

Correspondence received by the  
Concord Select Board

Week Ending – May 20, 2024

1. Ann Schaffer – 41 Millrun Lane
2. Chesley Chen – 196 Williams Road
3. Scott Gillis – 80 Alford Circle
4. Scott Gillis – 80 Alford Circle
5. Dan Dimancescu – 444 Main Street
6. Ellen Quackenbush – 206 Prairie Street
7. Sue St. Croix – 32 Center Village Drove
8. Craig Awmiller – 27 Lang Street
9. Mari Weinberg via Joe Palumbo – 26 Hillside Avenue
10. Margaret Schumacher – 25 Highland Street
11. Matt Conroy – 449 Barretts Mill Road
12. Chesley Chan – 196 Williams Road
13. Tooley Rogers – 30 Elsinore Street
14. Judith Frediani – 30 Center Village Drive
15. Mark Hanson – 340 Holden Wood Road
16. Noor Kassamali – 599 Bedford Street
17. Janet S. Benvenuti – 35 Jonas Brown Circle
18. Susan Mlodozeniec – 392 Border Road
19. Peggy Yalman – 724 Main Street
20. Rebecca Crimmin – 28 Ridgewood Road
21. Kathy Kolowich – 25 Lowell Road
22. Mari Alexander – 172 Ministerial Drive
23. Leanne Bateman – 17 Shirley Street

24. Kim Frederick – 166 Main Street

**From:** [Ann Schauffler](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Ellen Garrison Middle School  
**Date:** Friday, May 10, 2024 4:02:36 PM

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You don't often get email from ann.schauffler@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board Members:

Below is a copy of an email that I sent to the School Committee:

Dear Committee Members:

The Town Meeting vote, The Select Board Vote as well as many groups and committees in the town of Concord, have made it clear - overwhelmingly- that their preference is to name the new middle school after Ellen Garrison, a Concord native who led an accomplished life, paving the way for justice and equity in education for all and as well as in civil rights.

I would hope that your committee could see their way to naming the middle school after Garrison.

As you know, for many many years the Town Meeting votes have spoken for the town and as a matter of course, the votes indicate and determine the preferences and needs of our community.

Let Concord be known as an important participant in the road to equity and justice as we take this opportunity to honorably recognize this daughter of our historically significant town, especially in light of our 250th Celebration, by naming the middle school after Ellen Garrison.

Your committee would make history by doing so.

Thank you,  
Ann Schauffler  
41 Millrun Lane

**From:** [Chesley Chen](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Cc:** [Chesley Chen](#)  
**Subject:** Ellen Garrison Middle School and School Committee meeting on 5/7/24  
**Date:** Friday, May 10, 2024 4:04:21 PM

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You don't often get email from chesleychen@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Concord Select Board,  
First, thank you for your support of the name Ellen Garrison Middle School.

I am Chesley Chen, 196 William Road. I'm writing to call to your attention to my interaction with the School Committee on Tuesday night. You might have been there or might have already heard about it from other townspeople. I went to the School Committee to make my public statement in favor of the name Ellen Garrison Middle School. I was the first to arrive and sign it. I went early to make sure I would have a chance to speak. I filled out a speaker's form. For some reason, I did not "make the cut." When I asked the School Committee about the selection process, I was abruptly cutoff.

The next morning, I emailed a copy of my public statement to the School Committee. (See below) I have not received a response.

I have a history of community service in Concord having been a Boy Scout Scoutmaster/Leader for 11 years (2006-2017.) During my tenure, we helped 47 young men earn their Eagle Scout ranks. That's one-third of all the Eagle Scouts in the Troop's 48-year history. Boy Scouts was all about helping boys (and now girls) develop into young adults and leaders. We instilled in them values such as inclusion, fairness, honesty, common courtesy, etc. That's one reason I was so taken aback on Tuesday night by the School Committee behavior. I was left speechless.

I will be at the Select Board Meeting on Monday and happy to share more at the meeting if appropriate.

Thanks for all your service and support!  
Ches

My email to the School Committee, sent on May 8th:

Dear Concord School Committee,  
This is the public statement I prepared for last night's School Committee meeting. As you know and can see on the sign-up sheet, I was the first person to arrive. I wrongly assumed that would assure me an opportunity to speak. (First come, first served as in Town Meeting.) Unfortunately, I was excluded from speaking. The process did not allow. Frankly, the process for signing in and filling out the speaker's sheet was very opaque. I only heard about it through word of mouth. After I asked the School Committee my question about process, I was left even more unsure how speakers were prioritized and selected. It appeared that the people on Zoom only had to raise their hands to be chosen. Can you clarify how the speaker inclusion / exclusion process works?

Thank you for your attention.  
Chesley Chen, 196 Williams Road.

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Chesley Chen Public Statement prepared for Concord School Committee Meeting, May 7, 2024

Hi. I am Chesley Chen, and I live at 196 Williams Road.

I came here to ask you to name the new middle school the Ellen Garrison Middle School.

