

Hingham Voter

Winter 2019

celebrating 85 years



The League of Women
Voters of Hingham

A note from the Chair

I can tell it's almost spring in Hingham! How so? Buzz surrounding Hingham's Annual Town Meeting is heating up! Be it funding for town purchases and projects, proposed by-laws, tax changes, fund transfers, etc., proponents and opponents are gearing up to address the issues.

As you know, the Town Warrant guides the business of the meeting. It must be posted by January 20 and sent to each home at least seven days before an Annual Town Meeting. This gives all citizens of Hingham time to read and study the articles, get the facts, meet with neighbors and friends to discuss, and finally attend and vote!

At its February Meeting the LWV Hingham Steering Committee voted unanimously to support the proposed Plastic Bag Reduction and Encourage Reusable Bags By-law. If adopted Hingham would join 91 other cities and towns in Massachusetts that have approved plastic bag regulations. The support for this article is reflected in *League of Women Voters of Hingham Local Program* ENVIRONMENT section 1F and IMPACT OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT ON HINGHAM sections V and VIB.

As League member Eileen McIntyre stated in the *Hingham Journal* article last March (*Town Meeting: An evening out with friends* March 22, 2018), "Now is the time to mark your calendar to plan a night on the town. But instead of dinner and a movie, join some friends for an evening of discovery and finding common ground at our Hingham Town Meeting."

The date is April 22. The place is Hingham High School. The time is 7:00 PM. Make your voice heard. Attend Town Meeting and vote!

Regards,
Elizabeth

*The League of Women
Voters is a non-partisan
political organization that
encourages active and
informed participation of
citizens in government.*

Steering Committee

Elizabeth Danis, Chair
Eva Marx
Jane Malme
Carolyn Locke
Eileen McIntyre
Nina Wellford-Price

Treasurer

Nancy MacDonald

Communications and Facebook

Eileen McIntyre

Website

Liza O'Reilly

School Outreach

Lisa Stein

Candidates Night

Chris Wilk

Membership

Kate Boland

SAVE THE DATE

Have you heard...Dr. Karen Mazza, education specialist for the Legislative Action Committee of LWVMA, is the guest speaker at our League's Annual All Members Meeting on May 2? Dr. Mazza represented the LWVMA on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Task Force on Civic Learning and Engagement from 2016-2017, and in conjunction with the Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition, she advocated for the passage of civic legislation which culminated in the enactment of Chapter 296, An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement. This promises to be a very interesting evening so be sure to save the date!



VOTER REGISTRATION PAYS OFF AT THE NOVEMBER ELECTION!

Many thanks to Kate Boland, Julie Strehle, Judy Parsons, Cynthia Galko, Carolyn Locke, Lynn Anderson, Paula Bagger, Judy Wilson, Caitlin Shea, Elizabeth Danis, Skip Jenkins, and organizer Nina Wellford Price for passing out I Voted Today stickers. Although we started with 5000 stickers, we ran out! WOW! Never fear...we have re-stocked and are ready for April 27!



UPCOMING EVENTS

February 27	Warrant Review	6:00 PM
March 19	State of the State	7:00 PM
April 10	Candidates Night	7:00 PM
April 22	Town Meeting	7:00 PM
April 27	Polls open	8:00 AM
May 2	Annual All Members Meeting	6:30 PM

AFFORDABLE HOUSING FORUM HIGHLIGHTS

Cathy Salisbury, Eva Marx, and Nina Wellford-Price, Contributors

On November 15, 2018, at the home of Cathy Salisbury guest speaker Tim White, Chairman of the Hingham Affordable Trust, began by taking us back to the early 1600's in Massachusetts. He distributed a copy of records of fines levied in Plymouth Bay Colony for various misdemeanors (drunkenness, adultery, lying etc.) and invited our members to visit the Plymouth County Registry and look at their treasure trove of records.

Tim then explained how the Hingham Affordable Housing Trust came into existence. The Town Meeting voted, in accordance with MGL C. 44 s. 55C, to preserve the Town's affordable housing stock and create new opportunities by creating the Affordable Housing Trust to assume that responsibility. In 2012 Town Meeting voted to amend Hingham's by-laws to require financial reporting of the committee's actions, which is subject to the public records law.



Tim explained that MGL C. 40B is the state's tool for creating affordable housing. Ten percent of a city or town's total housing stock must meet the 10% goal set by the General Court. MGL C. 40B sets limits on how much can be charged for an affordable unit (\$200,000 for a two-bedroom unit, \$249,000 for a three-bedroom unit in our region). These numbers vary slightly by region. Qualifying income levels are set at no more than \$51,000.00 for a single household and \$73,000.00 for a four-member family.

From 2010 to 2016 Hingham's affordable housing stock increased from 4.5% to 6.3%. Since then it has increased to 11.4% and the Town has met the 10% goal. Hull, by contrast, has 3.4% affordable housing. Tim explained that, even though housing in a municipality might be cheap, if the Department of Housing and Community Development (the state agency charged with overseeing the 40B program) does not certify that it belongs to the municipality's 40B housing stock, it will not count towards the 10% goal. There also may be other reasons why housing does not qualify towards the 40B goal. Once a house or rental has been designated as an affordable unit, a deed restriction restricts it indefinitely so that only qualified individuals can buy or rent it at the statutory price.

