



“Women's Suffrage Marks 100 Years: LWV Exhibit on the Common”

A Gift to the Town from the League of Women Voters of Needham

The League of Women Voters of Needham will donate a public art installation on the Needham Town Common to honor the people and events that had a role in the women’s suffrage movement. The intent is to draw attention to and educate residents of Needham about the 100th anniversary of women’s suffrage in the US, Massachusetts, and Needham.

The installation is designed for viewers to wander through at their own pace, view from afar, or view close up and learn more about our history. Being outdoors and spread out on the trees, the installation will be safe, enjoyable, and inspirational.

LWV-Needham has selected the dates of October 17 – 30 for public viewing of the exhibit. These dates coincide with the Early Voting period, which seems appropriate for a display honoring “Votes for Women.” The installation will in no way impede access of citizens coming to Town Hall to vote or drop off ballots in the Drop Box.

The League plans to “wrap” the Common’s seven tree trunks with fabric “sashes” to suggest the traditional sash of the suffragist, using the suffrage colors of purple, white and gold. Sashes will feature the names and events of the suffrage movement. A scannable QR code will take viewers to a website with further information about the person or event.

The sashes will make an impactful and highly visible statement, attracting attention from people about town, and inspiring them to investigate further. The original concept was created in consultation with NHS art teacher Linda Burke. Hand-lettering was done by NHS student Calligraphy Club members as part of their community service commitment. League members further developed the concept, created the sashes, chose the people and events to honor, and developed the education content and web page.

The photo below shows how the sashes would be displayed. The sashes are affixed, top and bottom, to hula hoops through fabric sleeves. These structures are attached to the trees using fishing line. No damage will come to the trees. The loose-fitting nature of the structures is intentional—to allow them to sway with the breeze. An [eight-second video](#) displays this effect. (<http://bit.ly/common-sash>)

The QR code on the purple sashes on each tree will lead viewers to the companion page on the LWV-Needham.org website (<https://lwg-needham.org/womens-suffrage-on-common/>) where viewers can read about the people and events appearing on the sashes.

We have prepared the materials to complete the installation on seven trees. This includes making the sashes for the trees, procuring and painting the hula hoops, writing summaries of about 20 suffragists and events, and preparing the companion web page and QR code.

The League of Women Voters would like to donate this art installation to the Town of Needham in honor of the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment and the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Sashes / Website Information



Sojourner Truth
Lucy Stone
Frederick Douglass
Eliza La Croix
Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin
Alice Stone Blackwell
Maude Wood Park
Susan Walker Fitzgerald
Blanche Ames
Florence Luscomb
Melnea Cass
Susan B. Anthony
Carrie Chapman Catt
Alice Paul and Lucy Burns
Ida B. Wells
Worcester Convention, October 1850.
Boston Suffrage Parades/Nov 2 Referendum (1915)
Boston Protest / Charles St. Jail 1919
MA ratifies 19th Amendment June 25, 1919
Needham Suffrage
Delta Sigma Theta Sorority

Acknowledgements

The League committee developed the concept, made the sashes, chose the people and events to honor, and developed the education content and web page: Heidi Frail (chair), Chris Balmer, Jane Evans, Jan Soma, Andy Wizer.

Needham High School Art Teacher Linda Burke advised on the overall design of the installation.

Needham High School student (class of 2020) Julia Berkman, founder of the NHS Calligraphy Club "Scribbles that Matter," hand-lettered the sashes.

Town staff Kate Fitzpatrick, Sandy Cincotta, and Ed Olson supported and assisted the League, and the Select Board approved the concept and final donation of the exhibit to the Town of Needham.