

LWVCC Winter Newsletter 2023/2024

LWVCC Board:

Stephan Bader
Robert Hilsinger (Treasurer)
Diane Proctor
Melissa Saalfeld
Emily Wheeler (Spokesperson)
Linda Ziffrin

Committee Chairs:

Advocacy *Stephan Bader, Linda Ziffrin*
Book Group *Mary Sterling*
Civics Education *Susan Frey*
Communications *Karlen Reed*
DEIB *Anne Rarich*
Environment *Janet Rothrock*
Events *Melissa Saalfeld*
Housing Issues *Ingrid Detweiler*
Membership *Linda Ziffrin*
Town Government *Diane Proctor*
Voter Service *Emily Wheeler*

It has been such a busy and productive fall for the LWVCC. Our collaboration with the Concord Free Public Library extended beyond our First Friday program resulting in five events in the Goodwin Forum that all tackled tough issues important to Concord and Carlisle: what modern policing means for our towns, what Concord should do with the former Super Fund site at 2229 Main Street, whether we should make changes to our Town Meeting form of legislature, what more Concord can do relative to affordable housing, and legislation needed to make incarceration more humane. We attempted to make these programs as accessible as possible by providing a Zoom option and a recording by Minuteman Media Network. You will read more detail about some of these programs in this newsletter and can access the recordings of them on our website (lwvcc.org).

Our committees have been busy outside of the Goodwin Forum as well. In this newsletter you can read about the DEIB Committee's collaboration with many groups in town to create Concord's Social Justice Roundtable, the Housing Issues Committee's coverage of the many housing projects currently under consideration and the State League's recognition of the efforts of our Civics Education Committee.

Looking forward, please join us in the Goodwin Forum as we collaborate with many groups on December 6th to discuss the climate impact of the proposed Hanscom private jet hangar expansion. On January 27th, we're excited that Judge Nancy Gertner will speak at our winter breakfast. And last but not most certainly not least, we hope to see you at the Holiday get together at Nosh on December 13th at 5 pm for good conversation and holiday cheer (RSVP to events@lwvcc.org).

With gratitude for your membership, The LWVCC Board

LWVCC RESOURCES

Committee and Board Email

Advocacy advocacy@lwvcc.org
Board board@lwvcc.org
Book Group bookgroup@lwvcc.org
Civics Education civicseducation@lwvcc.org
Communications communications@lwvcc.org
DEIB dei@lwvcc.org
Environment environment@lwvcc.org
Events events@lwvcc.org
Housing Issues housingissues@lwvcc.org
Membership membership@lwvcc.org
Town Government
towngovernmentconcord@lwvcc.org
Voter Service voterservice@lwvcc.org

How to Know What's Happening or Get a Zoom Link

The **Monday Member News** email is your weekly guide to all meetings and events coming up of interest to League members. If you are not receiving the email and would like to, please send an email to communications@lwvcc.org.



Or use our **web site calendar**:

1. Go to lwvcc.org
 2. Click on the EVENTS menu
 3. Choose calendar
- Double click on any event to see a description and the zoom link.

Is it time to renew my membership?

We are hoping to have all memberships renewed by the end of December so we can assemble the Membership Guide.

If you have not yet renewed, go to lwvcc.org or use the QR code below.

Don't remember if you've renewed yet this year? Send an email to membership@lwvcc.org and we'll be happy to help figure that out!



LWVCC's Fall 2023 Highlights

Day on the Hill



Dee Ortner, Linda Ziffrin, Nancy Beeuwkes and Karlen Reed spent a day on the Hill visiting the offices of our State Representatives and Senator Mike Barrett (pictured above). Members of LWV Lexington also shown.

October First Friday 2229 Main Street Concord: Take it or Leave it?



Select Board member Terri Ackerman, Chair of the 2229 Main Street Advisory Task Force Paul Boehm, and LWVCC Moderator Diane Proctor get ready for the discussion of the history, future options and plans for decision-making about the 2229 Main Street site in Concord.

Town Discussion Forum: Does Town Meeting Work for You?



