

# THE ELLINGTON CONNECTION

## Important Information regarding the November 6, 2007 Election

### Election Day

**November 6, 2007**

**Polls will be open**

**6:00 AM to 8:00 PM**

**District 1: Ellington High School**

**District 2: Crystal Lake School**

Note: Non-electors (on the grand list as of October 2006) who wish to vote on ballot questions regarding Farmland Preservation or the Charter Revision may do so at the Town Hall.

To determine your voting district, visit our website: [www.ellington-ct.gov](http://www.ellington-ct.gov)  
Select 'Town Services'  
Select 'Registrar of Voters'

### ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Absentee Ballots are available in the Town Clerk's Office.

**Deadline to apply is November 5**

Any qualified voter unable to vote due to the following reasons may obtain an Absentee Ballot: Illness or physical disability; absence from town during all election hours; religious beliefs forbidding secular activity on election day; serving as an election official at a polling place other than their own; or active service in the Armed Forces.

In order for your vote to count, Absentee Ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's office in person by 6:00 pm on November 5 **OR** if returned by mail, must be received by the Town Clerk no later than 5:00 pm on November 6.

<b>Registrar of Voters Office Hours:</b>	Monday	2 pm—5 pm
	Tuesday	9 am—12noon
	Wednesday	10 am—1 pm
	Thursday	10 am—1 pm

**Telephone: 870-3107**

### REGISTER TO VOTE

The deadline for registration to vote in the November 6, 2007 election is October 23 for mail-in forms and October 30, 2007 for in-person registration (see Voter Making Sessions below). However, if a person becomes 18 years of age, a citizen or resident of the Town after October 23, 2007, that person may register on or before 12:00 noon on November 5, 2007, at the Office of the Registrar of Voters. If you are voting as a non-electors on ballot questions, please keep in mind that you must be on the grand list of October, 2006, to be eligible to vote.

To register to become a voter in Ellington or to change your voting information, please call 870-3107 or pick up a voter registration card at the Registrar of Voters Office, the Hall Memorial Library or the Town Clerk's Office. You may also get an application online from the Secretary of State's website, [www.sots.state.ct.us](http://www.sots.state.ct.us). Return the cards to the Registrar of Voters, P.O. Box 187, Ellington, CT 06029.

### VOTER MAKING SESSIONS

Date	Time	Location
October 20, 2007	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Hall Memorial Library
October 23, 2007	10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.	Town Hall
October 30, 2007	9:00 a.m.– 8:00 p.m.	Town Hall

### NEW VOTING MACHINES

The new voting machines will be in place for Election Day. They are quite simple to use and we will have personnel available at the polls to guide you through the process. In addition, voting machine demonstrations will also be held on the following dates:

### VOTING MACHINE DEMONSTRATIONS

Date	Time	Location
October 17, 2007	4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.	Big Y
October 20, 2007	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Hall Memorial Library
October 23, 2007	10:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m.	Town Hall
October 29, 2007	4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Senior Center
October 30, 2007	9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.	Town Hall

The Office of the Secretary of State has prepared a 90 second instructional video and has made it available on the YouTube website: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nVRvR-kWxil>

Or view it through our website at [www.ellington-ct.gov](http://www.ellington-ct.gov), select "Our Town" and click the link in the Election 2007 announcement".

## EXPLANATORY TEXT FOR NOVEMBER 6, 2007 BALLOT QUESTIONS

In addition to the slate of candidates running for election on November 6, 2007, the following questions will also appear on the ballot. Please take the time to read and understand the questions so you can make an informed vote at the polls on Election Day.

**Farmland Preservation:** At their July 16, 2007 meeting, the Board of Selectmen voted to add the following question to the November 6, 2007 ballot:

**“Shall the Town of Ellington appropriate \$2,000,000 for acquisition of development rights with respect to agricultural lands constituting working farms, and authorize the issue of bonds, notes and other obligations to finance the portion of the appropriation not defrayed by grants?”**

A “yes” vote on the farmland preservation question would authorize the town to borrow up to \$2,000,000 either as needed or in anticipation of the need and to use it to purchase the development rights of land currently used as a “working farm”. The farmer would continue to own the land and be able to continue farming the land but would not be able to develop the land for housing or commercial uses. No particular land is identified in this question and any particular development rights being purchased will require future town meeting approval.

