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Eileen Entin, Chair

February, 2021

Elaine Quinlan, Editor

## CANDIDATES' FORUM ISSUE

### CLC's Annual Meeting

Although CLC usually holds its annual meeting in April, with the availability of the Covid-19 vaccine increasing, albeit slowly, we are postponing our annual meeting until later in 2021, when it may be possible to hold an in-person meeting. Please check our website ([CLCLex.org](http://CLCLex.org)) periodically for further information about the annual meeting date, location, and featured speaker. We will post updated information as the regulations imposed by the pandemic evolve.



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**2021 CLC dues are payable now.** The status of your dues payment can be found on the address label of snail-mailed newsletters, or near the top of the email announcing this issue. If it says Dues Paid through February 2021 (or earlier), it is time to renew your membership for 2021.

Annual membership to CLC is \$20.00. Suggested membership levels are:

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 20 (Twig)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$ 50 (Branch)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 (Tree)
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$(Other)

You may pay your dues using PayPal on the CLC Website (<https://www.clclex.org>).

If you prefer to contribute by mail, please send your name, address and email (or phone number), along with your check, to:

Citizens for Lexington Conservation  
P.O. Box 292  
Lexington, MA 02420-0003

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member       Renewal

Go Green. Check here if you would like to have your newsletter in color with live links, using a download link from an email, instead of the paper snail mail.

Membership fees support our organization. CLC is a registered 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

## CLC 2021 Question for candidates, sent to all candidates:

[Citizens for Lexington Conservation](#), our local environmental advocacy and education organization, has been collecting and publishing candidates' responses to environmental issues for many years. CLC has chosen to focus this year's candidates' question on warrant articles proposed by the Lexington Tree Committee.

Acting on its concern about Lexington's tree canopy, the Lexington Tree Committee has submitted three articles proposing changes and additions to the Lexington Tree Bylaw (<https://ecode360.com/10535335>) for consideration at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. You can read a draft of the three warrant articles proposed by the Tree Committee on the CLC web-site ([CLCLex.org](http://CLCLex.org)).

The first article specifies that when an applicant requests permission to remove a Town-owned tree, the applicant will be required to provide an appraisal of the tree's value and, if permission is granted, pay to the Lexington Tree Fund up to the appraised value of the tree.

The second and third articles apply to trees that are greater than or equal to 6 inches DBH (diameter at breast height). The second article includes a bylaw change for sites on which there is major construction - i.e., tear down sites and sites where the footprint of structures on the site increases by more than 50%. When trees are removed in the setback area, property owners, typically builders at these sites, have the option of either paying a mitigation fee to the Lexington Tree Fund or replanting trees. Currently it is more economical for a property owner to pay the mitigation fee than to replant. To encourage the replanting of trees, the Tree Committee proposes to increase from \$100 to \$200 the amount to be paid per diameter inch for removed trees.

The third article includes a change for sites that are not covered currently under the Tree bylaw. The goal is both to obtain more information about the removal of trees and in the process to educate homeowners considering cutting down a tree on their property. Before a tree is re-moved on property where neither demolition nor major reconstruction is proposed, the home-owner would be required to request a no-fee tree removal permit using the Town's online permit system. In the process, the applicant would enter information about the tree and the reason for removal, and the system would present information about the benefits of trees and alternatives to tree removal. If the applicant goes ahead with the removal request, the permit would be granted automatically.

As you form your position on the articles proposed by the Tree Committee, please consider the following questions:

- How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?
- Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

- Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

## **CANDIDATES FOR TOWN-WIDE OFFICE**

### **Candidate for Select Board Member: 3-Year Term**

**Jill Hai**  
jillhailex@gmail.com

Jill Hai does not feel it is appropriate to publish her opinion of the three articles in advance of the Select Board voting on them prior to Town Meeting.

### **Candidates for School Committee: 3-Year Term**

**Kathleen M. Lenihan**  
kathleen1lenihan@gmail.com

I am delighted and excited to strongly support all three articles proposed by the Tree Committee. I'm from Las Vegas, a community not known for its green canopy. When you grow up in a place with few trees, you can never take their beauty and shade for granted. One of the first things my husband and I did when we bought our first home in Lexington was to plant a maple tree in the front yard. In our second home in Lexington, we've planted two Dutch elm disease resistant elm trees and four birch trees.

Managing and protecting the tree canopy is absolutely essential for any town. It is well documented how a robust tree canopy can improve property values, lower energy bills in the summer, reduce storm runoff, and combat climate change. More difficult to quantify, but nevertheless true, is that trees are just beautiful and make people feel good. A town can, if they have the resources, build new roads, schools, and sidewalks in a short time frame. No town, no matter how wealthy, can create a tree canopy of mature shade trees in anything other than a very long time frame. You can't hurry nature. When we lose mature trees, or even trees that are only part way to mature, it can take decades to replace them. An entire generation of children can grow up without big trees shading their play. Whether these trees are on public or private property is beside the point. They all contribute to Lexington's canopy.

With so much building going on all over Lexington, we must take action to protect our trees. They are all too often seen as impediments to construction and it is far too easy to simply remove them. The articles proposed by the Tree Committee will allow for people to pause and take a breath before doing something that cannot be undone. While some of us do not

need any education about the value of trees, we cannot ignore the fact that many homeowners could benefit from this information. In the past, removing trees and paying a small fee was the path of least resistance. I'm pleased to see that the proposed articles will give more incentives to finding solutions other than removal. In the future, I hope to see fees and/or penalties added to Article 33.

