
League of Women Voters of Newton

Newsletter

Volume 15, Issue 5

visit us online at www.lwvnewton.org

September 2009

Charter Review Study Gets Underway

by Sandy Butzel

During June and July, Sandy Butzel, Rhanna Kidwell and Lynne Sullivan, the co-chairs of the Charter Review Committee, met almost weekly to plan a timeline and a study plan for the committee. In doing so, they spoke to many League members who offered their input and feedback as well as help formulating the specifics of the study. Some of those members were John Stewart, Ruthanne Fuller, George Foord, Myra Tattenbaum, Sandy Shick, Carol Ann Shea, Audrey Cooper, Pat Acton, Deb Crossley and Leslie Burg.

The three co-chairs plan to use the League email system and newsletter to present several Content Papers for members to read in preparation for the final consensus meeting on the topic. One public forum is planned on the different forms of government and why other cities have changed their charter. The com-

mittee chairs have already collected many resources and developed an electronic bibliography for use by committee members, and the Library has ordered ten copies of The Model City Charter to be on hand for members. The study officially kicked off in early September.

The co-chairs have been gratified that so many League members have come forward to participate in the study. Many of them are our own League experts who have extensive knowledge and experience in many areas of government in the city. So far the study has a roster of twenty people. Many will be consultants to the committee rather than full-time committee members. The co-chairs would also like to recruit League members who aren't experts but want to learn about Newton's government and its charter. If you are interested, please contact Sandy (617-332-8021), Rhanna (617-244-3832) or Lynne (617-965-5880).

Preliminary Election Mayoral Debate

by Sharyn Roberts

The Druker Auditorium at the Newton Free Library was overflowing with interested voters who came to hear the five candidates for Newton's next mayor debate on September 3rd. The debate, sponsored by the LWVN, NewTV and the Library, will be rebroadcast on NewTV up until the election, and it will also be available online at our website, www.lwvnewton.org.

The pace was brisk, with five candidates all responding and rebutting to ten different questions from the audience. The questions covered a variety of topics, including the Citizen's Advisory Group's report detailing the unsustainable state of city finances; the wetlands at Newton South High School; the impact of the new Newton North High School; municipal employee health benefits; METCO funding; and environmental improvements.

The Voters Service Committee is very grateful to debate moderator Risa Nyman of the Brookline League, as well as to LWVN volunteers Janet Serman, Tami Roberts, Anne Borg, Bonnie Carter, Gail Glick, Lee Kefauver, Karol Tager, Shirley Farnham, Ingrid Kefauver, Linda Morrison, and Myra Tattenbaum.

The Committee would also like to extend its thanks to all the volunteers who worked on the Ward 8 School Committee Preliminary Election Debate on Thursday, August 20: moderator Marcia Hirshberg of the Westwood League and LWVN volunteers Bonnie Carter, Tami Roberts, Pat Acton, Shirley Farnham, Ellen Glusman, Linda Greenberg, and Barbara Sydney.

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To receive an **audio version** of this Newsletter, call Terry Yoffie at 617-965-1796.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization. Regular membership is open to all citizens (men and women) of voting age; associate membership is open to young people and noncitizens. Your annual dues give you membership in local, state and national leagues.

For more information about the League of Women Voters, including information on joining us, call 617-964-0014 or visit www.lwvnewton.org.

COMMITTEES

Charter Review Committee

Sandy Butzel
Rhanna Kidwell
Lynne Sullivan

Community Preservation Committee

open

Education

open

Election Commission

Nancy Criscitiello
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Newsletter & Website

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Topic Meetings

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Linda Morrison
Carol Ann Shea

Voter Service/Citizen Education

Bonnie Carter
Sharyn Roberts
Barbara Sydney

Building Newton's Future

192 Lexington Street Project

A proposal to construct 10 units of high quality, environmentally sustainable affordable housing at 192 Lexington St. comes before the **Finance Committee on Monday, September 14 at 7:45 pm**. Funding has already been approved by the Community Preservation Committees, both City and Aldermanic, and the Planning Board. The LWVN strongly supports this project. Come to the meeting or call your aldermen (visit www.ci.newton.ma.us/Aldermen/ for contact info) to help support this project.

