

Newsletter

Volume 9 Issue 4

April 2003

Reduce...Reuse...Then Recycle

City Implements Source Reduction Project

By Linda Walden, City of Newton Source Reduction Coordinator, LWVN Member

The City of Newton has established the first Source Reduction Project in the Commonwealth through joint funding from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the City. The goal of the project is to identify ways to reduce the amount of materials and toxic substances that go into the waste stream and to shift to purchasing of more environmentally friendly products and services. The project will serve as a prototype for duplication by other communities.

Source reduction, also known as pollution prevention, waste prevention, and pre-cycling, is a growing effort to curb the amount of waste that needs to be managed by communities. Reduction is first in the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" hierarchy of waste management approaches. Last year, approximately 50,000 tons of waste was generated in Newton at a cost of \$6,000,000 for removal. Historically, attention was focused on promoting

recycling and Newton's recycling rate is nearly 46%. Now the objective is to attain more sustainable communities by just plain using less.

A Source Reduction Team comprised of city and school employees will identify and implement actions intended to reduce waste in municipal and school workplaces. The Source Reduction Team has identified the following areas for source reduction efforts: reducing paper, junk mail and duplicate publications; purchasing more environmentally friendly products; increasing recycling opportunities; and creating safer and healthier public buildings and workplaces.

An outreach program will be developed to bring the message of source reduction to residents and businesses. Watch for it early this summer. Also, a "How To" manual will be produced for use by other Massachusetts communities. The Source Reduction Project is located in the Department of Public Works at (617) 796-1005.

Too Much Trash

The City of Newton spends \$6 million dollars a year to manage 56,000 tons of solid waste management. With a minimal population change between 1980 and 2000, Newton's trash rate increased by 29%.

Each year, Americans generate:

- **4 pounds of trash per person per day**, a rate that has doubled since 1950.
- **3.5 billion pounds of carpet waste** – enough to carpet 219 malls the size of Mall America.
- **28 billion pounds of food waste** - McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King combined sell less food than that.
- **19 billion pounds of packaging peanuts** – enough to fill 7 Metro Dome stadiums.

Reuse and Recycle

The recycling rate in Newton increased from 39.8% to 46% between 1995 and 2002. But recycling is not enough! Source Reduction is the first "R" strategy in solid waste management followed by Reuse and Recycle. If waste is not created, it does not need to be recycled or disposed of.

Waste reduction programs maximize the use of materials before they are recycled or thrown away by:

- Using reusable instead of disposable materials
- Eliminating a particular item altogether
- Repairing or maintaining equipment
- Buying more durable products
- Buying recycled products

Benefits of Source Reduction

The City will reap a number of benefits from waste prevention efforts.

- **Cost Savings** - Saves dollars through changes in operations, more conscientious use of supplies, and purchasing environmentally friendly products.
- **Safer Buildings and Schools** – Creates safer buildings by using less hazardous products.
- **Resource Conservation** - Reduces the use of natural resources, supports markets for recycled materials, and stimulates business opportunities.
- **Improving Quality of Life** – Reduces air and water pollution, preserves non-renewable resources and habitat, and creates a healthier and more resilient environment. ■

It Starts With Us!

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The LWVN Newsletter is published nine times per year. The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization open to all citizens of voting age. For more information about the League of Women Voters, call 617-964-0014.

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Anita's Legacy

I want to thank Nancy Crowley and Sandy Butzel for the wonderful farewell event they arranged for Anita and Bob Capeless. Citizens Extraordinaire gave us an opportunity to thank Anita and Bob for all they have done for Newton and to endow the Massachusetts Collection of the Newton Free Library in their names. At the farewell, Sandy read a number of excerpts from president's messages that Anita had written during her presidency in the early eighties. I thought that those of you who were unable to be there might appreciate the following excerpts reprinted with the author's permission:

League members are in training to be leaders in the community.

