

League of Women Voters of Newton Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 7

September 2004

HIGH PERFORMANCE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:

Using Public Funds More Wisely

by Deb Crossley & Linda Walden

Communities across the country are increasingly adopting high performance design and construction standards as policy for new public facilities. Why? Because such standards assure a healthy building for occupants, facilities that do less harm to the environment, and perhaps primarily, because a high performance facility is cost effective, and therefore the most responsible use of public funds.

The Newton League has joined the High Performance Building Coalition (HPBC) initiated by the Green Decade Coalition to take this message to the City in time to assure that Newton North High School is designed to meet the highest performance standard possible.

Formed several months ago to advocate sustainable design specifically for Newton North High School, the HPBC includes individual participants who also serve on the Newton Citizens' Commission on Energy, Sustainable Newton Committee, Sunergy, Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee as well as many individuals. The coalition ultimately wants to see high performance design made policy for all new public construction in Newton. The City incorporated several sustainable design measures into the recent renovation of Newton South High School that save over \$200,000 annually in operations costs. By establishing a clear policy for new construction, Newton can achieve far greater savings.

Last February the LWV collaborated with the Green Decade Coalition to sponsor a very-well attended program on Green Buildings, in which David del Porto outlined how it would be possible to save well over \$20 million in avoided costs over twenty years, comparing high performance design criteria to required building codes. Last spring the League sent a letter to Mayor Cohen urging the City to take steps to insure that a new or renovated Newton North High School meet high performance building criteria and the Mayor responded with his support.

What is high performance design? Also called "sustainable" or "green" design, it defines both a product and a process. High performance facilities achieve a high level of environmental performance (such as low energy and water demand), durability (such as longer life and lower maintenance) and indoor air quality, by adopting a process that targets such achievements. The process involves integrated design (relationships among design elements affecting performance and cost), incorporating "best practices" (professional standards above and beyond building code requirements) and using emerging technologies (such as ground water heat pumps) where possible and prudent.

Continued on page seven

Become Involved

VOLUNTEER TO REGISTER VOTERS

*Sharyn Roberts and Sue Rosenbaum,
Voters' Service Committee*

The Voters' Service Committee wants to reach out this fall to unregistered voters and encourage them to register and vote. We will be targeting young workers, college students, and other citizens who are not registered to vote.

If you are willing to give just two hours to work at a registration table this fall, please call Sue Rosenbaum at 617-332-0306 or email her at dsr2@rcn.com. You may also leave a message at the Newton League phone number: 617-964-0014.

This is the core mission of the League! Step forward and help! We'll provide all materials and back-up information. There will be many opportunities to help, and we will accommodate your schedule. The last day to register for the November 2nd election is October 13th, but we continue our voter registration efforts all year long. Please call if you are interested in helping get out the vote. ■



LWVN Officers and Directors 2004-2005

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LWVNSteeringComm@yahoo.com

Bonnie Carter	617-969-0686
Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
Amelia Koch	617-244-2647
Beth Lowd	617-332-1978
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Handbook	Robin Maltz	617-969-1554
Human Rights	Holly Gunner	617-964-0767
Membership	Elaine Reisman Co-Chair	617-244-6439
Recycling	Barbara Herson	617-964-7463
Unit Meetings	Linda Morrison Co-Chair	617-332-6539
Unit Meetings	Ruth Neiberg Co-Chair	617-969-9329
Web Site	Judy Jaffe	617-969-7427

Newsletter

Editor	Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
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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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From the Steering Committee

Summer – Election Year Style!

In presidential election years, the vitality of the League of Women Voters comes into play. While the media is absorbed in biting partisan politics, the League is spending time on improving our election system for the voter.

In Washington, the LWVUS issued a 16 page report entitled *Helping America Vote: Safeguarding the Vote* which recommends operational and management practices for state and local elections in order that the votes of eligible voters are recorded correctly. As most voters throughout the country will be returning to the same style voting machine they used four years ago, there are now federal requirements and state certification standards for the machines which must be met. Also, attention is to be paid to the ballot design, and measures are to be in place to document that these practices are carried out and that audits are possible if problems occur.

In Massachusetts, attention is also on the voter. In June, Secretary of State Wm. Galvin and LWVM President Madhu Sridhar jointly signed a Voters Bill of Rights. This document contains 15 rights guaranteed to qualified, registered voters and will be available in polling places to avoid any confusion that could possibly occur on election day. Some of the items speak to the amount of time one can spend in the "voting booth" and how many replacement ballots you can request if you make an error, and the right of accommodations for voters with disabilities. The Bill of Rights is a product of the award winning Vote! 2004 Campaign, which also has a Newsletter visible at www.votinginfo.info.

