



The League of Women Voters Of Weston

April, 2009

No. 116

OPENING MESSAGE

Katty Chace

League of Women Voters of Weston

President..... Katty Chace
781-891-1087

Treasurer..... Kathie Strehle
508-358-8937

Voter Service.....Sally Currier
781-235-9506

Membership..... Rochelle Nemrow
781-790-1138

Bulletin..... Katherine Wolfthal
Editor 781-891-9549

This LWV/Weston Newsletter is published monthly except July and August. The LWV is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age.

League of Women Voters of Weston
15 Conant Road, Weston MA 02493

VOTER INFORMATION

1-800-882-1649

League of Women Voters
of Massachusetts
133 Portland Street
Boston MA 02114
(617)523-2999

Submit articles to Katherine Wolfthal in
typewritten hard copy or by e-mail to
kate@weichi.com

As we move into spring, the political calendar seems to be getting very busy. Our first upcoming event is Candidates and Issues night on Wednesday, April 29th at 7:15 at the High School Media Center. The only contested race in this year's election will be for selectman, where Richard Sher is challenging incumbent Steve Charlip. Usually we put this most exciting part of the program at the end of the evening, to hold the crowd, but since one of the candidates has another obligation, we have agreed to put the Selectmen's race on first, so that he can leave by 8:00. We will then move on to the uncontested candidates, all of whom are incumbents. Bob Buchanan, who is running for a 30th and final year as Moderator, will be there, as will at least two of the candidates for School Committee and one for Library Trustee. After that, we will have some time to discuss some of the issues that will be on the ballot on election Day and on the Town Meeting warrant.

On Saturday May 2, we will hold a coffee hour featuring Planning Board member Al Aydelott and Town Planner Susan Haber, who will explain the articles on the warrant that amend the Zoning By-laws. Numerous parts of this recodification have been described as "housekeeping" changes, but others have raised concerns, so this session should provide a good opportunity for people to ask questions and get some clarification. If time permits, there may also be a chance for a brief presentation of the article dealing with dog issues.

The Town Election will take place on Saturday, May 9 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm in the upper Town Hall. In addition to the election of candidates, there will also be four referendum questions on the ballot. The first two questions deal with debt exclusion, the third asks whether the Town Clerk should be appointed rather than elected, and the fourth authorizes a liquor license for the Josiah Smith Tavern and Barn.

The Town Meeting will take place on Monday, May 11 in the High School auditorium at 7:45 (with the usual Special Town Meeting scheduled directly beforehand at 7:30). Amongst the issues to be decided there is a request for funds for bonding of a replacement Department of Public Works facility. It is expected that Town Meeting will run at least two nights. The second night will be Wednesday, May 13th. If a third session, if needed, would be on Monday, May 18th.

Please join us for our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, May 20 at 7:00 at the library's Community Room. Our speaker will be Weston resident Pamela Wood, Massachusetts Jury Commissioner for the last five years, and I'm sure she will have interesting insights into our state's jury system. We will have refreshments first, then our speaker, and close the evening with a brief business meeting.

CALENDAR

APRIL – MAY 2009

**April 29, Wednesday.....Candidates and Issues Night
7:15 P.M., Weston High School Media Room**

**May 2, Saturday.....LWVW Coffee Hour
11:00 A.M. – 12:30 P.M. , Community Room Al Aydelott, Susan Haber:
Weston Public Library Zoning by-law recodification**

**May 4, Monday..... Town Budget Hearing
7:30 P.M., Weston Town Hall Auditorium**

**May 9, Saturday..... Town Elections
8:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M., Weston Town Hall Auditorium**

**May 11, Monday..... Weston Town Meeting
7:30 P.M., Weston High School Auditorium**

**May 13, Wednesday..... Weston Town Meeting,
7:30 P.M., Weston High School Auditorium Second Night**

**May 5, Tuesday..... LWVW Open Meeting
9:15 A.M., Brook School
Mary Palmer Room**

**May 20, Wednesday..... LWVW Annual Meeting
7:00 P.M. Community Room Speaker: Pamela Wood
Weston Public Library MA Jury Commissioner**