Learning to be an executive, developing those skills that constitute a large part of an executive's ability to deal successfully with people takes time and practice. This sort of training is very often not available to women in the marketplace because it has been traditionally reserved for men.

Observing a more experienced member perform one of the techniques you want to learn, then being able to practice it yourself in a sympathetic atmosphere is common in the League. Skill in making decisions, behaving assertively, working with or running a committee increases self-confidence and abilities in other areas.

And don't turn down the opportunity to work on a committee or to be a chairperson. Working with a group of like-minded people to achieve a successful result is as exhilarating. Don't settle for "maybe next year when things are less hectic." Join in now!

I couldn't have said it better myself.

Amelia D Koch

Save the Date
Wednesday, June 11th, 6 P.M.
DINNER AND ANNUAL MEETING
Newton Senior Center

Welcome New Members

Marguerite H. V. Hasbrouck
43 Oak Street Newton Upper Falls, MA 02464
magsm@mindspring.com

Pamela Libby
12 Dunstan Street, #1 W. Newton, MA 02465
617-332-4460
pjlibby@att.net



All Members

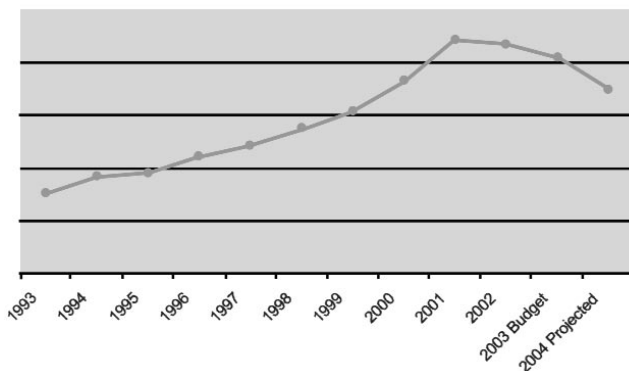
Please check your listing in the handbook. If there are corrections or e-mail address additions, send them to robinm@attbi.com

City Finances

While the city is struggling to put together next year's budget the state is also struggling which means city departments have been trying to hit a moving target. Despite state aid cuts of about 15% the news is not all bad. In part due to the proposition 2 1/2 override passed by Newton voters last year which increased the base, and in part due to continued new growth, revenue from property taxes is going up \$6MM and overall Newton's budget is going up approximately \$3MM. This hardly means an easy year for Newton, health care and pension obligations put pressure on the budget and there are salary increases based on union contracts too.

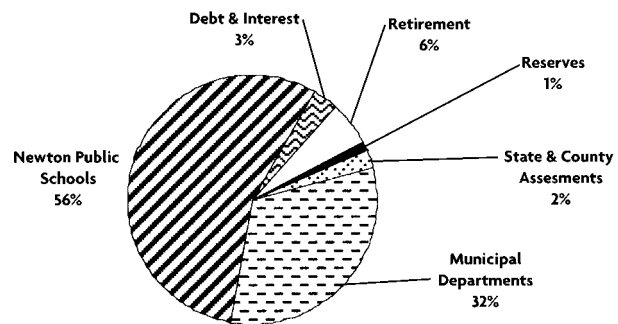
	1993	1998	2003	Budget 2004
Projected Property Taxes	\$115,067,378	\$137,940,591	\$180,170,221	\$186,178,853
Motor Vehicle Excise Taxes	5,887,885	8,439,040	9,848,559	0,045,530
Local Revenue	8,588,182	13,173,816	10,536,547	10,426,267
State Aid	7,615,880	13,761,733	20,635,315	17,635,540
	\$137,161,318	\$173,317,178	\$221,190,642	\$224,286,190

State Aid



Looking at revenue overall, the city is moving back to increased dependence on property taxes after years of increasing aid from the state. State aid is projected to be 7.9% percent of Newton's revenue budget, State aid reached a high of 11.2% of revenues in 2001 and hasn't been as low as 7.9% since 1998. State aid was ramped up over a ten-year period to support new state mandates in education.