Locally, our Voters Service activities calendar grows daily! Local colleges are requesting our participation in registration of new voters. Amid reports of campus based political groups trying to spearhead their own registration campaigns to lock in voters for their particular candidates, the League can be called upon to provide young people with the nonpartisan information they need to join into the democratic process of voting.

MANY THANKS TO OUR DEDICATED VOTER SERVICE TEAM! ■

Ann Grantham

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

PHONOTHON

Is just around the corner!

Please look for our letter in September and send in your reply or respond when you are called by our member volunteers.

The league depends on your generosity especially in this important election year.

THANK YOU!



Fair Districts for Fair Elections

by Beth Lowd, LWVN Steering Committee Member

Ballot question one on the November ballot in Newton's 11th and 12th Middlesex districts will concern the reform of the redistricting process to make elections fairer. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts has a position in favor of an independent redistricting commission and is expected to endorse the question early in the fall.

Sponsored by Common Cause in 15 districts this fall, the advisory question will ask voters to instruct their legislator to vote in favor of removing the authority to create congressional and legislative districts from the state legislature and instead place that responsibility in the hands of an independent redistricting commission. The commission would operate by strict guidelines, such as the following:

- Keep towns and city neighborhoods together.
- Practice non-partisan redistricting.
- Prevent redistricting from intentionally protecting or harming any candidate.
- Foster competition by treating incumbents like any other candidate and creating opportunities for local elected officials to "move up".
- Protect the voting rights of minority communities.
- Require a public process and public input.

Eventually, the change will require a constitutional amendment.

Beth Lowd, who is a Common Cause Board member, will lead the campaign to pass the advisory question in Newton. League members who are willing to help should call her at 617-332-1978.

Voters will probably remember that during the 2001 redistricting process, one proposal by the House leadership would have changed the two districts named above so much that Reps. Kay Khan and Ruth Balser would have been pitted against each other. There was speculation that this was to "punish" our two legislators who don't often go along with leadership's proposals. A public outcry reversed the decision.

The final version of the 2001 map that the House of Representatives drew for Boston's districts broke up Boston neighborhoods to such an extent that although the non-white majority of voters in Boston has been growing, the number of seats held by minorities would likely have decreased! It accomplished this by concentrating minority voters in some districts and diluting others with chunks of suburban voters. For this violation of the 1965 Voting Rights

Act, a federal 3-judge panel threw the plan out and ordered the House to comply with the law. In the court's words, the House "sacrificed racial fairness to the voters on the altar of incumbency protection."

Eleven states avoid such blatant "gerrymandering" by appointing independent commissions to draw district lines. For example, in Iowa the districts are all nearly square, while ours in Massachusetts wiggle all over the map and are often only one town wide! One problem with gerrymandering is that it frequently results in fewer contested races. Only about 30% of our races are contested in Massachusetts; whereas those in states with independent commissions average 70%! One way to think about it is that, using sophisticated software, legislators choose their "safe" voters, instead of the voters choosing them, a kind of upside-down democracy.

For more information see
www.commoncause.org/states/massachusetts/RedistrictingInfo.htm■

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

Newton Community Preservation Committee Update

By Priscilla Leith

In two lengthy meetings, June 30 and July 28 the Newton Community Preservation Committee discussed several proposals before sending them to the Newton Board of Aldermen. This Committee deserves thanks for contributing their time and expertise toward wise use of Newton's CPA funds.

NEW OFFICERS

As of the September 29 new officers will be Douglas Dickson (Chair), Andy Stern (Vice Chair), and either Chris Moore or Jennifer Goldson of the City Planning Dept (Clerk).

LINDEN GREEN

248 Eliot Street, Upper Falls

CAN-DO's proposal for five units of moderate-income housing was recommended by the Planning Department and the CPC voted to recommend full funding to the Board of Aldermen. CAN-DO's Executive Director Josephine McNeil stated that the neighbors' request for just 4 units was economically unfeasible, and their request to change the orientation of a building unworkable.

PELHAM HOUSE

45 Pelham Street, Newton Centre

In 2003 Community Living Network received approval for this senior housing project, 1/2 block from the Newton Centre business district, and asked for another \$100,000 to cover added costs. It is currently under construction. Marcie Laden, Executive Director of CLN, explained costs rose from an original \$950,000 estimate to \$1.7M and then to \$2.2M.

Further, structural damage became evident after construction began, and codes and safety regulations added costs for other improvements. CLN took out larger loans to cover these costs and extended the time period for the loan, which raised the expense of insurance and interest. The Planning Dept is reviewing this project over the summer, and it will be on the CPC agenda at the September meeting.

