

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONCORD-CARLISLE

Founded 1930

LWV BULLETIN

LWVCC Website: https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/concord-carlisle

Winter 2019

P.O. Box 34 Concord, Massachusetts 01742-0034

Vol 24 2018-19 #3

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CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

- 1 Fri. 1st Friday, 9:30-11 am, Climate Change
6 Wed. Board Meeting, 9:30 am - 12 pm
8 Fri. Education Committee, 9:30-11:30 am
11 Mon. FinCom Hearing - Town Budget, 7 pm
11 Mon. Observer Corps, 7:30-9 pm
19 Tue. Town Government Committee, 2-4 pm
21 Thu. Agenda Setting Committee, 10 am - noon
25 Mon. FinCom Hearing - School Budget, 7 pm
26 Tue. Select Board Hearing - Warrant, 7 pm
28 Thu. Book Group, 7:30-9 pm

MARCH

- 1 Fri. 1st Friday, 9:30-11 am, Warrant Articles
4 Mon. Carlisle Town Caucus
5 Tue. Book Group, 10-11:30 am
5 Tue. Planning Board Hearing - Warrant, 7 pm
6 Wed. Board Meeting, 9:30 am - 12 pm
8 Fri. Education Committee, 9:30-11:30 am
11 Mon. Observer Corps, 7:30-9 pm
11 Mon. FinCom Hearing, Enterprise Funds, 7 pm
17 Sun. Concord Candidate Forum
19 Tue. Town Government Committee, 2-4 pm
21 Thu. Agenda Setting Committee, 10-noon
26 Tue. Concord Town Election

Members are welcome at monthly Board meetings.
Please contact the President if you would like to attend.

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan political organization of men and women formed in 1920 and dedicated to the principles of self-government established by the Constitution of the United States. The League works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Even though it is still January, April Town Meetings, in both Concord and Carlisle, are already the focus of myriad town committees. The language for Warrant articles has been refined and presentations for public hearings—for Concord, at least—scheduled. The League's Observer Corps is attentive to the work of the Planning Board, Select Board, School Committees, and Finance Committee, to name a few. In other words, we are collectively very busy.

Following the work of the many committees and their requests to the Towns can be a fulltime job. The League's Town Government Committees, chaired by Ardis Bordman and Cindy Nock, review each warrant article to determine which articles address issues that relate to established League positions and, thereby, require our particular consideration. This process is invariably time consuming but invaluable.

This coming year, in Concord, budgetary issues for both the Town and the schools will be of central importance. As well, commitments to affordable housing initiatives will require our thorough understanding. The crumb-rubber concern, that was part of the high school playing fields discussions, is back in the form of a public petition. The Community Preservation Committee again focuses its resources on projects that are pertinent to its mission. Although fewer items are on the warrant this year, and optimism abounds that Concord may have a shorter Town Meeting, the length of debate is never predictable!

Now is the time to start learning as much as you can about the issues we will be asked to consider. Please attend the League Town Government Committee meetings, warrant reviews (announced through Monday Member News) and other committee (like the Education Committee's several outreach efforts) meetings so that you can become independently informed. Watch the weekly League MMN or visit the LWVCC Web Site, where meetings are posted for opportunities to study and learn. The League will sponsor a Candidate Forum on Sunday, March 17th, at Harvey Wheeler in Concord, for candidates for the Concord Select Board, School Committees, Concord Housing Authority, and Town Moderator. The election will take place on March 26th. This is an excellent time to hear the perspectives of

future officials. The forum will be filmed by the Town's Minuteman Media. In addition, the public TV channels (Channels 8, 9, and 99) have many town committee meetings up and streaming, so watching those can be invaluable.

Before taking a position on Warrant articles, the Board carefully studies each article and meets to discuss them in depth. Everyone is welcome to join those discussions. While the Board is the final arbiter of public League positions, it can only do its work well if we hear the divergent perspectives our membership holds. Please do not hesitate to connect with Board members if you have questions or concerns.

As always, we remember, democracy is not a spectator sport.