City of Newton FY03 Budgeted Expenditures



On the expense side the school budget continues to grow more rapidly than the municipal departments. Schools represented 54% of the budget in 1998, 60% in 2003.

COME AND DISCUSS THE CITY FINANCES, PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE
AT THE APRIL DAYTIME UNIT MEETING

SEE CALENDAR FOR DETAILS OR CALL RUTH AT 617-969-9329. ■

Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

- ☐ I would like to join the League of Women voters of Newton. Enclosed is my check for \$50 payable to LWVN.
- ☐ Lifetime membership \$1000
- ☐ I would like to receive materials about the League.
- ☐ I would like to be contacted by a League member to talk about LWVN.

Mail this form (and your check, if joining) to:
Andrea Kozinetz Holtz at 8 Stoney Brae Road,
Newton Highlands, MA 02461

Committees - in - Action

E d u c a t i o n

Focus	Renovations, increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards	
Members	Ann Grantham	Robin Maltz
	Susie Heyman	Fran Osten
	Jody Klein	Beverly Spencer
	Anne Larner	Beth Wilkinson
Contact	Andrea Kelley	617 964-4609
	Andrea Kozinetz	617 964-6490
	Co-Chairs	

H u m a n R i g h t s

Focus	League outreach, relevance and support for the human rights of Newton's diverse populations	
Members	Sharon Balfour	
	Susie Heyman	
	Jody Klein	
	Linda Morrison	
Contact	Holly Gunner, Chair	617 964-0767

L a n d U s e / T r a n s p o r t a t i o n

Focus	Interrelationship between land use and transportation and its effects on Newton & surrounding communities	
Members	AnnaMaria Abernathy	
	Anita Capeless	
	Carol Ann Shea	
	Lynne Sullivan	
Contact	Anita Capeless	617 969-9483

L o c a l A c t i o n

Focus	Various local issues	
Members	In formation - all welcome	
Contact	Deb Crossley	617 244-7597
	Chair	

N o m i n a t i n g

Members	Deb Hirsch	Fran Seasholes
	Elaine Reisman	Janet Stearns
Contact	Sandy Butzel	617 332 8021
	Chair	

You may call committee contact or a Board officer or director to learn more about current committee work. All are welcome to participate.

O b s e r v e r C o r p s

Report on the Newton Parks and Recreation Commission

by Priscilla Leith, LWVN Observer

This report encompasses the December '02; January and February '03 meetings of the Commission and includes regular reports given at each meeting by Fran Towle, Commissioner of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Members of the Commission: *James Mahoney, W2 (Chair); Jennie DeVito, W1; Peter Johnson, W3 (Vice Chair); Francis Rice, W4; Walter Bernheimer, W5; Andrew Stern, W6; Gwen Fineberg, W7; and, Robert Platt, W8.*

The Skatepark Committee

More than a year ago a group wishing to see a skatepark in Newton persuaded the Board of Aldermen to set up an Ad Hoc Committee on this subject. A site at the Newton Highlands Playground (Dedham St.) emerged as the recommended location, but neighbors rose in opposition. The Parks and Rec Commission was then asked to take on a comprehensive study and another, larger Committee was organized chaired by Ward 6 Commissioner Walter Bernheimer.

The Skatepark Committee report was released on January 27 at the Parks and Rec Commission meeting. LWVN has a copy. In summary, it is a comprehensive survey of the demand for and the possible locations for such a park, the rationale for ranking or rejecting about 45 locations investigated. A survey done in Newton elementary and middle schools shows a desire among young people for such a facility, with 3,000 to 4,000 potential users who live in Newton, which the Commission felt represents a demand for such a facility.

The Rec Commission unanimously voted to ask the Mayor to make a determination whether to allocate funds for a feasibility study whether to locate a skatepark at one of the 4 sites (in the report) OR request that private funds be used for such a feasibility study. In the event that private funds are raised and offered, the motion also stipulates that the feasibility study is to be under the control of the Newton Parks and Recreation Commission, which would establish guidelines for the study and direct the consultant hired.

