



BULLETIN, January, 2023

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

LWV FEBRUARY FIRST FRIDAY FORUM

FEBRUARY 3, 2023:

How Can We Help?

At 9:30 am on Friday, February 3, at the Lexington Community Center, 39 Marrett Road, you are invited to learn more about three local groups:

Food Link * **LexEAT** * **LexRAP**.

Food Link is a community organization that "envision[s] a world in which everyone has abundant nourishing food and a food system in which no edible food goes to waste." The organization rescues surplus fresh food that would otherwise be wasted, and delivers it to community organizations serving people in need in the Greater Boston area.

Director of Programs and Strategy Elise Springuel, a member of Food Link's team for more than five years, will tell us how this program functions in Lexington.



Lex Eat Together offers free and nutritious meals to individuals and families in need within our community. Originally a communal in-person dining experience, because of

health and safety issues relating to the pandemic, LexEAT currently offers take out dinners on a weekly basis. George Murnaghan, one of a group of four founding board members, will speak about food issues in our town.

LexRAP, the Lexington Refugee Assistance Program, is a community organization which welcomes, supports and assists refugees and asylum seekers. It offers a support network for housing, food, clothing, health care, employment, and education (including learning English), to help those who have recently arrived to navigate life in the US, where language and culture are very different from that of their home country. As the war in Ukraine has made us all more aware of the struggles of refugees driven from their homes by external forces, LexRAP's mission becomes particularly pertinent.

We'll hear from Bruce Neumann, who has been an active member of the group since its inception. He and his wife Pat have hosted, in their home, asylum seekers from Uganda, Jamaica, and most recently, Afghanistan.



This program is the fifth in the 2022-2023 First Friday Forum series hosted by the Lexington League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. All League forums are free and open to the public, and, as always, there will be time for questions and answers after the presentations. For more information about the League and this program go to <https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts.lexington>.

REMINDER:

**FIRST FRIDAY FORUMS ARE NOW PRESENTED IN PERSON. THE
FEBRUARY FORUM WILL BE HELD AT THE LEXINGTON
COMMUNITY CENTER, 39 MARRETT ROAD, ROOM 237.**

Early Notice
LWV MARCH FIRST FRIDAY FORUM
MARCH 3, 2023:
New Special Permit Residential Development Zoning

In January, LWV Lex invited Planning Director Abby McCabe and members of the Planning Board to explain the recent state mandate for creating zoning that will permit multi-family housing by right in Lexington. The Planning Board presented their scheme of potential multi-family housing zones, located near public transportation and other services, which will appear in a warrant article at the spring Annual Town Meeting.

In March, the LWV Lex First Friday Forum will offer a presentation on a separate zoning proposal to come before spring Town Meeting. Members of the Special Permit Residential Development Ad hoc Zoning Committee (SPRD) will set out their recommendations for new SPRD zoning, intended to further encourage the creation of smaller, more sustainable and affordable homes throughout Lexington.

LexSeeHer SPEAKER SERIES

LexSeeHer's Speaker Series spotlighting its **Visibility Banner Honorees** continues into the new year.

On Thursday, January 26, from 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm, the program on Zoom will recognize Melanie Lin and Elizabeth "Bettie" Clarke for their impressive contributions to our town.

Melanie Lin is President of the Chinese American Association of Lexington ("CAAL"), and an active volunteer in many community initiatives - from helping supply masks during the shutdown to the 300th Anniversary Dance Around the World. Melanie was nominated for her work organizing events that bring the entire community together, and for her vision of sharing cultural traditions in an inclusive way that inspires people from many different backgrounds.

Bettie Clarke is being recognized for her contributions to Lexington over more than 30 years, having served on the School Committee in addition to being a long time Town Meeting member. Bettie advocated for the establishment of the METCO program in Lexington, and was instrumental in establishing the METCO College Scholarship Fund of Lexington. She has been an avid proponent of civic engagement from the time she was a leader of the League of Women Voters of Lexington in the early 1950s. Bettie's daughters, Rebecca "Pogo" Clarke and Abi Karner will join us for a presentation and discussion.

This program is made possible by the generous donors to the Cary Library Foundation. Find details on each event and to register, go to the programs page at Cary Library and on www.lexseeher.com.