Diane Proctor
President, LWVCC

COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Have you renewed your LWVCC membership? If not, you only have a few days before you will be dropped from our membership rolls. The League of Women Voters has a firm policy that on January 31st all members who have not renewed are dropped from the membership rolls for all three organizations (local, state and national). We hope you want to maintain your membership so that you will be regularly updated on our activities, informed about current issues through Monday Member News and the bulletin, and involved in the League activities and concerns that are important to you. You can renew your membership through PayPal on our League website or you can send a check for dues (\$55 for single membership, \$80 for household membership) to LWVCC Treasurer, P.O. Box 34, Concord, MA 01742. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at: Membership@LWVCC.org. *Anne Hayden, Membership Chair.*

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee meets monthly on Friday mornings, usually the second Friday of the month. The Education Committee follows the work of the School Committees.

- Two big items for our attention this month are the school budgets and the Concord Middle School buildings. The Concord Carlisle Regional School District (CCRS) budget for FY20 met the Finance Committee guideline while maintaining the Lap Top purchasing program. The Concord Public School budget for FY20 exceeds the FinCom guidelines by \$145,000 but incorporates an expanded special education program that will keep students in district.
- Concord was not selected to receive state funding assistance for a new middle school from the Massachusetts School Building Authority this year. Both Peabody and Sanborn are deteriorating and require costly upkeep. The Education Committee will monitor discussions about the middle schools and next steps.

Edie Lipinski



- The Civics Bee working group is forming a team to participate in a multi-community Civics Bee on April 7th in Weston. Teams from Sudbury and Wayland will also participate. Susan Frey, Diane Proctor, and Terri Ackerman are organizing the adult team, coordinating with middle and high school teachers, and enlisting help with publicity from the Concord Library. Weston will record the event on their local TV site for later viewing.

- On January 4th we hosted the First Friday Forum: Educating the Whole Child: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Environment (see following article). For more information please contact Edie at education@lwvcc.org. *Edie Lipinski, Education Committee Chair*

IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

The LWVCC Immigration Committee meets monthly to learn more about local organizations that are helping immigrants living in this area. The committee has learned about pending state legislation on sanctuary cities, about visits to the border by local church groups, and a local group called Dignity in Asylum which houses asylum seekers in our area.

On November 15, Committee members met with Maureen Willis, Executive Director of EnglishAtLarge, (EAL) and Jeff Backerman, vice-president of the EAL Board. EnglishAtLarge is a nonprofit volunteer

network in 21 Massachusetts communities. EAL provides small group English language instruction to adult immigrants in these communities and helps learners to achieve personal goals and adapt to culture in a foreign country. Since its founding in 1970, EAL has helped more than 10,000 adult immigrants and refugees from around the world improve their English language skills and adapt to American life.

Nancy Cronin



EnglishAtLarge

EAL provides various services to English language learners such as One-on-One Tutoring at all levels for learners who cannot attend classroom-based programs. Volunteer tutors receive 12 hours of initial training and ongoing professional development and support from staff.

For intermediate and advanced learners to practice spontaneous spoken English, EAL holds Conversation Groups in a supportive group setting. Trained volunteers facilitate discussions based on the needs and interests of the learners. There are 17 people enrolled in two conversation groups at the two libraries in Concord.

Judy Zaunbrecher

A Career Access Lab serves immigrants who need to build job-related skills to be able to secure jobs or advance their careers in the U.S. They are connected with local career mentors and resources and participate in a 15-week Career Group program.

Currently 213 volunteers are working with English learners, and there are 143 persons on the waiting list for instruction. The need for this service is so great that many potential learners must wait as long as one year to join a group. For more information contact Maureen Willis, Executive Director at 781-395-2374 or Jeff Backerman at 978-369-6082.

Committee Discussion

Anne Hayden suggested that League members could join an EAL Conversation Group and talk about elections, voting and the U.S. structure of government. She will follow up with Maureen Willis. Two other suggestions were that the LWVCC talk with the Concord Police Department about any immigration issues here, and that we invite ESL volunteers and staff, as well as Dignity in Asylum founders, to the January 26 Winter Breakfast. For more information please contact Nancy at immigration@lwvcc.org. *Nancy Cronin, Immigration Committee Chair*

VOTER SERVICE REPORT

Concord Town elections will be held on Tuesday, March 26, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. The Town Citizens' Caucus is scheduled for Monday, January 28, 7:30 p.m. at the Town House hearing room (Snow date is January 29, same time and place). The offices to be filled are: Town Moderator (1 seat); Select Board (2 seats), School Committee (2 seats); and Concord Housing Authority (2 seats – 1 for a 3-year term, 1 for a 5-year term).



