

Newsletter

Volume 10 Issue 6

August 2004

Planning for Newton's Future

Village Changes Envisioned

by Andreae Downs

Significant areas of agreement and overlap have developed during the twenty-six months of meetings of the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee, which had its Third Community Workshop June 29.

A Fourth Community Workshop is planned for this fall, to unveil a final draft plan.

About fifty people gathered at the Mason-Rice School to hear about planning for economic development, energy/sustainability and planning with history. Entwined with all three subjects were the issues of transportation and housing, particularly around traffic congestion, and housing affordability and density.

The workshop and additional exhibits displayed an emerging consensus around several ideas:

- the desirability of encouraging alternate modes of transportation—train, bus, bicycle, pedestrian, streetcar;
- the need for pedestrian “enhancements,” these were not detailed, in village centers and residential areas;
- the idea that new development should be encouraged in village centers and around “transportation nodes,” i.e. train stops and bus stops, that would include offices and residences over shops or other businesses;
- the sense that despite wanting some growth in specific commercial areas, it is important to protect Newton’s residential quality of life above other goals.

Philip Herr, chair of the CPAC, noted that the committee hoped to have a draft plan that integrates the work of all seven sub-committees to present to the community and then the mayor by the early fall.

Mayor David Cohen thanked the committee for its work and stressed that he was hoping that the result of this work would be a “living document” that would be regularly updated.

Continued on page three

National Convention - June 2004

A Full Throttle Event

by Andrea Kelley and Sue Rosenbaum

The Newton League sent three delegates to the national convention of the League of Women Voters. From Friday June 11 through Tuesday, June 15, Ruby Ajanee, Andrea Kelley and Susan Rosenbaum joined over 900 others attending the convention in Washington, DC.

The main buzz throughout all five days was around coming to a position on electronic voting (DREs) and voter verified paper trails (VVPT). The issue of accountability of votes for elections pervaded all caucus sessions beginning early in the morning into the wee hours of every night.

Other topics that were addressed in caucuses, workshops, plenary sessions, at meals, and on the sidewalks were: Civil Liberties and the Patriot Act, Datelines for TV News Coverage, Saving America’s Wetlands, Community programs, the ERA, Nominating Committee slate vs. board members nominated from the floor, Abolition of the Death Penalty, Smart Growth, No Child Left Behind, National Drug Policy and Pain Management, Election of Executive Office by Majority Vote, and Federal Assault Weapons Ban.

There were some very well presented panels, such as “Balancing Civil Liberties and Homeland Security in a Post-September 11th Age”. David Cole, a civil liberties advocate and professor at Georgetown Law School, Jamie Gorelick who is a member of the 9/11 Commission, and Ruth Wedgewood, a military tribunal expert currently teaching at Johns Hopkins, painted a worrisome portrait of the current state of civil liberties in the face of the U.S. government’s attempts at homeland security.

All three Newton delegates were disappointed in the quality of the leadership training sessions that the LWVUS ran. There was also too much overlap and reliance on a costly and time intensive program called Leadership Plenty, developed by the Pew Partnership, as the only training “module” presented.

Continued on page four

LWVN Officers and Directors 2004-2005

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Unit Meetings	Linda Morrison Co-Chair	617-332-6539
Unit Meetings	Ruth Neiberg Co-Chair	617-969-9329
Web Site	Judy Jaffe	617-969-7427

Newsletter

Editor	Ann Grantham	617-964-0333
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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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www.newtoncitizens.com/LWV

From the Steering Committee

A New Adventure

July 14 became the official beginning of the 2004-05 League year. On this cool summer evening, the Newton Board members enjoyed the pleasantries of introductions along with a pot luck meal and then went right to work. Realizing that our aim for the evening was to develop our own non-partisan policy, we used this goal as scaffolding as we discussed the board organization, portfolios, our internal and external communications, observing for the League, speaking for the League, and our overall board responsibility. We discussed LWV Program and Action: Advocacy or Education, drawing on examples of using our League positions to take a stand as we have with the CPC, the Override, and on environmental issues. When the business meeting convened, a motion was made and the following Non-partisan policy was adopted:

The Policy as it applies to Members

The League prides itself on having a membership composed of diverse, informed women and men. Its individual members are encouraged to participate fully in party politics and governments at all levels. Many League members have strong affiliations with political parties or candidates, or are elected officials themselves.

The Policy as it applies to Board Members

The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Newton has a responsibility to uphold the nonpartisan status of the League as an organization. The Steering Committee members, Voter Service Chair, Newsletter Editor, Education Chair, and Local Action Chair shall not engage in visible support of political candidates. Other board members may be politically active at all levels. However, they should use discretion to ensure that their own activities are not identified with the League in the public mind. Candidates for local elected office and their campaign managers cannot serve on the Board of Directors. If any questions arise regarding the non-partisan policy, the matter will come before the Board for interpretation and discussion. If a Board member resigns from the Board because of a conflict of this policy, that member shall not return to the Board until after the next Annual Meeting. Final decisions about implementing this nonpartisan policy rest with the Board of Directors.