Tim noted that the Town of Hingham has been a leader in pursuing affordable housing opportunities. He gave examples of recent affordable units: 80 Beal Street, the former Amigo property, 8 units; Beal's Cove Road, 4 units; Veteran's Home on Fort Hill Street, 8 units; Rust House, Main Street, 8 units. The Trust manages the



town-owned Lincoln Apartments, whose 60 units are all affordable. The Trust is also considering the Selectmen's Parcel next to Adam's Court on Beal Street as a site for future affordable housing. Currently the Trust is working on 302-304 Whiting Street with Habitat for Humanity and 499 Cushing Street (the last house before Derby Street). Now that the Town has met the 10% goal, developers cannot ignore the Town's zoning laws. The Town can choose to cooperate with the developer in a "friendly 40B" or Local Initiative Program (LIP) project if it is in the best interest of the Town. Both the Whiting Street and Cushing Street projects are such LIP projects. The Trust is

also working on the development of a housing production plan which will be an effective tool for targeting future projects.

The Trust faces significant challenges as it looks to the future. The average three-bedroom house in Hingham costs \$800,000; if it is sold as an affordable unit for \$249,000, the \$551,000 difference is paid by Community Preservation Act monies. Although the statute requires that a certain portion of CPC funds be devoted to housing, there is competition for CPC funds and the Trust cannot afford to buy many houses to turn them into affordable houses for ownership by income-eligible individuals. The state encourages affordable rental units because, when 25% of rental units in a project qualify as affordable, then all the rental units will count as affordable.

When choosing where to place affordable housing, the Trust weighs priorities that are sometimes conflicting, such as proximity to public transportation, impact on school enrollment, density of the neighborhood, traffic, and potential future use of the property. Their goal is to disperse affordable housing throughout town.



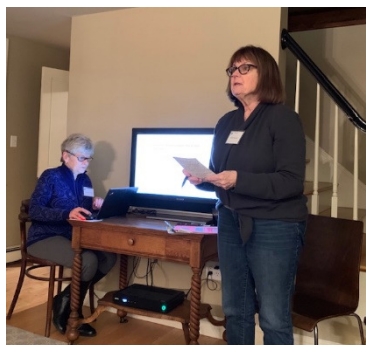
BALLOT QUESTION PROCESS STUDY

On January 9 in an effort to help prepare and educate League members, Chartis Tebbetts, Eva Marx, Eileen McIntyre, Elizabeth Danis, and Nancy Bettinger presented background information for each of the fifteen



questions in the Ballot Question Process Study. Two weeks later seventeen League members again gathered at the home of Kate Boland to arrive at consensus for each question. Through discussion we gained insight into the involved ballot question process. Carolyn Locke recorded comments as we explored Understanding Ballot Questions, Signature Requirements, Signature Gathering, Legislative Involvement and Responsibilities, and Campaign Financing for Ballot Questions. Because of Kate's organization and ability to keep everyone on the question at hand, we finished the process with time available to catch up with friends and informally discuss state and local issues.

Sincere thanks to Committee member volunteers Chartis, Eva, Eileen, Elizabeth, and Nancy and to our moderator and reporter Kate and Carolyn for their contributions to this initiative. As mandated by the LWVMA our final report was approved by the Steering Committee and sent to the state League before the February 16 deadline. From here the LWVMA board of directors will approve and recommend the position for approval at the LWVMA convention in June. Once approved, it becomes the League's position and is the basis for action on the issue.





THE CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

Sponsored by LWV MA

Need a challenge for your high schooler during February Recess? Take a look at this!



100 Years!

Since Women Suffragists were Arrested and Jailed in Boston for Protesting President Wilson

Mr. President:
You said to the United States Senate on Sept. 30
"We shall not only be divided but shall never be divided
if we do not enfranchise women."
You alone can remove this distrust NOW by securing the vote
needed to pass the Suffrage Amendment before Nov. 4.

The Women's Suffrage Celebration Coalition of Massachusetts,
The Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center, and
The Boston Women's Heritage Trail Are Proud to Present

"I Want to Go to Jail"

Staged reading, in period costume, of an original play by
Pamela Swing, Ph.D., and Elizabeth Dabenska, Brandeis undergraduate
Directed, produced and performed by Brandeis undergraduates

"I Want to Go to Jail" transports you back to February 1919, when
women suffragists grappled with unexpected obstacles in their
quest for the final vote needed to pass the suffrage amendment.
They were arrested for picketing President Wilson in front of the
Massachusetts State House, and served time in the Charles Street
Jail. These were the last arrests of the suffrage movement.

VOTES FOR WOMEN

SUFFRAGE 100

For more information:
<https://suffrage100ma.org>

Thursday, February 28, 2019
12:00-1:30p.m.
Grand Staircase, Mass. State House
24 Beacon Street, Boston
Seating is limited. Free and open to the public

I WANT TO GO WHERE?

You may remember that last year LWV Hingham joined the Women's Suffrage Celebration Coalition of Massachusetts, and Freddie Kay, president of WSCC, was guest speaker at our annual meeting. Scheduled for Thursday, February 28, "I Want to Go to Jail" looks like an opportunity not to be missed. If you are interested in attending and would like to go as a group, let me know. Registration is requested.

THANK YOU for finding LWV Hingham on:



We



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and also when you



OR



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