I am a person of color. I am Chinese American. My wife Mary and I raised our 4 children here. They all went through the Concord / CCHS system. Mary and I are two-time Concord residents, first from 1987-91 and then again from 1999 to now. We love it here.

We've always felt that the town - and its reputation - represents a culture of inclusion that welcomes and embraces diversity. Chinese people have a long history of being excluded in America. In fact, yesterday was the 142<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. We've all come a long way since then.

I'm proud that the vote was an overwhelming "Yes" at the town meeting in support of the name Ellen Garrison Middle School. Thank you, people of Concord!

Rather than go over things already discussed, I want to talk about reputation.

If we go with the Ellen Garrison Middle School, Concord protects and keeps our reputation and culture of inclusion. A culture that welcomes and embraces diversity. A town that we can all be proud of.

My fear is that if the School Committee doesn't choose the Ellen Garrison Middle School, it will tarnish the Town's reputation, and by association, the townspeople. Concord could earn a reputation of turning our backs on our history of inclusion. I really don't want to see that happen.

The School Committee has a rare opportunity to pivot and protect Concord's

reputation and maybe even improve it if messaged properly. That's all in your control.

My question is...

Which reputation do you want Concord to be known for? Which reputation do you want us all to be known for?

For me, the very choice is clear.

Thank you.

*Chesley Chen*

**From:** [Scotthgillis](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Mary Hartman](#); [Mark Howell](#); [Terri Ackerman](#); [Cameron McKennitt](#); [Wendy Rovelli](#)  
**Cc:** [Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator](#); [Kaari Tari](#); [Scott H Gillis](#)  
**Subject:** Low Cost Opportunity to "Hear Voters' Opinions"  
**Date:** Saturday, May 11, 2024 2:10:57 PM  
**Attachments:** [apple-touch-icon.png](#)

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Dear Select Board Members,

A Special Town Election on single topic is an agenda item for your upcoming Select Board Meeting.

Massachusetts General Law Chapter 53, Section 18A allows our Select Board to add non-binding referendum questions to any Town Election. The question(s) must be added 35 days prior to the Town Election.

General Law - Part I, Title VIII, Chapter  
53, Section 18A  
[malegislature.gov](http://malegislature.gov)



Data from the Town Clerk's webpage shows that turnout for Special Town Elections is significantly higher than attendance at Annual Town Meetings. Our Town Clerk estimates a Special Town Election costs about \$25,000 to conduct. Adding a few non-binding referendum questions would add less than 10% in incremental costs.

It is expected that our Annual Town Meeting Study Committee will survey registered voters as part of their process. It would be very cost effective to ask a question or two during the upcoming Special Town Election. Perhaps our Moderator or any of our Select Board members can think of one or two helpful questions.

The Select Board may wish to ask a question or two about a Concord matter unrelated to Annual Town Meeting.

Please consider adding a few questions with the goal of seeking the voice of our Town and taking advantage of this cost effective opportunity. It would provide a large number of registered voters with a convenient way to share their opinions. A high interest non-binding referendum question might even increase voter turnout.

Below is a simple question as an example:

If the Massachusetts Legislature allows remote participation during Annual Town Meetings would you like the option to participate remotely? Please answer yes or no.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Scott

Scott H. Gillis  
80 Alford Circle  
[scotthgillis@comcast.net](mailto:scotthgillis@comcast.net)  
781-799-5594



**From:** [Scotthgillis](#)  
**To:** [Mary Hartman](#); [Terri Ackerman](#); [Wendy Rovelli](#); [Mark Howell](#); [Cameron McKennitt](#); [Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator](#)  
**Cc:** [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Kaari Tari](#)  
**Subject:** Draft Public Opinion Advisory Questions  
**Date:** Sunday, May 12, 2024 7:53:24 AM

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Good morning, Select Board Members and Town Moderator,

Below are a two draft public opinion advisory questions for each of you and our Town Meeting Study Committee Members to consider. Most likely some of you will be able to think of additional, modified or alternative questions that would allow registered voters to provide their opinions in an easy, rapid and low cost way.

Question 1) Because attendance is low at Annual Town Meeting do you think Concord would be better served by a Representative Town Meeting like Lexington? Please vote yes or no.

Question 2) If the Massachusetts Legislature allows remote participation during Annual Town Meetings would you like the option to participate remotely? Please vote yes or no.

These draft questions are offered as nothing more than discussion starters.

Sincerely,  
Scott

Scott H. Gillis  
80 Alford Circle  
[scotthgillis@comcast.net](mailto:scotthgillis@comcast.net)  
781-799-5594

On May 11, 2024, at 5:03 PM, Scotthgillis <[scotthgillis@comcast.net](mailto:scotthgillis@comcast.net)> wrote:

Good afternoon, Carmin,

Thank you very much for your quick and thoughtful response!