I am grateful to the Tree Committee for bringing this issue to Town Meeting. If re-elected as a representative for Precinct 4, I will voice my support for all three articles.

**Deepika Sawhney**  
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I support the warrant articles brought forward by the Lexington Tree Committee. The tree canopy defines the ethos, and the nature of a town. For example: Lincoln seems more rural with about 16.6% in conservation land, Burlington more urban with about 3.3%, while Lexington is somewhere in between (with 12.3%). Beyond the conservation areas the softening of the street landscape through trees keeps the community healthier and happier. Civilizations have prospered or floundered due to a lack of trees. For example: recent research connects the fall of the Mayan Civilization to the severe droughts caused by deforestation and the resultant changes in the regional climate. We too face a climate crisis, and every tree helps.

A healthy old tree can never be replaced. If it is not unhealthy or a danger to a structure, then cutting it down should be avoided if possible. Where possible, replacement with either equal size or multiples of trees should be the norm. Unfortunately measuring the worth of a tree based on diameters and dollars doesn't truly capture its value. And in any case for an expensive construction project, it becomes a forgettable rounding error.

There are many magnificent trees which are the oldest 'residents' of our Town. Perhaps giving them status as "Lexington Treasures" may be appropriate? Where the warrant articles advocate fees and permits, perhaps it's possible to add some persuasive measures too? For example: reducing the assessed value for tax purposes for homes which have such trees and owners who are willing to be good caretakers. Or we could closely follow the Cambridge example wherein all their significant trees are protected through the permitting process. School students can help too like the Framingham high schoolers who will plant over two hundred trees to offset all the paper used by schools in a year. Ultimately, Lexingtonians have to value its trees for what they are – invaluable.

## **Candidates for Planning Board: 3-Year Term**

**Melanie A. Thompson**

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melaniethompson2020@gmail.com

It is very important to preserve Lexington's tree canopy. The environmental benefits and the beauty of watching the leaves blossom in the spring and summer add to the value of living in Lexington. The first article requiring a tree appraisal, and to pay the appraised value into the tree fund, is a reasonable request of a developer during construction as it is in the best interest of the Town to preserve a full and maintained tree canopy.

As far as the second article which effectively doubles the current amount to be paid per diameter for removed trees is a cost likely to be borne by developers. This Article is something I'd be interested in hearing thoughts from builders to see how strongly they would accept or reject this increase. Developers may find it easier to pay the fee than to perform the desired behavior, which is to replace and nurture a new tree and grow Lexington's tree canopy. I would like to hear their perspective on this Article.

For the third article, I'd like to know what value the Citizens for Lexington Conservation of a no-fee permit feels would bring to the town. Requiring a homeowner to request a no-fee removal permit for dying trees for example might place on them an unnecessary burden going through the permit process. Example - we had a beautiful cherry tree on my property at the front that had been there for 30 years at least. We have a large number of family pictures taken under the tree over the years during the two weeks in May that it blossomed.

Unfortunately, the tree recently developed some kind of fungus and became a danger, so it had to be removed. What would be the value to the town in requiring a permit for this kind of removal on private property? If we have a problem that homeowners are cutting down perfectly healthy trees at random if they're not doing construction, this might be a separate concern. Do we have such a problem? I would like to hear more discussion on the no-fee permit process to demonstrate the usefulness of this type of permit. It may be justified under certain circumstances.

I think the changes in the three warrants are significant, and would like to see them in place first, assess the reaction before strengthening them. Overall we want to encourage the replacing of tree canopy, which is in the best interest of the Town. This would always be my first priority.

## **Candidate for Housing Authority: 5-Year Term**

No response was received from the Candidate for Housing Authority.

# CANDIDATES FOR TOWN MEETING

## Precinct 1

**Robert Cunha**

bob.cunha@lexingtonmma.org

I understand the Tree Committee's concerns with the removal of trees and their attempting to educate the public. As these articles are still only in draft form, I can support the articles with the exception of the article which will place restrictions on private homeowners for removal of trees which are hazardous or diseased. I have found homeowners general want trees on their property and want to maintain the tree canopy. The proposed language in the draft article is unreasonable to the average homeowner due to cost and time delay.

I am in full support of increasing the amount of money that will be paid to the Tree Committee if trees are to be removed. The removal of trees on tear down sites and sites where the footprint of structures on the site increases by more than 50% are just awful. Hopefully these article's will discourage the removal of our tree canopy.

**Judith L. Zabin**

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I definitely support these warrant articles proposed for the 2021 Annual Town Meeting. The Tree Committee is continuing its critically important work in proposing these changes and additions to the Lexington Tree bylaw this year. Protecting, conserving and enhancing Lexington's tree canopy is crucial for the sustainability and quality of life in Town.

The new bylaw change regarding non protected trees on private property is a creative way of using the tree permit removal process for educating the homeowner about other options and considerations to tree removal.

**Tanya J. Gisolfi-McCready**

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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy -- the number and distribution of trees in Town?

It is very important to preserve or restore Lexington's tree canopy. New construction/renovation is welcome and somewhat expected, but should be balanced to include green space and new trees. Preservation of old growth trees should be encouraged in renovations, updates, and/or new construction, and at the very least new trees should be planted to offset. For both character and environmental reasons, I believe it is equally important that we maintain a diverse canopy of trees throughout the Town, not just a concentration of treescapes in the parks and conservation areas.

Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

People have expressed concern about tree removal, particularly in the context of new construction or circumstances where the primary motivation appeared to be cosmetic or making room for large house construction. They lament the loss of shade to the public way, change in character, and how it seems to denude the streetscape. There are differences in opinion for tree removal that makes way for utilities, sidewalks, or other activities with community benefit. In both cases, however, I would like to find creative ways for replacement trees or plantings.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

Removal of trees, regardless whether on public or private property, should not become the acceptable norm. Old growth trees are, in particular, irreplaceable. The Town should encourage preservation first, and at the very least, seek opportunities for 1:1 replacement and replanting. In the same way that our tax base is critical to the Town's performance and attractiveness, so is our canopy of trees, and as such, should be cherished and maintained as much as possible.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support?

I strongly support increased fees for tree removal, but I would like to encourage the replanting of trees or plants on the lot where they were removed.

Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I would like to have access to the deliberations and research that took place in the development of the articles in order to weigh where guidelines, fees, or mandates are most appropriate. Not every circumstance for tree removal is the same, and I would want to make sure the articles are appropriately specific and structured to balance Town's overall policy goals while greatly emphasizing tree canopy protection.

**Katherine E. Reynolds**  
508-245-6316  
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Preserving Lexington's tree canopy is very important to me. In fact, in 2018 I led the effort to protect three beautiful trees at the Center Recreation Complex when the new construction plans for the Center Recreation Complex Renovation Project were in their final stages. I noticed that three huge trees next to the playground were at risk for demolition. I immediately brought this to the attention of Town Meeting members and the Chair of the Tree Committee, Gerry Paul. We successfully convinced town officials to preserve these trees.

Those Center Recreation Complex trees, and so many others in Lexington, provide shade, a natural environment, a connection to Lexington's rich history, and a spot for everyone in



the community to enjoy. My experience advocating to preserve these trees is what first introduced me to Town Meeting, sparking my interest in becoming a Town Meeting member.

Lexington should absolutely be concerned about the removal of trees on private and public property. Removing trees on public and private property, when taken as a whole, will irreparably change our Town's landscape, natural environment, and character. From losing the simple enjoyment of looking for a blue jay in a neighbor's tree to the lack of shade at a playground, we need to be thinking about all the ways that trees positively impact our lives and Town.

I support the proposed increase of the mitigation fee from \$100 to \$200 per diameter inch for removed trees at major construction sites. I agree that an increase in the mitigation fee may encourage property owners to consider replanting trees more often.

I am particularly interested in the scope of the third article's change for sites that are not covered currently under the tree bylaw. Obtaining more information about the removal of trees, such as homeowners' reasons for tree removal and the numbers of trees removed over time in Lexington, would provide strong data for future policy-making efforts. Additionally, educating homeowners about the benefits of trees and alternatives to tree removal could convince more owners to preserve trees that they otherwise would have removed.

**Janet M. Kern**

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I support all three articles proposed by the Tree Committee. As we continue to consider and confront the climate crisis, we should do everything we can to preserve our tree canopy that sequesters carbon and provides shade that in turn reduces energy usage. Whether on private or public property, any given tree in Lexington is important to the entire community. This is particularly true of native trees that each play a part in a delicate eco-system, with a single tree in some cases ***providing habitat for thousands of species of native birds and insects\****. For that reason, I would encourage and support an amendment to the second article that imposes a "native tree removal surcharge" and to the third article that takes additional action (either additional education or imposing a fee) if the tree to be removed is a tree native to New England.

\*I commend the book "Bringing Nature Home" by Doug Tallamy to anyone interested in this particular topic!

## Precinct 2

**Marian O. Cohen**

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Trees are essential to life and to the quality of life. I am wholly in favor of protecting existing, healthy, trees in our community. The Town should be concerned about removal of trees, particularly those on public property. Elected officials are the stewards of our community and protecting trees is an important element of their role. Trees are essential for the community – for environmental reasons, health reasons, visual and quality of life reasons. We must be careful, however, to recognize that some trees are unhealthy in themselves or are infested with bugs that threaten the health of the trees or other trees in their vicinity, or are ‘unhealthy’ from an invasive standpoint. In other words, not all trees should be viewed equally, but all slated for removal should be evaluated.

Trees on public property, in a sense, belong to the public so it is reasonable to expect that a request to remove the trees be made and that appropriate recompense be provided for their replacement in the stock of Town-owned trees. While I am generally favorably disposed to support articles that protect our trees, the details are important, especially when discussing laws or requirements. I am concerned about the implications and consequences of the second and third articles cited. While I would not want to see denuding of trees (that will not be replaced once construction is completed) on a construction site, I have questions about the proposed increase and administration of fees. I would want to know why the specific amount (\$200) was identified and who would be responsible for annual assessment and adjustment of fees. With respect to the third article, since it stipulates that a removal permit would be granted automatically, there is no guarantee that an applicant would comply with the requirements as stated and there is no penalty for non-compliance. That article appears to be more centered on information-gathering and education than on protection of trees, per se. Having data on trees in Lexington and educating people about the value and importance of trees would be good, but I am not sure this is the best way to achieve that goal. As with the second article, I would like to have more information.

