

# OPINION

## League deserved more respect, and so do you

Anyone who has read this newspaper on a regular basis over the last 20+ years, either as the current Norwood Record or the former Norwood Bulletin knows we are not a fan of Massachusetts State Representative John Rogers. Not because he hasn't delivered the goods to his constituents here in town, he certainly has. Whether the money garnered from the state by Rogers was spent wisely or not is fodder for another discussion. The bottom line is the Town of Norwood has received more than its fair share of funding and perks, and Rogers has played a big part in most of it.

However, in politics the ends don't always justify the means. In our opinion, Representative Rogers is the epitome of what is wrong with Massachusetts politics. Even putting aside his illegally using campaign funds to purchase a house on the Cape, which was conveniently swept under the rug by the state, but ruined a friend's career, the democratic machine on Beacon Hill has become so powerful that they really don't care what you think of them or their votes. This, coupled with the apathetic attitudes of voters believing that regardless of how they vote change will never come about, means politicians firmly entrenched in the State House feel invincible. They don't listen to you because they don't have to.

The latest example of this is Mr. Rogers backing out of a debate against challenger Tim Hempton scheduled by the Norwood League of Women Voters. When this newspaper called the Rogers camp for a reason, the best they could come up with was that he was already doing a debate on NPA TV, hosted by Tom Cummings. Apparently, Rogers just can't be bothered to do another even though he committed to it because he's a busy guy.

Now, no offense to Tom Cummings, who has been a contributing member to this town for a long time, and providing good local television for many years, but to use his debate as an excuse is a direct slap in the face to both the League of Women Voters and Norwood residents.

The Norwood League of Women Voters has been around since 1920, and they and the National League of Women Voters has a long history of hosting nonpartisan candidate forums and educating the American people. Every election season, Leagues across the county hold hundreds of candidate debates and forums to help voters learn about the candidates on their ballot. Attending or watching a candidate debate is one of the best ways to prepare for casting your ballot. As a core feature of U.S. politics, candidate debates help voters learn more about a candidate and his or her stance on key issues. So, given their history, and the fact that Rogers originally agreed to it and then backing out at the last minute is simply politics at its worst, and Rogers at his best. But, then again, what does he care? The threat to his seat is miniscule. Or is it?

There does appear to be a bit of an uprising by voters in Massachusetts politics. Democrats, though still powerful, have taken some hits recently, both legally and at the polls. Even though the state attorney general's office has been a doormat for local politicians to wipe their feet on, the Feds have stepped in and prosecuted some who have been so obvious in their disdain for the electorate that accountability had to be upheld.

There are also examples of voters finally saying no to the laziness and greed at both the national and state levels, the most obvious being the ouster of longtime US Rep. John Tierney. And ten years ago Martha Coakley would have gotten away with her "look the other way approach" to state politics and won the governorship in a landslide. Now, she actually has to campaign and is neck and neck with Charlie Baker, a republican for goodness sake! Who'da think?

Whether Norwood voters follow the state trend and make the race for the seat currently held by Mr. Rogers competitive, or even bother to show up and vote at all remains to be seen. Tim Hempton is a good candidate and deserves to be heard. Too bad Mr. Rogers has about as much respect for him as he does the Norwood League of Women Voters, or you.

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# Letters to the Editor

## WHY NO DEBATE?

To the Editor:

I was troubled to learn recently that Rep. John Rogers has declined the invitation of the Norwood League of Women Voters to debate Dr. Tim Hempton at the Candidates Night on Oct. 22. By not showing up at the League's major event, Rogers is depriving the people of Norwood of the opportunity to hear how he and Dr. Hempton differ on the issues.

The Massachusetts Legislature has unfortunately become a place where debate is virtually non-existent. Bills are passed with little or no discussion, and the voice of the voters is often ignored. By snubbing the League of Women Voters and avoiding public debate of the issues, Rep. Rogers' behavior is sadly reflective of what is wrong with state government in Massachusetts.

