



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

Box 233 Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

LWVL NEWS AND INFORMATION

LWVL November First Friday

League Forum: "What's Up in Downtown Lexington?"

Guest speakers at the League of Women Voters First Friday Forum on November 4 will present background information on some of the projects we've been seeing and hearing about in Lexington's Center.

The just-about-completed Town Office Building renovations will be described by Linda Vine, Deputy Town Manager, and Mark Barrett, Department of Public Facilities Project Manager and Planning Director. Maryann McCall-Taylor will review the "Streetscape" schematic proposals now in the works. Judy Uhrig, former Planning Board and Board of Appeals member, will moderate.

This is the second in a series of 2011-2012 First Friday Forums hosted by the League of Women Voters of Lexington to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. Note the change in location. Coffee will be available at 9:15 a.m. and presentations will begin at 9:30 in the Samuel Hadley Public Service Building at 201 Bedford Street which is accessible by Lexpress and from the Minuteman Bikeway. For more information or to carpool, contact the League at 781-862-6435. All League forums are open to the public at no charge.

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Community Conversation: What Does Community Mean: How Can We Create It Together?

The Lexington Community Conversation – “What Does Community Mean?” -- held on Tuesday evening, September 27, was a great success! This event, organized by the League of Women Voters of Lexington and co-sponsored by a number of other community groups, brought together over 160 residents and town staff in small group discussions about aspects of the Lexington community experience. The evening was ably moderated by Deborah Brown, Lexington’s Town Moderator, who began the evening with a playful question designed to acquaint table members with each other: “what was something fun you did in Lexington in the last two weeks?” Two other questions took up the balance of the evening: How can the community be more helpful and supportive? What are ways to become more engaged in and supportive of our community? Major themes during the evening discussion included transportation (ranging from Lexpress to better sidewalk plowing in the winter); improving the way information about town programs and resources is communicated; programs for seniors, youth, and those in life-stage transitions; integrating newcomers and residents from other races and cultures; neighborhood-based activities; concerns about the vitality of the town center. A summary of the evening’s discussion has been shared with the Selectmen-appointed Community Center Task Force (CCTF).

In speaking about the event, CCTF chair Laura Hussong said, “the Community Conversation has connected the CCTF to many people around Lexington who are working on the same sorts of issues, so it benefits our task immediately. By bringing the issues of community before the town, the Conversation has allowed the seemingly unrelated wishes, dreams, disappointments and concerns of our citizens to be focused and seen within the framework of a larger issue of ‘community’, something that we can give voice to and all relate to.

“The League has also shared their findings with the CCTF, and many of the wishes and dreams of our fellow Lexingtonians are things that would be possible if we had a community center in town. For instance, people want gathering spots, ways to integrate newcomers, our many ethnic communities, people of differing ages. People want locations for community events such as Halloween, Discovery Day, International Nights and so on. A common theme was to have a place to go, a way to reduce the isolation that can befall people at different points in their lives.”

The organizing committee is grateful to a number of contributors for their financial or in-kind donations, including: Cary Memorial Library; the Culinary Arts Students at Minuteman High School; Emily Passman; the Friends of the Council on Aging; the League of Women Voters of Lexington; the Lexington Council on Aging; the Lexington Recreation Department; the Lexington Police Department; Starbucks on Bedford Street; and Wilson Farms. We are also indebted to volunteers who served as greeters, table scribes and facilitators.

This event was lucky to have a great team of hard working and imaginative organizers, who worked all summer to shape the evening down to the last detail. We are very grateful to have worked with this wonderful group: Betty Borghesani, Sheila Butts, Marilyn Campbell, Pat Costello, Betsy Hatfield, Pam Hoffman, Laura Hussong, Susan LaPointe, Charlotte Rodgers, Pat Romeo-Gilbert, Karen Simmons, Shirley Stolz, and Judy Zabin.

Nancy Adler
Peggy Enders
LWV Board Co-Chairs, Community Conversation
October 18, 2011

LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT BOUNDARIES REDRAWN FOR 2012

State legislators are constitutionally required to redraw legislative boundaries every 10 years to reflect population changes recorded in the federal census. The new map, if approved, would take effect following the 2012 elections, with candidates running in their newly defined districts.

Under the redrawn map Lexington would be consolidated into a single House district. Lexington precincts 2, 3 and 4 would move from the 9th Middlesex District - currently represented by Rep. Tom Stanley, D-Waltham - into the 15th Middlesex District, currently represented by Rep. Jay Kaufman.