Town Moderator Carmin Reiss led the give-and-take on Town Meeting structure with panelists Matt Johnson, Sue Felshin, Scott Gillis, and James Cohane, led by LWVCC moderator Diane Proctor

The League at Concord's Ag Day



Board member Emily Wheeler prepares to ring the opening bell



Melissa with visiting 8th graders



Even the youngest take part in Civics Bingo with the help of Melissa Saalfield and Linda Ziffrin

Humane Incarceration: Panel Discussion



Prison outreach, incarceration rates, needs for women inmates, updating re-entry systems, and prisoner medical needs were among the topics discussed by panelists (from L to R): Chris Worrell (MA State Rep. 5th Suffolk District), Moderator Ellen Quackenbush (LWVCC), Panelist Sam Williams (Executive Director of Concord Prison Outreach), Simon Cataldo (MA State Rep 14th Middlesex District), Priscila Sousa (MA State Rep 6th Middlesex District), and Nancy Bettinger (LWVMA Criminal Justice Specialist)

November First Friday Affordable Housing Strategies

Testifying on the Hill



Housing experts Keith Bergman and Stephan Bader (LWVCC) testify at the State House on affordable housing bills



Chris Kluchman (MA Exec Office of Housing & Livable Communities) with Stephan Bader as moderator speak on housing efforts at the state and local level. See Housing update in this newsletter.

Winter News from our Committees

where the work of the League gets done



Housing Issues

Concord Moves Forward with Affordable Housing

The Town of Concord is three housing units short of the 10% state mandated affordable housing requirement. This means the Town is susceptible to a developer submitting a plan for more housing under the state's 40B statute. Two such proposals have been submitted:

1. An application has been submitted for a comprehensive permit to construct two, five-story buildings on Baker Avenue with a total of 201 rental units called NOVO Riverside Commons, of which 25% of the units will be affordable. The project has had one review and discussion with the Concord Zoning Board of Appeals. A second public hearing is scheduled for November 30th.
2. A second 40B application has been submitted to construct 216 rental units in three buildings called Thoreau Residences at 275 Forest Ridge Road. Of the 216 units, 54 will be affordable.

Additionally, the Town is moving forward to construct three new units and renovate two existing units as part of the Assabet River Bluff project. All five will be affordable.

Concord is also developing zoning proposals to comply with the state's MBTA Communities Act. The law requires the 177 Massachusetts communities served by public transit to zone for a certain amount of multi-family housing by right (i.e., without needing a 'special permit'). The new zoning locates at least half of the prescribed number of units (1,094 in Concord) within a half-mile radius of the community's transit connection(s). Zoning for other multi-family housing may be spread out beyond the transit hub. The proposed zoning bylaw will be on the warrant of the April 29, 2024 Annual Town meeting. The Planning board will be discussing its draft overlay district at its meetings on November 28, December 12, and December 19.

On November 3rd the LWVCC and the Concord Free Public Library featured Chris Kluchman, Acting Director of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC), Community Services Division discussing housing tools that can be used to create more affordable housing. Massachusetts has a challenging housing crisis.

Housing is about people who want to downsize and stay in Concord. Housing is about young professionals—including some who grew up in Concord—who want to be part of the Concord community. Housing is about young families who want to raise their kids here. Housing is about the middle class who have been priced out of living in Concord.

The video recording of the November 3rd program can be found on the LWVCC website. Click here:

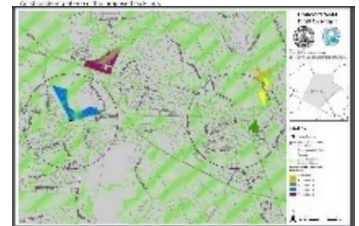
<https://my.lwv.org/massachusetts/concord-carlisle>

Ingrid Detweiler
Chair, Housing Issues Committee

NOVO Riverside Commons Comp. Permit - 292 & 294
Baker Ave



Residences at Thoreau Comp. Permit - 275 Forest
Ridge Rd





Is it Time for Changes to Town Meeting?

For a vigorous discussion of the question “Does Town Meeting Work For You?”, co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Concord-Carlisle and the Concord Free Public Library, folks gathered on November 2nd in the Goodwin Forum to hear Carmin Reiss (Town Moderator) and four thoughtful citizens comment on the effectiveness of Town Meeting.

Carmin compared our Open Town Meeting model of governing to the gathering of a large jury: legislators, as jurists, hear the pros and cons of various Warrant Articles through thoughtful deliberation and then vote “yea” or “nay.” Reminding us that “deliberation is not only about speaking; it is also about listening,” she ended the evening by urging folks to join a new committee whose charge is to evaluate our present system (volunteer cards available at the Town House and on-line at concordma.gov).

