voters of Kent.

**League of Women Voters of Kent**

[www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org](http://www.kent.oh.lwvnet.org)

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**League of Women Voters of Northern Portage County**

Voter Service Chair: Sue Griffey, (330)562-8027

To print a copy of your ballot, go to the Portage County Board of Elections web site View Ballots page:

<http://www.voterfind.com/portageoh/ballotlist.aspx>

Select Election Date: 5/2/2017 Primary Election

Select District Type: Cities, Villages, or Townships e.g. *Cities*

Select District Name: e.g. *Kent City*

Click the Find Ballots box.

Find your precinct and click the View Ballot box. The sample ballot should appear.

If you don't know your precinct, click on "searching" in the paragraph on the View Ballots page or follow this link: <http://www.voterfind.com/portageoh/vtrlookup.aspx>

<b>CITY/VILLAGE/TOWNSHIP/PRECINCT IN PORTAGE COUNTY</b>	<b>RACES</b>	<b>PAGE NOS.</b>
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## Kent City Council-At-Large



### **Michael DeLeone**

Party: Dem

Occupation: Equipment Operator

530 Fairchild Avenue Kent, OH 44240

Age: 57

Education: Theodore Roosevelt High School 1978. Attended The Ohio State University.

Training & Experience: Life resident of Kent. Council-at-Large Kent City Council for 20 years. Perfect attendance at City Council meetings.

Question 1: What changes, if any, are needed to the Kent City Charter, and why?

Answer 1: We as Council appoint a Charter Review Committee every ten years to review the charter. If they recommend a change, it goes to Council and then to the voters. I feel the citizens appointed have done a good job with their recommendations in the past. Council can suggest a change to the charter at any time, but it would still need to go to the voters of Kent for approval. I don't feel that there are any changes needed to the charter at this time.

Question 2: How can Kent's zoning and comprehensive planning ensure a better quality of life for current and future Kent residents?

Answer 2: Zoning changes with time. That is why Council continually goes over zoning laws chapter by chapter. We need to protect the neighborhoods in the city. I feel we need to get together with Franklin and Brimfield Townships to keep intrusive projects that might disturb the quality of life of our bordering neighborhoods.

Question 3: What would you recommend the City of Kent explore to promote economic development?

Answer 3: Kent has accomplished so much in the last 20 years! We need to start concentrating on the corridors entering the city to bring quality development to those neighborhoods as well.

## Kent City Council-At-Large

### **Melissa Long**

Party: Dem

Occupation:

978 Cottage Gate Drive Kent, OH 44240

Training & Experience: Kent City Council member since 2014. Planning Commission 2009-2014. Democratic Central Committee since 2006. Ohio State Secretary, Alliance for Retired Americans AFL-CIO since 2005. Kent Environmental Council, Portage Community Action Council. Mayor of Cortland 2000-4.

Question 1: What changes, if any, are needed to the Kent City Charter, and why?

Answer 1: City Council should have authority to select, hire, and remove the Law Director. The Law Director should be the legal counsel to the elected officials who vote on the legislation under which the City operates. The members of City Council should have an independent professional who will legally evaluate the city administration's policies as a representative of the elected officials and not as an employee of the city administration.

Question 2: How can Kent's zoning and comprehensive planning ensure a better quality of life for current and future Kent residents?

Answer 2: City Council is presently reviewing the zoning code. Future multi-family development should promote pedestrian access and public transportation to community businesses. In a University community, with a high proportion of adults under 25 years of age, walking and bicycling should be easy, convenient, and safe, while individual motor vehicle congestion should be discouraged. Older citizens should have respectable housing available, in planned developments where maintenance is provided and access to community businesses and professional services is available.

Question 3: What would you recommend the City of Kent explore to promote economic development?

Answer 3: Kent has successfully brought good professional jobs downtown at Ametek, Davey, and Smithers Oasis, and has brought medical providers to South Water Street and manufacturers to West Main Street. Community restaurants and entertainment businesses have flourished and are reaching market capacity. The City has participated in the Business Incubator project to facilitate development of new employers and has land-banked real estate to provide for business relocation. Kent is a model of economic development that other communities study. An area to "explore" is encouraging Kent-based researchers to establish businesses that will produce newly-developed goods and services in Kent, making use of Kent's educated population, transportation systems, and outstanding City services.

## Kent City Council-At-Large



**Gwen Rosenberg**

Party: Dem

Occupation: Business Owner

526 Rockwell Street Kent, OH 44240

Age: 43

Education: Loyola University of Chicago, B.S., cum laude; Criminal Justice

Training & Experience: Owner of local business, Popped! for 5 years Member of Kent Area Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Kent Received Development Award from the City of Kent in 2013 Actively involved as a resident in our community and as a parent in Kent City Schools

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/Gwen-Rosenberg-for-Kent-City-Council-1229369513783944/>

Question 1: What changes, if any, are needed to the Kent City Charter, and why?