With best wishes for a nice weekend,  
Scott

Scott H. Gillis  
[scotthgillis@comcast.net](mailto:scotthgillis@comcast.net)  
781-799-5594

On May 11, 2024, at 4:55 PM, Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator  
<[moderator@concordma.gov](mailto:moderator@concordma.gov)> wrote:

Scott,

I know that OML prevents SB from commenting on your suggestion, but I want to note that this is a very good idea for the Town Meeting Study Committee to consider – the topic will be on the TMSC's agenda for its first meeting next week ( meeting should be posted on Monday). If there is enough time for public opinion advisory questions to be formulated and presented to the Select Board and included on the Special Town Election ballot, TMSC may well wish to so request, since soliciting the opinions of Concord voters is part of its charge.

The timing on this may work out, or it may not, but definitely is worth thinking through. I believe that SB meets again on Monday May 20 - perhaps that agenda could include discussion of specific ballot questions and whether to include them on the Special Town Meeting ballot.

Appreciate the suggestion.

Carmin C. Reiss  
Moderator  
Concord, MA 01742

*Please be advised that the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email to and from a government email address is a public record unless the content of the email falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Laws.*

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**From:** Scotthgillis <scotthgillis@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 11, 2024 2:10 PM  
**To:** Shannon McAndrew <smcandrew@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>  
**Cc:** Carmin Reiss, Town Moderator <moderator@concordma.gov>; Kaari Tari <ktari@concordma.gov>; Scott H Gillis <scotthgillis@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Low Cost Opportunity to “Hear Voters’ Opinions”

Dear Select Board Members,

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[<apple  
touch-  
icon.pr](#)

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The Select Board may wish to ask a question or two about a Concord matter unrelated to Annual Town Meeting.

Please consider adding a few questions with the goal of seeking the voice of our Town and taking advantage of this cost effective opportunity. It would provide a large number of registered voters with a convenient way to share their opinions. A high interest non-binding referendum question might even increase voter turnout.

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Thank you for your consideration,  
Scott

Scott H. Gillis  
80 Alford Circle  
[scotthgillis@comcast.net](mailto:scotthgillis@comcast.net)  
781-799-5594



**From:** [Dan Dimancescu](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Cc:** [Joe Palumbo](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Naming of the Middle School "Ellen Garrison"  
**Date:** Sunday, May 12, 2024 11:48:06 AM

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[You don't often get email from [tsgdd@mac.com](mailto:tsgdd@mac.com). Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

To the Select Board - This message is to affirm my support for the recommended naming by the School Committee as the Ellen Garrison Middle School — a view discussed and supported by a preponderant majority of Article 22 at Town Meeting. That the recommendation was ignored by the School Committee at its last meeting is unacceptable. I urge that the Board ensure that the School Committee respond to the recommended “Ellen Garrison” naming of the Middle School.

Dan Dimancescu  
444 Monument St, Concord, MA 01742

To the Concord Selectboard,

Town Meeting is the purest form of democracy.

On April 29<sup>th</sup>, with 1131 Concord residents present, Town Meeting approved the Concord School budget. On the next night, April 30<sup>th</sup>, with 977 Concord residents present, Town Meeting overwhelmingly urged the School Committee to name the middle school for Ellen Garrison.

Both these votes are the voice of the Town of Concord.

I am dismayed that the Concord School Committee seems to accept the first vote yet dismisses the second.

I ask the Selectboard join with the Town Meeting in urging the School Committee to respond to this very clear ask of Town Meeting 2024.

Ellen Quackenbush  
206 Prairie St

**From:** [Sue StCroix](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Warrant #22  
**Date:** Sunday, May 12, 2024 6:17:03 PM

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You don't often get email from [suestcroix@outlook.com](mailto:suestcroix@outlook.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board Members,

I would appreciate your thoughts on how one goes about receiving an official response to a town warrant non binding request. I do understand that the school committee is not obligated to remain the middle school, but such a resounding vote deserves an official response.

I will again make this request of the School Committee and would appreciate any guidance or support you could provide to make this happen.

Best regards,

Sue StCroix  
32 Center Village Dr

**From:** [Pinkerton From the Pound](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Craig Awmiller 5.13.24 Letter to Concord Select Board  
**Date:** Sunday, May 12, 2024 9:13:23 PM

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You don't often get email from cstanleyawmiller@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

*By Electronic Mail*

May 13, 2024

Dear Concord Select Board Members:

I write to express my thanks to the Select Board, and to our community at large, for their overwhelming support of Warrant Article 22, asking that our new middle school be named after Ellen Garrison.

The town of Concord does not make news when it names a school for one of its residents who struggled to advance the causes of democracy and freedom. Many in our town—from those who died at the North Bridge to those who died on the battlefields of the Civil War—have similarly struggled. We do not make news when we uphold that tradition. We make news when we *do not*.

This is reflected in the unflattering local news coverage that has already appeared.