The League will sponsor a candidate forum on Sunday, March 17, 2019, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Harvey Wheeler Center in Concord. The forum will be videotaped by the Town's Minuteman Media Network for later viewing. Be sure to attend the candidate forum on March 17 and then vote on March 26. Please contact Judy Zaunbrecher at VoterService@lwvcc.org if you would like to volunteer to help plan and produce the candidate forum. We need greeters, question sorters, and question developers. *Judy Zaunbrecher, Voter Service Chair.*

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The League's new website can be found at <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/concord-carlisle>. We hope that you are finding it to be a valuable tool. However, it will always

Nancy Brown



be a work in progress, so please let the Communications Committee know how it can be improved. What else would you like to find there? Is something out of date? Please send comments to Communications@LWVCC.org. Or better yet, come to the next meeting of the Communications Committee: Wednesday, January 30, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m. at the Fowler Library in West Concord. We will also be discussing other communication vehicles and would welcome the input of savvy League members. *Nancy Brown, Communications Chair.*

LWVCC BOOK GROUP

Our January Winter Breakfast speaker, Aviva Chomsky, talked about the complexity of immigration issues. The LWVCC Book Group selections for January have been chosen to complement and expand on this topic: [They Take Our Jobs! And 20 other myths about immigration](#) by Aviva Chomsky and [Go, Went, Gone](#) by German writer Jenny Erpenbeck and translated by Susan Bernofsky. Our discussion meetings will be on Monday, January 28th from 10-11:30 am in the Trustees Room of the Concord Main Library and Thursday, January 31st from 7:00-8:30pm in the lower meeting room in the Concord Main Library.

Our next book selection is [The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy](#) by Michael McCarthy. Those discussion meetings will be on Thursday, February 28th from 7:30 to 9:00 pm in the lower meeting room of the Concord Main Library and Tuesday, March 5th from 10-11:30am in the Trustees Room of the Concord Main Library.

[The Moth Snowstorm](#) is unlike any other book on climate change today. It is a

manifesto rooted in experience, a poignant memoir of the author's first love: nature. McCarthy traces his adoration of the natural world to when he was seven, when the discovery of butterflies and birds brought sudden joy to a boy whose mother had just been hospitalized and whose family life was deteriorating. He goes on to record in painful detail the rapid dissolution of nature's abundance in the intervening decades, and he proposes a radical solution to our current problem: that we each recognize in ourselves the capacity to love the natural world.

Anne Hayden



The LWVCC Book Group selects books that focus on topics on current issues or local interest. Our discussions are always lively and informative. This year the Steering Committee has included both nonfiction and fiction book suggestions for some of the meetings with the expectation that this will enable attendees to more fully explore these important topics. LWVCC Book Group meetings are open to all. *Anne Hayden, Janet Miller, Diane Proctor and Mary Sterling, Book Group Steering Committee.*

THE LWVCC OBSERVER CORPS



The League Observer Corps monitors about 20 town and school committees. The League needs Observers for the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Historic Districts Commission, as well as additional substitute Observers. *Janet Rothrock, Observer Corps Chair, jrothrock@hyraxes.com*

Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) is a six-person board (three members, three associate members) appointed by the Select Board. The responsibilities of the ZBA are to act on variances and special permits as prescribed by law, as well as the zoning bylaws of the Town. The ZBA hears and decides appeals by any person aggrieved by an inability to

obtain a permit or enforcement action from the Building Inspector. The ZBA meets monthly at 7:15 p.m., at 141 Keyes Road, Concord. Website: <http://www.concordma.gov/1223/Zoning-Board-of-Appeals>. *Needs an Observer.*

Historic Districts Commission

The Historic Districts Commission is a five-member and five-associate member board appointed by the Select Board. The Historic Districts Commission is charged with determining the appropriateness of exterior architectural features of buildings and structures to be erected within the historic districts. The Historic Districts Commission meets twice a month at 7 p.m., at 141 Keyes Road, Concord. Website: <https://concordma.gov/1145/Historic-Districts-Commission>. *Needs an Observer.*

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS

West Concord Advisory Committee – by Mary Sterling, Observer

The West Concord Advisory Committee (WCAC) is a subcommittee of the Concord Planning Board whose purpose is “to provide public examination of the issues surrounding future development, growth, and improvement in West Concord Center.” The primary guide for the subcommittee is the West Concord Village Master Plan of 2010, which provides a roadmap for future development of West Concord center. Members of WCAC are liaisons with many departments and committees in Concord in order to stay informed, serve as a resource, and maintain good communication. The WCAC meets at 7 p.m. on the first