The 15th District currently encompasses the other six Lexington precincts, as well as four in Woburn and four in Arlington. The reconfigured district would include all nine Lexington precincts and four in Woburn, with the four Arlington precincts being split up among the 23rd and 24th district, currently represented by Rep. Sean Garballey, D-Arlington and Rep. William Brownsberger, D-Belmont, respectively.

Rep. Kaufman said in an interview with the Lexington Minuteman that "I'm extremely pleased that the nine Lexington precincts are reunited" and he said he would miss his involvement with Arlington. In the same interview Rep Kaufman also said "I've really enjoyed being part of the Arlington community," "I have no doubt, that even when the district changes, I will continue that collaboration, though it will be less official than it has been in the last decade."

Lexington's two state Senate districts – Sen. Susan Fargo's 3rd Middlesex district and Sen. Ken Donnelly's 4th Middlesex district would be largely unchanged.

(The above text is from an article that originally appeared in the October 20, 2011 edition of the Lexington Minuteman newspaper and is reproduced with permission.)

LWVMA

From the League Leaders Update:

The Voter is back!

The Massachusetts League Board is bringing back an emailed newsletter for all LWVMA members. The Mass. League Voter will be distributed quarterly to update you on what your state League is working on and what we have accomplished. We hope you enjoy it!

If someone in your League is not receiving this newsletter, ask them to send their email address to lwwma@lwwma.org and we'll put them on the list.

LWVMA Plans Three Environmental Forums in Spring 2012

To reinforce the LWV's strong positions on environmental issues, the state League is planning to sponsor three regional forums across Massachusetts this spring, each focusing on a topic of major interest to the region. Our specialists on environmental legislation are in the process of developing topic areas and will then be contacting potential speakers. The forums, similar to the two on women's health issues we sponsored last spring, will be held on weekend dates in the eastern, central and western regions of Massachusetts. Local Leagues in the regions will be asked to play a significant role in the planning and implementation of these forums.

League in Action on Beacon Hill

Our legislative specialists are hard at work as the State Senate and House conduct their fall legislative session. Below are some of the bills we will be presenting testimony on this fall, and you can help by contacting your state senator and representative.

- SB304 An act relative to disclosure of political spending
- SB305 An act relative to accountability for corporate political spending
- HB1106 An act to establish election day registration

Our specialists have also recently presented testimony supporting HB890 and SB1650, which seek to expand the bottle bill to include deposits on water, tea and other non-carbonated beverage bottles, and on SB185 to develop programs to reduce the high-school dropout rate.

LWVMA continues to strongly oppose legislation that would legalize casino gambling and slots parlors in Massachusetts.

If you would like to be kept up to date on legislation the League is working on, sign up for the Action Alerts LWVMA distributes when votes on these bills are coming up. Join the Action Alert email list by contacting lwwma@lwwma.org. You can also find more

detailed information on the legislation we are following on our website, www.lwvma.org.

LWVUS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear League Leader:

Today, the LWV, NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council) and LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) released the results of a poll by Public Policy Polling. The poll was conducted nationwide with particular emphasis on voters in California, Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Virginia, and was designed to measure support for the EPA. Overwhelmingly, voters, especially women voters, expressed their faith in the EPA and their support for stronger standards to protect the public from toxics in our air.

Opponents of the EPA have relentlessly cited the agency as the prime example of big government interference with business and blamed the agency for job losses and over regulation. Well, what the corporate polluters and their supporters in Congress are selling, the American voter is not buying. There is a clear consensus around the country that protecting the public health through reasonable federal regulation is an important government function and there is no need to choose between jobs and the environment.

Opposing big corporate interests is never easy, and the job never ends, but the League has never shied away from holding officials accountable to the public. We have many tools at our disposal from the Clean Air Promise to the issues we ask candidates for public office to discuss in our forums, debates and voter guides.

Voters who take the time to respond to polls are sending a message to Congress and to the President. That message is no surprise to League members. For over 90 years the League has understood the relationship between public health and well-being and our democracy's health and well-being.

We can never give up!

In League,
Elisabeth MacNamara

We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the December 2011 Bulletin, please send it to *Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti* at *Nancor1106@gmail.com* by November 26th.

Dates to Save:

November 4 LWVL First Friday Forum at Samuel Hadley DPW Building

December 2 LWVL First Friday at Cary Memorial Library



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