**Barbara Katzenberg**

barbara.katzenberg@gmail.com

It is important to maintain and improve Lexington’s natural environment from the perspective of conservation and aesthetic values. Trees on public and private lands can improve our quality of life by their presence and can play a small role in addressing the twin threats of habitat loss and climate change. Tree removal can be an emotional topic on both sides of the question, so any new regulations such as the one proposed in Article 3, need to be thought through carefully. If elected, I would devote effort to understanding which policies can be most effective in achieving our land use goals. I am interested in how businesses (builders, tree care companies, landscapers) work with these types of policies as a practical matter and whether they typically get implemented in the intended spirit. My current thinking

is that I would support the first Warrant article which concerns Town-owned trees. The second Warrant article makes sense assuming the new dollar amount is high enough to make replanting a more attractive option to most property owners than paying the mitigation fee. I am still weighing whether the third article represents an effective way to encourage thoughtful decisions about tree removal on private property. The proposed automated permitting process seems too weak to be meaningful, but a stronger permitting process implies more cost to both property owners and the Town.

**Rita Vachani**  
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It is very important to me to protect and grow the tree canopy in Lexington for several reasons, including its effect on summer temperatures, on air pollution, on the aesthetics of the Town and on providing habitat for birds/wildlife. If we want to preserve this “green infrastructure” in Town, we cannot do so by only preserving and managing the trees on public property; we have to include the trees on private property. Hence, I am in favor of strengthening by-laws that aim to preserve the trees on private property. On tear down sites and on sites with major construction, I strongly support effective deterrence of tree cutting by an increase in fees or by requiring an equivalent replacement of trees. I also support requiring homeowners requesting permission to remove a Town-owned tree, to pay to the Lexington Tree Fund up to the appraised value of the tree, unless there are mitigating circumstances.

I feel most homeowners in Town want to preserve their trees and typically cut them only when necessary because of disease or threat to property. For the minority that may not consciously think about the value that trees provide, we could look for more effective ways to reach them than the proposed article 33.

### **Precinct 3**

**Delanot Bastien**  
617-799-6373  
dbastientmma@yahoo.com

I agree with the tenet of your organization and supporting and preserving Lexington's tree canopy.

I grew up in the farm land in a Rural region in Haiti. My late father was a Farm Agricultural Technical. My late father did mostly Agroforestry farming. I learned from his philosophy in Agroforestry farming. I came to love and appreciated Agroforestry farming. “Agroforestry farming is a type of agriculture that incorporates the planting, cultivation, and conservation of trees alongside crops or livestock farming [residential housing, parks, streets in our town environment private or public places- are interconnected with trees.]. ... According to the USDA.” I believe we can cohabit with trees with private land and public land. We must

preserve our trees in the Town of Lexington to keep our air and environment healthy. I am in full support “on the articles proposed by the Tree Committee.”

How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

I support the distribution of trees throughout Lexington. I am not aware that my constituents expressed concern about tree removal or talked with me concerning tree replacement. If there are constituents in precinct 3 who are voicing their opinions concerning tree removal and replacement, I like to hear from them.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? Yes On public property? Yes. Please refer to my above-referenced statement to this subject matter.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support?

I believe the articles are making sense to me. I do support most of them. However, I suggest that Citizens for Lexington Conservation is publicizing to the public the works and the preserving Lexington's tree canopy information and proposed articles.

Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

Yes, there may be some variances that need to be add or part of the proposed of some of the articles. This will give more support to the proposed article.

**David L. Kaufman**  
davidlkaufman@rcn.com

While the articles are still only drafts, I probably will support all of them except the new section on non-protected trees. That is apt to be both unenforced and essentially unenforceable. The data collected needs to be archived in a maintainable database as a public record forever (which requires energy for the storage and periodic Town Clerk & IT staff time), and is of essentially no use to anyone, before or after the removal. It creates extensive costly paperwork for no apparent benefit to the environment.

While they are probably mostly less than 6 inches DBH there are many invasive trees in Lexington like Norway Maples, and many buckthorns. Other trees need to be removed due to infestations by various bugs.

**Robert I. Rotberg**  
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As a longtime member of CLC and as a 44-year town meeting member who has fully supported Tree Committee, Conservation Commission, and CLC initiatives across these several decades, I am greatly concerned about the loss of Town and household owned

trees. Maintaining and extending our canopy is important aesthetically and ecologically, and helps us do our small but meaningful part to mitigate global warming. Constituents do like and welcome their treescapes. Anything to reduce it, metaphorically to clear-cut, is bad for neighborhoods and for the Town as a whole. I fully support the proposals put forward by the Tree Committee and will speak for them on the Town Meeting floor. At the moment our Tree By-Law is far too weak. Anything to strengthen it and give it some more fibrous character is welcome. This past autumn I was part of a neighborhood group that failed – despite much effort and the support of the Tree Committee -- to prevent the destruction of a massive and beloved oak. That experience reminded me how as a Town we need to buttress our regulations and our by-laws – for the benefit of all citizens and to enhance the nature of the Town of Lexington.

**Edward F. Dolan**  
617-312-6646  
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Two important issues for Lexington are:

- Continuing the “greening” of Lexington.
- Establishing standards for sustainable water use, both commercial and residential.

How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town?

To quote William Moomaw, professor emeritus at Tufts and a lead author of five reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in a submission on the acquisition of the Highland Avenue Conservation Land: “The most effective thing that we can do (to sequester carbon) is to allow trees that are already planted and growing to reach their full ecological potential to store carbon and develop a forest that has its full complement of environmental services.” Moreover, nurturing new tree plantings is much more water-intensive than maintaining current trees that have extensive, established root systems.

Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

Not to me, but I am sure there is widespread support to maintain the tree stock we have. At Potter Pond, where I live, our Landscape Committee works hard to maintain and improve our flora, both trees and other plantings.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property? Of course, for the reasons cited above.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

The maintenance of the urban tree canopy helps remove pollutants from the air, soil and water and helps regulate the hydrological cycle. Wooded areas provide habitat for deer, fox, turkeys, red tail hawks, owls and many other species, as well as the ability for members of the community to access the land and interact with nature.

## **Precinct 4**

**Gloria J. Bloom**  
gjbloom@rcn.com

First, I must disclose that I am a member of the tree committee. I support all three articles. Article 1: Paying appraised value for removing town trees is long overdue. Increasing the cost should make saving the tree a more attractive option. Article 2: The goal is to encourage property developers to replace trees removed. It currently costs the Town far more to replace the trees than the developer pays. Article 3: The goal is to encourage homeowners to consider the option of letting a tree remain, as well as to provide the Town an idea of why canopy loss is occurring.

Mature trees provide environmental services (carbon sequestration and ground water control, in particular) that take decades to replace. This is why maintaining mature trees on both private and public property is so important. I think all three articles could be made stronger (e.g. increase charges, make permits mandatory). However, we should start with these articles and see if they make a difference in canopy preservation before trying to get more controversial positions enacted.

**Charles W. Lamb**  
charles.lamb@gmail.com

How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

Very important and Yes. Way back in the early 2000's I was one of the original supporters of the Tree By-Law when it was considered in Town Meeting.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property? Yes, and Yes.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I support all three Articles, but I confess that I share some of the concerns expressed by my colleague David Kaufman regarding Article 35(b) as possibly being unenforceable. I will still vote for it in spite of those reservations.

**Kathleen M. Lenihan**

This candidate's response is under Candidates for School Committee.

**Jennifer Richlin**

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As someone who has lived in Lexington for 20 years and has personally witnessed what the loss of mature trees can do to a neighborhood, I am in favor of strengthening the town's tree bylaws by incorporating most of the elements of the Tree Committee's amendments. Mature trees not only provide cooling shade and add beauty to the landscape, they also serve important environmental functions by providing habitats for local birds and animals as well as removing pollutants from the air. The amended bylaws which will require larger fees and penalties for removing trees, including paying up to the appraised value of a tree, will be a greater deterrent than the existing bylaws and will hopefully save trees or encourage replacement with comparable ones.

The only aspect of the articles that I question is whether it is feasible to require homeowners to apply for a permit to remove any tree greater than 6 inches DBH when not involved in major construction or demolition. Often trees in wooded yards must be pruned for safety reasons. I would hope a permit would not be required for these reasons. Requiring a permit for each of these cases may be onerous for the homeowner and the town permitting department.

**Laura Champneys Atlee**

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I am delighted that the Citizens for Lexington Conservation are raising candidates' awareness of the Lexington Tree Committee's proposed warrant articles. COVID-19 restrictions have prohibited me from fully engaging with my constituents on matters such as tree removal and replacement. However, we all benefit in numerous ways from the town's greenery and should concern ourselves with promoting and protecting it, and consistent with that, the Town should be concerned about the removal of trees on both private and public properties.

While I support the spirit of the Lexington Tree Committee's three articles and would likely back them in a vote, I would like the drafters to further consider the impact that the articles could have on Lexington's more vulnerable citizens:

Amendment to Section §120-7-B: The Select Board, in deciding whether to require an applicant to pay up to the appraised value of the tree should consider the applicant's ability to pay, so as not to impose a significant financial burden on lower/fixed income applicants, and the reason for tree's removal (e.g., the addition of a wheelchair ramp).

Amendments to §120-8-B-1 and §120-8-C-2: Lexington suffers from a shortage of affordable housing. To the extent possible, I would not like to see the increased fee negatively impact the feasibility of affordable housing projects.

Amendment to §120-8-B, new section §120-8-B-F and “Non-Protected Trees”: a property owner may not be able to identify the tree species and/or calculate the diameter. Assistance should be provided, as needed, to help property owners collect this information without the needing to pay a third party for such services.

## **Precinct 5**

**Anil A. Ahuja**

anil.ahuja@lexingtontmma.org

· How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

It is very important to preserve, and even enhance the tree canopy we have in town. There was an incident in late summer where a constituent contacted me for help in putting a stay on the cutting of a tree on their property. This was Thursday morning and the tree was scheduled to be cut Monday. I, and a few other Town Meeting Member's from Precinct 5, voiced our opposition to it and the Select Board put a stay on the tree removal.

· Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

I do not know what legal jurisdiction the Town has over the property owner's rights regarding removal of trees on their property. The Town has every right to be concerned about tree canopy on public property unless it poses a clear nuisance/danger to the public.

· Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I am in support of all articles. The penalties for developers should be greater than residents.

**Richard L. Neumeier**

dick.neumeier@lexingtontmma.org

I intend to support these articles. I believe that it is quite important to preserve Lexington's tree canopy on public land private property.