May 29-30, Newton Marriott Hotel.....LWVMA Convention

WHEN IT'S TIME FOR ACTION

President

President Barack H. Obama
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20510
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/>

U.S. Senators

- The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
2400 JFK Building
Boston, MA 02203

(617)565-3170
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
(202)224-4543
senator@kennedy.senate.gov

- The Honorable John F. Kerry
One Bowdin Square, Tenth Floor
Boston, MA 02114

(617)565-8519
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
(202)224-2742
E-mail: john_kerry@kerry.senate.gov

U.S. Representative 7th District

The Honorable Edward J. Markey
(781)396-2900
(202)225-2836
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
(202)225-2836
<http://www.house.gov/markey>

Governor

Governor Deval Patrick
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 360
Boston MA 02133
(617)727-3600
E-mail: Goffice@state.ma.us

State Senator 5th Middlesex District

The Honorable Susan Fargo
(617)722-1572
State House, Room 505
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: sfargo@senate.state.ma.us
Home: (781) 259-9623

State Representative 4th Norfolk District

The Honorable Alice Hanlon Peisch
(617)722-2230
(781)237-4719
State House, Room 26
Boston MA 02133-1054
E-mail: rep.alicepeisch@hou.state.ma.us

BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Barbara Fullerton

The Board met at the home of Sally Carrier on Tuesday, April 14.

SUSAN HABER- Susan Haber, Weston Town Planner has been invited to attend a Board meeting to answer questions about the recodification of the town by-laws, but she has not yet responded. The change in wording about the minimum acreage for farms will be suspended for further study and discussion by the planning board at a later date.

DOG WALKERS- Since the issue of regulations for dog walkers will be discussed at the May town meeting, that might be a good topic for a coffee hour on May 2. There seems to be some concern that the proposed fees for the walkers are unreasonably high.

DPW COFFEE HOUR- The coffee hour on April 4 had a good number of people attending. One question is whether the LWV should publically support the new DPW plan at the town meeting.

Some Board members felt that we should not endorse the DPW project, but remain impartial until the Town Meeting vote. Others felt that the planning group worked very hard to incorporate input from all sources and that the league should support the planning process without telling people whether or not they should vote in favor of the new building design. It was disappointing that the current plan will not include an active solar energy component, although the basic infrastructure will be put on the roof for a possible future installation. The hope is that they'll be able to get a private investor to pay for the active solar system when the system is able to generate at least 100 Kwatts (they presently can only generate 80 Kwatts).

The consensus was that we should urge the planning committee to continue to work on some of the issues, such as the solar energy, that have not yet been included.

WESTON LWV WEB SITE- The new web site for the Weston LWV does not allow non-members to access the most current bulletin, and the home page does not say explicitly that one needs to join in order to see it. It seems that the home page of the web site should draw people in more and give them a reason to join. There was some discussion of taking some time in the summer to modify the web site to make it more inviting, and maybe add some more photos.

BOARD POLITICAL ACTIVITY- The issue came up of whether the Board members should be able to donate to political candidates. It was decided that Board members who are on the masthead should not advocate for, or donate to, candidates at the local level. Yard signs are very obvious as a form of support, and should not be used at the local level. It was thought that Board members should, however, be able to support political candidates at the state or national levels.

CANDIDATES' NIGHT- Richard Sher decided fairly late to run for Selectman.

Jean Thurston cannot moderate at Candidates' Night, because she's a candidate for Measurer of Lumber. Katty Chace said that she would be the moderator for the event, which will begin at 7:15 pm to accommodate some candidates who need to finish early. Refreshments will be available starting at 7:00pm.

ANNUAL MEETING - Pam Woods, jury commissioner, will be the speaker for the annual meeting, to be held at the library on May 20.