Answer 1: I respect the work and value the recommendations made by the Charter Review Commission in 2015, and feel that our present City Charter is adequate. Our current review process is an effective method for the city to revisit the City Charter and make changes determined necessary by the citizens of Kent.

Question 2: How can Kent's zoning and comprehensive planning ensure a better quality of life for current and future Kent residents?

Answer 2: Basically, we need to make some changes to Kent's current zoning laws to be sure that new developments do not detract from our quality of life nor cost us our city's unique character. We'll need to plan ahead, do our research on how other communities have managed growth, and work with our City Manager to chart a course that encourages economic investment in a way that fits our plan for the city's future and not a scattershot of new construction that may infringe on the quality of life for our residents or visitors.

Question 3: What would you recommend the City of Kent explore to promote economic development?

Answer 3: In 2011, I signed a lease on the space that would become my family's sole source of income while it was still just a patch of dirt, because I love Kent and wanted to start my business here. Over the years, I have encouraged others with a business idea to look at Kent because of the people, the neighborhoods, the schools, the parks, the University, etc. Economic development comes in all sizes, and as a city council person I would like to encourage entrepreneurship by providing access to information on business creation and development. I'd also like to find ways in invite some of the Kent State students, faculty and staff currently involved with entrepreneurship, biotech or high-tech degrees to stay here by fostering an attitude that welcomes these startups and offers resources that encourage innovation.

## Kent City Council-At-Large



**Roger Sidoti**

Party: Dem

Occupation: Retired

1257 Elno Avenue Kent, OH 44240

Age: 67

Education: Ed.S Leadership/Organizational Development-KSU M.A. Educational Administration-KSU B.A. Secondary Education-UA

Training & Experience: A 42+ year resident, having served on Kent Charter Review, Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, Assessment Equalization Board, and City Council. A teacher and High School Principal 40 years, part time organization consultant and mentor, and active volunteer.

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/RogerSidoti>

Twitter: [twitter.com/Sid1257](https://twitter.com/Sid1257)

Question 1: What changes, if any, are needed to the Kent City Charter, and why?

Answer 1: I would like our citizens to consider seating of a Charter Review Citizens Committee every 4 years, rather than the current 10, and submitting proposed Charter Amendments to the voters each non-presidential general election. With the rapid expansion of information technology, the changing cultural and economic dynamics, and growing citizen activism, it seems prudent to offer the opportunity for an infusion of new thoughts and reflection on our Charter in a shorter cycle. I would also be interested in community feedback and consideration of non-partisan elections. Being a life long educator, I am always concerned about finding ways to encourage younger men and women to become candidates for local offices. While not an indictment of the Party system (I am a lifelong Democrat), or my fellow Senior citizens, I am curious if non-partisan elections would encourage more, and younger citizens to run for City Council, bringing with them different and varied perspectives.

Question 2: How can Kent's zoning and comprehensive planning ensure a better quality of life for current and future Kent residents?

Answer 2: Comprehensive Planning and Zoning is always steeped in balancing the rights of property owners, with a shared vision of a positive quality of life for our citizens. As history demonstrates, change in the use status of a piece of land can be abrupt. This is especially true when long-standing, undeveloped land abuts a neighborhood of low density, single-family homes. It is incumbent on the City to consider the future usage of open land, determine the appropriate zoning to help shape that usage, and create requirements, within the law, to buffer the negative impact on those neighborhoods. Traffic, noise, and privacy issues must carry heavy weight, as well as other dilatory effects on other property owners. Concepts, such as transitional zoning, conditional zoning usage, and multi-purpose integration, need thoughtful and thorough planning, and consideration. The Zoning Code needs to reflect these concepts in balancing a positive quality of life for residents and any ongoing development

Question 3: What would you recommend the City of Kent explore to promote economic development?

Answer 3: There is a need for good paying, long term jobs, unlike fast food service & pizza delivery, for young families in our area. I encourage light manufacturing investment on the stretch of Mogadore Road and at recovered commercial sites on Lake Street. Young people need to earn enough to reinvest into our community through home ownership to halt a trend of homes being bought up by speculators, turning them into boarding houses, and encouraging a transitory citizenry. I would like to see a hardware store return to our city, a grocery market within three blocks of downtown, and continued retail development near the 261 and 43 intersection, specifically designed to serve people living in the various Senior complexes along Sunny Brook Road. I would encourage the development of the old cement factory site at the intersection of North Water Street and Lake Street, for a senior living complex, or affordable condominiums for those who would like to downsize, but still live in Kent.

**Issue 1 Brady Lake Village Proposed Disincorporation of Village**

Shall the village known as Brady Lake Village surrender its corporate power?

A majority vote is necessary for passage.