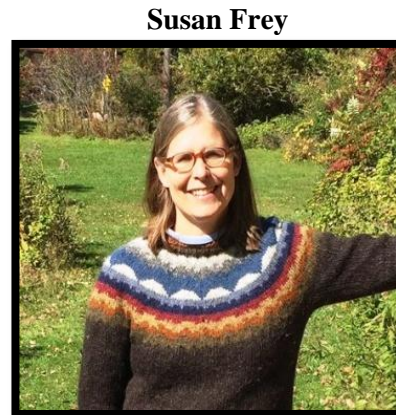
Wednesday of the month in the Harvey Wheeler Community Center.

The evolution of a plan for a West Concord Cultural District has been a frequent topic of conversation at recent WCAC meetings. The vision of a cultural district which “brings artists and owners together” guides a recently formed West Concord Junction Cultural District Committee. This Committee has been awarded a \$5,000 grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to hire a consultant to assist in gathering information and set priorities to encourage working artists and cultural opportunities in West Concord. Members of the WCAC view this plan as part of the larger conversation about strengthening West Concord Design Guidelines and examining zoning, which is a priority of the Concord Planning Board in 2018 and into 2019.

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail and the Gerow land have been discussed at WCAC meetings in recent months to ensure that these recreational assets of West Concord are well designed and well integrated into the village. WCAC has also stayed informed about a study for the proposed pedestrian bridge over the Assabet River to the West Concord Business district from the Baker Avenue business complex. WCAC priorities for 2019 include continued involvement in all projects described above. In addition, the WCAC will continue to focus on the concept and design of “Complete Streets” which are “designed and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities.” Finally, WCAC intends to stay informed and active regarding housing development proposals currently in process.

Finance Committee – by Susan Frey and Maureen Kemeza, Observers

Budget Guidelines This fall the Finance Committee (FC), chaired by Tom Tarpey, set preliminary and then final FY2020 budget guidelines while Town Manager Chris Whelan and School Superintendent Laurie Hunter created their annual budgets for the Town, Concord Public Schools (CPS) and Concord-Carlisle Regional High School (CCRHS).



Susan Frey

The CPS and CCRHS budgets were created using a zero-based budgeting process this year, with school administration looking at each school program expense from the ground up. The Town and CCRHS budgets are within the FC’s guidelines, but the CPS budget exceeds this guideline by roughly \$145,000 at the time of publication. The school administration has committed to increasing elementary and middle school teachers’ salaries to make them level with high school teachers, which created a sizeable salary bump in this year’s CPS budget. A major challenge facing the FC is that Moody’s credit rating service, which helps determine the cost of the Town’s borrowing, has placed the School Department on a “watch” list because the School Department’s Excess & Deficiency Account (E&D) dropped to a very low level. This indicated to Moody’s that the School Department does not have enough operational reserves to meet short-term financial emergencies. In the past, the School Department used E&D as a source for funding shortfalls in the operating budget. The proposed CPS budget has reduced its reliance on the E&D accounts, contributing, in part, to the

Maureen Kemeza



FC guidelines being exceeded. The school administration asserts that the CPS budget is actually very lean and is not eager to make further adjustments.

Sustainable Growth Rate The FC is struggling with how to help Town residents understand that when they vote to fund various articles at Town Meeting, property taxes will rise and ultimately will reach an unsustainable level of tax burden. FC is proposing a warrant article at Town Meeting that would change the FC's committee bylaw to expand its responsibilities in two ways. The first step instructs the FC to publish an annual five-year projection of the likely burden on the Town's taxpayers. The second step instructs

the FC to publish an annual statement of its recommendations regarding sustainable growth rates for the upcoming fiscal year and for the each of the five following fiscal years. At the time of publication, Chair Tarpey and FC members are still working on the definition of a sustainable growth rate (SGR), which may be presented when the article is discussed at Town Meeting in April. A detailed summary of the FC budget guidelines and fiscal concerns can be found on the FC web page on FY2020 budget guidelines:

<https://www.concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17800/Fiscal-Year-2020-Budget-Guidelines>.