GRACE CHURCH AND THE YMCA, both in Newton Corner

These two proposals were discussed together because they have similar issues. Grace Episcopal Church asked for \$93,075 from the CPA fund to repair stained glass windows. This would be "matched" with \$105,000 from the church congregation to repair the slate roof. The YMCA proposal is for either \$125,000 for replacement or \$160,000 for restoration of 66 windows in the building.

Commissioner Charles McMillan observed that these requests constitute "new ground" for the Committee. He favored funding both requests, because they are buildings that have been here for a long time, as long as the proponents commit to accepting a historic preservation restriction on the buildings.

Commissioner Doug Dickson said that in his opinion, these proposals do not rise to the level that they can clear public objections to funding the proposals.

Commissioner Joyce Moss said she supported the Grace Church request but not the YMCA, which she doesn't see as a historic building.

Commissioner Judy Jacobson favored funding the YMCA with a preservation restriction, but not funding Grace Church.

A "straw motion" to fund the YMCA had 3 yes, 3 no, 2 abstaining, and 1 absent, so a final vote was postponed until the September meeting.

Grace Church lost by a vote of 3 yes, 4 no, 1 abstaining and 1 absent.

ANGINO FARM PROPOSAL

Nahanton and Winchester Streets, Newton Centre

The Newton Conservators are requesting \$2,560,000 in CPC funds to purchase the 98,406 sq. ft. farm formerly owned by Jerry Angino. It is the last farm remaining in Newton. Conservators signed a purchase and sale agreement with the Estate's Executor on June 29. Representatives of the Conservators and the Community Preservation Committee are meeting over the summer to refine the proposal before sending it to the Board of Aldermen for consideration, although they did approve it at their July meeting.

The Newton Conservators would acquire and own the land, with the City holding an open space and historic preservation restriction. A newly-formed Newton Community Farming Group, with the Conservators, would provide at least \$40,000 towards building improvements and farm start-up costs. The land would be leased to an approved Farm Group that will operate a non-profit, organic farm for fruits, vegetables and cut flowers. The existing farmhouse would be renovated and become meeting space and housing for the resident farmer.

The Farm would be "an active, community-operated working farm that will grow produce for Newton residents, run educational programs for children and adults, provide outstanding volunteer opportunities, and run a program to provide food for those in need," according to the proposal. ■

Justice and Health Care Committees

All members are invited to participate

Administration of Justice Committee Upcoming Events

Please mark your calendar now to join us for the Fall Administration of Justice Committee meeting on September 14, 2004. Anyone who wants to join the LWVM Administration of Justice Committee or to just help us choose future priorities is welcome to attend our first fall meeting. Our speaker will be Liz Marshall, previous LWVM Administration of Justice Specialist. The September 14 meeting will be held at 10:00 am in the Framingham Town Hall basement conference room. To be put on our email notification list or to give feedback, please email Patti Muldoon, Administration of Justice Specialist at pmmLWV@houserock.org.

Administration of Justice Committee Notes

The Administration of Justice Committee is actively seeking new committee members. The committee works on court reform, death penalty, prison issues, and sentencing. We have also addressed juvenile justice issues in the past. The committee meets the second Tuesday of the month, September through June, at 10:00 a.m. at Framingham Town Hall basement conference room. To receive updates, meeting reminders and change notifications, please email pmmLWV@houserock.org or call Patti Muldoon, LWVM Administration of Justice Specialist, at 781-648-1019.

October Health Care Conference

The LWVM Healthcare Committee is participating in the forum "Health Care: The Disconnect between the People and the Political" with Warren Tolman, Margaret O'Malley, and Jay Kaufman. Presented by the Winchester Council on Aging, the forum will be held on Saturday, October 2, 2004, at the Jenks Center, 109 Skillings Road, Winchester, MA 01890. Coffee will be served at 8:30 a.m. and the program is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. to noon. Call 781-721-7136 to pre-register. Please contact Judy Deutsch, 978-443-8609 for further information. ■

Committees - in - Action

Local Action

Contact Deb Crossley, Chair ⁶¹⁷244-7597

OBSERVER CORPS

Community Preservation Committee

Jody Klein
Priscilla Leith

Election Commission

Bonnie Carter
Nancy Criscitiello

Finance Committee, Board of Alderman

Ruby Ajane
Amelia Koch

Newton Citizen Commission on Energy

Deb Crossley,
LWVN Representative

Newton Free Library Board

Mary Adelstein

Parks and Recreation Commission

Priscilla Leith

Zoning and Planning Committee, Board of Aldermen

Judy Jaffe

Environmental Issues

Focus Promoting source reduction, and recycling programs in municipal offices and public schools

Members Deb Crossley
Katherine Gekas
Beth Lowd
Barbara Herson
Robin Maltz
Martha Richmond
Sharyn Roberts