**Town Charter:** The Town Charter is the basic law that defines the organization, powers, functions and essential procedures for the Town of Ellington. This important document guides our leaders and citizens in the smooth operation of the Town. In September 2005, the Board of Selectmen appointed a six-member Charter Revision Commission. The members, Joe Wehr (Chair), Charlotte Adams, Tim Olmstead, John O’Shaughnessy, Gary Riley and Terry Shook, were charged with reviewing the Charter and recommending changes. The Commission solicited input from all Departments and Commission/Boards/Agencies and scheduled a public hearing to listen to citizens’ comments. The next 14 months were spent discussing the proposed revisions. The questions, as they will appear on the ballot and the explanation of each, are listed below.

The following documents are available for review in the Town Clerk’s Office and the First Selectman’s Office and on our website, [www.ellington-ct.gov](http://www.ellington-ct.gov): Town Charter, Charter Revision Commission Final Report and the Board of Selectmen’s Minutes approving the Charter revisions for voting.

### Proposed Charter Revision Ballot Questions

Questions as they will appear on the ballot are in bold; followed by an explanation.

**1. Shall the Planning and Zoning Commission be appointed rather than be elected?**

Currently the Planning & Zoning Commission (PZC) consists of six elected regular members and three appointed alternate members. A “yes” vote on Question #1 would eliminate the election of regular members who would then be appointed.

**2. Shall the Zoning Board of Appeals be appointed rather than be elected?**

Currently the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) consists of six elected regular members and three appointed alternate members. A “yes” vote on Question #2 would eliminate the election of regular members who would then be appointed.

**3. Shall the Planning & Zoning Commission consist of 7 regular and 2 alternate members rather than the present 6 regular members and 3 alternate members?**

A “yes” vote on Question #3 would increase the number of regular members on the PZC by one to a total of seven, and decrease the number of alternate members by one.

**4. Shall the Zoning Board of Appeals consist of 5 regular and 3 alternate members rather than the present 6 regular members and 3 alternate members?**

A “yes” vote on Question #4 would reduce the number of regular members on the ZBA from six to five, the statutory number of ZBA members, and makes no change in the number of alternate members.

**5. Shall a Shared Services Commission be established for the purpose of recommending areas where the sharing of support services between the Town and the Board of Education is in the best interest of Town residents by increasing efficiency and reducing costs?**

A "yes" vote on Question #5 would result in the establishment of a permanent Shared Services Commission with the majority of its members not representing any of the agencies responsible for areas of the budget. This Commission would be responsible for finding services that might be shared by more than one agency or department in a more cost-effective manner. This commission would have no authority to require a change in practice except by negotiation and persuasion.

**6. Shall the Board of Selectmen annually review and modify goals to be accomplished over the next five years?**

A "yes" vote on Question #6 would require the Board of Selectmen to set and modify goals over a five-year planning period.

**7. If the vote on the Annual Town Budget is adjourned to a referendum, shall all further votes on the Annual Town Budget be by referendum every other week until final approval is given?**

A "yes" vote on Question #7 will not require the annual budget be voted on at referendum, but if a referendum vote is held under existing rules and the budget is defeated, then all future votes on that budget must be by referendum. This may avoid the confusion that a later vote may be taken at a town meeting. This question also would require the vote be taken every other week instead of the current weekly vote where there may be insufficient time to reconsider the budget or to give required notice of the later vote.

**8. Shall specified financial limits be increased to recognize inflation?**

A "yes" vote to Question #8 will affect the following sections:

SECTION 504. GENERAL POWERS AND DUTIES - re: accepting real estate, increase \$20,000 to \$40,000.