TOWN ELECTIONS: MARCH 6, 2023

CANDIDATES' NIGHT, FEBRUARY 16, 2023

Leading up to Town Elections on **March 6**, the **League's Annual Candidates' Night** will be held on **Thursday, February 16, at 7:00 pm, at Clarke Middle School**. Because there is only one contested town-wide race this year (for School Committee), Candidates' Night will give more focus to Precinct Meetings, which offer an opportunity to get to know candidates for Town Meeting and to talk with them about the issues facing Lexington. There is no better chance for direct input to the people you will elect to represent you, and we look forward to hearing from as many residents as possible on that evening.

On June 22, 2022, then Governor Baker signed **the "VOTES Act,"** which provides for in-person early voting and voting by mail in local elections.

The new law requires towns to offer voting by mail in local elections unless the town governing body opts out after a public hearing. **Lexington already has mail in voting in place.** To request an early voting ballot, you must **fill out a Vote by Mail Application (PDF)** available at the Town Clerk's Office or on the Town Clerk's web page. The application must be requested by mail or in person by Friday, February 27, and the filled out application must be returned by 8:00 pm on election night March 6.

Towns are not required to offer in-person early voting for local elections, but have the option to do so. **In Lexington's March 6 election, only early voting by mail is provided.**

For more detailed information about local registration and voting deadlines, as well as precinct polling places, see the Town Website, www.lexingtonma.gov, and go to the

COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT FOR LEXINGTON (CEL) OPEN HOUSE

On **Friday, January 27, 2023, from 9:00 am – 11:00 am, at the Lexington Community Center**, the Community Endowment for Lexington will be hosting an open house to acquaint the town with its programs. The event is open to representatives of Lexington non-profits, town agencies, and community members wishing to learn more about CEL's work. Members of the CEL board will present on the organization's mission, its history of prior giving, and its hopes for 2023. After the presentations there will be time for questions, discussions and networking.

The Community Endowment for Lexington awards grants to nonprofits and town agencies working in the areas of health and human services, arts and culture, the environment, and community building, encouraging collaborative solutions to issues facing Lexington. It offers ways for donors to give back and to leave a legacy. For more information see www.lexingtonendowment.org.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

LWVMA PROGRAM PLANNING FOR THE 2023-2025 BIENNIEL

Time Table. The LWVMA Board has published its draft **Program and Action Priorities and Goals for 2023-2025**. Local Leagues will review this material and submit suggested amendments and additions by March 10. The LWVMA will then distribute the Board's final Program and Action Recommendations, together with any non-recommended proposals, to local Leagues to review prior to the LWVMA Convention in June, where the membership will vote on them.

Fundamentals. Underlying all of the priorities and goals to be established for the coming two years will be the League's concern for racial justice. The LWVMA will continue to educate local League members on fundamental aspects of diversity, equity and inclusion, and will provide safe spaces for League members and community members to discuss these issues, always viewing our specific goals and challenges through the lens of DEI.

Action Priority: Improving Elections

Advocate for election reforms, including Election Day voter registration, poll access for voters with disabilities, and clearer mail ballot information.

Action Priority: Empowering Voters and Fostering Civic Engagement

- Support civic education in schools, supporting school implementation of S.2631 "An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement," with continued advocacy for its annual funding and resource support; support civics education with statewide Civics Portfolio events in school districts.
- Continue to encourage informed and active participation in government and understanding of major public policy issues, through online voters' guides, Scharfman citizen education grants to local Leagues, candidate forums, civic trivia events, and "democracy partnerships" in under-resourced communities.
- Review the operation of Senate and House rules, assignments and stipends to promote more transparency and accountability.
- Advocate for legislation adding hybrid meeting options for wider constituent access.

Action Priority: Advocating for Justice and Equality

- Take action to identify and eradicate systemic racism in Massachusetts as it exists in education, housing, employment, health care and every aspect of American life'
- Advocate for strengthened and extended rights for all women, LGBTQ residents, and all historically disadvantaged residents of the state.

- Support legislation to reform sentencing, probation and parole policies; support rehabilitative and re-entry services; and promote alternatives to incarceration, including enhance mental health care.