Contact Linda Walden, Chair ⁶¹⁷630-9538

Nominating Committee

Members Barbara Lietzke
Carol Ann Shea

Contact Janet Stearns, Chair ⁶¹⁷559-9987

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

To: Your Favorite Young Adult

CC:

Subject: Voter Information Sites for Young Adults in Your Life

Believing young adults are getting all their contact and information about the world off the Internet. The following sites have non-partisan election information:

- www.votinginfo.info - LWVM young voter information site
- www.dnet.org - LWV voter information site
- www.rockthevote.com - excellent information on developing high school "street teams" to get out the vote
- www.smackdownyourvote.com - partner with the League to encourage young voters - check out their 18-30 VIP brochure with responses from President Bush and Senator Kerry to questions of interest to young voters
- www.youthvote.org - National coalition of groups working to increase youth voter turnout
- www.mtv.com - their program Choose or Lose encourages young adults to exercise their voice and vote
- www.newvotersproject.org - The New Voters Project is a grassroots, peer-to-peer young voter mobilization initiative
- www.raiseyourvoice.org/home.html - a national effort to engage students in public life through support for student voice, service, and engagement in the democracy



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*Our politics may lean to the left,
but our work...NEVER!*

Continued from page one

HIGH PERFORMANCE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION:

Design elements that must be evaluated are many, but include:

- o Site Design Landscape Design,
- o Building Design,
- o Building Materials,
- o Water recovery systems,
- o Building mechanical and electrical systems,
- o Indoor Air Quality,
- o Demolition and Waste Management

The HPBC also wants to require a cost assessment method called "life cycle costing", which includes the total cost of design, construction, bond interest, operations and maintenance over the life of the building, which would allow Newton the opportunity to make wise, long term, cost effective choices throughout design and construction. This way, Newton could establish a process that assures assessment of measures that save energy, water, and resources, assure healthy and productive learning environments, remain within the budget, and enjoy long term savings.

How do we make this Happen? To assure that Newton achieves high performance in a new NNHS facility, the HPBC wants the Designer Selection and Design Review Committees to make such expectations clear in the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a Design Team (architect and engineers). To this end, the HPBC has drafted language which both expresses Newton's commitment to high performance design, and defines the process and standards by which this shall be achieved.

Please join the League Environmental Issues Committee and members of the HPBC on September 8 at 11:30 to learn more about how high performance building concepts were applied at Newton South High School, what specifics are possible in a new building and how you can help to make Newton North "green". ■

LWVN CALENDAR

September

- 8 Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.- 1:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, High Performance Buildings, at the home of Ruth Neiberg, 72 Dalton Rd., Newton Centre, 617-969-9329. Brown bag lunches encouraged.
- 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., **Voter Registration** at Mt. Ida College. Contact- Sue Rosenbaum, 617-332-0306.
- 9 Thursday, 7:00 p.m. **Potluck/Working Board Meeting** at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Pkwy, Newton, 617-964-0333. Chair-Bonnie Carter.
- 14 Tuesday, **State Primary Election Day**, Polls Open 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- Newsletter Deadline**
- 22 Wednesday, 12:00-2:00 p.m., **Voter Service Table at Community Service Fair**, Mt. Ida College. Contact Sue Rosenbaum, 617-332-0306.
- 23 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **Board Meeting**, location TBA, Chair – Bonnie Carter

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on to
www.newtv.org

October

- 4 Monday, 5:30-9:00 p.m., **Phonothon**, AG Edwards & Sons, Newton, Contact Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Supper provided
- 5 Tuesday, 5:30-9:00 p.m., **Phonothon**, AG Edwards & Sons, Newton, Contact Bonnie Carter, 617-969-0686, Supper provided
- 7 Thursday, 7:00 p.m., **Potluck/Working Board Meeting**, Location TBA, Chair – Beth Lowd
- 13 Wednesday, **Last Day to register to vote** and to change party enrollment for the November State/Presidential Election
- 11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, Ballot Questions/Pro and Con, at the home of Marianne Hudec, 48 Druid Hill Rd., Newton Highlands, 617-527-4276. Brown bag lunches encouraged.
- 7:30 p.m., **Candidates Forum**, US House of Representatives 4th District
- 14 Thursday, 7:30 – 9:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, Ballot Questions/Pro and Con
- Newsletter Deadline**
- 17 Sunday, **Harvest Fair**, Newton Centre Green
- 21 Thursday, 7:15 p.m., **LWVN Board Meeting** at the home of Sue Rosenbaum, 121 Winslow Rd., Waban, 617-332-0306 Chair- Beth Lowd
- 30 Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., **LWVM Fall Conference**, Our Choices, Our Future – Vote 2004, Quincy Marriott Hotel

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