TAVERN AND LIBRARY RENOVATION- Pam Swain, from the committee to convert the Josiah Smith Tavern and old library, came to the meeting to give us recent updates on the process and to answer our questions. She said that the liquor license for the tavern is necessary for the project to be successful. The Massachusetts legislature has already approved the license, and it will be on the ballot for the Weston town election on

May 9. The town will own the liquor license in order to keep control of the project. Because of that ownership, any future restaurant owner will not be able to resell the license to another party. There are still concerns from St. Julia's Church about the playground's being moved from the current site, and also concerns by the Women's Community League about where they will move during the renovation of the old library, which will be their future home. The Women's Community League (WCL) is a valued group in Weston, and the town should be doing what it can to support the group during the time of transition. One of the locations to which the WCL could move during the reconstruction period is the basement of the First Parish Church, and a second possible site is the small house at the front of the Mass Broken Stone property.

There will be an open house at the Josiah Smith Tavern on May 3, 5-7pm.

FUND RAISER FOR WESTON LWV- The Weston league needs to have a fund raising event to replenish our bank account. The last fund raiser was 10 years ago, and the \$7500 profit from that event is nearly depleted. A group of Board members have met to discuss possible topics and speakers for the event to be held in the fall of 2009. Sally Currier has offered her house as a location for the fund raiser. One topic that is thought to have a high level of interest would be something centered on health care. We will need to recruit more members to work on various subcommittees for the event. Anyone who has specific ideas for the fund raiser should contact either Sally Currier or Katty Chace.

STATE CONVENTION- The state convention of the Massachusetts League of Women Voters will be held on May 29 and 30 at the Newton Marriott. Lower cost early registration is available until May 11.

ZONING BY-LAW RECODIFICATION

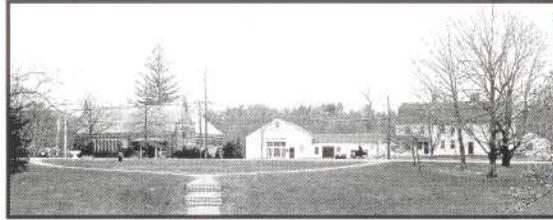
Periodically, nearly annually, our Planning Board proposes by-law additions, modifications and deletions, band-aids if you will, for problems which arise from the current Zoning By-Laws. This year is no exception. This year the Planning Board is proposing to re-codify Weston's entire Zoning By-Laws for the first time in twenty years.

Obviously, this is a huge undertaking, worthy of very careful consideration. The zoning regulations have enormous consequences to all property owners in the town. These by-laws regulate the ways in which property owners can develop, renovate, restore, and possibly maintain their properties. Such a far-reaching set of regulations can solve some problems while creating a host of new ones. In the interests of doing this properly, completely and meeting the goals of the community, it makes sense for the Planning Board and the Town Planner to work with the Building Inspector and the Zoning Board, as well as a variety community members to reach a consensus of how to best protect the diverse interests, sustainability and affordability of property in Weston. The re-codification should have the review and input of building and planning professionals, who can consider the perhaps unintended consequences of proposed changes, as well as the community at large.



Story above grade? (This cantilevered "Floating Castle" is in Ukraine, not Weston!)

There are two big changes in the current re-codification proposal which bear immediate attention. First, a change to the definition of "story above grade" – that is, the level from which a home's stories are measured – is being proposed. The second major change in the current proposals is the codification of a definition of "Substantial Demolition." These are just two of the changes currently proposed within the re-codification. There have been other proposals which have been withdrawn, such as set back requirements. However, if the Town is prepared to re-codify the Zoning By-Law, the Town should proceed thoughtfully, professionally, and with sufficient community involvement and time for education so that the changes are appropriate for our Town and as complete as possible. There is a Public Hearing scheduled for Wednesday, May 6, 2009 at 7:30 PM at Town Hall to review and discuss the zoning by-law proposals. Please make every effort to attend this hearing to understand the proposals and the consequences of these proposals. Public Hearings are the venue for community members to participate in the discussion and development of town policies.