Adopted by the LWVN Board of Directors July 14, 2004

In addition, we voted to join a coalition working to ensure that high performance building standards on city buildings be adopted as city policy.

This evening came about after several meetings of the newly elected Steering Committee, a five member group elected at Annual Meeting instead of the traditional structure which includes President and Vice Presidents. Deb Crossley attended each of these meetings bringing questions and ideas about how we were going to proceed. In addition, Ruby Ajanee, fresh from National Convention, brought new ideas and enthusiasm to these discussions. Many thanks to Deb and Ruby for their contribution and thanks to Barbara Lietzke for hosting our July meeting.

*As we prepare for the coming year,
we have a new spirit of adventure! ■*

Ann Grantham

Planning for Newton's Future

Continued from page one

Cohen appointed the CPAC in May 2002. According to a 2004 CPAC draft the mayor charged the committee "with helping the City to develop elements for the City's Comprehensive Plan." CPAC includes more than two dozen active members, including four Aldermen.

The initial charge was to develop plan elements of:

- Land Use, and
- Transportation.

But the committee agreed early on that it was important to also address:

- Housing.

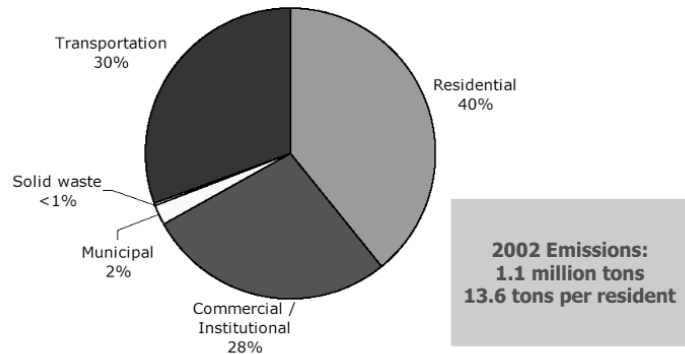
Since then, the group added:

- Recreation and Open Space which spun-off
- Natural Resources (including Energy & Sustainability)
- Cultural Resources (now Planning with History) and
- Economic Development, and
- Services & Facilities.

Newton's Energy Inventory



Figure 2-1: Newton's 2002 GHG Emissions by Sector



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Gerry Adams presented the work of the Economic Development Commission. He stressed that Newton was not looking for development to produce local jobs, but instead was looking to preserve its affluent, residential nature. Future economic growth, he suggested, could happen in commercial "corridors," such as Needham Street and along Route 9, over the Turnpike, and in village centers.

Adams suggested that affordable housing built in village centers would address both the lack of such housing and the lack of life in some village centers. Eventual growth, he proposed, should strengthen businesses in the village centers, concentrate density in these areas and not in currently only-residential areas, and preserve Newton's current residential amenities (parks, playgrounds, sidewalks)

ENERGY/SUSTAINABILITY

Katherine Gekas and Amelia Ravin of the Newton Citizens Commission on Energy presented plans on energy and sustainability. Gekas, who chairs the commission, noted that Newton's Citywide Energy Plan is to conserve, use alternate sources of energy, reduce emissions and greenhouse gasses, and improve the city's quality of life.

Gekas noted that since 1999, when Newton joined the Cities for Climate Protection Program, municipal emissions were down 6 percent. The city, her charts showed, produces 2 percent of the city's emissions: the largest emitters are residences (40%) and transportation (30%).

The commission currently recommends that the city adopt high performance standards for all public buildings (some, like Newton South, have already incorporated them),

Continued on page five

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.

☐ My Email address may be shared with State and National LWV

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



BEST WISHES TO:

Amelia Koch and Peter Meyer

Pat Acton and Joe Anastasi

JULY 25TH, 2004

League Specialists Wanted: Be Involved!



The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is currently recruiting specialists in several areas to serve on the LWVM Program & Action Committee. Requirements for the position include keen interest in the specialty area and a desire to put into practice League lobbying opportunities.

We are especially seeking specialists in the following areas:

- Basic human needs
- Children's issues
- Citizens' rights
- Domestic violence
- State government/public personnel
- Legislative director

We will train all specialists prior to serving. The time commitment is one meeting a month and the rest of the time is up to the individual specialist.

If you are interested, please contact Diane Jeffery, vice president of Program & Action at: 781-762-6026, or via e-mail at: djeffery@lwvma.org. ■

Continued from page one

National Convention

The two most contentious issues were around verifiable voting systems and the election of a board slate for LWVUS. A brewing distrust of "national" by "grassroots" members was in full show. Both topics generated much discussion and disagreement, with a divisiveness that ultimately brought about two satisfactory results.

