

Board of Directors

President
Marcia Johnson

January 9, 2023

Vice President
Judy Jaffe

Newton Zoning Board of Appeals
Newton City Hall
1000 Commonwealth Avenue
Newton, MA 02459

Clerk Coordinator
Jen Abbott

Treasurer
Andrea Kozinetz

Dear Chairman Lipsitt and Members of the Zoning Board of Appeals,

Directors
Bonnie Carter
Frieda Dweck
Rhanna Kidwell
David Micley
Lisa Mirabile
Linda Morrison
Madeline Ranalli
Sharyn Roberts
Marcia Tabenken

On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Newton (**LWVN**) Board of Directors, I am writing to express our support for Metro West Collaborative Development Inc.'s request for a Comprehensive Permit, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 40B, to redevelop the West Newton Armory into a 100% affordable development with 43 affordable residential rental units, community space, office space, and 33 parking stalls.

Metro West has asked the ZBA to approve a Comprehensive Permit before it submits a [One Stop](#) application for tax credit financing to the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development on January 19, 2023. This funding in 2023 will allow the West Armory project to move forward and add the much-needed units to Newton's affordable housing stock.

Given the City's need for these units, we think that approval of this project should not be delayed for another year.

The Armory project is already embracing a high standard for sustainable building design in line with the League of Women Voters of Newton and Massachusetts' environmental priorities. While we would certainly welcome and encourage the utilization of Passive House technology--considered to be the gold standard of sustainable building design--we nonetheless urge that the Board approve the project on the 11th, with opportunities to embrace this standard later on in the development process."

The LWVN's support is in alignment with:

1. [League of Women Voters, US position](#) (found on page 139 of the 2020-202 Impact on Issues Guide to Public Policy Positions) *"that every person and family should have decent, safe, and affordable housing. State and local Leagues have worked to increase the supply of low and moderate-income housing through efforts to change zoning laws and to set up shared housing services."* And....(found on page 105 "Statement of Position on Climate Change Policy, as announced by the National Board, January 2019) *The League believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and our planet. The League believes that an interrelated approach to combating climate change—including through energy conservation, air pollution controls, building resilience, and promotion of renewable resources— is necessary to protect public health and defend the overall integrity of the global ecosystem."*

2. League of Women Voters, Massachusetts position (found on page 53 of the June 2020 WHERE WE STAND Program Book) *“to press for an increased supply of low- and moderate-income housing using different approaches [including] . . . abolition of local restrictive zoning and building code requirements.”*
3. Newton’s Comprehensive Plan, 2011 (page 5-12) *“We want our stock of housing to match the social and economic diversity of our population. That requires increasing both rental and home ownership opportunities for the entire range of low-, moderate-, and middle-income families . . .”* (Page 8-8) *“Increase energy efficiency and sustainable practices in buildings and infrastructure. . In the short term, this would involve encouraging owners to retrofit existing buildings to upgrade their energy using elements and systems. In the longer run, use of high-performance building standards for renovations and new construction is necessary, which can be encouraged by means of various incentives and as a condition of obtaining special permits and variances”*
4. LWVN’s 2022-2023 Program: Land Use and Housing Production and Stability and Climate Action Sustainability
(<https://lwvnewton.org/2022-2023-lwv-newton-program/>)

In alignment with Newton’s Comprehensive Plan and LWV values and positions, we urge timely approval of this Comprehensive Permit.

Sincerely,

Marcia Johnson

Marcia Johnson
President, League of Women Voters, Newton