**Rita Pandey**  
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Preserving tree canopy in Lexington is extremely important to me. Trees improve air quality, stabilize the ecosystem, control climate change, and provide habitat for wildlife. I support planting of indigenous native trees and plants as well as maintaining the health of existing trees. To bring more awareness, I am a board member for “Lexington Living Landscapes” and “Citizens for Lexington Conservation”.

Some of my constituents have expressed their concern regarding tree removal and replacement in Town and others do not want the Town’s interference on private property. For maintaining Lexington's characteristics and considering the climate threats, the Town should be concerned and impose bylaws, but increasing awareness regarding the importance of trees and offering incentives on private property would be a positive step.

I agree and support all three articles except section b of Article 35 on unprotected trees. This addition does not seem necessary and its implementation would be difficult.

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As a candidate for Town Meeting in Precinct 5, I am strongly in favor of the three articles proposed by the Lexington Tree Committee. The tree canopy in Lexington requires our attention, as development can and does threaten the green spaces throughout Lexington. My small neighborhood had an experience with a developer who clear-cut a wooded lot and changed the contours of the landscape, eliminating a patch of wild land and causing rainwater flow and snow removal problems. Ours is just one example of how business interests are often favored in Lexington’s insufficiently regulated residential development. In our situation, an organized group of neighbors followed the permitting process, and we were astounded by the ease with which the developer received permission for removing so many trees, including those that were supposed to be protected by the town’s tree laws. I am in favor of increasing the fees developers must pay for the removal of large trees, as well as requiring payment from those requesting removal of trees on town property. I believe the third article requesting property owners to complete a no-fee permit application regarding non-protected trees is a good first step, and I hope the provision of educational materials will change minds. As a Town Meeting Member, I would vote to approve all three articles and would welcome more opportunities to shape policies that focus on environmental sustainability. The global climate crisis clearly reveals how interconnected we are and how property lines do not protect us from the impact of actions taken by others. We are in this together, and we must be accountable to each other for the survival of our planet.

**Salvador A. Jaramillo**  
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Preserving Lexington's tree canopy is an issue that is of utmost importance to me as a resident in Lexington. We are gifted to have a town with so many beautiful trails and sites that ultimately would not be the same without the tree canopy that exists throughout Lexington. I believe it is important that we protect areas with densely populated trees, especially those that have grown in Lexington for many decades and even centuries. There is always a way to preserve and add to the number of trees in the face of residential and community development. Although I myself have never heard any direct complaints of trees within my own neighborhood, I have heard the occasional concern over trees that may pose dangers near roads and residential areas. Safety should always be our priority, but I also think we should also look to other solutions such as trimming or replanting instead of just cutting.

I also believe that the town should be proactive about the education and discouragement of tree removal on both private and public property. Although private property owners should have the ultimate say on whether or not to cut down trees on their property, it never hurts to let them know of the potential consequences that tree environment has on the local ecosystem and community. The benefits of trees are not only limited to the private or public lands they reside on, therefore we need to emphasize the consequences tree removal poses.

As a candidate for town meeting member, I fully support all the warrant articles proposed by the Lexington Tree Committee. In particular, I strongly agree with the raising of the mitigation fee for construction/destruction sites who cut down town trees, as encouraging constructors and/or owners to replant the trees themselves is more economical and efficient than collecting the fee. For these reasons, I would even advocate for an even higher fee to further support this incentive. As said earlier, it is important that we help educate and dissuade property owners in Lexington from cutting down trees if possible, therefore I strongly feel the data collection and education tree bylaw will help us achieve that goal. It is also imperative that we collect the fair value for town owned trees that are given permission to be appraised and cut down in order to discourage the cutting of publicly owned trees. All in all, these proposed warrant articles will be the step in the right direction for continued conservation of our town and environment.

## **Precinct 6**

**Edmund C. Grant**  
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I have been a Town Meeting Member since 1985 and voted in favor of the Tree Bylaw when it was adopted and later amended. I think the Town tree canopy is important both environmentally and aesthetically. Presumably I will support the proposed three articles on

the Warrant for the Spring Annual Town Meeting pending the final presentations and deliberation of those articles at Town Meeting.

**Jyotsna Kakullavarapu**

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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

It is very important to me. I moved from a town home to a single-family home with many trees and good land size and almost half acre to an acre lot neighborhood and started feeling the difference of clean air, atmosphere attracting habitat for animals like bunnies, turkeys, birds I loved and enjoyed the difference. Unless they are bad species trees like pine which is creating acidity constituents don't like to remove good species trees as I heard.

In the COVID social distancing unprecedented time, natural trees contributing for fresh air and seeing residents walk in the neighborhood was the best part to maintain good health.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

Town shouldn't be concerned much about removal of trees on the private property as owners should be given some choice of their own. It's an expensive proposition too to remove a tree. Certainly, reasonable explanation for removal and opportunity to plant for replacement is a great idea to preserve greenery, fresh air, and measures to protect environment in town is great. Again reasonable explanation for removing a tree on public property is Town's concern for sure.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

Raising mitigation funds, will make it more attractive for applicants to replant versus making payments to the Lexington Tree Fund. Doubling the mitigation funds make them think twice before removing a good tree. I think articles are well thought about, more stricter, better informed to the town about tree removal by the owners should be encouraged to evaluate the need of removal and better understand the residents' needs.

**Deepika Sawhney**

This candidate's response is under Candidates for School Committee.

