



Shape Tomorrow.  
Vote Today.

Lowell Votes  
C/O CBA, 517 Moody St. 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Lowell, MA 01854  
info@lowellvotes.org

## 2017 Kick-Off Meeting Notes

We had a great first meeting of 2017 last week! Thanks to all who came, but don't worry if you missed it, there's lots of ways to do your bit going forward. Read over the list of committees below and their planned action items see if there's one you might want to join! Reply to this email if you want to get connected.

### Neighborhood and Multicultural, Meeting in February

- Recruit and advocate for translators at polling locations
- Engage with faith-based communities with information and encouragement
- Organize multi-ethnic meet ups for civic engagement in each neighborhood

### Events, Next Meeting Tuesday, Jan 31

- Go to existing events to distribute voting information and register voters
- Identify events that will make biggest impact and recruit volunteers
- Plan a special summer/fall rally event

### Canvassing and Voter Contact, House Party Meeting TBD

- Contact voters door-to-door to collect input into the questions for a candidate survey
- Later distribute voter guides door-to-door
- Consider a "non-binding" ballot initiative to drive civic engagement by underserved communities

### Youth Outreach, TBD

- Organize and advocate for Civics Day at Lowell High School with meetings with councils, city officials, and shadowing in various departments
- Create a Youth Commission to advise City on Policies and provide input
- Lowell Votes Youth Survey to solicit input on how youth want to be involved

### Media and Education, TBD

- Create a separate Twitter to re-tweet all local political topics
- Create section of website for candidates materials like press releases
- Create a multilingual candidate guide with informative website

**Full Notes on Following Pages!**

## Neighborhoods and Multicultural

Goals identified of group and misc. Notes:

- To Encourage diverse populations across the city to get involved at all levels of government
- To organize multi-ethnic neighborhood meet-ups
- To provide civic engagement presentations with residents in neighborhoods and schools where we work
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Ideas and Opportunities/Questions/Experiences/Needs

Jay: Tabling and Announcements about Lowell Votes over PA can be made at the Tyler Park Summer neighborhood concert

Cliff: Do we have the data and is it effective to register people at State offices - RMV/DTA, etc.

Rebecca: No personal connections to do so but wondering if we can reach out to more neighborhood groups and festivals

Rosa: Should engage more with Cambodian New Year in April and the various celebrations at Pailin Park around that time. St. Patricks also has a celebration.

She is willing to continue to get the word out to the congregation after the sermons

Jey: Spoke about personal experiences registering voters and providing translation - Would be willing to do both again

Yun-Ju: It's one thing to register voters but another to get help educate and motivate them in culturally competent ways. The city doesn't do a good job of informing voters across the city of changes in locations or how to request translation (in their own language). CBA has brought translators in the past to polling locations (Library, etc.) and that really helps.

Cliff: We need to reach down to those who can reach out to the unreachable - because the people here are not necessarily the people to reach them.

Rosa agreed with this and the need to continue spreading the word through all our networks.

Joey: To make it accessible to residents - We need to identify the issues that are directly relevant to people's lives and make it easy for them to access information about those issues.

Yun-Ju: Is this the group to discuss the district/ward rep. Issue if we are talking about reaching out to residents in diverse parts of the city?

Mary: There will be a meeting in February for affected residents to learn more and consider signing on to the suit of interested. Give them Lowell Votes info or have them contact Lowell Alliance if they are interested.

## Events

It was nice to see/meet you tonight. We appreciate your support and hope to see you stay involved in any way you feel comfortable.

To briefly recap today's events breakout session:

- Tabling events
  - Determine goals and messaging for tabling as the voting season progresses
    - Distribute voting Information
    - Lowell Votes brand
    - Register voters
  - Make outline of events that will make the most impact
  - Start to fill in the calendar and match volunteers with event contact people
  - Recruit people as proxy tablers
- Rally for Civic Engagement
  - We'll work with Chris Hayes on this event
  - This will be a topic for a later date, closer to the election

Our first event planning committee will be held next Tuesday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 7 pm at my condo, located at **181 Market St unit 12**. When you enter the building, buzz unit 12 and go to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Take a left out of the elevator to unit 12. Please call if you have any issues.

