



The League of Women
Voters of Hingham

HINGHAM VOTER

Spring 2017

Steering Committee: Eva Marx, Catherine Salisbury, Jane Malme, Anne Fanton, Kate Boland **Treasurer:** Marisa Costello; **Website:** Liza O'Reilly; **School Outreach:** Elizabeth Danis; **Candidates Night:** Chris Wilk

2016-17 CALENDAR

September 7, 2016 - Steering Committee Meeting, 1:00 p.m. @ 338 Main Street

September 17, 2016 - LWVMA League Leaders' Lunch, 10:00 a.m. @ Hingham Community Center

September 28, 2016 - Membership Fondue Social – What is ahead for the year? 7:00 p.m.

October 26, 2016 - Member Forum, Affordable Housing; Town Administrator Ted Alexiades, 7:00 p.m.

November 16, 2016 - Sip N Chat Member Charter School Discussion, 7:00 p.m.

January 12, 2017- Brown Bag Lunch discussion on Charter Schools

January 18, 2017- Charter School Consensus meeting

February 15, 2017- Voter Education Hingham Warrant Review, 7:00 p.m. @ Town Hall with Advisory Chair Jim Taylor

March 8, 2017 – Members Meeting, State of the State (MA Representatives and Senator), 7:00 p.m.

April 5, 2017 – Public Voter Education Candidates Night, 7:00 p.m. @ Hingham Town Hall

April 28-29, 2017 - LWVMA Convention in Framingham, MA

April 27, 2017 - Sip and Chat member discussion of Town issues @ location TBD

April 29, 2017 - Town Elections; members hand out I Voted Today stickers at polls

***** May 3, 2017**- All Member Annual Meeting; speaker Ann Bookman PhD, 6:30 p.m. @ South Shore Country Club

******* note date change

Steering Committee Letter

With each spring we all share a sense of renewal or reawakening in our gardens. I know personally I am itching to get out and trim back plants and dig. (I guess the outside holiday lights should come down. At least they have been turned off since January 15!)

Recently I have felt a strong sense of renewal with regards to our League too! Although our League is 83 years old, I was recently reminded about the true value of the League of Women Voters. We don't support or oppose candidates and parties, however we work like heck to study a subject, come to consensus and then work on policy changes to make

something better. I am not aware of another organization that works so hard to provide voter education in a non-partisan way.

I really don't know members political affiliations as a whole, but I can tell you we were fortunate to have a wonderful nine member committee along with many members of our League, looking at the LWVMA Charter School research and all sharing a variety of perspectives. The conversation was thoughtful, respectful and- I will risk speaking for all members who joined in the discussion- we learned a lot! I have been asked, "Does the League support Charter Schools?" It isn't about yes or no, it is about how we work together with the common goal of educating all students.

I feel grateful for all of our member's opinions that give our League the optimal opportunity to learn from each other and hear opposing views. The State League is putting together the new round of legislative bills we will be supporting or opposing. Some will be refiles of last session's bills with changes, some will be based on our positions relating to criminal justice reform, voter registration, carbon pricing and women's health bills. So I welcome all of you to get in the game.

Our steering committee is seeking members and if you would like one of the most rewarding opportunities we would LOVE for you to reach out to a steering committee member today.

Our Membership Is Growing

This year we sadly bid farewell to members who have moved away. We will miss Mary O'Donnell, MJ Shultz and Cindy Coe. Their contributions over the years have been huge and varied, whether offering their home for a meeting, serving as our President (once or twice), or chairing one of our exhaustive studies. They will be greatly missed. Our organization cannot thank them enough!

At the same time, we are excited to welcome six new members to our League. They are Jane Kringdon, Nina Wellford-Price, Diane Morrison, Nancy Bettinger, Meg Wheeler, and Chris Murphy. I am sure you will enjoy getting to know them at our next member meeting which is the State of the State meeting on March 8 @ 7:00 p.m.

Annual Meeting Speaker Not to Be Missed

Ann Bookman, PhD, has accepted our invitation to speak at our May 3 LWWH Annual Meeting. Ms. Bookman is the Director at the McCormack Graduate School's Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy at UMass Boston. She comes with three decades of experience in academia and government where she has addressed redesigning the workplace to ensure gender equity and family support, including child care and elder care. She was appointed by President Bill Clinton as policy and research director of the Women's Bureau at the U.S. Department of Labor. Her social policy expertise on women's issues promises to be especially relevant to our interests.

Mark your calendars now for our May 3 Annual Meeting, a time to connect with friends, give input to your League's direction and learn!

