

Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 3

March 2004

"That which truly exists, must be possible."

Green Buildings Go Mainstream

The enthusiastic crowd, at the Druker Auditorium of the Newton Free Library, for a "Sustainable Building Design in Newton" panel and discussion, sends a new message to city planners, architects & contractors alike: GREEN BUILDINGS HAVE GONE MAINSTREAM.

The February 23rd event attracted more than one hundred residents of various ages and professions, including architects, contractors, concerned local citizens, with high school parents and elected officials and Newton's mayor, David Cohen. Attendees heard how the application of these "high performance" building principles to the plans for Newton North High School could result in saving millions of dollars in operating costs over the life of the building.

Introduced by moderator Brooke Lipsitt, the presenters adopted a mainstreaming approach that spoke to the sizeable audience, setting the discussion in the practical, economic terms of accountability, intentionality, and high performance construction. The first presenter, David Del Porto of Ecological Engineering, framed his discussion in terms of "high performance construction," rather than emphasizing green aspects. The second panelist, Barbara Batshalom, executive director of Green Roundtable, later defined it not as "alternative" construction but instead as "conscious design." For both, these terms include the economic, environmental, and aesthetic dimensions that define green building: an efficient use of environmental resources, economic and environmental regeneration of negative impacts, increased human comfort, health, and productivity, and aesthetic design.

Referencing a recent, comprehensive California study that pursued a cost-benefit analysis of green building, Del Porto argued the ultimate economic sense of "front-loading [construction costs] with better planning and delivering it with \$50-\$70 in savings per square foot." This study, published in October 2003, measured the efficacy and efficiency of building construction according to six environmental criteria: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, indoor environmental quality, and innovation and design. Its findings demonstrated that "investments in green buildings pay for themselves 10 times over." As a result, the California Department of Finance agreed to sign off on "the existence of financial benefits associated with improved health, productivity and lowered operations and maintenance costs in green buildings." The study further prompted the California Board of Regents to actively encourage new higher education construction to be green. Del Porto then applied the study's findings to the upcoming Newton North High School project and concluded that "high performance construction" could decrease operating costs by \$21,315,500 to \$30,393,500. To Del Porto, it's simply a matter of "thinking, designing, and choosing differently."

Barbara Batshalom, executive director of the Green Roundtable, proceeded to illuminate particular methods of achieving "conscious design." "In constructing a building we start with intentions," she said, "then engage in a collaborative process, and lastly apply a knowledge of 'stuff.' The first and foremost issue," Batshalom emphasized, is "getting beyond the pieces. Thinking permeates the whole process. We need to be bold enough to ask a multitude of questions, to educate ourselves, to make our expectations clear, to demand answers, and to ask that those who answer be accountable. When a person wants to buy a car, for example, she will ask the car dealer several questions as to the condition and durability of the car. Although this convention does not hold in the building process, we need to require the same accountability. With the intention of saving energy, for example, we may approach some experts to do energy modeling for us; with such models, we may more clearly communicate with our contractors and lay down our expectations."

Nick Parnell, the Commissioner for Public Buildings in Newton, concluded the panel's presentation with a review of the green measures implemented at Newton South High School. Newton South features a 7 kW photovoltaic panel (with more solar to come);

Continued on page 3

LWVN Officers and Directors 2003-2004

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Vice President	Deborah Crossley	⁶¹⁷ 244-7597
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Newsletter Editor	Ann Grantham	⁶¹⁷ 964-0333
Education	Jody Klein	⁶¹⁷ 244-4767
At Large	Beth Lowd	⁶¹⁷ 332-1978
Unit Organization	Ruth Neiberg	⁶¹⁷ 969-9329
Voter Service	Sue Rosenbaum	⁶¹⁷ 332-0306

Off Board Specialists

Environmental Issues	Linda Walden	⁶¹⁷ 630-9538
Human Rights	Holly Gunner	⁶¹⁷ 964-0767

Newsletter

President	Amelia Koch	⁶¹⁷ 244-2647
Editor	Ann Grantham	⁶¹⁷ 964-0333

Committee Members

Pat Acton	⁶¹⁷ 965-5572
Liz Lieberman	⁶¹⁷ 244-4402
Linda Morrison	⁶¹⁷ 332-6539

The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan 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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617-964-0014
www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV

Observing Opportunity

There is always so much to do. I think one of the arts of good living is striking the fine balance between enough and too much. Myself, I find it goes in waves. For awhile I get too busy to take on anything new, then I finish a few things, get my head above water and then commit to more and so on. If you happen to find yourself in the latter stage with your head a little over the top we would particularly like to have some help with observing some key city meetings.