Austin St. Parking Lot

The LWVN's Housing Committee, as a member of the Housing Action Plan Initiative (HAPI), invites members to come to **"Can a Newtonville parking lot become a model for development in Newton villages?"** on Thurs. Sept. 24th, 2009 at 7 pm at the New Art Center, 61 Washington Park, Newtonville. The meeting is sponsored by HAPI and the Newton Economic Development Commission (EDC).

State Seeks Volunteers to Study Transportation, Home Rule

As recommended at the Massachusetts LWV convention this spring, the LWVNMA will begin two re-studies this fall, one on transportation and the other on home rule, and they are looking for volunteers to join both. Transportation was a topic that our own members were enthusiastic about when giving their input on state level program planning at our program planning this spring: step forward if this is something you'd like to get involved with! More information on studies in general and these in particular can be found at: www.lwvma.org/studycommitteequestions.shtml and www.lwvma.org/homerulestudy.shtml.

From the President

September 2009

Dear League Members,

Over the summer, your League leadership has been planning the year's activities, establishing leadership responsibilities and running daily activities. Your president, three vice presidents and committee chairs have been preparing the newsletter, planning monthly topic meetings and future educational forums, monitoring city activities, organizing and running the recent and future aldermen, school committee, and mayoral debates, and developing our agenda for local action activities approved by members at the annual meeting.

Election Activities

The preliminary election will be on Tuesday, September 15. Please check the City of Newton Election Department (www.ci.newton.ma.us/Election/index.htm) for information about the election – and see the handy link to the city's polling location finder on the front page of our site, www.lwvnewton.org, as well as links to all the candidates' websites and lots of other election related information.

Our Voters Service committee, headed by Sharyn Roberts, Bonnie Carter and Barbara Sydney, arranged two debates for the September 15th preliminary election. The first was among the four candidates running for the Ward 8 school committee seat and was held August 20; the second, featuring the five mayoral candidates, was on September 3. Both are being rebroadcast on NewTV until Sept. 15.

The committee has also published a Voters' Guide for the preliminary election, available on our website, and is working hard on a Voters' Guide for the November election, which will be published as an insert to the TAB. We are extremely grateful to the Village Bank for a generous contribution toward this expensive effort. If you'd like to join Village Bank as an underwriter, business card ads are \$50, or we are happy to accept donations of any amount. And if you would like to work at the debates, help register voters or help with the Voters' Guide, please contact Sharyn Roberts at 617-969-9588 or sharyn@neovana.com.

The City Charter Study

As you can see in the front-page article, the Charter Study Committee, chaired by Sandy Butzel, Rhanna Kidwell and Lynne Sullivan, has been very engaged in planning for the study, launched early this month.

September Topic Meeting

On September 9, the League welcomed members from the Green Decade Coalition to discuss how we can reduce our carbon footprint with some basic ideas that we can use at home. Bonnie Glickman and Jay Walter, Co-chairs of the Newton Eco Team Project, gave a presentation on Eco-Teams, and then lead the group through a first Eco-Team meeting. Find out more at www.newtonecoteams.org/default.aspx.

"\$90 for 90"

\$90 for 90 years of service is the theme for this year's celebration of the national League's 90th birthday, founded on February 10, 1920. The League began as a "mighty political experiment" designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, the League was an activist, grassroots organization whose leaders believed that citizens should play a critical role in advocacy. We continue this mission today and maintain the traditions established in the early years of the League.

Watch for activities surrounding the 90-year celebration as well as for a major event in Newton celebrating our 75th birthday in 2010. We hope members will support the League with a gift toward our work in education, voters' service and advocacy. A phonathon will be scheduled for

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Welcome New Members!