A main accomplishment of the convention was the creation of a new position on accountable voting systems. The delegate body overturned the previous position (it was felt by some that this position was created by the US board without adequate study or grassroots input), and replaced it with a much more broad, simple position. The changes are:

"In order to ensure integrity and voter confidence in elections, the LWVUS supports the implementation of voting systems and procedures that are secure, accurate, recountable, and accessible."

This new position is clearer, more open to changing technologies over time, in keeping with LWV goals without dictating methodology, less constricting in the long run – more "league-like".

Other major decisions were to defend civil liberties as a highest priority for education and advocacy, now with campaign finance and election reform as the top priorities. Defeated non-recommended items included: ERA as a renewed effort, No Child Left Behind as a LWVUS monitored/supported issue, and Death Penalty abolition.

The slate of Officers and Directors to the LWVUS national board that was presented by the Nominating Committee did prevail.

The PMP was raised for 2004-05 to \$23.80 as of July 1, 2004.

The three Newton delegates were busy attending networking sessions, caucuses and workshops. Kelley was extremely impressed by the thought-provoking "Democracy at Its Best: Judicial Decisions" workshop, which made a convincing case for the preservation of the rule of law, and pointed out worrisome inroads that restrict judicial independence based on political pressure.

Rosenbaum was impressed with the pace the delegates kept during the five days of the convention, especially considering many were several years older. The only "breaks" during the day were working meals.

A breakfast leadership training session as well as a luncheon sponsored by the World Wrestling Entertainers were attended by the Newton delegates. Yes, they were entertained by strong men talking about their efforts to get young people to vote. The WWE is interested in working with the League in cities that they perform in to educate and register new voters. Their main message was that more potential young voters can be reached by collaborating with a variety of organizations. Their campaign is called "Smack Down your Vote."

As a result of this session, Rosenbaum plans to reach out to young people around Newton by setting up registration booths at events that attract young adults, as well as going to the several local college campuses.

One such event took place July 28 at Limited Editions in Newton Highlands. The Smart Women Company sold their apt and humorous girl-power wares and the League simultaneously provided a voter registration table.

Keynote banquet speaker Helen Thomas was superb: direct, insightful, humorous, acerbic and warm at the same time.

Convention is a full throttle event, chock full of networking opportunities and eye-opening ideas. It confirms what is best with the League: the consensus process of study and position forming around multiple and complex issues. It is both invigorating and exhausting. The three delegates thank the Newton league for letting them represent LWVN, and they pledge to carry forward some of the enthusiasm and ideas they brought home. ■

Note from the LWVN Treasurer

We are trying to close our books for 2003-2004.

HAVE YOU OVERLOOKED YOUR LEAGUE DUES?

Many have. Your annual dues renew your membership in local, state and national leagues. You will receive regular publications as well as a chance to be active, informed, and heard. Thank you for checking!

Dues for membership and contributions to the LWVNewton are not deductible as charitable contributions for tax purposes.

Questions?

Email andreaik@comcast.net
or call 617 964-6490.

Please remit payments to
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8 Stony Brae Road, Newton, MA 02164
INVOICES MAILED DURING JULY
2004 BEGIN LWVN's 2004-2005 YEAR.

Call for Volunteers to Register Voters

The Voters' Service Committee wants to reach out this fall to unregistered voters and encourage them to register and vote. If you are willing to give just two hours to work at a registration table during summer or fall, please call Sue Rosenbaum at 617-332-0306 or email her at dsr2@rcn.com. You may also leave a message at the Newton League phone number: 617-964-0014. We will be targeting young workers, college students, and other citizens who are not registered to vote.

This is the core mission of the League! Step forward and help! We'll provide all materials and back-up information. There will be many opportunities to help, and we will accommodate your schedule. The last day to register for the November 2nd election is October 13th, but we will continue our voter registration efforts all year long. Please call if you are interested in helping to get out the vote.

*Sharyn Roberts and Sue Rosenbaum,
Voters' Service Committee*

Planning for Newton's Future

Continued from page three

encourage residents and businesses to conduct energy audits, purchase power from renewable sources, use public buildings as demonstration projects (she noted that community centers now have solar panels), create incentives for private development, and perhaps install more efficient street lights.

In transportation, the commission recommends encouraging more efficient and alternative fuel cars, promoting development near public transportation, and improving pedestrian and bike access to schools and village centers.

Ravin noted that in solid waste, the city already had a fairly high residential recycling rate. The commission, she said, recommends reducing construction & demolition waste, and work on improving commercial and institutional recycling rates.