We'll meet for an hour and I think we can get a lot accomplished on the first 3 tabling bullets above. We can all start to gather a tabling network and as new events pop up, which happens often in Lowell, we can ask for volunteers.

## Canvassing/Voter Contact

We discussed the success of the 2015 effort. The consensus was that contacting voters on issues, not candidates, helped break down barriers when knocking doors. The focus on soliciting input from those we talked to, then putting those concerns into a Candidate Questionnaire should be repeated and improved upon.

We talked briefly about what voters we may 'target' in 2017.

- "Sleepy City Voters:" Those that have voted sparingly in City elections, but not in the last few cycles.
- "Cusp State/Federal Voters:" that have a high propensity for 'even year elections,' but don't vote in City elections. These folks should also have a stable 'tenure of residency' and possibly old enough to have kids in the school system.

We skimmed over the possibility of using a 'non-binding' ballot initiative to drive voter interest and turnout. I am clarifying HOW that would happen. If the Council collaborates, it's easy. If they don't, we may need to gather up to 6,500+(10% Registered voters) signatures to put it on the ballot. Such an enterprise would be huge, but COULD be a building block to real civic engagement by underserved communities.

We discussed the imperative to have volunteers and funds to print literature and fund an outreach campaign. I'd say, conservatively, > \$5,000.

We are going to set up a house party to brainstorm further. Details are being developed. So, TBD.

## **Youth Outreach**

Group talked about a number of strategies that could be used to engage and outreach to more young people. We started with potential places to connect with young people that included things like schools (e.g. LHS, Lowell Catholic, Innovation Academy, Greater Voc, UML, MCC), clubs, barbershops, youth development orgs (e.g. UTEC, Girls Inc., B&G), nonprofits (e.g. Mill City Grows, CMAA, CBA) and churches / faith orgs. Using incentives (e.g. raffles, food) was noted as important and necessary.

We also talked about the need for youth to have more opportunities to learn more about how to be civic. This included everything from learning about public issues and discussing them, to running simulations of how government works to learning about the voting process and registering (or pre-registering) to vote. The main point was to increase knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary for civic engagement.

One possible action could be pushing for a Civics Day at the High School where teens would do a field trip to visit city government. They would meet with councils, city officials, and shadow individuals in various departments. Such a day would include a visit to the Elections office and get a demo of how voting worked.

Another action suggested was working with the city to create a youth commission, much like the Lowell Council on Aging or Boston's Youth Council. This body would advise the city on policies and provide input on plans from a youth perspective. They would bring youth voices to the city.

The final action the group discussed and the place to probably start was to create a Lowell Votes Youth Survey to solicit input from a wide range of young people in the city on what they want the city to do and how they want to be involved. Ideally this survey would be constructed in collaboration with some local youth and then promoted in a wide range of venues. Including prizes or incentives for filling out the survey is suggested. From the survey, we might cull some youth who could be a youth committee of Lowell Votes.

## **Media and Education**

Lots of enthusiasm for having an active social media presence. James suggests having a separate twitter that just retweets all local politics related stories, suggested he might be willing to help with it. Also suggested having a section of the website for any candidate materials like press releases and whatnot, just based on whatever people want to send us. This might help lower profile or low tech candidates get the word out.

Rosa is happy to step up as a volunteer with bilingual Spanish and graphic design skills. We talked about maybe making some infographics based on what we hear from the candidates.

Joe is happy to help contribute to the candidate guide, as per usual.

I think other than that folks want to see us do what we've gotten good at doing: putting out a solid candidate guide and maintaining an informative website. Not very exciting or innovative, but it definitely sounds like a doable goal to me!