Archiving Our League- Uncovering Our Rich History

Exciting news! The Steering Committee has employed Bob Malme, an experienced archivist, to inventory our Chapter's records. These are the 11 boxes that have travelled from house to house for decades. We are grateful for Bob's talents and the generosity of members who are donating the cost of his services.

Bob has completed half of the inventory and given the Steering Committee a record of his findings. Documents fall into several categories: organizational materials such as by-laws, meeting minutes, financial reports; internal publications such as bulletins, consensus reports, committee reports, presidents' reports; external publications such as Voter's Guides, Know your Town, study reports; local study materials such as committee notes, news clippings; and State and National study materials and news clippings.

Here are some nuggets Bob uncovered:

- Handwritten and typed notes from meetings starting in 1945
- Slides and documentation for a unit the League presented at the Middle School on Hingham's history
- League Local Action Program on Drug and Alcohol Education 1985
- Studies, including *The Impact of Hingham's Growth and Development 1987-88*; *Casino Gambling Study 1981*; *Affordable Housing Study including special needs housing, public housing and homeless population; 1986-89*

Steering Committee member Cathy Salisbury has agreed to chair oversight of the archiving process. Upon completion of the inventory, the Steering Committee with Cathy's leadership will decide how to organize the papers and which records to digitize. The Committee has been delighted to learn about the wide number of topics our League has tackled for study and voter education over the years.

As we prepare to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution in 1920 and the founding of the League of Women Voters of the US, these materials will provide the foundation for sharing our Chapter's accomplishments with members and the public.

2017 Hingham Town Meeting Proposed Zoning Articles

The League has not taken positions on these articles however Steering Committee member Cathy Salisbury has provided this overview for your information.

There are five zoning articles proposed by the Zoning Board of Appeals for the 2017 Town Meeting. One is a proposal to place a moratorium on the sale and consumption of non-medicinal marijuana pending the drafting of appropriate zoning amendments to regulate it. Two articles change the definitions of lot width, lot area and lot line to close loopholes that permit the development of odd shaped lots. Another changes parking design standards and allows the sharing of parking to meet zoning requirements. The fifth one proposes to change the standard for the consideration of alterations,

extensions and changes to non-conforming structures accessory to dwellings (such as sheds and garages that are either attached or detached from the dwelling).

Zoning continued

This last article proposes to substitute approval by Special Permit for Variance approval as now required by the Mass. General Laws. Variance approval is difficult to obtain due to the requirement that the applicant prove hardship due to unique characteristics on the lot (e.g. soil, shape or topography of the lot not otherwise present in that zoning district). There is great demand from Hingham homeowners to alter, expand or rebuild their accessory structures and sometimes they need a variance to do so. Granting these requests sometimes results in incursions or greater incursions into sideline and front and rear setbacks. Sometimes the re-built accessory structure is much larger than the original structure and allows for new living space as well as the original use.

There have been anomalous results such as when a homeowner attaches the garage to the house in order to avoid the variance strictures applicable to detached accessory structures. The Board of Appeals is attempting to address this problem with this article. There should be robust debate of all this on Town Meeting floor.

There are pros and cons regarding this article. On the one hand, a Special Permit is easier to obtain than a variance since it does not require a finding of hardship and generally allows the permit-granting board to exercise more discretion. As a result, abutters will have a more difficult time legally challenging their decisions. On the other hand, there are restrictions written into this article that state that the alterations etc. cannot go closer to the existing setbacks, cannot increase in volume more than 25% and cannot go more than one and one half stories tall or the height of the existing roof if it is higher than one and one half stories tall. At least residents know there are limits to what their abutters can do with their accessory structures.

There are appeal provisions for abutters in both variance and special permit decisions but not for other residents. There are general standards applicable to both proceedings that the permit-granting authority has to refer to in their decision.

This is a significant change to the Hingham Zoning By-Law similar in scope and effect to Article 48 of the 1984 Town Meeting (the so-called Hatfield Article) which led to the adoption III-IE of our Zoning By-Law and to changes in the MGL.

Voter Education- FY '18 Warrant Review

We had a great turn out at our 6th annual Warrant Review. Advisory Chair Jim Taylor did a great job giving an overview of the Articles, financial picture of the town and a thorough synopsis of the Warrant. If you didn't see the recording it is on HCAM or you can watch it [here](#) . It was nice to see so many League members there too.

Woman's March

Many of our members participated at the Woman's March. We walked in support of the many positions the League has taken. Our League also made the front page of The Boston Globe. (Although the subject was three young women if you look to the bottom left hand corner you will see our sign.) Thanks to member Lisa Stein who sent this along.



Kate Boland



Eileen McIntyre



Judy Parsons