CONCORD TOWN GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE

January opens a new year and closes the Annual Town Meeting Warrant, and we are well into learning about the intent, effect, and cost of the Articles. We have learned from our Town Moderator that electronic voting may be used, for the first time, on the second day of Town Meeting. Now is the time for questions about the intent, effect, and cost of Articles--the floor of Town Meeting may be too late!

Ardis Bordman



Over the next three months, the League will be gathering information about Annual Town Meeting warrant articles in preparation for possible League recommendations at Town Meeting. The Town Meeting Articles and public hearing dates will be available on the Town Meeting website (<https://www.concordma.gov/2235/2019-Annual-Town-Meeting>). The hearings will be televised.

The League's Affordable Housing Subcommittee continues its research including several affordable housing-related articles that will be on the warrant. These articles present three possible funding mechanisms for increasing moderate and low income affordable housing. They include an annual budget appropriation from the free cash account, a real estate transfer tax, and a building permit fee surcharge. A fourth article would

create a Concord Affordable Housing Trust which will receive and disburse funds raised from the real estate transfer tax and the building permit fee surcharge. Providing housing for those who need assistance is a long standing commitment of the League at local, state, and national levels.

The nine-member Concord Town Manager Search Committee has begun the work of searching for a new Town Manager to replace Chris Whelan at the end of his 28-year tenure in June 2019. The Select Board’s consultant, Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI), scheduled three public listening forums in January, met with the Search Committee, town committee chairs and senior staff, and reached out to other constituencies, seeking input on the characteristics and skills best suited in a candidate. The official job placement ad will be posted on the MRI website by February 3, with the goal of having a replacement in place by June 2019. See the Search Committee’s web page for more information: <https://concordma.gov/2286/Town-Manager-Search-Committee>.

We welcome members who want to drop in when they can and those who want to follow all the local government developments, especially during town meeting time. Join us in the Trustees Room, Concord Main Library, from 2-4 pm on the following dates: Feb. 19, March 19, April 16, and May 14. Email me abordman@comcast.net or call 978-369-7914. *Ardis Bordman, Concord Town Government Committee Chair.*

CONCORD’S WARRANT ARTICLES

This year’s Annual Town Meeting will address a wide range of topics – affordable housing, budget guidelines, OPEB (other post-employment benefits like health insurance), parks and libraries, schools, community preservation, personnel, public works, zoning bylaws, and artificial turf. The following are summaries of the 46 Articles:

Select Board: The Select Board will sponsor affordable housing Articles: an appropriation from “free cash,” special legislation to support a real estate transfer tax, a bylaw increasing the permit fee surcharge, and creation of an affordable housing trust. Also sponsored will be an Article to change posting procedures for Town Meeting Warrants.

Planning Board: The Planning Board will sponsor nine zoning Articles, covering formula business for Concord Center, wireless overlay district map, handicapped parking, groundwater conservancy district, marijuana establishment temporary moratorium, nonconforming single and two-family residential structures, fairs and bazaars, flood plain conservancy district map, and government and utility uses.

Karlen Reed



School Committee: Warrant Articles sponsored by the School Committee for Concord Public School (CPS) include the FY20 operating budget, a CPS FY20 capital budget, a \$1.5 million

request for a feasibility study for a new middle school, and a request to create a CPS rental revolving account to keep CPS rental revenues from flowing into the Town's free cash account. The School Committee for the Concord-Carlisle Regional High School (CCRS) proposes a FY20 operating budget and a \$2 million capital improvement request for paving and lighting the high school access road and 104 additional parking spaces.

Town Manager: The Town Manager's office will sponsor Warrant Articles that include the proposed FY20 Town Operating Budget, several debt authorizations for town buildings, Gerow and White Pond parks, Emerson land acquisition, and the Library. Other Articles will seek authorization to transfer Town land for purposes of affordable housing at Gerow Park, a change in the records management procedures, and a change that would allow the Town Clerk to appoint election officials.

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee will sponsor a bylaw amendment that changes its committee charge to produce and publish an annual five-year projection of the tax burden and to publish recommendations each year regarding sustainable growth rates for the upcoming fiscal year and the five following fiscal years (see related report in this issue).

Citizen Petitions: The only citizen petition this year is offered by Beverly Bryant, which focuses on extending the prohibition of synthetic turf on Town land for another three years.