Panelists expressed many opinions and options to the current system. Carmin, for example, noted that with Open Town Meeting we have an “unparalleled opportunity for ordinary voters to directly participate in their government; everyone has the right to speak and to vote.” Our current system was adopted in 1956. Several changes have been embraced since then, some specifically endorsed by a 1996 Study Report that reviewed Town Meeting procedures.

Panelist Matt Johnson, a self-confessed “rabble rouser,” admitted that he has come to admire our present system: “it is a precious option we have; we can vote for every dollar the Town spends.” Suggesting that incentives for participation should be considered, he proffered the notion that attendees, who vote on every article, should be paid \$100/evening. Essentially, he believes that discourse informs and even invites folks to change their minds, a system that is better than any alternative.

Panelist Sue Felshin admitted that Town Meeting “is time consuming and it does disenfranchise certain people, but it is our best option.” She repeatedly argued that any change or adjustment to our structure must not “separate deliberation from voting.” People can too readily be influenced by disinformation; engaging in and attending personally to the discussion is essential for responsible voting.

Third panelist Scott Gillis provided fascinating graphs that revealed several key habits: Concordians over the past decade have voted in the range of 85% for presidential elections; in the 70-75% range for state elections; unevenly (but lower) at town elections; and at around 15% for Town Meeting. Clearly, we have an alert polity when it comes to non-local considerations. Why, therefore, do so few attend Town Meeting?

James Cohane, our final panelist to speak, confessed that he attends Town Meeting, but finds the whole process, as a “newbie,” simply “bizarre and opaque.” He provocatively challenged the Town to justify the exclusion of many from the voting process, such as parents of small children who cannot both participate. He amusedly assured the gathering that “you really don’t want all the children of young families in attendance”; it would be chaotic. It was the Middle School funding concerns that motivated his attendance and drew him into the process.

The discussion then turned to the audience. Noting that “Americans are alienated from their political system...we need to spend time listening to each other,” Garret Whitney commented on the poor attendance of Concord citizens at Town Meeting (5-15% of our Town), while Bob Treitman argued that we are exercising “voter suppression” by systemically precluding shift workers, nurses, folks working at Crosby’s, single parents with children, and fire fighters, as examples, from attending Town meeting. In response, others suggested “that we are not really suppressing folks. Life has just become busier.” Pointing out that Town Meeting takes no more than 2-4 evenings each year, Parashar Patel wondered if we were making “a mountain out of a molehill,” as those who do not attend may simply be uninterested.

In the end, the gathering overwhelmingly expressed a preference for our present form of governing. The advice given to all is to participate in the Town’s committee system, become informed, and attend Town Meeting. It was noted that the League offers the opportunity for each complex Warrant Article to have public discourse in advance of the Town Meeting through First Friday presentations. A full viewing of the meeting can be seen by visiting lwvcc.org.

Diane Proctor
Chair, Town Government Committee

LWVCC committees are open to all members and welcome new faces. Feel free to contact the Chair of a committee you are interested in (see the front page of this Newsletter for email contacts) or just show up at a meeting or event you see posted here or in the Monday Member News.



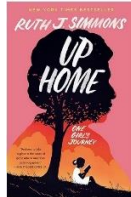
Book Group

January Book Group Selection

Up Home: One Girl's Journey

by Ruth Simmons

The first Black president of an Ivy League university, Simmons (b. 1945) chronicles her life and abundant accomplishments. Born to sharecroppers in Grapeland, Texas, the youngest of 12 children, she graduated from Dillard University and went on to earn a doctorate in romance literature from Harvard. Throughout her graceful, poised memoir, the author emphasizes the importance of education and family, especially her mother, Fannie, who sacrificed so much for her children. Simmons provides an extensive, engrossing family history of both the land they worked and the people she met along her voyage away from rural Texas to the highest rungs of academia.



JOIN US for the Book Discussion: January 17, 2024 3-4:30
Location: 57 Sudbury Road, Concord

Looking ahead to March's pick:

Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America

by Heather Cox Richardson

The Book Committee and the DEIB Committee will co-sponsor a book discussion of the new work by Heather Cox Richardson, Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America.



Watch Monday Member News for date and location of March's discussion

Mary Sterling
Chair, Book Group



Communications

LWVCC is active on social media! Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and Instagram where you can stay up-to-date on current events.



facebook.com/lwvccma



@lwvconcordcarlisle

Join the LWVCC in using Outreach Circle to forward LWVCC notices to your email network.

OutreachCircle



To use Outreach Circle on your phone, point your phone's camera at this picture, then tap on the web site address that shows up.