One meeting we are looking for help with is the Community Preservation Committee (CPC). For some time now the League has been pretty faithfully observing the CPC. There has been a good interactive process between the League and the committee. We have commented in one way or another on every proposal and would like to continue. Unfortunately, a conflict of interest has developed for the most frequent League observer and she cannot serve at present. There is an active group of board and off board members who have read proposals. What is needed is someone who is able to observe, read statements, and help coordinate the distribution of proposals. If this interests you let me know.

I hope by now that you will all have received your League Handbook. I am particularly proud of the efforts of one of our newest board members, Deborah Atwood, for her patience and persistence in renewing the advertisers. I also want to thank and acknowledge Robin Maltz who put the handbook together. Her patience and persistence were also much appreciated!

Hope you've all survived the winter and will come and join us at a unit meeting or other League event as the weather improves.

Amelia Koch

Welcome New Member

ELLIE GOLDBERG
79 Elmore St
Newton Center, MA 02459-1137
617-965-9637
erg_hk@juno.com

Committee Notes
ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES GROUP

Programs Encourage Action

Linda Walden, Chair

The environmental issues group has been focusing on the planning of two programs. The unit meeting on February 11 viewed the video "More Fun, Less Stuff" which provided many discussion points around consumerism and the environment. This topic was well received and there have been requests to have the program repeated for other community groups.

The "Sustainable Building Design" forum, co-sponsored with the Green Decade Coalition and the Newton Free Library (February 23 at 7:00 pm at the library) brought together three knowledgeable speakers who discussed the importance and practicality of incorporating "green" technologies. A review of the recent Newton South High School renovation demonstrated environmental design that has been successfully utilized. A "call to action" urged participants to contact their aldermen in support of incorporating more widespread environmentally-friendly building practices in City buildings. ■

Continued from page one

Green Buildings

construction that maximizes natural lighting; occupancy controlled lighting, heating, ventilating and air conditioning; the recycling of used tiles and ceramics; waterless urinals; substitution of a recycled linoleum product for carpeting; rainwater recovery for toilets and sports fields irrigation; and the use of recycled wood. The bottom-line analysis, Parnell informed us, was a 32.6% reduction in energy use, saving the city \$211,000/year. Other anticipated benefits include increased productivity and health; reduced emissions and waste, reduced water use; and the ability to use the facility as a tool for environmental education.

Oh behalf of the organizers for the Environmental Speakers Series, the Green Decade Coalition, the Newton Free Library and Linda Walden and members of the Environmental Issues Committee of the League of Women Voters, Moderator Brooke Lipsitt urged Newton residents to actively encourage efficient/green building in the Newton North upcoming construction process. As David Del Porto commented, "If it hadn't been proven, I might think that I'm dreaming! But a good friend told me: that which exists truly must be possible."

The LWVN Newsletter is grateful to Katherine Foo for contributing to this article. ■

Special Event!

Jody Klein, Chair

The Education Committee would like to call your attention to a Chapter 70 Roundtable on Public School Education Funding at Framingham State College on Monday evening, March 15th, entitled *A Decade of Education Reform: The Push for Greater Adequacy, Equity and Accountability*.

Panelists are:

Representative Marie St. Fleur
Co-Chair Education Committee

Glenn Koocher
Massachusetts Association of School Committees

David Tobin
Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

Mary Frantz
League of Women Voters of Massachusetts

David Danning
Massachusetts Teachers Association

Jerry Wasserman
Suburban Coalition

John Ladner
Residents Advocating Governmental Equity

R.S.V.P.

State Representative Karen E. Spilka:
508-872-6677 or
Jessica.Kemp@hou.state.ma.us

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT
AND TIMELY TOPIC ■.

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- ☐ I would like to join the League of Women voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$50 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.

☐ My Email address may be shared with State and National LWV

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

Local Action



January 28, 2004

To: Community Preservation Committee

Cc: Newton Board of Aldermen, Mayor David B. Cohen

Re: Proposal for CPC funding for Stearns Park "Master Plan".

The League of Women Voters of Newton raised several concerns on the Stearns Park proposal on December 8, 2003. Our comments and questions stemmed from two bases: how each proposal would fit with the criteria set by the CPC in the allocation of funds, and the pervasive question of how an individual park plan should fit into a citywide Master Plan for Parks and Recreation facilities.

In order of the criteria in the Application for Community Preservation Funding, we pose questions about:

4. **Timing.** We wonder if the timing of this proposal is based on what is best for the site development, the availability of CPA monies, or the timetable established by the CDBG? In any case, the LWVN encourages the CPC to stay true to its own goals and timetables and not be swayed by others.
6. **Success Factors.** Given the current departmental workload, the CPC is urged to look closely into the ability of an overstretched City staff to manage projects of this type and to "monitor the master plan development work closely" in-house.
9. **Maintenance.** This is clearly a key to long-term success. We are concerned that this and other requests to the CPC indicate that the Parks and Recreation budget is inadequate to fund maintenance for existing parks. If maintenance for this Stearns Park project is to be funded within the Parks and Recreation Department budget, which is already strapped for adequate funding for existing parks, then how would the City commit to budgeting for this additional expense?