At its May 7, 2024, meeting, the School Committee clearly indicated that it does not intend to heed the message so clearly expressed at Town Meeting on April 30, 2024. By ignoring that message, the School Committee has, in its intransigence, again made Concord the potential object of public mockery. We have already made news by refusing to name a school after a local inspiration. Inviting further embarrassment, we are now on the cusp of making even more news by refusing—under the guise of shallow legalisms—to adhere to the basic tenets of democracy.

The New York Times recently ran a front page article on a school district in Virginia that reinstated the name of Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson to one of their public schools. While I am certain that Concord will never name a school after a Confederate general, I can well see how we will be portrayed by respected news outlets as genteel, superficially democratic, both-sides-of-their-mouths examples of knee-jerk “anti-woke”-ism.

Why incur such an unnecessary risk to our reputation? With a 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching, why are we continuing to turn our much-honored community into a flashpoint for controversy?

No good can come of engaging in more clique-ish politics. It is time for cooler, and clearer, heads to prevail.

Thank you,

Craig Awmiller  
27 Lang Street  
Concord, MA 01742

**From:** [Joe Palumbo](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Concord School Committee May 7, 2024- METCO PTG public statement ( please submit to Select Board members)  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:26:20 AM

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I have been asked by Mari Wienberg, 26 Hillside Avenue, as she does not have email to forward this communication that she was prepared to read last evening. She wanted this submitted to the Select Board .

Below is the statement from Akia Obas METCO PTG Chair that was read at the 5/7 School Committee Meeting and emailed to them as well.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Akia Obas** <[obas.akia@gmail.com](mailto:obas.akia@gmail.com)>  
Date: Fri, May 10, 2024 at 8:05 PM  
Subject: Concord School Committee May 7, 2024- METCO PTG public statement  
To: [concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org](mailto:concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org)  
<[concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org](mailto:concordschoolcommittee@concordps.org)>  
CC: CONCORD METCO FAMILIES <[Concordmetcofamilies@gmail.com](mailto:Concordmetcofamilies@gmail.com)>

**Dear Concord School Committee,**

**On April 30th during the Concord Town Meeting, Ms. Alexa Anderson, the Chair of the Concord Public Schools, misrepresented the METCO PTG. During her presentation, Ms Alexa Anderson stated "neither the METCO representatives on the School Committee nor the the METCO PTG had achieved consensus" regarding the naming of the middle school.**

No feedback was officially shared with Alexa or the school committee on behalf of METCO PTG regarding our thoughts on the naming of the middle school. Furthermore, the school committee did not reach out to METCO PTG for an official statement regarding our stance on the naming of the middle school. Why would Ms. Anderson comment on METCO PTG's stance on the naming of the middle school without any prior official communication?

**Diversity, inclusion, equity, and belonging for our students of color in the METCO program are of paramount concern to METCO PTG. In our view, DIEB remains the focus of METCO PTG. Frankly, today we feel Concord is not fully committed to embracing the diverse cultures and, frankly, the history, such as the remarkable Ellen Garrison, that make up Concord.**

**METCO PTG eagerly embraces all opportunities for partnership and collaboration with the school committee to fervently propel DIEB forward. We respectfully request that any future inquiries from school committee members seeking METCO PTG's official stance be formally submitted in writing.**

**Regards,  
Akia Obas  
METCO PTG Chair**

**From:** [Margaret Schumacher](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Meeting of May 13  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 7:42:35 AM

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You don't often get email from roscoeotis2@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear members of the select board,

Thank you for hearing us speak regarding the naming of our new middle school after Concord's very own Ellen Garrison. I am dismayed and honestly shocked, that in the prepared statement by the select board, after public comments, that you have not even an informal opinion on this issue! You were in support of Article 22 and recommended the naming of our new middle school The Ellen Garrison Middle School. How can you not even have an informal opinion? Your recommendation is to "write the school committee". As you surely must know, the school committee is not reading our letters, nor are they listening to the many citizens who are asking them a seemingly simple question, Why NOT Ellen?

People are watching. This issue matters. Please rethink your position and give us, at least, an "informal " opinion.

Thank you,

Margaret Schumacher  
25 Highland Street  
Concord

**From:** [Matt Conroy](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Middle school Name  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 8:55:00 AM

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You don't often get email from matt.j.conroy@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

First off I'd like to thank the Select Board for supporting Article 22. I also wanted to take a moment to share my perspective with regard to the naming of the new Middle School. I was surprised to see that the School Committee didn't respond to the Town Meeting request to reconsider the naming process at your last meeting. While I recognize that Ms. Anderson did provide a new proposal, that was not the request made by the voting public. While I have a clear perspective on what the name should be, shared below, the choice to not respond at all was worrying. That said, I'd simply like to share my perspective on why naming the new middle school after Ellen Garrison is a good idea.