Dee Sullivan,  
Norwood

## EXACTLY WHAT WE NEED

To the Editor:

So, let me get this straight. When a person becomes a selectman, participates fully in all meeting and discussions, does the due diligence needed to fully understand even the most complex issues, volunteers to serve on numerous committees (even the unpopular ones), demonstrates leadership in moving issues to resolution, these are things we don't want to see in a Selectman? Seems to me that is EXACTLY what we want in our elected officials.

Last week's Letter to the Editor criticizing Selectman Plasko seemed to me to be the venting of someone who didn't like a particular stand the Selectmen took on an issue near and dear to the writer. That, frankly, is a very shortsighted view of someone who has served Norwood in various capacities over the past 30-plus years as Selectman, Chairman

of the Selectmen's Board, Town Meeting member and Moderator.

In 2003, I served on a study committee with Bill Plasko, Susan Wilson McQuaid and Will Krasnow. This committee was charged with the task of looking at the need for a Personnel by-law and Personnel Board. Mr. Plasko was selected as chair of this committee, which ultimately recommended and established Norwood's Personnel Board and Human Resources function.

As chairperson of the committee, I found Mr. Plasko to be well organized, professional, highly committed to the task at hand and a pleasure to work with. Norwood is very fortunate to have a person like Mr. Plasko serving on the Board of Selectmen.

Mr. Plasko has got to stay.  
Robert Donnelly  
Norwood

## DPW project on track, kind of

Sam Nickerson  
Staff Reporter

Despite significant progress on the Department of Public Works (DPW) construction projects, some sites remain slightly behind schedule. Compass Project Management officials said during a Permanent Building Construction Committee meeting on Sept. 25.

Compass representative Bryan Jarvis said that unforeseen conditions and issues with vendors were among the main causes of the delay, but construction company Colantonio was readjusting their plans appropriately and are under budget.

"At this point, we feel that they're actually in a pretty good condition," Jarvis said. "It's not exactly where they wanted to be, but it's still on track. We think it's where the project needs to be."

The large vehicle storage garage on Lenox Street is up and running, Jarvis said, with mechanics operating out of the building, which is substantially complete, minus several punch

list items. Jarvis reported that DPW staff had been trained on the systems at the site as well.

At the time of the meeting, metal panels had been put up around the perimeter of building number six on Winter Street, and Compass officials anticipated the roof paneling to be finished this past weekend. The structure is slated for completion by the end of November.

Jarvis reported that Colantonio was around a month behind at the Lyman Place site, particularly due to complications with building number two. While previous plans included tackling the building in parts, Jarvis said the plan is now for Colantonio to attack the building as a whole, now that older structures on site have been demolished.

Steel for the building is projected to be installed between December and January, with overall completion taking place in the spring.

Jarvis also reported that Colantonio was slightly ahead of their most recent schedule at building number one, especially in regard to masonry for the

building's stair towers. The expected date of completion is the end of July.

According to Jarvis, Colantonio had estimated they were two months behind schedule overall, but Compass feels it is closer to only one month because of sites like Winter Street, where they are on target. Colantonio's workforce has been expedited and crews have been working Saturdays to make up for any lost ground.

The Compass representatives also spoke about an upcoming due date for bids for a fabric salt shed project with a concrete block foundation at the Winter Street Composting Facility. Bids are due on Oct. 16 and the structure is to be completed in time for winter, between November and December. This salt shed will eventually serve as auxiliary storage, in conjunction with a larger storage shed.

Jarvis said that the town has previously just kept a tarp over the salt at Lyman and

DPW  
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ing, the Selectmen discussed operations management of the proposed ice rink in South Norwood with Town Manager John Carroll.

Carroll proposed setting up an interim committee to make recommendations to the Selectmen about the rink's governance, citing a similar process in Milton.

Selectman Paul Bishop said he had full confidence in the existing rink committee and did not see a reason for another committee.

Carroll countered that the town engineer and other important officials were not on the existing committee, on which he and Plasko serve, and it was not broad enough to make operations decisions.

Plasko said he was torn on the issue, but thought that a Request for Proposals for a management firm might be all that is needed.

"This is much too important an issue to shoot from the hip without investigating all of the options that are available,"

Donohue said.

Based on a motion by Bishop, Selectmen voted to have the rink construction committee come before the Board to present more ideas.

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