

Newsletter

Tackling the Tradeoffs:

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT NEWTON'S FUTURE

Newton is a vital and vibrant community that is home to more than 83,800 residents, a city that by so many measures “works.” But communities are dynamic. Newton faces demographic, economic, and social challenges that must be met thoughtfully. How can we ensure that Newton thrives tomorrow as well as it does today? How, in short, will we shape our city’s future? Newton’s diverse and passionate citizenry make discussion and debate essential: what matters deserve priority in a city in which there are many priorities? What compromises are reasonable? Which are too costly?

It is time to begin this critical conversation. “Tackling the Tradeoffs: Conversations about Newton’s Future,” is a series of public forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters, the Newton Council on Aging, the Newton Schools Foundation, the Newton PTO Council, the Newton TAB, and NewTV.

These meetings were conceived as a response to two recent and important documents: the report of the Blue Ribbon Commission, and Newton’s first Comprehensive Plan. These reports represent hours of debate and consideration undertaken by city officials and citizen volunteers. The forums aim to engage the rest of the community in this important work.

The Blue Ribbon Commission, appointed by the mayor in the fall of 2006 and charged “to review all aspects of Newton’s projected financial resources and expenses,” came to several key conclusions in its February 2007 report:

- The City of Newton faces a structural deficit, “not a one-year mismatch between revenues and expenses,” potentially rising to \$35.7 million in 2012.
- Due to wage adjustments, increases in school enrollment, and chronic under funding of capital maintenance, Newton should consider the use of Proposition 2½ overrides to close the budget gap.

The Newton Comprehensive Plan, released in draft in October 2006 and slated for adoption this fall, addressed a

wide range of issues. The purpose of the Plan is “to form policies to govern the future physical development of the entire City.” It offers goals and recommendations in eight areas: land use, transportation, housing, economic development, open space and recreation, natural resources, cultural resources, and facilities and services.

Goals include:

- Protecting the richness of differences among city neighborhoods
- Assuring development densities relate appropriately to neighborhood character, infrastructure capacity, and promotion of a range of housing opportunities
- Giving priority to investments in capital facilities that add to existing structures
- Guiding land use to strengthen village centers
- Refining zoning to allow higher density in village centers and commercial districts, support a mix of uses within a building or area, and avoid displacement of existing housing in favor of newer and more costly units.

“TACKLING THE TRADEOFFS” FORUM

TUESDAY,
OCTOBER 16TH

7:30 P.M.

NEWTV STUDIOS

- Promoting economic development without October Topic Meeting endangering the residential quality of life through well-conceived development opportunities along commercial corridors.

The first “Tackling the Tradeoffs” forum will be held on Tuesday, October 16th at 7:30 p.m. at the NewTV studios on Needham Street. The panel for the first forum will include Paul Levy, Chair of the Blue Ribbon Commission; Phil Herr, Chair of the Newton Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee; and John Stewart, former Alderman. Brooke Lipsitt, former President of the Board of Aldermen, will serve as moderator.

For this conversation to be successful, public input is essential. Newton residents are invited to submit questions for the panelists ahead of the forum, either online through the TAB’s blog (<http://blogs.townonline.com/newton>), or by mail to the TAB. Submitted questions will be reviewed and

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NEWSLETTER

Editor Ann Grantham 617-964-0333

The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

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<http://www.lwvn.ma.lwvnet.org>

Continuing Our Work

By Sue Rosenbaum

The members of the League of Women Voters here in Newton apparently do not know the meaning of "the lazy days of August". During the last month our members have been extremely busy tending to city issues.

Voters Service held a candidates forum on August 23rd with the five candidates for Alderman-at-Large in Ward One. The forum is currently being shown on NewTV leading up to the preliminary election on September 18th. In addition, Board members have formulated questions for a Voters Guide to be published in the TAB in October to help people become familiar with the local candidates on the November ballot.

The local action committee has been busy observing city meetings and keeping track of new CPA applications. They have been working hard planning for the September topic meeting which will inform all of us about the Newton Election Commission. Our Membership chair is busy planning new member events in addition to setting up information tables at The Harvest Fair and the Newton Volunteer Day Event. City Finances are being scrutinized and a new forum is being planned to discuss the findings of the Blue Ribbon Commission. Our Fundraising Committee is also busy planning future events and our newsletter editor is always busy keeping track of calendar items and publishing the next issue of our informative Newsletter.