SECTION 603. SPECIAL TOWN MEETINGS (c) & (d) - re: accepting real estate and sale of town-owned real property, increase \$20,000 to \$40,000.

SECTION 813. PERMANENT BUILDING COMMITTEE (b) - re: cost of construction projects, increase \$20,000 to \$40,000.

SECTION 1004. DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE ON THE BUDGET - remove 7% maximum to the Capital Reserve Fund; maintains Town's credit rating.

SECTION 1004. DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF FINANCE ON THE BUDGET - increase amount from \$30,000 to \$40,000 for expenditures or transfers requiring a town meeting.

SECTION 1008. EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS - increase maximum emergency appropriation from \$100,000 to \$250,000.

SECTION 1009. EXPENDITURES AND ACCOUNTING - allows Board of Finance to approve additional appropriations in an amount up to \$40,000 or to close out a capital projects under \$40,000, which were approved at the Annual Town Budget meeting.

**9. Shall purchases that exceed \$1,000,000 require a referendum vote?**

A "yes" vote to Question #9 will change SECTION 603 by adding a new subsection (j), to require purchases that exceed \$1,000,000 be approved at a referendum.

**10. May non-electors be appointed to ad hoc committees?**

A "yes" vote to Question #10 will permit non-electors to be appointed to temporary committees such as youth services, drug advisory and graduation committees. Currently non-elector employees and interested business people are not eligible to serve. This would not change the requirement that only electors may serve on regular commissions.

**11. Shall a Senior Center Endowment Fund Committee and Flood and Erosion Control Board be established in the charter?**

A "yes" vote to Question #11 will create a permanent Senior Center Endowment Fund Committee to manage financial assets of the Senior Center not supported by taxes. It will also create a Flood and Erosion Control Board as a permanent board as required by statute.

**12. Shall an Ethics Commission be established in the charter?**

A “yes” vote on Question #12 will create an Ethics Commission that would be charged with developing an ethics code to be approved by the Board of Selectmen and thereafter to inform officials and the public as to those rules and to review issues that may arise under the code.

**13. Shall section 918 Fire Department and Section 920 Ambulance Service be repealed and replaced with a new section entitled Emergency Services?**

A “yes” vote rescinds certain sections that separately refer to the fire and ambulance departments that provide emergency services and combine the reference into a single section. It also requires that the Town execute a written contract with each of the services. It does not change any of the organizations now providing any of these services nor change their responsibility.

**14. Shall the Board of Selectmen have the authority to require separate votes on the Town’s operating budget and the Town’s Education budget after the combined budget has failed to be adopted at least once?**

Currently the vote on the annual budget requires a single vote for the total appropriation for all departments. A “yes” vote on Question #14 would permit the Board of Selectmen to divide the question and require a vote on the general town budget and a separate vote on the Board of Education budget. This ability to separate the budgets into two votes could only be exercised after the budget has been defeated at least once either at town meeting or at referendum.

**15. Shall all grants that have the potential to impose any financial burden on the Town be approved by the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance prior to acceptance?**

A “yes” vote on Question #15 requires that before the Town accepts any grant that may require the expenditure of Town funds, that both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance approve the grant.

**16. Shall technical changes be made to the charter to comply with State Statutes and collective bargaining agreements and to clarify ambiguities and format?**

A “yes” vote on Question #16 will allow revisions for clarifications and grammatical, formatting and technical changes.

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Note: Charter amendments approved on November 6, 2007 shall take effect on January 1, 2008 except that any person who was elected shall be entitled to complete his or her elected term even if the board to which he or she was elected has been reduced in number or changed to an appointed position. Appointments shall be made pursuant to the Town Charter to transition to staggered terms as soon as possible, as vacancies occur in elected terms or expire.

The information in this newsletter was prepared through the  
Town Clerk’s Office

**Town Hall  
55 Main Street  
P O Box 187  
Ellington, CT 06029**

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