Barbara Chandra, Newton Highlands, MA 02461

Margie Ross Decter, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Shirley Farnham, Newtonville, MA 02460

Shawn Fitzgibbons, Newton Centre 02459

Chryse Gibson, Newton Centre, MA 02459

Rob Gifford, Newton Centre, MA 02459

Linda Green, Newton Highlands 02461

Esther Lobel, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467

Susan Mirsky, Newton Highlands, MA 02461

John Stewart, Newton Upper Falls, MA 02462

Karolina Tager, Newtonville, MA 02460

Members Work to Make Newton Voting Easier



While local candidates campaigned, the 12 members of the LWVN committee interested in the Election Commission worked to make the voting process in Newton smooth and easy.

In regular meetings with Craig Manseau, Executive Secretary to the Election Commission, the committee has helped in the creation of an application form for prospective inspectors, recruiting flyers, and a uniform evaluation form for wardens, clerks and inspectors. Until now, none of the above had been formalized.

“He has been great,” said committee co-chair Ellen Glusman of Manseau. “A lot of progress has been made.”

The committee also reviewed the warden’s training manual and recommended improvements.

The new evaluation forms have reportedly been included in the wardens’ log books and the flyers have already been requested by election department staff.

Committee members also observe the workings of the appointed Election Commission, consisting of two Democrats and two Republicans. This spring and summer they attended the appointed Commission’s regular quarterly meetings, including one on Sept. 9 where they outnumbered the commissioners (as there was no quorum, the meeting will be rescheduled).

In the fall, the committee plans to explore how the Election Commission is constituted, and how that is outlined in the City Charter.

Thanks are due to committee co-chairs Nancy Criscitiello and Ellen Glusman, ably aided by Sharyn Roberts, Ann Borg, Margaret LeBlanc, Myra Tattenbaum, Lee and Ingrid Kefauver, Sue Rosenbaum, Terry Yoffie, Sue Flicop and Shirley Farnham.

Health Care Reform

Please join the LWV of Newton and Sudbury for:

“Wading Through the Morass of Healthcare Reform”

Tuesday, September 22, 2009

2:00 - 3:30pm at the Newton Senior Center

Presenter/Moderator Reverend Judy Deutsch, LWV Sudbury, Vice President of Mass-Care, Health Care Specialist of the LWV MA.

Farmers Market Fun

Every summer and fall, the LWVN hosts a table at the Farmers Markets to help register voters and provide information. We are looking for volunteers who are willing to sit at a table for an hour or two and greet citizens at the following times:

- Tuesdays through October 27, 1:30 - 6:00 pm at the Cold Spring Farmers' Market
- Fridays through October 30, 1:30 - 6:00 pm at Post 440 Nonantum Farmers' Market

If you are willing to volunteer for an hour or two, please contact Sharyn Roberts at (617)969-9588 or sharyn@neovana.com.

Many thanks to all those who’ve braved the sun and rain so far this season: Bonnie Carter, Lucia Dolan, Shirley Farnham, Ellen Glusman, Ann Grantham, Linda Morrison, Sharyn Roberts, and Barbara Sydney. And thanks as well to those who donated their umbrellas (sun and rain!) and other equipment to keep us dry and shaded: Bonnie Carter, Andreae Downs, Shirley Farnham, Ellen Glusman, Tami Roberts, and Terry Yoffie.



September means Renewal!

In case you have forgotten, the LWVN has moved to an annual renewal date for all members, meaning everyone will be asked to renew in September. A renewal letter will be arriving in your mailbox soon: your prompt response will save us the time and money – and you the hassle – of repeated reminders. We feel very proud of all the work we’ve done this year, and look forward to an equally productive and rewarding year ahead.

From the President, continued from page 3

the fall and I hope you consider the League's positive effect on government when you answer the call and give generously. The United States would have a different political environment without the League's presence.