Recreation Department Budget

Mayor Cohen has instructed Ms. Towle to reduce the budget for FY2004. She has done that by increasing fees, by reducing the hours for "leaders" at the Newton Centre tennis courts, and by deciding to charge for some items that the Rec Dept had previously given for free to Little League teams (e.g., free baseballs, cost of umpires and referees). A job search is underway for a new assistant superintendent of maintenance to replace one who is retiring shortly.

The Rec Dept irrigates many playfields. The water at Cold Spring comes from a well instead of city metered (MDC) water, saving the Rec Dept about \$2,400 in FY2003. Plans to switch over to "wells" at other playfields are expected to save more money in FY2004. The Recreation Dept is responsible for maintenance on most city playgrounds and playfields, with some help coming from Little League or Newton Youth Soccer where there are agreements along those lines.

Forte Park

The Parks and Recreation Dept. submitted a proposal to the Newton Community Preservation Committee that held hearings in December. The proposal for Forte Park was put on the "fast track" to meet a Dec 31, 2002 deadline to qualify for land and water conservation assistance funds from the state. The CPC recommended this \$500,000 proposal to the Board of Aldermen, which approved it in December. Money was transferred from the FY2003 CPA Fund Reserve for this project, called Forte Park Phase II Renovation Project. The assumption is that 50% of the funds will go back into the CPA Fund if/when the state matching funds are obtained. ■

Inclusionary Ordinance

March 3, 2003

Newton Board of Aldermen
 Brooke K. Lipsitt, President
 1000 Commonwealth Avenue
 Newton, MA 02459

Re: Proposed revisions to Inclusionary Ordinance Section 30-24(f)

Dear President Lipsitt and members of the Newton Board of Aldermen,

The League of Women Voters of Newton commends the members of the Inclusionary Task Force for its thoughtful work in crafting a revised Inclusionary Ordinance, and the Zoning and Planning Committee for sending it to the Board of Alderman with unanimous approval.

The League believes that, in order to address the housing crisis we face today, it is critical to develop and commit to a housing plan and land use policies to support the objective of a socioeconomically diverse community. We agree with the task force that the inclusionary ordinance has provided the city with an essential tool to that end, and that, in light of current economics and market trends, the revised ordinance would provide the city with a much improved tool. Its broader applications, appropriate incentives and relative ease of use can serve to facilitate and retain much needed affordable housing in Newton.

At the same time, we realize this ordinance represents but one tool among many the city may ultimately need to help control development in support of a well-developed housing plan. The long range planning currently underway by the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee is critical in this regard, and the city may wish to review the range of tools at its disposal once consensus is reached on the policies and actions comprising a viable housing plan.

However, this ordinance represents a great step forward and may serve in the interim to facilitate and retain more housing that is affordable to more people. We therefore urge the Board of Alderman to vote Yes to approve the full text of Section 30-24f, as revised.

Respectfully,



Amelia Koch
 President, League of Women Voters of Newton



May 15th Forum Planned

Affordable Housing and Anti-Snob Zoning: Are the Laws Working?

The Newton League of Women Voters is sponsoring an affordable housing forum that will be held on **May 15th from 7:00 to 9:00 pm** at the Newton Free Library Druker Auditorium. This forum will focus on affordable housing needs in Newton and the state and local regulatory techniques that are used to encourage affordable housing development.

One of these techniques, the Comprehensive Permit Law, which is also known as the Anti-Snob Zoning Law or Chapter 40B, has been the subject of much recent controversy. Over 65 bills have been filed in this legislative session to amend the Comprehensive Permit Law. However, these bills will not likely be acted upon until after the recently appointed Governor's Chapter 40B Task Force reports its findings by the end of May.

