LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

MARCH IS WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH:
LOOK OUT FOR LOCAL AND NATIONAL OBSERVANCES

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

LWV MARCH FIRST FRIDAY FORUM, MARCH 4, 2022:
STATE “HOUSING CHOICE” REQUIREMENT
FOR MBTA COMMUNITIES

On Friday, March 4, 2022, at 9:30 am on Zoom, the Lexington League will present a discussion of Governor Baker’s ‘Housing Choice’ proposal, enacted in January, which requires MBTA communities (including Lexington) to zone for a reasonable amount of multi-family housing in town.

The statute states in pertinent part:

Chapter 40A, Sec. 3A (a)(1) An MBTA community shall have a zoning ... by-law that provides for at least 1 district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right, provided, however, that such multi-family housing shall be without age restrictions and shall be suitable for families with children. ...[A] district of reasonable size shall (i) have a minimum gross density of 15 units per acre, subject to any further limitations imposed by .... the state environmental code, and (ii) be located not more than 0.5 miles from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station, if applicable.

(b) An MBTA community that fails to comply with this section shall not be eligible for funds from (i) the Housing Choice Initiative as described by the governor ... December 11, 2017; (ii) the Local Capital Projects Fund ..., or the MassWorks infrastructure program ...

(c) The department, in consultation with the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, shall promulgate guidelines to determine if an MBTA community is in compliance with this section.
Chris Kluchman, FAICP, Deputy Director, Community Services Division, Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), will discuss the draft DHCD MBTA community guidelines, which have been recently published for comment from affected communities. Until recently, Ms. Kluchman was a longtime resident of Lexington, and is very familiar with our Town. She will walk us through the proposed regulatory scheme as it may affect Lexington, including potential locations for multi-family zoning and accommodation of the required density.

This topic is particularly pertinent now, as the Lexington Planning Board, in Article 36 on the 2022 Town Meeting Warrant, has offered a zoning amendment which anticipates permitting such housing in Lexington Center.

This program is the sixth in the 2021-2022 First Friday Forum series hosted by the League of Women Voters to promote awareness and understanding of public policy issues. As always, League forums are free and open to the public, and there will be time for Q&A after the presentation. For more information about the webinar, assistance using Zoom, or other activities of the League, go to http://www.lwvlexington.org/FirstFriday.html.

TOWN ELECTIONS: IMPORTANT DATES

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, March 1, 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Deadline to file Application for Absentee Vote By Mail Ballot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday, March 4, 12:00 noon</td>
<td>Deadline to file Application for Absentee Ballot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 7, 7:00 am to 8:00 pm</td>
<td>Annual Town Election (voted by Select Board)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, March 28</td>
<td>Annual Town Meeting (voted by Select Board)</td>
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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MASSACHUSETTS

LWVMA EVENTS

Barriers to Regional Decarbonization Webinar March 23

The LWVMA Environmental Action and Advocacy Committee invites you to a webinar, Barriers to Regional Decarbonization, on Wednesday, March 23 at 4 p.m.

Clean energy and the necessary reduction of our use of fossil fuels has become more and more urgent as we recognize how far human-induced global warming and climate change have progressed and how little time we have to right our course. The state released a first draft of an updated Net Zero Building Code in January, which will be subject to comment and amendment over the coming months.
In the meantime, a number of Massachusetts towns, including Lexington, are making efforts of their own to reduce their carbon footprint. Article 40 on the 2022 Town Meeting Warrant proposes to amend the Town’s zoning bylaw to reduce or eliminate the use of fossil fuels in new housing in Lexington by granting builders the option to build larger homes when they incorporate clean energy systems. At this writing, it is uncertain whether this proposal can go forward, due to a ruling from the Massachusetts Attorney General issued on February 25. Responding to a similar proposal in Brookline, the AG ruled that existing state law does not permit individual communities to use zoning restrictions to ban fossil fuels. Lexington, Brookline, Acton, Arlington, and Concord have home rule petitions pending in the state legislature which, if passed, would allow them to ban fossil fuels in new construction.

These developments highlight how essential regional cooperation is to meeting clean energy goals. Longstanding regional rules favor fossil fuel interests and often stand in the way of clean energy. The League’s March 23 webinar, co-hosted by the League of Women Voters and Elders Climate Action, will discuss who is in charge of these regional practices and how we can move forward from here. The speaker will be Melissa Birchard, Regulatory Attorney for Power Grid Reform, Acadia Center.

LWVMA ADVOCACY

Work and Family Mobility Act

For some 15 years, the League has been advocating for state legislation which would allow all qualified drivers to apply for a Massachusetts drivers license, regardless of immigration status. Allowing immigrants who live and work in Massachusetts to get drivers licenses advances safety by requiring all such drivers to be tested and show proof of insurance. It also allows police to identify drivers in the event of any problems. It removes a huge barrier to law abiding immigrants who need to be able to drive to work, access health care and transport their families. The Work and Family Mobility Act, is the verge of being processed out of the Transportation Committee for a vote on the Senate floor. An extension of time for the Transportation Committee report on the bill has been granted until Friday, March 4. This is a good time to contact your State Senator (See contact information in this Bulletin.) to urge them once again to support this bill.