I have been an educator for 25 years. I support and applaud the interest which has been shared by Dr. Hunter and the school committee: that inclusion and unity are the key factors in the naming of the Middle School. Positions and Interests are different things, however. And in that light, I implore them to reconsider, not their interest but their position. I share their interest in inclusion, in unity. AND I believe very firmly that Concord can and should expand its view of what unity and inclusion means. We have heard, over and over again, that many people of color do not feel included, do not feel a sense of community and inclusion in Concord. Naming the new Middle School for a local hero whose story has been severely undertold is a simple, easy and, at least to my mind, obvious step towards creating a greater feeling of inclusion in our town.

Names matter. They have power and can be used for great good in schools. I currently work at a middle school that was named after a local hero. On a daily basis we use our schools namesakes values to support, encourage, challenge and push our students. As a special education teacher if a student is working on improving their classroom

transitions we guide them to 'march like General Galvin', if they are trying to resolve a dispute we remind them to 'negotiate like General Galvin', if they are working towards building better organizational skills we exhort them to 'plan like General Galvin'. In each of these moments we turn our students' minds towards a local hero, a leader who comes from the same place that they do. An example of the values and beliefs that we as a community want to build. To folks who don't teach this may sound unimportant but I can tell you it is not. Sharing common goals, values and ethics are critical for schools and what better way to show those values than through the name? It keeps the ideals clear in the student and staffs mind on a daily basis. It communicates our values to our children, to our community and to the larger community as well.

The question for me is simple. What community do we want to be? If unity is the goal then let us unify behind something positive, not something that is simply descriptive.

The name Concord Middle School is fine. It is simply descriptive. Let's do better than simply describing a place, let's stand FOR something. Let's stand for unity, let's stand for inclusion, let's stand for challenging our students to stand up for what is right...let's stand for Ellen.

Best,  
Matt

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Matt Conroy  
449 Barretts Mill Road

**From:** [Chesley Chen](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Thank you!  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 8:00:04 AM

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You don't often get email from chesleychen@comcast.net. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board,

Thank you for listening to us share our perspectives on Tuesday night in support of the name Ellen Garrison Middle School. It's nice to be heard and listened to. I also appreciate your reading the statement with the advice of Town Counsel. Very clear and straightforward. We will soldier on in support of Ellen Garrison Middle School.

This is the first (or maybe 2nd) Select Board I've ever attended. I stayed longer than I expected. I enjoyed it! I thought you ran an excellent meeting. I got drawn into learning more about what's happening around Concord. Great to see how you navigate various initiatives and issues on behalf of Concord.

Thanks for all you do.

Sincerely,  
Ches (196 Williams Road)

*Chesley Chen (he/him/his)*

**From:** [Tooey Rogers](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Ellen Garrison  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 9:21:45 AM

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You don't often get email from [toeyr@gmail.com](mailto:toeyr@gmail.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

On May 15, 2024, at 9:16 AM, Tooey Rogers <[toeyr@gmail.com](mailto:toeyr@gmail.com)> wrote:

Hello Shannon,

Firstly, I thank the Select Board for listening to my - our - statements about the School Committee and about naming the new middle school for Ellen Garrison during your meeting on Monday night. I felt heard and respected - the feeling I have come to expect in my 28 years living in Concord.

I know the Select Board wants to respect the "sovereignty" of other town committees, in this case the School Committee. However, I feel the decision to name the new middle school has implications far beyond Concord on this eve of our 250th anniversary of the start of the American Revolution. As an example of addressing social justice for those whose voices have not been heard, Lexington is about to dedicate a "bronze arch inscribed with the figures of more than 20 historical Lexington women of different races, ages, and professions from the 18th century forward."

This is a time for Concord to step forward as well, and naming the new middle school, which will be dedicated next year - in the actual year of the 250th celebration - is just too much of an opportunity to let pass by. In fact, it seems such an easy opportunity for Concord make a statement for social justice, that I am shaking my head that it isn't seen as such by the School Committee.

I trust that the Select Board - our principal governing board - sees that this issue is larger than just the naming of a school within Concord.

I hope that you can determine a way to help Concord take advantage of this opportunity, and not let it slip by as so many names and voices have over the years. This is a time for standing up, not turning away. It is always time for standing up and not turning away.

Thank you again,  
Tooey Rogers  
30 Elsinore Street  
Secretary Concord Cultural Council  
Secretary Concord250 Permanent Memorial Subcommittee



**From:** [Judith Frediani](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Middle school  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 1:31:07 PM

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You don't often get email from judithfrediani@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Yes, still the middle school.

I just want to thank you for your support of naming the school for Ellen Garrison.

I also want you to know I am shocked, saddened and alarmed at the position of several school committee members and the Superintendent in their obstinate refusal to listen to voters, to people of color, and to the history of racism and justice-seeking in our country. I am alarmed that our children's education is to some degree in their hands.

I will continue to fight this bad decision.

Respectfully,  
Judith Frediani  
30 Center Village DR

**From:** [Mark Hanson](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Please thank the Select Board members for their support of Ellen Garrison  
**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 1:31:59 PM

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Hi Shannon,

Naming the middle school for Ellen Garrison is an excellent idea. I'm glad the Select board supports the request to the school committee.

