

**Democratic Club of Willow Valley
General Meeting
June 24, 2025**

President Jen Porter opened the meeting at 1p.m. and introduced two guest speakers.

Guest Marla Garza-Friel, Committee Person Manheim Township 4: Ms. Garza-Friel spoke briefly with information on two subjects.

- Nancy Mannion of Manheim Township has agreed to run against U.S. Representative Lloyd Smucker in 2026 and has begun organizing her campaign. Ms. Mannion, who has had an extensive career as nurse leader, educator, and consultant, asks for support in her candidacy.
- Secondly, Ms. Garza-Friel spoke of the need for more Democratic voters, both in terms of voter turnout and in new registrants, a number that has been flat since 2013. She cited the work of the League of Women Voters in registering young new voters with its First Vote Program.

Guest Speaker Izzy Smith Wade-EI, PA State Representative 49th District, Lancaster County.

Rep. Smith Wade-EI gave updates on what is happening in Harrisburg as the legislators work toward passing a yearly budget, due on June 30.

- The June 30 deadline for passage has been delayed. Legislators will continue to work until the bill is passed.
- A bipartisan move toward reform in cyber charter schools is ongoing with an emphasis on transparency in expenditure of tax payer money.
- PA's transit systems such as SEPTA and others face deficits statewide and will need more funding.
- Several areas throughout the state are seriously underfunded: child care, pre-Kindergarten, disability and sexual assault services.
- Funding is lacking for affordable housing and repairs to existing homes to bring them up to code, including lead abatement and senior housing.
- Two revenue drivers are under discussion: legalization of adult-use marijuana and management of skill games found in bars, gas stations, and convenience stores.

Rep. Smith Wade-EI also spoke of the importance of voting for judge retention in upcoming elections. These judges hear many cases involving issues such as voting and reproductive rights. Their removal may lead to disenfranchisement of women and minorities.

A Q&A session followed. Several of the topics raised were:

- consequences of non-passage of the budget by June 30 deadline and its impact on government
- consequences of non-passage of legalization of adult use marijuana on the budget
- how salaries for a legislator's staff are set
- need for a state-wide uniform cap on student expenditure in cyber charter schools
- alignment among Democratic minority in the Senate in regard to education, housing, and transit. President Porter thanked Rep. Smith Wade-EI for his informative talk and insight into his work in Harrisburg.

Business Meeting

No Kings Rally: held on Saturday, June 14, at Binn's Park in Lancaster was a success with approximately 4,500 attendees.

Treasury: current balance is \$3,914.85 with a Scholarship balance of \$3,557.00. The deficit is cleared.

Membership: Membership is at 35 with more applications coming in through the website.

Advocacy:

President Porter explained this month's Jimmy Carter advocacy effort to honor his work in the field of energy.

- President Carter established the Department of Energy in 1977 in response to the 1973 oil crisis, had solar panels installed on the White House (removed by President Reagan in 1980), and worked to end American dependence on foreign oil.
- In the U.S. 33 states now are heavy producers of solar energy. The top three states are California, Texas, and Florida.
- The actions for June are to contact State Senator Scott Martin and State Representative Steve Mentzer to encourage them to support funding for public schools in the upcoming budget vote. Also members are asked to contact U.S. Senators Dave McCormick and John Fetterman as well as U.S. Representative Lloyd Smucker to oppose the passage of Trump's "Big Beautiful Bill" now in the Senate.

Barbara Bonanno gave several reports:

- Contacts for two organizations that offer information and actions for advocacy are Indivisible Manheim Township (IndivisibleMT.org) and *We the Seniors* whose information may be found at (<https://grassrootsconnector.substack.com>).
- The total number of member contacts to legislators since the May 27 General Meeting was 150. She encouraged members to continue the effort.
- The Letter Writing group is being organized. A signup sheet was available.
- A signup sheet for volunteers to visit legislators was also available.

Upcoming Events:

Field trips to Milagro House

Wednesday, July 23 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 29 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Registration is required. Contact Ross Fairweather at rossfair63@gmail.com or 717-405-8447

Understanding Our Democracy:

Tuesday, July 15 – Housing and Homelessness

Monday, July 21 – Healthcare Challenges with Nancy Mannion, speaker.

Both meetings take place in the Cultural Center Education Room, 10:00-11:30 a.m.

Next General Meeting:

August 26, 1 p.m.. Cultural Center Education Room with three local candidates speaking: Sarah Cook and Kirk Williard for L-S School Board, Tracy Arnold for West Lampeter Supervisor.

No General Meeting in July. Trips to Milagro House are planned.

Lucy Painter, Secretary