"Sunshine Is the Best Disinfectant"

– Justice Louis Brandeis

The League has had a long tradition of observing committee and subcommittee meetings within our City Government. Once observed, we then report on our observations so that there is greater openness about city activities and decisions. As always, voters' service, advocacy and education represent our three primary functions. Observing government activities allows us to keep voters informed, advocate for them and educate about what is happening in their city government. To accomplish our basic work, we need volunteers to carry on the important work of observing government. I encourage

you to contact Anne Borg at info@lwvnewton.org about your interest in observing and reporting on aldermanic, school committee and other city committee meetings and activities.

Other Opportunities for getting involved:

Visit our web site to learn about what we do and email me at president@lwvnewton.org about your interests or call the League phone, 617-964-0014. We have many exciting projects going on that need volunteers and I and our League leaders are always happy to take time to work with volunteers on what interests they would like to pursue.

Finally, if there are topics you would like us to cover, please let me know by email or phone.

Respectfully,

Terry Yoffie
President, League of Women Voters, Newton

**Schedule of LWVN Candidates Debates
for the Nov. 3rd General Election**

Mayoral	Citywide	Thursday, Oct. 1	7:00-8:30 pm	Lasell College, deWitt Hall
Alderman-at-Large	Ward 7	Tuesday, Oct. 13	4:00-5:00 pm	NewTV
Alderman-at-Large	Ward 5	Tuesday, Oct. 13	5:15-6:15 pm	NewTV
Alderman-at-Large	Ward 1	Tuesday, Oct. 13	6:30-7:30 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 2	Sunday, Oct. 18	12:30-1:15 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 4	Sunday, Oct. 18	1:30-2:15 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 6	Sunday, Oct. 18	2:30-3:15 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 7	Sunday, Oct. 18	3:30-4:15 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 8	Sunday, Oct. 18	4:30-5:15 pm	NewTV
Ward Alderman	Ward 6	Monday, Oct. 19	6:00-6:45 pm	NewTV
Ward Alderman	Ward 5	Monday, Oct. 19	7:00-7:45 pm	NewTV
School Committee	Ward 5	Monday, Oct. 19	8:00-8:45 pm	NewTV

Additional Election Dates

- Wednesday, Oct. 14, 8:00 pm – Deadline for registering to vote in the Municipal Election
- Tuesday, November 3, 7:00 am – 8:00 pm - Polls open for Municipal Election Day
- Wednesday, November 18 – Last day to register to vote for US Senator Special Election State Primary
- Tuesday, December 8 – US Senator Special Election State Primary
- Wednesday, December 30, 2009 – Last day to register to vote for US Senator Special Election
- Tuesday, January 19, 2010 – US Senator Special Election

LWVN CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- 15th Tues, 7:00 am – 8:00 pm: **Preliminary Municipal Election**
- 16th Wed., 4:30pm, LWVN Working Board/Program & Action Meeting, at Ellen Glusman’s house
- 17th Thurs., 7:00pm, LWVN CPA Readers Meeting, at Andreae Downs’ house
- 18th Fri., 9:30am, LWVN Environmental Issues Committee Meeting, at Lucia Dolan’s house
- 22nd Tues., 2:00 - 3:30pm, “Wading Through the Morass of Healthcare Reform,” Senior Center
7:00pm, LWVN Board Meeting

OCTOBER

- 1st Thurs., 7:00pm Mayoral Debate
- 13th Tues., 4:00pm, Alderman-at-Large Debates
- 14th Wed., 11:30am-1:30pm, LWVN Topic Meeting, at NewTV
- 16th Fri., 9:30am, LWVN Environmental Issues Committee Meeting
- 18th Sun., 12:30pm, School Committee Debates
- 19th Mon., 6:00pm Ward Alderman/School Committee Debates
- 21st Wed., 4:30pm, LWVN Working Board/Program & Action Meeting
- 27th Tues., 7:00pm, LWVN Board Meeting

→ Don’t forget to check our online calendar for any late-breaking changes! www.lwvnewton.org

League of Women Voters of Newton

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