Thanks,  
Mark Hanson  
340 Holden Wood Road

**From:** [Noor Kassamali](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Ellen Garrison Middle School  
**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 2:01:55 PM

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[You don't often get email from nkassamali@verizon.net. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Respected Select Board members,

We were very disappointed at our recent Annual Town Meeting. How do we move forward? Should we request for an override?

Clearly the wishes of a majority were not taken into account. We heard from a number of individuals, including Grace, the young student who spoke very eloquently and some adults. Unfortunately, not all adults were given an opportunity to speak, because of time constraints. Concord, home of the American revolution and bastion of democracy, is now held hostage by views of a couple individuals on the school committee. This is an abomination and undemocratic, not consistent with our values.

We all support the school committee when we vote on requests for additional monies, so I feel very strongly, that on this one issue, the school committee should have listened to us. The school committee vote was not a majority, but the Concordians who stood up for Ellen Garrison at the Annual Town Meeting were a clear majority. Therefore, I would like to ask you all, how do we move forward? Will our democracy prevail?

I urge you all, as Select Board members elected by Concord's citizens to uphold our values and take the necessary steps to keep democracy alive. We, citizens of Concord, do not want to go down in history as the town where the beacon of democracy was extinguished.

Sincerely,

Noor Kassamali  
599 Bedford Street

**From:** [Mary Hartman](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)  
**Subject:** FW: The School Committee's Garrison Vote  
**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 8:37:44 PM  
**Attachments:** [School Committee - Garrison Middle School.pdf](#)

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Please post this letter to the correspondence page.

Thanx

**Mary Hartman**  
**Chair, Town of Concord Select Board**

*Please be advised that the Massachusetts Attorney General has determined that email to and from a government email address is a public record unless the content of the email falls within one of the stated exemptions under the Massachusetts Public Records Laws.*

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**From:** Janet Benvenuti <[janet@colpartners.com](mailto:janet@colpartners.com)>  
**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 at 8:36 AM  
**To:** Mary Hartman <[mhartman@concordma.gov](mailto:mhartman@concordma.gov)>, Mark Howell <[markhowell@concordma.gov](mailto:markhowell@concordma.gov)>, Terri Ackerman <[tackerman@concordma.gov](mailto:tackerman@concordma.gov)>, Cameron McKennitt <[cmckennitt@concordma.gov](mailto:cmckennitt@concordma.gov)>, Wendy Rovelli <[wrovelli@concordma.gov](mailto:wrovelli@concordma.gov)>  
**Subject:** The School Committee's Garrison Vote

Some people who received this message don't often get email from [janet@colpartners.com](mailto:janet@colpartners.com). [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Select Board members,

Thank you for your time volunteering to help govern Concord. Although my children are long past school age, I have been following the School Committee's activities on naming the middle school, understanding that as of last December, you no longer have the legal right to name the school. I've attached a copy of the letter I sent to the School Committee, hoping there is still room for compromise – naming the school after Ellen and the major auditorium after Hudner-Brown.

My deepest concern is that Ms. Anderson should not be the voice of Concord in the press. She does not represent the citizens of this town, that role rests with you. The escalating interest in this vote nationally requires that you all be prepared to speak with the press.

Thank you,

Janet Simpson Benvenuti  
35 Jonas Brown Circle

**From:** [Susan Mlodozienec](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Letter to Concord School Board included for Select Board records  
**Date:** Friday, May 17, 2024 8:08:55 AM

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**Warning:** This email was sent from outside the Town and it has the same display name as someone inside our organization. This is probably a phishing mail. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you are certain that this email is safe.

Hi Shannon! I used the [Contact the School Committee](#) link to submit the following letter to the School Committee this morning. While it doesn't seem like the School Committee publishes its correspondence it looks like the Select Board does. Here's a copy of my letter:

Dear Alexa Anderson, Chair of the Concord School Committee,

I'd like to add to the chorus of voices who are urging you to name the new middle school after Ellen Garrison.

During Town Meeting, Wilson Kerr had a chance to propose a compromise of naming individual buildings after Ellen or establishing other ways of honoring her. The compromise was not accepted, as evidenced by a vote not to advance his amendment, by that gathering of about 800 or so voters. I think the events of Town Meeting provide all of us with important information that there is a groundswell of support for naming the middle school after Ellen Garrison. By the vote on the amendment vote taken at Town Meeting, other alternative ways of honoring Ellen weren't deemed to be an acceptable substitute for the middle school naming idea. Your recently proposed naming of Ripley School for Ellen Garrison seems like a bait-and-switch tactic.

I recall submitting a response to your online survey about naming the school and then sending an email as well, in which I both times voted to name the school for Ellen Garrison. There doesn't seem to be transparency about the results of that survey other than your statement that a myriad of other names were suggested, Ellen Garrison continued to be suggested, and that the committee's bland favorite, Concord Middle School, emerged victorious when you voted. Luckily, Town Meeting is perfectly transparent in that you can see real people raising their hands to vote for a particular course of action, such as naming the middle school after Ellen Garrison, and Town Meeting voters overwhelmingly voted for that course of action. Town Meeting was attended by far more people than responded to your survey.