Planning with History

Alice Ingerson noted that her committee, on planning with history, had not yet come up with final recommendations, but had reached some consensus on planning and preservation. None of the committee members supported having a consultant come in and map out what parts of Newton should be preserved. Instead, she suggested that the CPAC look at both preserving the

past and improving on it: to retain a sense of community and place within a range of scales, with a range of goals (restoring, preserving, revising, and improving on history), and a range of tools (regulations, incentives, education). Education of the community was probably the first priority, she said, and noted brochures on the history of several villages are available online. (www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/hist/history.htm).

Community Response

Many of those in attendance, led by Linda Plaut, chair of Newton Pride, lobbied for a cultural center to be included in the CPAC's plans—both to encourage economic development and as an enhancement to the community's character.

Alderman George Mansfield worried that the plan's ideas might not be supported by a large number of Newton residents, and asked the committee to ensure that there be a large community consensus behind anything that comes to the Board of Aldermen for approval.

"Many people come to us to resist change," he noted. "The challenge is for us to inform people about these ideas, so when it gets to the aldermen, people say, yes, we want to go this way."

Alderman Lisle Baker questioned how the city could encourage economic development without increasing traffic congestion and how to build housing over commercial development without distorting the scale of village centers.

Srdjan Nedeljkovic, chair of the transportation subcommittee of CPAC, replied that it was possible to increase development without increasing traffic burdens, although he admitted it was a challenge.

Chuck Eisenberg stated that traffic capacity was limited, and having most of Newton's traffic capacity taken up by through traffic meant giving away a scarce commodity. He wondered whether the city could do anything to change that.

For more details, contact:

Philip Herr	617-969-1805
Gerry Adams	617-332-2996
Amelia Ravin	617-796-1144
	aravin@ci.newton.ma.us
Alice Ingerson	appliedhistory@rcn.com

or visit the city website at www.ci.newton.ma.us/Planning/CPAC/default.htm (this includes the committee's previous work as well as visual displays from June 29). ■



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Committees - in - Action

E d u c a t i o n

Focus Renovations, increasing high school enrollments, school financing, testing & standards

Members Susie Heyman Robin Maltz
Andrea Kelley Fran Osten
Andrea Kozinetz Beverly Spencer
Anne Larner Beth Wilkinson

Contact Jody Klein, Chair ⁶¹⁷244-4767

E n v i r o n m e n t a l I s s u e s

Focus Promoting source reduction, and recycling programs in municipal offices and public schools

Members Deb Crossley Robin Maltz
Katherine Gekas Martha Richmond
Barbara Herson Sharyn Roberts
Beth Lowd

Contact Linda Walden, Chair ⁶¹⁷630-9538

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
Linda Morrison

Contact Holly Gunner, Chair ⁶¹⁷964-0767

L o c a l A c t i o n

Contact Deb Crossley, Chair ⁶¹⁷244-7597

OBSERVER CORPS

Community Preservation Committee Jody Klein
Priscilla Leith

Election Commission Bonnie Carter
Nancy Criscitiello

Finance Committee, Board of Alderman Ruby Ajanee
Amelia Koch

Newton Citizen Commission on Energy Deb Crossley,
LWVN Representative

Newton Free Library Board Mary Adelstein

Parks and Recreation Commission Priscilla Leith

Zoning and Planning Committee, Board of Aldermen Judy Jaffe

N o m i n a t i n g C o m m i t t e e

Members Barbara Lietzke Carol Ann Shea

Contact Janet Stearns, Chair ⁶¹⁷559-9987

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

LWVN CALENDAR

July

- 28 Wednesday, 3-5 p.m. **Smart Women Tour/Voter Registration**
Limited Editions, Newton Highlands.

August

- 12 Thursday, 7:00 p.m. **Potluck/Working Board Meeting**
at the home of Ruby Ajane, 161 Sumner St. Newton Centre,
617-243-9888. Chair – Bonnie Carter
- 14 Saturday, **Newsletter Deadline**
- 26 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **Board Meeting**
at the home of Judy Jaffe, 45 Southgate Park, West Newton,
617-9689-7427. Chair – Bonnie Carter

September

- 8 Wednesday, 11:30 – 1:30 p.m., **Unit Meeting**, High
Performance Buildings, at the home of Ruth Neiberg,
72 Dalton Rd., Newton Centre, 716-969-9329.
Brown bag lunches encouraged.
- 9 Thursday, September, 7:00 p.m. **Potluck/Working Board
Meeting** at the home of Ann Grantham, 46 East Side Pkwy,
Newton, 617-964-0333. Chair – Bonnie Carter.
- 14 Tuesday, **Primary Election Day**,
Polls Open 7:00 a.m- 8:00 p.m.
Newsletter Deadline
- 18 Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., **LWVM Fall Conference**,
Our Choices, Our Future – Vote 2004,
Quincy Marriott Hotel
- 23 Thursday, 7:15 p.m. **Board Meeting** location TBA

Legislative Roundtable



For current schedule log on to www.newtv.org

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