So you see, League members are not lazy, even in August. Please join us for as many of our events as you are able. The League has something for everyone and I am proud to work with so many talented and dedicated men and women! ■

We Need Your Help!

There are three events coming up for which we need volunteers. Please consider helping out the LWVN by contributing a little of your time!

•••

Newton Volunteer Fair

Thursday, September 27th: 3:00-6:00pm at the Newton Public Library
Help showcase the League and invite new members. (1 hour shifts).

Please contact Robin Maltz, RobinM@comcast.net or 617-969-3230

LWVM Phonathon

Raise money for the State League and earn money for our League: Training and light dinner provided, Tuesday, October 9th, 5:30-9:00 pm and/or Monday, October 15th, 5:30-9:00 pm. at Caldwell Banker in Newton Centre.

Please contact Sue Rosenbaum at dsr2@rcn.com or 617-332-0306

Newton Harvest Fair

Sunday, October 14th 10:00 am-5:00 pm. Enjoy the fall weather, see your friends and share voter information. (2 hour shifts)

Please contact Sharyn Roberts at Sharyn@neovana.com or 617-969-9588 ■

Casinos in Massachusetts

LWVM LOBBIES AGAINST THEM

Casino gambling, long opposed by the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, is once again a real possibility in Massachusetts. Both the newly-recognized Wampanoag tribe and the racetrack owners are pressing for the addition of Class 3 gaming, which includes slot machines and table games, into the gaming already allowed under Massachusetts law.

Any legislation that expands legalized gambling from the current Class 2 for lottery and bingo gaming to Class 3 for table games and slot machines will certainly bleed lottery revenues and will allow the building of Foxwood and Mohegan Sun-type facilities by Massachusetts.

Background

1981: Convention delegates voted a one-year study of legalized casino gambling within the area of Social Issues.

1982: LWVM position was adopted. Members opposed the legalization of casino gambling, weighing the stimulus to increased employment, tourism and tax revenue against the demands for social and municipal services, police protection and the establishment of a state regulating body.

LWVN members participated in a study led by Judy Jaffe.

LWVN Position as found in LWVM WHERE WE STAND

Goal: Opposition to establishment of legalized casino gambling in Massachusetts.

If casino gambling became legal, the League would support:

- limited locations causing the least detrimental social and environmental impact, with acceptable road access and public transportation, and as part of a resort hotel complex sited with both local town and regional support

- rigid standards set by the state, possibly including hours of operation, dress codes, age limits for employment and participation, licensing of employees, relationships of gaming industry to public officials, credit and junket restrictions, and liquor regulations
- allowing stricter local regulations; requiring that the establishment comply with local zoning bylaws, building codes and public safety requirements
- especially created gaming commission (separate from Lottery Commission) to issue gaming licenses with approval by local town governing bodies; commission members not all coterminous with governor, and a separation of the bodies granting licenses and those responsible for oversight and audit
- all costs for license investigation and supervision paid from monies collected in non-refundable filing and licensing fees
- percent of taxation on industry winnings more than 7 percent and as much as 20 percent
- all revenue collected by the state, a portion returned to the communities impacted and demonstrating need, remaining monies returned to the state's general fund

League Action

Establishment of casino gambling in Massachusetts will need to go through the legislative process and following the announcement of the Governor's interest in having three state casinos there remain many legislators who are undecided.

LWVM website has further details and talking points representing the League position as a poor solution to revenue needs that is facing residents of Massachusetts. The time to lobby against casino gambling is NOW.

Tackling the Tradeoffs

Continued from page one

consolidated for the moderator by the sponsoring organizations. The public is also invited to attend and will be seated on a first-come basis. NewTV doors will open at 7:00 p.m. In addition, the forum will be taped by NewTV for rebroadcast throughout the fall.

As a follow-up to the first forum, there will be a series of more focused discussions; the first is planned for the evening of October 23rd at the Senior Center, at 345 Walnut Street in Newtonville. This first follow-up meeting will address specific concerns among Newton's senior citizens – and allow seniors to share their relevant experiences and observations. There will be a second follow-up discussion in January

focused on education issues, including curriculum, staffing matters, facilities and projected growth. Later follow-up discussions will address public safety, the environment, and zoning and development. ■

This Guest Commentary appeared in the September 17, 2007 NewtonTAB was contributed by LWVN President Sue Rosenbaum and Dena Salzberg, chairman of the Newton Council of Aging. Sue Ficop, co-president, Newton PTO Council, and Mandy Bass, co-president, Newton Schools Foundation, were also co-writers of this column.