DEIB Diversity. Equity. Inclusion. Belonging

A Busy Fall for the DEIB Committee

The DEIB Committee co-sponsored a roundtable of organizations that share our goals of making Concord a more inclusive town. The newly-named "Concord Social Justice Roundtable" has been created as a forum for various groups and individuals who share the common goal of helping Concord become a more welcoming, equitable, and inclusive community to share learnings, ideas, strategies and to find opportunities for synergy and collaboration.

More than 30 people showed up at the first Roundtable to hear what the town's DEI Commission has set for their goals for the next couple of years. The full DEI Commission ACTION PLAN can be found on the Town website at:

<https://concordma.gov/DocumentCenter/View/44592/FINAL-Commission-2023-Action-Plan-SEP-019>

The next roundtable will be at the Main Library on January 16th the day after MLK Day in early afternoon.

The program we co-sponsored with Concord-Carlisle Adult Education this fall that focused on discussions of the history of slavery taught by Joshua Frank was so successful it has created demand for another offering. The second class will start in February focused on the book "White Rage White Fragility". The registration link is below.

<https://ccace.asapconnected.com/#CourseID=293157>

We submitted a Letter to the Editor to the Concord Bridge thanking Dr. Carlos Hoyt and a panel of Concord residents who shared their stories of incidents of intolerance that they and their children have encountered in Concord. These incidents have happened in shops, schools, walking trails as well as other settings. More than 50 people attended this first Parish church event at Concord Academy. All agreed we had a long way to go and the world will be watching when we celebrate Concord's 250th.

The DEIB Committee meets the second Friday of each month on Zoom unless it conflicts with a First Friday offering. All are welcome. See Monday Member News or the calendar on lwvcc.org for Zoom links.

Anne Rarich
Chair, DEIB Committee

★ ★ ★ VOTER SERVICE ★ ★ ★

A brief preview of the 2024 schedule for Elections and Town Meeting*

Concord 2024 Town Election Schedule

Mon Jan 29	Town Caucus
Sat Feb 24	Voter registration deadline for Presidential Primary
Tue Mar 5	Presidential Primary, 7 am – 8 pm
Fri Mar 29	Voter registration deadline for Annual Town Election
Tue Apr 9	Annual Town Election
Fri Apr 19	Voter registration deadline for Annual Town Meeting
Sept TBD	State Primary (Voter registration 10 days before)
Sat Oct 26	Voter registration for Presidential Election
Tue Nov 5	Presidential Election, 7 am – 8 pm

Watch your mailbox for the mail-in voting ballot application for the March 5th presidential primary

2023-24 Concord Annual Town Meeting Schedule

Sat Dec 2, 2023	Town Meeting Preview Meeting; warrant opens
Fri Dec 15, 2023	Warrant Articles due
Wed Jan 3, 2024	Warrant Closes
Mon Jan 8	Select Board votes order of Warrant Articles
Wed Jan 24	Deadline to submit Warrant to printer
Wed Feb 7	Warrant mailed to all households
Mon Feb 26	Public Hearing #1, 7:00 p.m., Select Board
Thu Mar 7	Public Hearing #2, 7:00 p.m., FinCom – Town, schools
Tue Mar 12	Public Hearing #3, 7:00 p.m., Planning Board
Tue Mar 19	Public Hearing #4, 7:00 p.m., FinCom – Minuteman Vo-Tech, CPC
Thu Mar 21	Public Hearing #5, 7:00 p.m., FinCom – Enterprise Funds
Fri Mar 29	SB and FinCom recommendations on Articles due
Mon Apr 1	Select Board input on Consent Calendar; FinCom Report due
Fri Apr 5	Draft Motions due to Moderator
Fri Apr 12	FinCom Report mailed; Moderator’s Coordination Meeting
Thu Apr 18	All handouts, PowerPoints due to Moderator
Fri Apr 19	Voter registration deadline for Annual Town Meeting
Mon Apr 29	Town Meeting, 7:00 p.m. at CCHS (continues April 30, May 1).

*Carlisle dates for Town Meeting and Election in May are not yet set but will be posted in the Monday Member News when available.