**Vinita Verma**  
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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

It's absolutely very important to preserve Lexington's tree canopy – both the number and distribution of trees in town. Trees provide a character to our town, create a sense of place, provide a habitat for plants and animals, reduce stormwater runoff/erosion, conceal unsightly views, assist in conserving energy, and increase property values. And not to forget, Lexington Center's canopy adds to the beauty and character to Lexington's landscape, especially when leaves change color in Fall which attracts thousands of visitors thus supporting our local businesses. Also, considering accelerating climate change, environmentalists across the world have become increasingly concerned with preserving tree canopy. It is high time we set some guidance to protect tree canopy in Lexington.

No, my constituents have not expressed concern about tree removal and replacement yet because (thankfully) this has not been an issue in our area and (hopefully) never becomes a concern.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

Yes, the town should be concerned about the removal of trees on private and public property. Given how climate change has accelerated, environmentalists across the world have become increasingly concerned with the preservation of tree canopy. In our neighboring city, Cambridge there is data that shows how there has been a substantial loss in the city's canopy coverage (from 30% in 2009 to 26% in 2014). The city was losing about 16.4 acres of canopy annually and with that rate it could be down to 17% by 2030 [Reference: wbur.org], making the area less resilient to the impacts of climate change. We should start collecting similar data and start planning on protecting trees if we have not done it already.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I support the first article which specifies that applicants will be required to provide an appraisal of the tree's value to remove a Town-owned tree, and if permission is granted, will need to pay to Lexington Tree Fund up to the appraised value of the tree that can be used in replanting of trees to supplement the loss, thus protecting the environment.

I support the second article that includes bylaw change of increasing mitigation fee from \$100 to \$200 to encourage the replanting of trees.

However, I am concerned about the third article which states that the homeowner would be required to request a no-fee tree removal permit using the Town's online permit system. How will we or how should we inform all the residents of Lexington about this online form submission. For those residents who are old and not savvy enough to fill out the online form, is there a back-up plan for them to go to Town Office. What if the resident fails to inform the Town Office, are we going to charge a fine, and if so, how will that amount be determined?

**Taylor Carroll Singh**  
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On Thursday, March 12th, 2020, I attended the last in person Tree Committee meeting before the LPS announcement that schools would be shut down due to the spreading Coronavirus pandemic that same afternoon. I joined the Committee's meeting to warn them that a company working on Eversource's behalf was tagging mature trees lining our streets for removal. I informed them of what I was told by the representative that visited my property: He insinuated that if I did not allow them to remove my tree I may be liable for damages my tree may cause to the power lines if the tree were to fall in a storm. To add insult, investigation of the same tree by a hired Arborist a few months later determined that the tree was healthy and thriving! Preserving Lexington's tree canopy is very important to me and the thought of dotting out mature trees along our roads compelled me to reach out to our neighbors that care deeply enough for our town's aesthetics, shade, character and carbon footprint to volunteer their time as Tree Committee members.

I am grateful to our Tree Committee members for their hours of committed service and their efforts to bring forth these three warrant articles to ATM 2021. As a voting Town Meeting member, if elected, I intend to vote in support of the first two articles (one relating to town owned trees and the second relating to major construction). The third article has not won my support as I am concerned the no-fee tree removal permit system may be more trouble than it is worth. However, out of respect for the commitment of our Tree Committee members, I will assuredly listen attentively to the debate on the floor of this motion and not make my final decision until I fully understand all of its components and nuances.

I want to note that I particularly support the second article. In Precinct 6, we have many neighbors that have been upset with the development at 53 Hancock Street. In recent months, when mature trees have been removed, it brought no comfort to neighbors to learn that the consequence to the developer would be a \$100 per diameter inch fine per tree. An increase to \$200 is the very bare minimum we can do to act against unnecessary tree removal and I wholeheartedly support this change.

**Jodia L. Finnagan**  
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Protecting the environment is an existential issue, and a key part is protecting trees. This is not just an environmental issue either. Trees offer a way to make a town a more attractive place to live by providing privacy and making the area more beautiful. Lexington's tree

canopy is an often-overlooked reason our Town is as appealing as it is. Trees in Lexington should be protected and should only be cut down if they are diseased or if there is another significant problem with the tree. I therefore believe Articles 32, 33, and 34 represent an important step in the right direction. In regard to tree removal on public property, the Town should only ever remove an existing tree if it is diseased, if it poses a risk of damage to property or infrastructure that cannot be addressed some other way, or if it poses a danger in a storm. On private property the Town should act to protect trees as well based on these same criteria. I do have concerns on the Articles. I oppose the removal of large trees on private property, but I am worried about how the rules will be enforced on private property, how the tracking system will work, and if these proposals will be effective. I also think that it would be more effective to incentivize people to save trees instead of creating penalties for removing trees. Despite these concerns, I do believe we should move forward on these Articles. Article 34's proposal to amend existing law to ensure the mitigation fee to keep up with inflation and ensure costs are covered is an excellent idea. I strongly support the idea as well that there should be compensation to the Town for the removal of trees. The provision of education on the benefits of planting trees is a great ideal as well. Taken together, these Articles should help incentivize people to replace trees rather than pay a fine, a goal that I strongly share with CLC.

**Ramesh Nallavolu**

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I believe in the environment and Trees play a crucial part in the well-being of our environment! Not only are trees important for the environment, but trees are also critical for human life; we should give utmost importance to protect, care and grow trees. Trees are the easiest and best defense against global warming and climate change. There is a scope and need to increase the number of trees in the town. Trees provide environmental, public health, economic, happiness and social benefits to the community. Whether it be the town or the public, everyone should be concerned about the removal of trees regardless of if it is in private or public property.