Action Priority: Addressing the Climate Emergency

- Advocate for monitoring the implementation of the Massachusetts Climate Action legislation to ensure that it addresses the scale and urgency of the crisis;
- Advocate for the increased use of renewable energy, especially as it pertains to transportation;
- Advocate for improved public transportation funding, including transitioning to electrification, and expanding services, especially in Environmental Justice Communities.

Action Priority: Advocating for Equitable Access to Basic Human Services

- Advocate for single-payer universal health care for all Massachusetts residents;
- Work on strategies to improve educational access for historically disadvantaged communities;
- Advocate for affordable housing for all as a matter of equity, by promoting the preservation of existing affordable housing and the establishment of additional affordable housing, and extending tenants' rights.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENGAGEMENT

Voter Engagement

LWVMA's Voter Engagement Committee meets on Monday, January 23 at 7pm on Zoom. Come to listen in or join our cause to Get Out the Vote! The Zoom link to join the meeting on January 23 is: <https://zoom.us/j/7793514390#success>.

Legislative Action

- Are you frustrated by the lack of affordable housing in town?
- Do you want to see meaningful change in the criminal justice system?
- Would you like to have an impact on the higher education system in the Commonwealth?

The LWVMA has opportunities on the state **Legislative Action Committee** to work on housing, criminal justice reform, higher education, and many other issues. As a **specialist**, you would become familiar with the legislative process, collaborate on identifying priority bills, plan and conduct educational events/webinars, provide written and oral testimony for legislative hearings, work with advocacy coalitions and develop relationships with legislators. Help make a difference by taking your

experience to Beacon Hill. If you would like to become a specialist, please contact the [Legislative Action Committee chair, Jennifer Muroff \(jmuroff@lwwma.org\)](#).

- Would you like to help build a relationship with new or returning legislators representing your district?

As a Legislative Envoy for your local League, you would assist the LWWMA **Legislative Action Committee** with connecting local Leagues and their legislators.

Read more about the program at <https://lwwma.org/advocacy/lwwma-legislative-envoy-program/> or contact **Mary Cummings, Program Coordinator** at mcummings@lwwma.org.

- Are you willing to work for equitable health care for Massachusetts?

The **Legislative Action Committee** needs a member to step forward and assume the LWWMA Board seat on the **MassCare Coalition**. You would attend, participate, and give input at MassCare Board meetings held every other month, as well as monthly LWWMA Legislative Action Committee meetings. For more information contact healthcare specialists **Janice Goodell** and **Val Pasquantonio** at specialists@lwwma.org.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE US

HAPPY 103rd BIRTHDAY TO THE LEAGUE

Members of the League of Women Voters will celebrate the organization's 103rd birthday on **Tuesday, February 14** with a **National Day of Action!** Through storytelling, digital actions, local events, and advocacy, we will flex the breadth of our League people power and advance our priorities. There will be a marquee event with featured speakers livestreamed on LWVUS' Facebook page at 11:00 am ET on February 14.

Look for more information on our national birthday party in the next edition of the LWV Lex Bulletin.

LWVUS: 2022 IN RETROSPECT

For a full review of the national League's activities in the past year, take a look at LWVUS President Deborah Turner's blog at <https://www.lwv.org/blog/11-ways-you-protected-democracy-2022?eType=EmailBlastContent&eld=193da3ec-9248-453f-b5dd-439fc68098b6>. It was a hard and busy year!

SAVE THE DATE

January 23, 2023	Voter Engagement Committee (Zoom)
January 26, 2023	LexSeeHer Speaker Series (Zoom)
January 27, 2023	Community Endowment for Lexington Open House, Community Center
February 3, 2023	First Friday Forum, Community Center
February 14, 2023	LWVUS 103 rd Birthday on Facebook
February 16, 2023	Candidates Night, Clarke Middle School
March 3, 2023	First Friday Forum, Cary Library
March 6, 2023	Town Elections
March 10, 2023	Suggestions for Program and Action Priorities due to LWVMA

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

*For more information contact Lexington League
Convenor Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.*

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you'd like to submit an article for the February 2023 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to February 5, 2023.

