

FYI



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

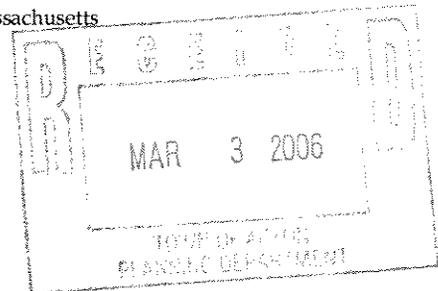


## ACTON AREA



Serving Acton, Boxborough, Littleton, Maynard and Stow, Massachusetts

Post Office Box 817 Acton, MA 01720



February 27, 2006

Acton Board of Selectmen  
Acton Finance Committee  
Acton Public School Committee  
Acton / Boxborough Regional School Committee

Dear Acton Board and Committee Members,

One goal of the League of Women Voters is to empower citizens to take an active role in government by providing them with the information they need to become effective participants. This is only possible if the communications and deliberations of our elected and appointed officials are transparent and available to all citizens.

The League of Women Voters – Acton Area applauds the use of the internet to increase transparency by posting meeting dates, agendas and minutes on the town's official website. We are pleased particularly by the recent use of the Document Management System to publicly post meeting documents, and we encourage more town boards and committees to use this system.

Unfortunately, some uses of the internet by government are not benign. Several citizens have contacted the League to express concern that one or more boards or committees may have violated the Open Meeting Law, primarily through the use of e-mail or internet communication to distribute substantive comments on matters before the board or committee. While e-mail and internet access provide efficient and timely ways for boards and committees to communicate, we believe they should not be used for discussion and/or deliberation, as it is impossible for even the most well-intentioned citizens to follow communications and deliberations that take place outside of a posted, open meeting.

The Open Meeting Law, while sometimes cumbersome, does ensure transparency in government, which we can all agree is a good thing. We commend the Board of Selectmen for its recent statements in support of Open Meeting Law and its efforts to clarify and strengthen internal policies to ensure that Open Meeting Law is followed consistently by all of Acton's elected and appointed officials.

Sincerely,

Paulina Knibbe  
Co-chairs, LWV – AA

Suzanne Shanahan

cc: Acton Boards and Committees