

**Darien League of Women Voters (LWV)  
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, April 7, 2021  
Zoom Call**

**Attendees**

Stephanie Maher, Vicki Baldwin, Clara Sartori, Amy Zerbe, Arlene Tulacro, Sue Okie, Martha Olson, Vivian Liu, Sarah Neuman, Millyn Gaaserud, Ann Reed

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Clara Sartori at 9:10 AM.

**Note: Votes were not taken without a quorum, with one exception reported below.**

**Treasurer's Report (Stephanie Maher)**

Stephanie Maher reported that the bank balance as of March 31 was approximately \$19,400. Stephanie reported that she had a call with Rebecca Traister's contact, who indicated that our \$5,000 deposit would be returned if the engagement with Rebecca is cancelled. The group discussed holding an in-person event in the Fall, in which case an additional \$5,000 fee would be due. The plan had been to co-sponsor with the Darien Library which was to contribute \$2,500 of the \$10,000 fee, which now seems unlikely. Arlene Tulacro has volunteered for planning a possible lunch event for the Fall.

**Volunteer Recognition (Clara Sartori)**

Clara Sartori reported that the Darien LWV has nominated Amy Zerbe for volunteer recognition for her technical support of the LWV. Volunteer Recognition Day is sponsored by The Community Fund of Darien.

**Membership Update**

Clara Sartori participated via Zoom in a new member outreach seminar offered by the LWVCT. Ideas discussed included an outreach circle to connect with like-minded members as well as post-Covid field trips.

Mary Genco has met virtually with representatives of the YWCA Newcomers to share our mission. The conversations have resulted in interest in the work of the LWV among YWCA members. Mary will continue to build this relationship.

Vivian Liu reported that the Membership Directory will be distributed as a PDF file via email to members. Posting on the website with additional security is too cumbersome.

**Town Officials Program (Clara Sartori)**

Clara Sartori reported that we would need to set a date, likely in May, for a Zoom event, and confirm volunteers to contact the heads of five major town groups: First Selectman, Chairs of the Board of Education, Board of Finance, Planning and Zoning Commission as well as the RTM Moderator. We also would need a Darien LWV moderator to coordinate the discussion. Clara suggested that perhaps we could recruit a team to include a Democrat and a Republican to moderate. Using the Library to co-sponsor would provide an effective Zoom format and promotion. Millyn Gaaserud volunteered to assist with planning a potential event.

## **Legislative Coffee Follow-Up**

Clara Sartori reported that the Darien LWV did send a letter to Bob Duff expressing our disappointment that he was not able to attend our Legislative Coffee. The group discussed inviting newly elected State Senator Patricia Billie Miller to our monthly meeting on May 5 via Zoom at 9:00 AM. Ann Reed volunteered to contact Senator Miller.

## **Nominating**

Clara Sartori expressed appreciation to Sue Okie for her long-term and continuing efforts to recruit members to join the Darien LWV board and for succession planning. The group agreed that the Darien LWV needs new members, volunteers and leaders for the many vacancies for valuable programs and for an additional co-president. We also need a designated location for in-person meetings when they likely resume in the Fall.

## **Publications**

Clara Sartori reported that the Darien LWV Government Guide was last published in 2019, and we should consider moving to or adding an electronic version. To compile a media outlet list, Clara requested that each member send to her a list of the print, social and other electronic media platforms that each prefers to use.

## **Programs**

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 2 via Zoom at 9:00 AM. Thanks were expressed to Evonne Klein for securing Patti Russo, Executive Director of the Campaign School at Yale University as our keynote speaker. Patti's Biography is attached.

The Future of Darien program held on April 5 via the Library's Zoom format was very successful with 190 registrants. Those attending will be invited to the next session on April 22.

A Voting and Elections program with Secretary of the State Denise Merrill will be held on April 29 at 6:30 PM via Zoom. The event is co-sponsored with the New Canaan LWV, and registration is through the Darien Library website.

As reported by the Treasurer, the Rebecca Traister Program has been postponed until a likely in-person event can be scheduled in the Fall.

## **Food for Thought**

This group meets each third Thursday of the month via Zoom. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>. [Karla Coe](#) can be contacted to join the group.

## **Announcements**

Clara Sartori reported no news on the Darien Housing Authority election. They had requested that the Darien LWV manage their election process.

## **News from the LWVCT**

Laura Smits, LWVCT Voter Service Vice President, can be joined on Wednesday, April 7, from 12:00 to 1:00 PM as she gives the "behind the scenes" summary of how the election process works in Connecticut. She will explain the roles of local election officials and the system that makes our elections some of the most secure in the nation.

As a legislative update, both [HJ58 No-Excuse Absentee Voting](#) and [HJ59 Early Voting](#) Joint Resolutions have been advanced out of committee. The house and senate calendars are being monitored and an update will be provided on specific actions to take in the coming weeks.

Both the Bottle Bill (Senate Bill 1037) and the Prison Gerrymandering Bill (Senate Bill 753) were advanced out of committee this week. The LWVCT has asked the Darien LWV to sign a letter in support of the Bottle Bill. **With a positive vote from all attending, plus two supporting emails that Clara Sartori has received from non-attendees, Amy Zerbe moved, and Stephanie Maher seconded a motion to agree to sign the letter.**

Clara Sartori reported that the New Canaan LWV has requested that we support having the LWVCT offer a training session closer to Darien and New Canaan for volunteers to become moderators.

### **Adjourn**

Amy Zerbe moved and Vivian Liu seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 AM. The next meeting will be held at 9:00 AM via Zoom on Wednesday, May 5.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vicki Baldwin, Secretary