Committees - in - Action

Observers

Coordinator: Andrea Kelley
617-964-4609

ELECTION COMMISSION Nancy Criscitiello
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES Deb Crossley
NEWTON FREE Mary Adelstein
LIBRARY BOARD

Committees

LOCAL ACTION

Focus *Community Preservation Act*

Contact Deborah Crossley,
Co-Chair 617-244-7597
Priscilla Leith,
Co-Chair 617-969-6837

Members

Anna Maria Abernathy Andrea Kelley
Carol Bock Jody Klein
Nancy Criscitiello Amelia Koch
Lucia Dolan Myra Tattenbaum
Andreae Downs Terry Yoffie
George Foord

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Focus *Adoption of an Energy Action Plan
in Newton*

Contact Lucia Dolan 617-332-1896

Members Mary Adelstein
Jane Baier
Carol Bock
Deb Crossley
Lucia Dolan
Andreae Downs
Beth Lowd
Sharyn Roberts

...

Feel free to call committee contacts
or a Board officer or director to learn more.

Committee Starts Up!

THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES COMMITTEE WILL MEET
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28 9:15 A.M.

LUCIA DOLAN'S HOME
20 DEVON ROAD, NEWTON CENTRE 617-332-1893

Our primary focus for the year will be the city's adoption
of the Energy Action Plan.

Two additional issues are:

1. Expanding recycling in city schools, parks, and buildings.
2. Storm water management / water quality in Newton.

We will also continue to follow and be represented on the High Performance Building Coalition and the Sustainable Newton Committee, thanks to Deb Crossley and Sharyn Roberts.

League members interested in learning more about or joining the Environmental Committee are welcome to attend. Please call or e-mail (luciadolan@rcn.com) for more information or directions. ■

*Do you know a
special business you would like
League members to know about?*

**We are seeking recommendations of professionals,
restaurants, goods and services to invite
to become a sponsor of the
2008 LWVN Handbook.**

Please contact Lisa Mirabile 617-332-5374, Lisa@birchile.com

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- I would like to join the League of Women Voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$55 payable to LWVN.
- Lifetime membership \$1000
- I would like to receive materials about the League.
- I would like to be contacted by a League member to talk about LWVN.

Mail this form (and your check, if joining) to:
Andrea Kozinetz Holtz at 8 Stony Brae Road,
Newton Highlands, MA 02461

My email address may be shared with State and National LWV

Local Action



Newton Board of Aldermen cc: The Honorable Mayor David Cohen
Zoning and Planning Committee
Brian Yates, Chairman
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton Centre, MA 02459

Dear Alderman Yates:

The League of Women Voters of Newton supports the swift adoption by the Board of Aldermen of the Draft Comprehensive Plan dated October, 2006.

After many years of study and debate among dozens of citizen volunteers on the committee as well as hundreds of residents, city leaders and department staff who participated in the many public forums and workshops, this Plan is truly a consensus document. Citizens have given generously of their time, expertise and interest and have engaged in a rich dialog in a unique effort that recognized and considered individual, neighborhood, city and regional interests.

As has already been evidenced by several recent actions, as well as discussions on current development proposals in Newton where the Plan has been thoughtfully referenced, this document is a useful tool that can serve to inform and focus community decision making. Such a working document can help shape future development in Newton in ways that may help to manage more sustainable development where we want it, while helping to protect the character of what we want to keep.

The League urges the Zoning and Planning Committee of the Board of Aldermen to recommend approval to the full Board at its next session.

Respectfully,

Susan Rosenbaum
President, League of Women Voters of Newton

October Topic Meeting

Newton Public Schools Long Range Facilities Planning

Come join us on Wednesday, October 10, from 11:30 am – 1:00 pm to learn about the School Committee's long-range facilities planning. Dori Zaleznik, School Committee Chair, will join us for a presentation and discussion. The School Committee has submitted statements of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, and has obtained draft recommendations from an architectural firm. This will be an opportunity for

League members to hear information about the long range facilities study and about the School Committee's process for the creation of a plan to implement it. Brown bagging is encouraged. We will meet in the easy-access conference room of NewTV at 23 Needham St. Turn in at the sign that says Easy Street.