While the League of Women Voters of Newton fully endorses the CPC and its charge, we also appreciate the applicant's goal "calling for a change in the way parks are improved". However, this proposal is more a request for a design for a specific park than a Master Plan. A Master Plan would look at this site within the context of other parks and open spaces. We suggest that doing the master planning work before a site specific park design is the wisest way to proceed. As we wrote to you on December 8:

"... A further concern relates to more than one of the proposals, and that is the issue of "master plans". It was recommended to the Parks and Recreation Department during last year's CPA funding process that they develop a master plan for the city's parks. It would help the Parks and Recreation Dept. prioritize not just their requests for CPA funds, but also their own limited funds. We applaud the concept of master planning, but we would be reluctant to see planning funded for one park when it remains unclear how this park relates to Newton's park system. Further, it is unclear how the funding relates to the CP guidelines..."

When one considers the sum of several current requests for funding, for example, the \$51,000 for this plan, added to the \$66,000 requested for the West Newton Irrigation project, that total of \$116,000 could productively go toward the creation of a city-wide park and recreation facilities plan. That would provide the structure to assess future site specific projects according to planned priorities.

In summary, the League does not endorse the use of Community Preservation funds for the design of this specific park. The amount requested is high for such a narrowly focused purpose, and CP money spent on planning is something that you will surely discuss within your mission. We do not feel it is in the CPC's arena to fund a city wide Master Plan. However, a larger scale Master Plan could set the stage for such individual projects, and would benefit the entire city by creating a framework within which to make decisions about specific projects.

Thank you for your diligent attention to these proposals and to the process for Newton to best use the CPA resources.

Sincerely,

AMELIA KOCH
President

DEB CROSSLEY
Vice President, Local Action

Observer Notes

Finance Committee

By Ruby Ajanee, LWVN Observer

February 9, 2004 Meeting Room 222

Committee Members present: Coletti, Stewart, Linsky, Lipof, Gerst, Gentile and Schnipper. Absent: Parker

Vote tallies are listed as For/Against/Abstained/Absent

ITEM #317-03. The Committee voted 7,0,0,1 to accept and authorize to expend gifts received from various community groups totaling \$9,000 for the Hammond Park Stormwater Project.

ITEM #354-03. The Committee voted 7,0,0,1 to transfer \$31,400 from Inspection Services Department personal services account to the Planning Department personal services accounts as a result of the reorganization plan approved in November 2003.

ITEM #109-04. The Committee voted 7,0,0,1 to approve a one-year inter-governmental agreement the City of Newton and the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant for the maintenance of City-owned streetlights.

ITEM #420-02. The Committee voted 7,0,0,1 to accept and ordinance to implement the recent 41A revision (now a state law) allowing expansion of tax deferrals program to National Guards who experience financial hardship due to call for active duty.

ITEM #380-02. The Committee voted 7,0,0,1 to approval the proposal (subject to approval from Program & Services) that the City of Newton exercise the new option offered by Ch.184 and Ch. 51 of the Acts 2002 to adjust the age, income and asset requirements seniors must meet to qualify for tax exemptions Ch. 59 and Ch. 51 (41C) and the amount of the exemption granted to eligible seniors. The new option reduces the required age and increases the income and asset thresholds.

ITEM #311-03. The Committee voted 5,1,1,1 (Gerst opposed, Coletti abstained) to approval the creation of a revolving fund with an expenditure limit of up to \$65, 000. The fund will receive student-parking fees and expenditures will pay the wages of campus aides and administrative salaries for the program.

February 23, 2004 Meeting Room 222

Committee Members present: Coletti, Stewart, Linsky, Lipof, Gerst, Gentile, Parker and Schnipper.

Vote tallies are listed as For/Against/Abstained/Absent

ITEM #125-04. The Committee voted 8,0,0,0 to transfer \$2,725 from the Clerk of the Board full-time salary account to the City Clerk expense account to allow the City Clerk to purchase vital record binders. The transfer of funds is possible due to surplus funds created by the vacancy in the department.

ITEM #127-04. The Committee voted 8,0,0,0 to appropriate \$23, 885 from the Capital Stabilization Fund to purchase a new postage machine.

ITEM #126-04. The Committee voted 8,0,0,0 to expend \$16, 377.84 from the Sewer Surplus Fund to settle a claim by two residents whose home was flooded with sewage after a City crew opened a cleanout cap in the basement of the said home without first checking to see if the sewer line was surcharged.