The proposed disincorporation of the village was placed on the ballot by petition of at least 40% of the electors of Brady Lake Village (as determined "by the number voting at the last regular municipal election"). "If the result of the election is in favor of such surrender, the village clerk shall certify the result to the secretary of state and the county recorder, who shall record it in their respective offices, and thereupon the corporate powers of such village shall cease." (ORC 703.20)

Yes - For the Measure Argument for Dissolution (provided by Jason Rothaermill)

Brady Lake is not now nor can it become fiscally sustainable due to limited revenues and state support. BLV currently holds nearly \$300,000 in outstanding debts (not including road repairs) on its original \$750,000 in principle and interest for the Ball field and new Town hall purchases, accounting for nearly 40% of all revenues per year through 2024. BLV pays a 62% higher property tax base than Franklin Township with an additional 1% income tax and continues to receive fewer services, including road maintenance and safety, EMS and fire. The only way to become sustainable would be to tax all residents at a rate of nearly 10% income tax for the next 10 years. How much more can you afford to give to a failing entity? Look at the facts and vote for your future - Vote to Dissolve Brady Lake and bring money and services back to your families.

No - Against the Measure Argument Against Dissolution (provided by Bob Howard)

If dissolved, Brady Lake Village may become Brady Lake Township or part of another township. Dissolving BLV means paying debt by selling off assets (lake, ballfield, fire station, village hall, garage, equipment, etc.). Remaining debt will then be assigned, though no one seems to know to whom or how this will be decided. It will ultimately come to current property owners, one way or another. New arrangements will likely require new taxes to provide police, fire and local maintenance services. As villagers, we will be in a position to have the largest say in our future. If we end the current local government, no one knows what will happen. Why not work together to make a sensible decision? Vote NO!

**Issue 2 Deerfield Township Additional Levy**

Amount: 1.5 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$91,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2017 for Parks and Recreation.

Explanation: The money would be used for Parks & Recreation upkeep. (Kristy Richards, Deerfield Township Fiscal Officer)

**Issue 3 Ravenna Township Additional Levy**

Amount: 2.0 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$240,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2017 for Emergency Medical Services (EMS).

Explanation: This will be our first strictly EMS levy. Rising costs and lower revenue has forced the Fire Dept. to reduce its staffing over the years to stay within budget and keep aging equipment longer. This levy is badly needed to restore staff to 4 Firefighter Paramedics a day and to replace old equipment and ambulances. (Mark Kozak, Ravenna Township Fire Chief, MPA)

**Issue 4 Aurora City Schools Additional Levy**

Amount: 5.9 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$3.7 million annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2017.

Explanation: Funds from the levy will help offset the loss of state funding that the district has experienced through the elimination of the tangible personal property tax. Money raised by this levy will be used to maintain the current performance and programs of the district. (Bill Volosin, Aurora City Schools Treasurer)

**Issue 5 Ravenna City Schools Additional Levy**

Amount: 2.9 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$911,000 annually for 5 years beginning in 2017 for permanent improvements.

Explanation: The money will be used throughout the district to fix elementary school roofs, fix the numerous leaky pipes in all buildings, update textbooks from the 1990's and to purchase new, safe buses. We also need to update our old technology so that our students can take the state mandated tests on state recommended computers. (Dennis Honkala, Ravenna School District Superintendent)

**Issue 6 Crestwood Local Schools Bond Issue Levy and Permanent Improvements Additional Levy**

Amount: The total levy is 4.95 mills. 4.45 mills of that amount would be used to pay the interest and retire the principal of a \$23 million bond issue throughout the stated maximum maturity of 30 years beginning in 2017. The balance of the levy—0.50 mill—is an Additional Levy and would generate approximately \$152,000 annually for 30 years for the purpose of General Permanent Improvements.

Explanation: The bonds will be used to construct a new 7-12 building. The 0.50 mill levy will be used for maintenance on the new building in the future. The 0.50 mill levy is required by the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission. (Jill Rowe, Crestwood Local Schools Treasurer)

**Issue 7 Field Local Schools Additional Levy**

Amount: 8.3 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$3.2 million annually for 5 years beginning in 2017.

Explanation: The money generated will be used to maintain our current offerings. We will add new courses, programs and technology as the budget allows. All decisions are based on providing our students with the best possible education. The Field Local Schools have not had a new operating levy since 1991. (Todd Carpenter, Field Local Schools Treasurer)

**Issue 8 Waterloo Local Schools Additional Levy**

Amount: 8.25 mills Additional Levy that would generate approximately \$1.4 million annually for a continuing period of time beginning in 2017.

Explanation: The money will be used to keep our current level of programming and staffing in place. The district's administration and teachers have always been cognizant of our financial position. As a result, the district rarely has asked for new operating money. We ask to keep our level of educational programming and staffing at our current levels. (Todd Carpenter, Waterloo Local Schools Treasurer)