I respect the work you do on your committee and know you do a lot for the town. Voters at Town Meeting stood by the School District on the budget it requested this year – I know I voted in support of that at Town Meeting also. While you are probably thrilled to accept popular vote approving Article 20 regarding the school budget, it's curious that the popular vote about naming the middle school after Ellen Garrison in Article 22 is getting your cold shoulder.

Over the last few years, Concord residents have voted first to embark upon the middle school project and then to fund it with our property tax dollars. The Middle School Committee has wanted us to feel invested in it and proud of the new school's design, and we are. It would make the middle school project an even bigger success to be named after a brave daughter of Concord who got educated here and then risked her life to teach others. She accomplished this in spite of society at the time telling her to expect less freedom, fewer opportunities, and zero influence because she was black.

Fast forward to today, and I feel like the School Committee is telling the voters in the Town of Concord to expect less, fewer and zero because the School Committee wants brandish its power and honor its policy and procedure at all costs. You seem to have some sort of rift with the Concord's DEI Committee, which is unprofessional and damaging to the town.

In listening to your arguments and watching your meetings, it's obvious that you're doing

everything you can to keep from naming the school after Ellen Garrison. However, in honoring the vote at Town Meeting to name the middle school after Ellen Garrison you will avoid having to schedule hearings or devote additional meeting time to this debate. We realize that you have many other important issues to contend with and look forward to your stewardship of those initiatives as opposed to further strategizing about how to disregard town residents' wishes.

Sincerely,

Susan Mlodozeniec  
392 Border Rd.  
Concord

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Susan Mlodozeniec  
[susan.mlodozeniec@gmail.com](mailto:susan.mlodozeniec@gmail.com)

**From:** [Peggy Yalman](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Ellen Garrison Middle School  
**Date:** Saturday, May 18, 2024 9:45:46 AM

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[You don't often get email from pyalman8@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

Please add my name to the long list of Concord residents that want the new school to be named after Ellen Garrison. The town may never have such a great opportunity to name a school after a black woman who grew up in Concord and went on to be a Civil Rights pioneer.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Peggy Yalman  
724 Main St

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Rebecca Crimmin](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Middle school debate  
**Date:** Sunday, May 19, 2024 11:55:53 AM

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[You don't often get email from [rebecca.crimmin@gmail.com](mailto:rebecca.crimmin@gmail.com). Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification> ]

To whom it may concern,

I wanted to thank the select board for all the work you do on behalf of the residents of Concord. I really appreciate the select board taking a strong and clear position in renaming the middle school for Ellen Garrison. This seems like such a simple step to create a more welcoming environment, it costs us nothing to do it! I really hope the school committee reconsiders in light of the town's reaction and name the school after Garrison.

Kind regards,  
Rebecca Crimmin  
28 Ridgewood Rd.

**From:** [Katharine Kolowich](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Middle School naming vote  
**Date:** Monday, May 13, 2024 7:21:06 AM

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Dear Select Board,

I am among the many people who voted to name the new middle school, Ellen Garrison Middle School during Town Meeting last month. Despite our reaching out to the School committee to respond to that definitive "yes" vote, they have not directly answered the voters. A number of us attended the school committee meeting last week, and the board only allowed a few people to stand at the microphone to make a comment. They are not, as this point, willing to answer to the town meeting voters.

Our group, "Stand up for Ellen Garrison", appreciates your support as we work to urge the school committee to give us an answer.

Sincerely,  
Kathy Kolowich (Shapleigh)  
25 Lowell Road

**From:** [Mary Hartman](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Letter Regarding Concord Middle School Naming  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 14, 2024 6:24:37 AM

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Pls post to the correspondence website. Thanx

Mary Hartman  
Select Board, Town of Concord

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**From:** Mari Alexander <mari.alexander@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 13, 2024 11:50:44 AM  
**To:** letters@theconcordbridge.org <letters@theconcordbridge.org>  
**Cc:** Alexa Anderson <alexabanderson@gmail.com>; Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>; Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>; Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>; Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>; DEI <dei@concordma.gov>; Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>  
**Subject:** Letter Regarding Concord Middle School Naming

Some people who received this message don't often get email from mari.alexander@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

To Whom it May Concern,

I write to voice my support for the naming of the new middle school building to be Concord Middle School. While I trust and support the steps that the elected members of the School Committee have already undertaken, my reasons go beyond questions over process or adequate public input.