Medicare for All in Massachusetts

The Medicare for All in Massachusetts Act (H.1267/S.766) is a priority bill for the LWVMA. It requires as many co-sponsors as possible to move through the legislative process for eventual debate and vote in the House and Senate. Representative Michelle Ciccolo is already a co-sponsor of the House bill, but Senators Barrett and Friedman are not yet co-sponsors in the Senate. Contact your senator to let them know that you support this legislation and want to see them co-sponsor it.
Natural Resources Bills: Drought and Invasive Species

Two natural resources bill supported by the LWVMA are sitting in the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture (JENRA) and need to be reported out favorably in order to advance.

The drought bill mandates a statewide policy and authority for water conservation in times of drought, exempting only agricultural water use.

The Invasive Species Act creates a coordinated approach to invasive species management with more effective assistance and funding from the state to minimize eradication methods that are unnecessarily expensive, laborious and toxic. It has the support of state environmental groups, developers and state agency representatives.

Please contact your legislators and urge them to ask that these bills be reported out of committee.

Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Bodies

“An Act to Ensure Gender Parity and Racial and Ethnic Diversity on Public Boards and Commissions” (S.2077), is currently before the Massachusetts Senate’s Ways and Means Committee. The bill would ensure that appointments to state public boards and commissions broadly reflect the composition of the general public with regard to gender and race. Women and people of color are vastly underrepresented on these bodies, which can have great impact on the state’s policies and initiatives on everything from education, health and human services, housing and economic development, labor and workforce development, to public safety. More varied viewpoints and voices are needed. The LWVMA asks you to contact Michael Rodrigues, Ways and Means Chair, to urge that this bill be favorably reported out of committee as soon as possible.

LWVMA advocacy on Beacon Hill continues to be effective.

Here is a list of LWVMA bills that were reported favorably out of committee in February.

H.202/S.111 An Act improving emergency housing assistance for children and families experiencing homelessness  
H.1428/S.898 An Act codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program/An Act relative to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program  
H.199/S.96 An Act to Lift Kids out of Deep Poverty  
H.311/S.176 An Act to mandate domestic violence and sexual assault awareness education for aestheticians, barbers, cosmetologists, electrologists, hairdressers, manicurists, and massage therapists  
H.715/S.298 An Act to Promote Student Nutrition  
H.1794/S.1022 An Act to prevent the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences based on juvenile adjudications  
H.3289 An Act to expand the Bottle Bill  
H.3302 An Act to promote offshore wind energy and renewables
An Act relative to maintaining adequate water supplies through effective drought management

An Act improving municipal water infrastructure

An Act protecting water systems through the labeling of flushable wipes

An Act restricting toxic PFAS chemicals in consumer products to protect our health

An Act preserving open space in the Commonwealth

An Act increasing the conservation land tax credit

An Act establishing the Massachusetts Information Privacy Act

Resolutions for a United States Constitutional Amendment and a limited amendment proposing convention (LWVMA Opposes)

An Act relative to crime gun data analysis and reporting

An Act relative to accelerating improvements to the local and regional public health system to address disparities in the delivery of public health services

An act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency

An Act providing a bill of rights for people experiencing homelessness

An Act to streamline access to critical public health and safety-net programs through common applications

An Act relative to regional transportation ballot initiatives

An Act to ensure gender parity and racial and ethnic diversity in public boards and commissions

An Act relative to the defense against abusive waivers

An Act to access disposable menstrual products in prisons, homeless shelters and public schools

An act relative to healthy youth

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF THE UNITED STATES

LWVUS EVENTS

REMINDER: LWVUS 55TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
SHERATON DOWNTOWN DENVER (CO) AND ONLINE
JUNE 23-26, 2022.

All League members are invited to attend our biennial national gathering, to be held in Denver, CO and online in 2022. Voting delegates will participate in plenary sessions dealing with the League budget, programs and election of officers. In addition, there will be opportunities to network with fellow League members from all areas of the country, attend large and small group training and education sessions, and be informed and inspired by League and invited speakers. The sessions will be fully hybrid with combined in-person and virtual experiences. More information can be found on the LWVUS website under League Management.
On March 3, at 12:00 noon ET on Facebook Live, the LWVUS will host a Women Power Democracy Live Panel to celebrate Women’s History Month. LWV CEO Virginia Kase Solomon will be joined by activists from SuperMajority, League of United American Citizens (LULAC), and Black Voters Matter to discuss how to build more trust in our elections, grow our electorate with equity, and create fair voter access. [https://www.facebook.com/events/652891875922157/](https://www.facebook.com/events/652891875922157/).

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**SAVE THE DATE**

- March 3, 2022  Women Power Democracy Live Panel (on Facebook)
- March 7, 2022  Local Election Day
- March 23, 2022  Decarbonization Webinar
- March 28, 2022  Lexington Town Meeting begins
- June 23-26, 2023  LWVUS Biennial Convention on Zoom & in Denver, CO
### Contact Information for Legislators

| U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren | 309 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202 244-4543 |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| U.S. Senator Edward Markey   | 255 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202 224-2742 |
| U.S. Representative Katherine Clark | 2448 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
202 225-2836 |
| MA Senator Michael Barrett   | Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov  
617 722-1572 |
| MA Senator Cindy Friedman    | Cindy.Friedman@masenate.gov  
617 722-1432 |
| MA Representative Michelle Ciccolo | Michelle.Ciccolo@mahouse.gov  
617 722-2210 |

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 the Lexington League Convener Margaret Coppe at mecoppe@gmail.com.
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF LEXINGTON

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We welcome Bulletin articles from members. If you’d like to submit an article for the March, 2022 LWV LEXINGTON Bulletin, please send it to Wendy Manz at wendy_manz@yahoo.com prior to March 25, 2022.