Forum speakers will include many of Newton's local and state elected officials, a member of the Governor's 40B Task Force and others, such as developers, housing advocates and community representatives. The Forum will include a panel discussion that will address issues such as:

- How successful have existing laws been in increasing the supply of affordable housing?
- How much control does a community have over a comprehensive permit development?
- How much weight is given to local plans in the comprehensive permit process?
- What affordable housing planning and regulatory efforts has the City undertaken?

The Newton League and the co-sponsors of the forum are encouraging its membership and other interested citizens to attend to join in the discussion of these important issues. Co-sponsors include: the Newton Free Library, the City of Newton Housing Partnership, Newton Community Development Foundation (NCDF), CAN-DO, UCHAN and Cooperative Living of Newton.

Registration for the Forum is not required, but the League NEEDS VOLUNTEERS to assist with the Forum. If you would like to become more involved in planning for the Forum or in the League's housing or legislative efforts, please contact Janet Stearns at (617)559-9987. ■

**PRISCILLA M.
LEITH, MBA**

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Update:

Energy Action Plan: Intern on Board

by Deb Crossley

Intern Amelia Ravin is now working in her part time position from within the planning department to coordinate further development of the energy action plan. The Newton Citizen's Commission on Energy, who will direct her work, clarified the distinction between the CPAC's commitment to fully integrating the principles of wise energy management into the various sections of the comprehensive plan, and the energy action plan itself, at its February meeting. The EC directed Ms. Ravin to first review both the Brookline and Cambridge models to see how they organized their efforts, then prepare an informational packet, including the original resolution, work accomplished in 1998, and a work plan for coordinating with all relevant city departments. This accomplished, she will arrange a meeting with city department heads and the NNChamber of Commerce, where the mayor can introduce the project.

The city of Newton has thus far only committed its share (\$1100) to fund the first of three semesters' work that Newton will need to achieve the desired results (MIT funds the balance of the internship). Ms Ravin is to present the draft work plan at the March meeting of the Energy Commission, where we will also discuss a request to Newton to commit to the balance of this work. ■

LWVN CALENDAR

April

- 6 Sunday, 2:00- 4:00 P.M. We the People,
Making Democracy Work,
Speaker: Lani Guinier,
Faneuil Hall, Boston
- 9 Wednesday, 11:30 – 1:30 P.M.,
Unit Meeting, City Finances at
Mary Adelstein's, 63 Gammons Road,
Waban 617-527-5503
- 15 Tuesday, 7:30 P.M.,
Education Committee,
at Andrea Kozinetz Holtz's,
8 Stoney Brae Rd.,
Newton Highlands, 617-964-6490
- 16 Wednesday, Working Board Meeting/
Newsletter Deadline
- 30 Wednesday, Day on the Hill,
State House, Boston
- Wednesday, 7:30 P.M., Local Program
Planning at Ann Grantham's, 46 East
Side Pkwy, Newton, 617-964-0333

May

- 7 Wednesday, 7:30, Board Meeting at
Pat Acton's, 48 Miller Rd.,
Newton Centre, 617- 965-5572
- 15 Thursday, 7-9 P.M.,
Affordable Housing Forum, Druker
Auditorium, Newton Free Library
- 16-17 Friday and Saturday,
LWVMA Convention,
Wyndham Hotel, Westborough

DAY ON THE HILL

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts Wednesday, April 30, 2003 State House, Boston

9:00 a.m. Registration & Reception – Nurses Hall

10:00 – 11:00 Gardner Auditorium

Honored Guest

Governor Mitt Romney

Featured Speaker on Affordable Housing

Douglas Foy

Chief Commonwealth Development Executive Office of Transportation,
Department of Housing & Community Development,
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

11:00 – Noon League Program Specialists

2003-2004 Legislative Priorities

- Education Reform Financing
- Health Care Services and Financing
- Access to Services and Prescriptions for Emergency Contraception

Issues for Advocacy

- Clean Elections Implementation
- Equitable Coverage in Annuity Policies
- Judicial Independence
- Prison Reform

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