We moved to Concord in 2015 when our children were 8, 6, 4, and 2. At that time our two eldest children attended Thoreau Elementary School, and our youngest Concord Integrated Preschool. For the past 9 years our family have been invested parents/students/volunteers within the Concord Public Schools (currently with two at CCHS, one at CMS, and one at Thoreau). We moved from a much larger city in Virginia, where there were 21 elementary schools, 6 middle schools, and 3 very large high schools. All of these schools were named after either a location (e.g., Glebe Road Elementary) or a person (Washington & Lee (now "Liberty") High School). This made sense given the size of the district and the number of schools. In contrast, Concord has 3 elementary schools, 1 middle school and 1 high school. That math in my view makes the decision simple - we use names or locations when there are multiple age-level buildings; and where there are not, the building is simply "Concord". Our experience moving to Concord in 2015 - as total "newbies" to this community - brings my feelings into focus when I reflect upon just how united our town is, and how large of a role our public schools have in the uniting of our community and our local spirit. Since my kids were young, they have attended sports clinics hosted by the coaches and older kids at the high school, music concerts and recitals in the auditoriums at CCHS and CMS, and the incredible Kicks for Cancer games and Mighty Moose races held at CCHS. These schools are not just hubs for learning and academic and intellectual growth 5 days a week, they are also a hub for

the community on nights and weekends. We are not a large city with multiple nodes and identities. We are Concord and we are Patriots. It seems that in this naming debate we're overlooking the fact that our younger kids - coming from three distinct elementary schools - have been waiting their entire young lives to attend Concord Middle School and Concord-Carlisle High School. There is community and town pride here, and that is one of the many things we love about Concord.

All that said, Ellen Garrison is an incredible inspiration - both to our children and to the community in Concord. She is a source of pride, and she should (and I think will!) be recognized in ways that are likely more meaningful and lasting than the naming of the middle school building (case in point, does anyone know who Sanborn or Ripley is? I did not until this recent discussion). New curriculum on Ellen Garrison's life and impact? Yes, please! Let's teach our kids about our past and the remarkable people who came from here who went on to do amazing things. We can honor Ellen Garrison while still naming the middle school for the remarkable place we live. After all, doesn't that in a way honor \*all\* of our community members - past, present, and future?

Respectfully,  
Mari Alexander  
172 Ministerial Drive

**From:** [Mary Hartman](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#); [Andrea Fountain](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Please help us name the new middle school  
**Date:** Thursday, May 16, 2024 6:06:04 PM

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Pls post to the correspondence website.

Thanx

**Mary Hartman**  
**Chair, Town of Concord Select Board**

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**From:** lbateman5@gmail.com <lbateman5@gmail.com>  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 15, 2024 at 9:28 PM  
**To:** Mary Hartman <mhartman@concordma.gov>, Mark Howell <markhowell@concordma.gov>, Cameron McKennitt <cmckennitt@concordma.gov>, Wendy Rovelli <wrovelli@concordma.gov>, Terri Ackerman <tackerman@concordma.gov>  
**Subject:** Please help us name the new middle school

Some people who received this message don't often get email from lbateman5@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**To the Select Board:**

I am writing to ask for any help at all you can give to name the new middle school Ellen Garrison Middle School for our students and residents.

You have witnessed the School Committee ignore the will of the Concord residents who stood up and voted on Tuesday, April 30. This vote asked the School Committee to name the new middle school the Ellen Garrison Middle School, by an overwhelmingly majority.

The majority of Concord residents are clearly in favor of this measure. What can be done when Town policy and process is not followed? There has been no response from the School Committee, where only two members disagree with the new name. It is time for the School Committee to take action for US, or for the way we do things to change.

Please help wherever you can to influence our elected officials to act on our behalf. I also urge us all to think beyond such a small group for such a huge and critical decision. From my

perspective, such important and permanent decisions should be decided at Town Meeting in a formal vote of residents, or by a town-wide special vote—not a small group of just five residents where only two are against the name. This in no way accurately or fairly captures the values and views of the entire town.

Thank you for all you do. Please help us.

Leanne Bateman  
17 Shirley Street

**From:** [Kim Frederick](#)  
**To:** [Shannon McAndrew](#)  
**Subject:** Ellen Garrison Middle School  
**Date:** Sunday, May 19, 2024 12:03:16 PM

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Dear Concord Select Board Members,

I am writing to thank you for your support of the naming of Ellen Garrison Middle School and would like to urge you to ask the School Committee to respond to the Town's request from Town meeting to consider naming the new Middle School for Ellen Garrison. I think it will be a name that we can all be proud of. I saw in the comments on the Globe article that there are people saying that they've never heard of Ellen. But, the truth is that we should have known her name all along! She is an incredible role model for all of our young people. I think that naming the Middle School for her is appropriate and would be a great thing for the town to do.

Thank you for all you have already done on behalf of this issue.

Best,

Kim Frederick

(mom of an Alcott 5th grader and CCHS 10th grader)

166 Main Street

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Kim Frederick  
*History Teacher, House Faculty, Ultimate Frisbee Coach*  
[kim\\_frederick@concordacademy.org](mailto:kim_frederick@concordacademy.org)  
(978) 402-2306