Others: Additional Articles will include funding for the Minuteman Vocational Technical School, the Enterprise funds (Light Plant, solid waste disposal, sewer system, sewer improvement, water, and water main replacement), the Beede Swim & Fitness Center, the PEG access fund, use of Free Cash, Community Preservation Act projects, creation of an OPEB trust fund, personnel classifications and compensation plans, and unpaid bills. *Karlen Reed.*

FIRST FRIDAYS



January 4 – Educating the Whole Child: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Environment in Our Schools

On January 4th, the Education Committee hosted a First Friday Forum: “Educating the Whole Child: Creating an Inclusive and Supportive Environment in Our Schools.” The event, held at the Fowler Library in West Concord, featured school administrators from Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS), the middle school,

and the elementary schools, who spoke about school programs that focus on the definition of “success,” self-confidence, mindfulness, diversity, cultural competency, and inclusiveness. The speakers were Dr. Laurie Hunter, Superintendent; Mike Mastrullo, CCHS Principal; Justin Cameron, Middle School Principal; Sharon Young, Alcott Principal; Angel Charles, Thoreau

Principal; Matt Lucey, Willard Principal; Andrew Nyamekye, METCO Director; and Sherree Foye, Alcott School Counselor. Diane Proctor, LWVCC President, and Edie Lipinski, Education Committee Chair, moderated and organized the program.

CCHS Principal Mike Mastrullo spoke about Challenge Success, a program that questions the definition of success and focuses on student well-being in addition to academic achievement. Concord Middle School Principal Justin Cameron talked about HOME BASE, a Concord Middle School advisory program. Developed by teachers, the program increases availability of adults to meet with students throughout the day. Alcott Counselor Sherree Foye described Open Circle, a social-emotional learning program where teachers are trained to hold sessions with their class to problem-solve and work on community building.



Willard Principal Matt Lucey shared some mindfulness activities meant to provide students with a set of strategies to build a coping toolkit to maintain their own health. METCO Director Andrew Nyamekye gave a brief overview of the history and present demographics of the METCO program. Alcott Principal Sharon Young shared information about the district-wide and school-based professional development training for the faculty and staff in cultural competency, as well

as the school district's efforts to hire teachers of diverse backgrounds. Thoreau Principal Angel Charles provided information on new programs at Thoreau that allow students with multiple or specific needs to receive service in the local school setting. She also spoke to a renewed commitment to growing and fostering this mindset across the schools.

Thank you to all who participated and helped to organized this informative event. A video of the program is available on Concord's Minuteman Media Network at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjwKtPbTcM>. *Edie Lipinski, Education Chair.*

CLIMATE CHANGE: WHY DO LOCAL ACTIONS MATTER?

Friday, Feb. 1, 2019 9:15 – 11 a.m.
Fowler Library, 1322 Main Street, Concord

Speakers:

Gary Clayton	President, Mass Audubon
Kate Hanley	Concord Director of Sustainability
Rep. Tami Gouveia	14 th Middlesex District

Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle

Upcoming First Friday: February 1, 2019 – Climate Change: Why Do Local Actions Matter?

The February 1st First Friday at the Fowler Library in Concord, 9:15 – 11 a.m., will address climate change. The program will review the recent United Nations climate report and the 4th National Climate

Assessment, focusing on what must happen in the next 12 years to avert an environmental disaster. Speakers will be Gary Clayton, President of Massachusetts Audubon Society; Kate Hanley, Director of Sustainability for the Town of Concord; and Representative Tami Gouveia, 14th Middlesex District. The speakers will look at the climate reports, describe what is happening at the national, state, and local levels, and discuss local legislative efforts. *Janet Rothrock*

STATE PROGRAM AND ACTION – OUR STUDY OF THE BALLOT QUESTION PROCESS

The LWVCC is participating in the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) Study of the Massachusetts ballot question process – the way an issue goes from idea to a ballot vote. This study incorporates the intersection of the League’s areas of mission: voting and advocacy. LWVMA has not previously studied the initiative and referendum process in MA and has no positions on this aspect of voting/elections.

The scope of the study is to review the Massachusetts laws and regulations that govern statewide citizen-initiated ballot questions (initiative and referendum process); consider the consequences of current laws and regulations; and propose concrete next steps that LWVMA could take to enact change,



Nancy Beeuwkes



if the study results in recommended change. The study explores fifteen questions, arranged within six major areas: 1) understanding the ballot questions, 2) signature requirements, 3) signature gathering, 4) legislative involvement and responsibilities, 5) campaign financing for ballot questions, and 6) the initiative and referendum process in Massachusetts.