You are invited to

“A Taste of the Tavern”

Refreshments & Updates

See sketches & designs for
Josiah Smith Tavern, Old
Library, Playground,
more

at the Barn

Sunday, May 3 from 5 to 7 pm

COFFEE HOUR – PROPOSED DPW FACILITY

Katty Chace

Our April 4 coffee hour was dedicated to a very thorough explanation of the proposed new DPW facility. Permanent Building Committee member Mark Susser, former Finance Committee member Court Chilton, DPW Director Bob Hoffman and Don Stewart of the Weston Climate Group were all present with plans and drawings to explain the changes that have been adopted in the last year to make the building more energy efficient and "green". We were quite favorably impressed with the cooperation that has been exhibited by all parties involved to address the concerns of various constituencies.



Left: Charts showing the layout proposed for the different areas of the new DPW facility.

Right: An expectant audience eagerly samples refreshments and conversation before the presentation.

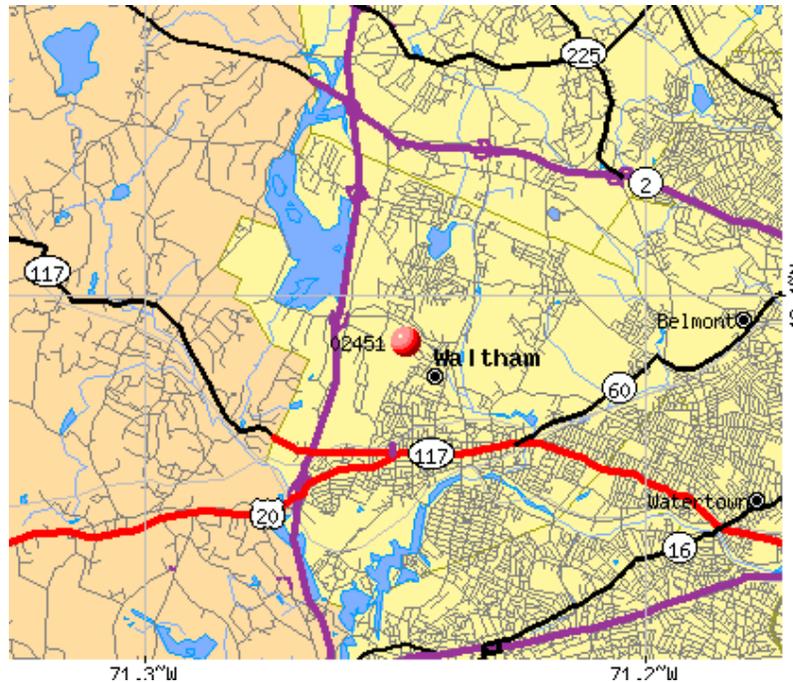


Left: Mark Susser explains how the new equipment bays will be used, as Don Stewart looks on.



An informative handout was distributed, with fact sheets explaining the development of the project, its features, benefits, costs and enhancements made since the outset. Emphasis was placed on energy efficiency and sustainability, and the steps being taken to make the facility LEED-compliant. LEED is a voluntary, consensus-based rating system aimed at creating high-performance, sustainable buildings.

RTE. 128 CENTRAL CORRIDOR COALITION
Inge Uhlir and Katty Chace



Selectmen from Weston, Lincoln and Lexington have been engaged in conversations with Mayor Jeanette McCarthy of Waltham about the implications for these towns when the former Polaroid site at the crossroads of Routes 117 and 128 becomes a new shopping mall.

With technical assistance from the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), municipal officials are considering problems with the “central corridor” of Route 128/95. This is the largest

project forecast for the “corridor.” Some believe there is a need for a direct access ramp to Route 128 in addition to many changes that are also envisioned for the Route 20 and 128 interchange. The selectmen hope that one of the outcomes of these changes, which will certainly inconvenience town residents, will be a Multi-Modal transportation center near the intersection of Rte. 128 and Rte. 20, which would enable better access (via bus and car) to Fitchburg line trains into Boston.

OUR LEAGUE WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING!

FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR LEAGUE AND ITS ACTIVITIES, GET VOTER INFORMATION,
READ PAST ISSUES OF OUR MONTHLY BULLETIN.
BE INFORMED ON OUR LOCAL POSITIONS.

<http://www.westonlwg.org>