

**Darien League of Women Voters (LWV)
Meeting Minutes, Wednesday, May 5, 2021
Zoom Call**

Attendees

Stephanie Maher, Vicki Baldwin, Clara Sartori, Amy Zerbe, Arlene Tulacro, Vivian Liu, Sarah Neumann, Millyn Gaaserud, Mary Genco, Evonne Klein, Carolyn Bayne, Gwen Mogenson, Ann Reed, Jean Sweeney, Kate Larson, Jill McCammon, Theresa Vogt.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Clara Sartori at 9:04 AM.

Approval of Minutes

Clara Sartori moved and Amy Zerbe seconded a motion to approve the minutes of April 7. Stephanie Maher moved and Kate Larson seconded a motion to approve the minutes of March 3, which could not be approved at the April meeting with lack of a quorum. Minutes of both meetings were approved by the participants who had attended those meetings, with a clarification in the April 7 minutes that Mary Genco has contacted the Darien YWCA, but not "other groups", regarding outreach.

Treasurer's Report (Stephanie Maher)

Stephanie Maher reported that the bank balance as of April 30 was approximately \$19,400. It was noted that about \$3,000 in donations have been received this year which could fund future programs. Also, the D&O insurance information has been submitted.

Update on Housing Authority Election Project (Clara Sartori)

In February, the Darien LWV had been asked to run this election as a third party, and Clara Sartori had indicated to Imagineers (the rental property agents), that we would help, but not run the election. The LWV has been asked again to run this project to be completed by July 1. During a discussion, it was noted that the LWV ran this election in 2015 and has provided detailed documentation on the process to Imagineers. However, the group's consensus was that we should decline to run it given our shortage of volunteers.

Discussion of proposed change to By-Laws (See Attachment)

Darien LWV has been asked that we add Article II, Section 2.2 "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Policy" as directed by the League of Women Voters of United States (LWVUS). This will be voted on at June Annual Meeting. The original documentation supporting this change will be circulated to members via email.

Membership Update

Thanks were expressed to Theresa Vogt and Vivian Liu for the development of the Membership Directory this year which is online and can be accessed via email provided to members. Copies can be downloaded and/or printed. Discussion resulted in agreement that changes/corrections/additions submitted via email to [Vivian Liu](mailto:VivianLiu@lwwv.org) or [Theresa Vogt](mailto:TheresaVogt@lwwv.org) will be updated twice per year. Any major change in membership can be reflected more often.

Report on Outreach Efforts (Mary Genco)

Mary has had two conversations with YWCA members who expressed interest in sharing LWV information with the Newcomers group. She is hopeful that these conversations will continue. The YWCA holds small Conversations with Purpose and information about town government would fit into these. A more formal relationship can possibly develop.

Nominations for Board and Leadership Development (Clara Sartori)

Clara led a discussion about the best course of action going forward to ensure that leadership is developed for the future. Several options for recruiting leaders or even considering a merger with another league were discussed. The consensus is that the Darien LWV has had a long and proud history of 92 years, and that with more targeted efforts to recruit future leaders, the league can continue that history, and be in compliance with leadership requirements in the By-Laws.

Following discussion, a team including Mary Genco, Gwen Mogenson, Kate Larson, Evonne Klein, and Vivian Liu agreed to form a Task Force to meet over the coming months to develop a strategic approach to describing the goals and future needs of the Darien LWV, and benefits of joining. Clara will send a special email to the membership describing the Task Force and inviting others to join. The Task Force members will also reach out by phone to recruit members to join.

Discussion of Proposed Legislation and Possible Action

We expect near-term legislative votes on the two resolutions to make changes to the State Constitution to permit No-Excuse Absentee Voting (HJ 58) and Early in-person Voting (HJ 59). According to a [January 2021 poll conducted by Secure Democracy](#): 70% of CT voters showed bipartisan support for No-Excuse Absentee Ballots/Voting and 79% of CT voters showed bipartisan support for Early In-Person voting.

The Darien LWV voted to sign on to a state league letter in support of the Bottle Bill.

The LWVCT supports efforts to PASS HJ 58 and HJ 59 and the Bottle Bill. Members can send emails to their Senator and Member of the House of Representatives to support these bills.

Publications (Clara Sartori)

Clara suggested that the Government Guide and Know Your Town Government publications could be online in the future. Volunteers are needed to compile these directories.

Programs

The May 20 Town Officials Evening Program via Zoom will be hosted by Darien Library and is publicized on their calendar. Volunteers to moderate the session should be sent to Clara Sartori.

The June 2 Annual Meeting at 7:00 PM will feature Keynote Speaker Patricia Russo, Executive Director of the Campaign School at Yale. (See LWV website for her bio.) Thanks were expressed to Evonne Klein for securing the speaker. Evonne is requesting input on the topics we would like Patricia to cover.

Clara Sartori reported that the April Collaborative Programs are now available on channel 79. They included the Fairfield County Community Foundation - Future of Darien Program, and the Voting in Connecticut with Secretary of State Denise Merrill Program. Clara attended a wrap up meeting on the Future of Fairfield

County: Darien, last Friday. Thanks were expressed to Darien for being the first in the discussion series. Lessons learned in Darien will be helpful in future planning of these discussions in neighboring towns.

Food for Thought

This is a free form discussion group, open to all members. The next Zoom meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 20th, but may have to be moved to May 27. Members can email [Karla Coe](mailto:Karla.Coe) for more information or to join the group.

Announcements

Clara Sartori shared news that member Kathy Baker has passed away.

Adjourn

Stephanie Maher moved, and Kate Larson seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Vicki Baldwin, Secretary