The League Board will review the consensus from meetings held on January

16, 2019 and will vote on a recommendation at the Board’s February 6 meeting. Our League’s report of that consensus is due to LWVMA by February 16, 2019. The LWVMA will present a recommendation, based on all local League reports, to the LWVMA 2019 Convention for a League vote. The LWVMA study materials are posted on the LWVMA Study Page:

<https://lwvma.org/the-lwvma-study-on-the-massachusetts-ballot-question-process>. *Nancy Beeuwkes, State Program & Action Chair*

NATIONAL PROGRAM & ACTION

The National LWV has a strong position on immigration under which the LWVCC can take action: <https://www.lwv.org/other-issues/immigration>. In addition to the immigration issues mentioned above, other priority issues for action by the national League are passage of the DREAM Act, Automatic Voter Registration (which was passed by the Massachusetts legislature this year) and Gun Control legislation. *Nancy Cronin, National Program & Action Chair*

HOLIDAY PARTY WRAP-UP

“A Good Time Was Had by All” – that could easily have been the title for the December 5, 2018 Holiday Brunch. Over 60 League members and guests gathered for the annual Holiday Brunch at the home of League members Nancy and Reinier Beeuwkes. Town Manager Chris Whelan recounted some highlights of his 28 years in office. He spoke about some of the issues that he, and the Town, have faced during that period – expanding and then closing the landfill, establishing a recycling program, relocating the Light Plant to Elm Street, moving Annual Town Meeting to the high school, increasing public housing, updating the police department, addressing traffic problems at the Route 2 rotary, and expanding capacity at the wastewater treatment plant and Nagog Pond.



visitors' center in Concord Center. “It was painful to go through, but it worked out in the end,” said Mr. Whelan. He noted transformations of some of the Town’s sites of concern, including the former Nuclear Metals site (2229 Main Street), Hanscom Air Force Base, and Crosby’s Corner, into workable components of our community.

Mr. Whelan emphasized the importance of engaging Town citizens and employees, and he observed that water issues, facilities issues, and

increasing public housing, updating the police department, addressing traffic problems at the Route 2 rotary, and expanding capacity at the wastewater treatment plant and Nagog Pond.

Mr. Whelan recalled how he started out as a town administrator in Brunswick, Maine and then Sandwich, Massachusetts before becoming Town Manager of Concord. He spoke about how, during his tenure, he helped balance American treasures like the Heywood Meadow historic site with town traffic and the need for a



housing issues are key issues facing Concord today. Mr. Whelan's tenure as Town Manager will finish in June 2019. *Karlen Reed*

REMEMBERING BETSY SLUDER

Betsy Sluder, Concord resident and LWVCC member, passed away on December 11, 2018. Ms. Sluder was a force of nature and a force for Nature. She had a deep love of the environment and an understanding of local politics that enabled her to leave a legacy of accomplishments in Armonk, NY, where she resided before moving to Concord. She was the driving force behind Concord's adoption of a wetland bylaw in 2010. Ms. Sluder served as the LWVCC liaison to Concord's Natural Resources Commission and chaired the River Steward Award Nominations Committee. She was awarded the National Park Service Conservation Hero Award in 2008 for her work related to the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Wild and Scenic Rivers. In addition, she was an expert gardener and worked with the Arnold Arboretum to enhance the Bradley Rosaceous Collection, originally named after her mother, Eleanor Cabot Bradley, and renamed in Ms. Sluder's honor in 2011. Ms. Sluder, a 63-year member of the League of Women Voters, was always gracious, sending written thank you notes to the members of the committee and offering refreshments on china plates with silver spoons and coffee pot. *Janet Rothrock.*



A BIT MORE:

Note: State Representative Tami Gouveia (D – 14th Middlesex District), newly sworn-in legislator for Concord and Carlisle, has posted her contact information and legislation on the General Court web page: <https://malegislature.gov/Legislators/Profile/TLG1>.

Note: The 2019 Spring Bulletin is expected to be released in early April; all submissions are due to the Editor by March 15. Thank you, as always, to the writers, reviewers, and photographers (thanks Kathleen and Robert!) for your contributions. *Karlen Reed, Bulletin Editor*

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Save the Date! Feb. 1 – First Friday – Climate Change – 9:15 – 11 a.m. Fowler Library, Concord



Reflections on the Old North Bridge on Christmas Eve