 Civics Education

LWVCC’s Approach to Support of Civics Education Projects Shared at LWVMA Town Hall

On November 13, LWVMA held a Town Hall for local leagues to share successes and challenges in the work they are doing to support and celebrate state-mandated civics education. The LWVCC Civics Education Committee’s support of 8th grade students’ civics projects, led by Chair Susan Frey and member Mary Sterling, was highlighted as an example of the most “intensive organizing” done by local leagues. As Susan and Mary pointed out, the LWVCC Committee’s collaborative relationship with the teaching team was at the heart of their success and the degree of support they provide has evolved over the three years of supporting the Student Showcase of their projects. After observing that one of the students’ challenges was reaching out to experts for research of their project, the Civics Ed Committee created a list of knowledgeable community members who were willing and able to answer students’ questions. The teachers coached the 8th graders in how to compose a formal email with a research request. LWVCC member Janet Miller provided expertise in environmental causes. The experience empowered the students to learn how to build community connections and use a community resource guide. See the video of the event [here](#) or go to: lwvcc.org



LWVCC member and environmental expert Janet Miller and her 8th grade researcher felt like “rock stars” when they finally met in person at the Showcase

Winter Calendar of Meetings and Events

December

- 6 Board meeting. 2-4 pm, CFPL Trustees Room & Zoom
- 6 LWVCC forum, "the Climate Impact of Private Jet Expansion: A Concord Community Forum", 6-7 pm, CFPL Goodwin Forum and by Zoom
- 8 LWVCC and CFPL First Friday: "Warner's Pond Update and Open Discussion", 10 – 11:30 am, CFPL Goodwin Forum and by Zoom
- 13 **LWVCC Holiday Party, 5 – 8 pm, Nosh by Concord Market**
- 14 LWVCC Housing Issues Committee, 4 pm via Zoom
- 15 LWVCC Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging Committee meeting, 10 - 11 am via Zoom

Join us at Nosh on Dec 13th 5-8 pm for holiday cheer
 RSVP to events@lwvcc.org

January

- 3 Board meeting, 2 - 4 pm, CFPL Trustees Room & Zoom
- 5 LWVCC and CFPL: First Friday, 10-11:30 am, CFPL Goodwin Forum & Zoom
- 16 DEI Concord Social Justice Roundtable, 2- 4 pm, CFPL Trustees Room & Zoom
- 17 Book Group, 3- 4:30 pm, 57 Sudbury Rd.
- 27 **LWVCC Winter Breakfast with speaker Judge Nancy Gertner, details forthcoming**

1/27/24 Winter Breakfast with speaker



Judge Nancy Gertner

Nancy Gertner is a former U.S. federal judge who built her career around standing up for women's rights, civil liberties and justice for all. Gertner was appointed to the federal bench of the U.S. District Court of MA by President Bill Clinton in 1994. She retired from the bench in 2011 to teach at Harvard Law School.

February

- 2 LWVCC and CFPL: First Friday, 10-11:30 am, CFPL Goodwin Forum & Zoom
- 7 Board meeting, 2-4 pm, CFPL Trustees Room & Zoom

March

- 1 LWVCC and CFPL: First Friday, 10-11:30 am, CFPL Goodwin Forum & Zoom
- 6 Board meeting, 2-4 pm, CFPL Trustees Room

TOWN MEETING (APRIL 29TH 2024)

Looking ahead to 2024 Town Meeting Warrant Articles research

As Always

- Concord Public and Regional School Budgets
- Regional School Capital Plan
- Town Budget
- Community Preservation Act

Possibly in the warrant this year

- MBTA Communities Overlay Map & Zoning
- Two-family residences in Residence Zoning District B



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

TO:



JOIN US for the
LWVCC Holiday Party
Upstairs at Nosh, across from the Concord Market



Wednesday December 13th, 5 - 8 pm
RSVP to events@lwvcc.org



The Climate Impact of Private Jet Expansion: A Concord Community Forum

Wednesday, December 6th 2023, 6:00 pm
Concord Free Public Library, Goodwin Forum and by Zoom

Massport is planning a massive hangar build-out for private jets at Hanscom Field (not Hanscom Air Force Base), which is the largest single development in Hanscom's history. This will impact our community by increasing greenhouse gas emissions levels and more. Come join us for this insightful program.

Panelists:

- Senator Mike Barrett, *Third Middlesex District*
- Alex Chatfield, *St. Anne's Climate Justice Committee*
- Neil Rasmussen, *Save Our Heritage*
- Chuck Collins, *Institute for Policy Studies*
- Michael McDonald, *Town of Concord Climate Action Committee*

Moderator:

Diane Proctor, *League of Women Voters – Concord Carlisle*



Concord Climate Action Committee
Concord Select Board



STOP PRIVATE JET EXPANSION at Hanscom or Anywhere



Concord Democratic Town Committee