ITEM #129-04. The Committee voted 8,0,0,0 to appropriate \$250,000 (\$188,600 from Water Surplus and \$61,000 from Sewer Surplus) to supplement the overtime accounts in the Water and Sewer divisions of the Public Works Department. ■

Committees - in - Action

Education

Focus	Renovations, increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards	
Members	Susie Heyman Andrea Kelley Andrea Kozinetz Anne Larner	Robin Maltz Fran Osten Beverly Spencer Beth Wilkinson
Contact	Jody Klein, Chair	⁶¹⁷ 244-4767

Environmental Issues

Focus	Promoting source reduction, and recycling programs in municipal offices and public schools	
Members	Deb Crossley Katherine Gekas Barbara Herson Beth Lowd	Robin Maltz Martha Richmond Sharyn Roberts
Contact	Linda Walden, Chair	⁶¹⁷ 630-9538

Human Rights

Focus	League outreach, relevance and support for the human rights of Newton's diverse populations	
Members	Sharon Balfour Linda Morrison	Susie Heyman
Contact	Holly Gunner, Chair	⁶¹⁷ 964-0767

Local Action

Contact	Deb Crossley, Chair	⁶¹⁷ 244-7597
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OBSERVER CORPS

Community Preservation Committee	Deb Crossley Jody Klein Priscilla Leith
Election Commission	Bonnie Carter Nancy Criscitiello
Finance Committee, Board of Alderman	Ruby Ajanee Amelia Koch
Newton Citizen Commission on Energy	Deb Crossley, LWVN Representative
Parks and Recreation Commission	Priscilla Leith
Zoning and Planning Committee, Board of Aldermen	Judy Jaffe

Nominating Committee

Members	Pat Acton Ruby Ajanee	Nancy Crowley Deb Hirsch
Contact	Fran Seasholes, Chair	⁶¹⁷ 969-5927

You may call committee contacts or a Board officer or director to learn more about current committee work. All are welcome to participate.



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but our work... NEVER!*

C o - s p o n s o r e d b y t h e
League of Women Voters
of the United States

Please join us for

**MARCH
FOR WOMEN'S LIVES**

**Sunday, April 25, 2004
Washington, DC**

The time is right for a public demonstration of historic size in support of reproductive freedom for all women. Our rights are under attack as they haven't been in over a decade, and Roe v. Wade hangs by a thread in the Supreme Court. You can help build the momentum we need to preserve our rights.

**Register for the March at
www.marchforwomen.org**

For information about bus tickets,
email tickets@equalityandjustice.com

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
is a member of the Massachusetts March for
Women's Lives Coalition

*Abortion Access Project, American Association of University
Women of Massachusetts, American Civil Liberties Union of
Massachusetts, Boston NOW, League of Women Voters of
Massachusetts, Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus,
NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts, Massachusetts Coalition
for Choice, Mass NOW, Planned Parenthood League of
Massachusetts, Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
of Massachusetts* ■

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on to
www.newtv.org

LWVN CALENDAR

March

- 2 Tuesday, PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY DAY,
Polls Open 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.
- 10 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Unit Meeting,
LWVMA Voting Systems Study, at the home of
Ruth Neiberg, 72 Dalton Rd., Newton Centre.
617-969-9329. Brown bagging encouraged.
- 11 Thursday, 7:30 - 9:30 p.m., Unit Meeting, LWVMA
Voting Systems Study, at the home of Bonnie Carter,
177 Homer St., Newton Centre. 617- 969-0686.
- 15 Monday, 7-9:30 p.m., Education Funding Forum,
at The Forum, Justin McCarthy College Center,
Framingham State College
- 17 Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Working Board Meeting/
Newsletter Deadline at the home of Bonnie Carter,
177 Homer Street., Newton Centre, 617-969-0686
- 23 Tuesday, 7:15 p.m., Board Meeting
at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Pkwy.,
Newton Corner, 617-964-0333

April

- 4 Sunday, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m., Making Democracy
Work: Electing the President, Faneuil Hall, Boston.
Family and friends welcome.
- 13 Tuesday, 7:30 p.m., Local Program Planning
- 14 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m. Unit Meeting,
Newton Financial Picture at the home of
Mary Adelstein, 63 Gammons Rd., Waban,
617-527-5503. Brown bagging encouraged
- 25 Sunday, March for Women's Lives, Washington DC
- 27 Tuesday, 7:15 p.m., Board Meeting

May

- 2 Sunday, 3-5, Champagne and Chocolate
Fundraising Event
- 18 Tuesday, MUNICIPAL ELECTION DAY
- 19 Wednesday, 6-9:30 p.m., Annual Meeting,
Newton Senior Center, 345 Walnut St. Newtonville

League of Women Voters of Newton

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