

Clerk's Corner September 2016

To Vote or not to vote?

To vote or not to vote? The answer is yes, everyone who is eligible should vote at each and every opportunity. It is evident by the recent voter turnout that not everyone feels the same way. There may be many reasons to not vote but going forward not being able to get to the polls on Election Day will not be a valid excuse.

As part of the Election Law Reform in 2014, Massachusetts is introducing Early Voting for the November 8, 2016 Presidential Election. The law states that early voting in Massachusetts will only be available for the biennial (every other year) state elections. Early voting in person or by mail will be open during a 12 calendar day window. At a minimum, early voting must be available during the regular town hall hours. Beyond these requirements, there is flexibility for each municipality to decide on locations and additional hours, if any, of early voting.

The Massachusetts Early Voting period for November 8<sup>th</sup> runs from Monday October 24 through Friday November 4, 2016. In Wenham, we will be holding early voting in Town Hall during regularly scheduled hours: Monday, Wednesday & Thursday 9am-4:30pm, Tuesday 9am-7pm and Friday 9am-1pm. Plus, for the convenience of the voters we will also offer early voting on Thursday 10/27 & 11/3 starting at 7:30am as well as from 9am-12pm on Saturday 10/29.

Voters may cast their ballots during these days at Town Hall. Once an early ballot has been cast, that voter cannot appear on Election Day. Voters may also request an early vote ballot by mail via an application to the Town Clerk. Early vote ballots may be returned in person by the voter or by mail. Early vote ballots that are mailed in must be received by the Town Clerk prior to the close of polls on Election Day.

The early voting initiative does not dismiss the absentee balloting option which is still available for any voter who wishes to request such a ballot.

Going back to whether to vote or not, we as US citizens should learn a lesson from England's last election. Even with 72% turnout, it seems as if

the majority did not win because too many voters assumed their vote was not needed and did not count. The lesson should be everyone should vote because everyone's vote counts and is essential to the democratic process in every instance.

In Wenham, there are several new projects happening. The inaugural Citizen's Leadership Academy starts this month and the See Click Fix application is up and running. More information on these programs can be found on the website, [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov). Lastly, please remember to conserve water in and out of the home as we are still in severe drought conditions.

*Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Town Clerk of Wenham in April 2014. More information on the Wenham Town Clerk can be found at [www.wenhamma.gov](http://www.wenhamma.gov) and by following the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook.*