Contact: Anne Borg 617- 244-6366. ■

Non-Partisan Policy of LWVN Newton 2007-08

The Policy as it Applies to Members

The League prides itself on having a membership of diverse, informed women and men. Its individual members are encouraged to participate fully in party politics and governments at all levels. Many League members have strong affiliations with political parties or candidates, or are elected officials themselves.

The Policy as it Applies to Board Members

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Newton has a responsibility to uphold the non-partisan status of the League as an organization. The President, Vice Presidents, Voters Service Chair, Newsletter Editor, Education Chair and Local Action Chairs shall not engage

in visible support of local political candidates. Board members should use discretion to ensure that their personal political activities are not identified with the League in the public mind. Candidates for local elected office and their campaign managers cannot serve on the Board of Directors. If any questions arise regarding the non-partisan policy, the matter will come before the Board for interpretation and discussion. If a Board member resigns from the Board because of a conflict of this policy, that member shall not return to the Board until after the next Annual Meeting. Final decisions about implementing this non-partisan policy rest with the Board of Directors. ■

Approved 6/27/07



Become Organized & Support LWV

Write your appointments on this clutter-free 2008 calendar.

Hang it by the silk cord or keep it in your drawer.

Contact Priscilla Leith, 617-969-6837



League of Women Voters
of Massachusetts
Citizen Education Fund

p r e s e n t s

Fall Conference 2007

Who Pays for Local Government?

Why is it my property taxes are so high, and
yet funding local services is a struggle?

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2007
9:30AM TO 3:00PM
QUINCY MARRIOTT

**Price \$40.00 per attendee (includes lunch) To register contact
lwwma@lwwma.org or contact Sue Rosenbaum 617-332-0306.**

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LWVN CALENDAR

September

- 25 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., **LWVN Board Meeting** at the home of Lisa Mirabile, 12 Scribner Pk., 617-332-2310
- 27 Thursday, 3-6 p.m., **Newton Volunteer Fair**, Newton Public Library, Contact Robin Maltz, 617-969-3230
- 28 Friday, 9:15 a.m., **Environmental Issues Committee Meeting** at the home of Lucia Dolan, 20 Devon Road, Newton Centre, 617-332-1893.
- 29 Saturday, 9:00-11:30 a.m., **League Presidents Breakfast**, Newton Marriott.
12:00-3:00 p.m., **Moderators Workshop**, Newton Marriott
RSVP to LWVMA@lwwma.org

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on
to www.nwtv.org

October

- 2 Tuesday, 7-9 p.m., **Region 5 Housing Consensus Meeting**, Lexington City Hall. Contact: Roberta Leviton 617-965-0016.
- 9 Tuesday, 5:30 – 9:00 p.m., **LWVM Phonathon** at Caldwell Banker, NC, Contact Sue Rosenbaum, 617-332-0306
- 10 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., **Topic Meeting: NPS Long Range Facilities Planning**, NewTV Conference Room. Contact: Anne Borg 617-244-6366, Brown Bagging Encouraged.
6:30 p.m. **Working Board/Potluck**, at the home of Robin Maltz, 20 Chatham Rd., Waban, 617-969-1554.
- 12 Friday, 9 a.m., **Local Action Committee** at the home of Deb Crossley, 14 Circuit Ave., Newton Highlands, 617-244-7597.
- 13 October 13 **LWVM Fall Conference**, Register at lwwma@lwwma.org, or contact Sue Rosenbaum, 617-332-0306
- 14 Sunday, **Newton Harvest Fest**, Newton Centre Green, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Contact Sharyn Roberts, 617-969-9588.
- 15 Monday, 5:30-9:30 p.m., **LWVM Phonathon** at Caldwell Banker, Contact Sue Rosenbaum, 617-332-030
- 16 Final Day to **Register to Vote** for the November Municipal Election.
Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., **Tackling the Tradeoffs Conversation**, NewTV conference room. Contact Lisa Mirabile 617-332-5374.
- 30 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., **LWVN Board Meeting** at the home of Terry Yoffie, 363 Waverly Rd., 617-965-1796.

League of Women Voters of Newton

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