I don't know how many tree removal requests are coming in town per year and how much fees are collected as of today. Fees increase from \$100 to \$200 for per diameter inch for removed tree removal seems high for residential expansion or teardown, but the increased fees may be good for development of commercial sites/industrial zones. I recommend replanting trees if the property has enough space on top of fees for tree removal as to bring more awareness in the community, otherwise owners pay fine and forget! I would also recommend studying best practices followed around Boston towns or best towns for trees in the US.

Community is forgetting the wisdom of trees and its diversity, education and awareness is the key to protect trees and the future. We have a long Minuteman bike path which goes in the middle of the town, which can plant more diversified native and medicinal trees. We do not have to go forest for forest bathing, walking on the bike path in Lexington should be like forest bathing, hence the need for more trees!

## **Precinct 7**

**Philip K. Hamilton**

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I strongly support the Tree Committee and its work. The removal of large trees, whether on public or private property, should be of concern to the Town, especially now, as global warming is increasing. I know from my work on the Conservation Commission that, when proposed construction includes the removal of large trees, owners of abutting properties are often concerned enough to raise objections.

I understand that the details of the three Tree Committee proposals are still subject to change. In their present form, I support the proposal to require appraisal of and payment for a town-owned tree that is removed by a private citizen. I am also in favor of the proposal to require further information about the removal of large trees that are currently protected by the bylaw and also about the trees planted as mitigation. I have reservations about the third proposal, to require the owner of a large tree that is not currently protected by the bylaw to obtain a permit before removing the tree. I agree that, as global warming intensifies, privately owned trees should be increasingly seen as a public benefit, to be protected by public regulation. But the extension of regulation to a homeowner's (as opposed to a developer's) privately owned trees is likely to be seen as a major change in perceived property rights. I would think that the first step toward achieving public support for that new level of regulation should be a widely dispersed and very visible program of public education (newspaper articles, a website, public forums, etc.) rather than the proposed permitting process. I also fear that the proposed process, with no fee, no onsite inspection and no penalty for non-compliance, is not likely to be enforceable or to produce much helpful information about the Town's tree canopy. I hope that the Tree Committee will revise this proposal.

**Stacey A. Hamilton**

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Preserving Lexington's tree canopy is very important, not just to Lexington but to the area in general. Loss of trees in surrounding areas more prone to development makes it even more critical to focus on responsible development and tree maintenance practices here in Lexington. Pct 7 constituents are very actively engaged in this topic, especially given the recent loss of trees and habitat due to the Grove Street development. I do think we need to consider not only the number and distribution of trees in town, but also the types of trees. Variety can impact everything from the look & feel of the landscape/streetscape to the air filtration to the susceptibility to broad loss from pests or disease. I think the Tree Committee has done a good job thus far of balancing focus on both public property and private property, but more education is always needed for residents to understand their options, especially as it relates to replanting.

I think the proposed articles on appraised value and fees to cover costs are good steps, and look forward to hearing more about them as we prepare for and engage in Town Meeting. An actual permitting process for non-protected tree removal may be a step too far, but the idea certainly speaks to the difficulty in tracking issues and improving outcomes for the tree canopy overall. Where I live in Precinct 7, the sheer number of trees already means there is a very constant level of activity, which would be a challenge to get people to document even if only at 6 DBH and above, and the value of doing so isn't entirely clear from the article. A voluntary database for key areas or issues, or perhaps some kind of incentive program to encourage reporting in key areas or for key issues, may be a better option. I recall a collective effort at the state level to track the winter moth, for example, that then used the reporting to encourage residents to take action locally to prevent the spread and plant trees resistant to the pest. For non-covered trees, I think actions where people can see the immediate impact and benefit would tend to gain more traction and support.

**Pamela C. Tames**  
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I fully value Lexington's tree canopy. I affirm that trees provide multiple benefits to the natural environment and to people, and that preservation of existing trees and planting of new trees enhances a community's quality of life.

Discouraging the removal of existing trees and requiring property owners to pay for the value of a tree unnecessarily removed are reasonable goals (first Article). Increasing fees and mitigation payments for the removal of trees protected by the Bylaws is legitimate (second Article). Gathering data about trees of a certain diameter on properties at which major construction or demolition is planned, and requiring notification of the Town as to such trees on any property before their removal is laudable (third Article).

I applaud the CLC for seeking to protect our trees. To further consider these Articles, I ask that certain information be provided. First, the criteria for determining whether a property owner will be required to pay for a removed tree. Second, whether the doubling of fees and mitigation payments is necessary to achieve the desired goal. Third, the guidelines and timeline envisioned, the ease of using the survey and database by Town staff and property owners, and enforcement.

**Christian L. Boutwell**  
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A healthy and vibrant tree canopy is an important part of the environmental health of Lexington and care and should be taken to not only maintain the canopy as it exists now but also to proactively develop a canopy capable of thriving under the changing climatic conditions of global warming. Although I can't recall ever hearing specific concerns about tree removal and replacement from neighbors or constituents (Pct 6 TMM 2016-2019; 2020), I believe that the majority of Lexington residents value the canopy and support well-



considered policies to reduce and/or mitigate the impacts of tree removal especially in the context of public property or the public right-of-way. Although I have not yet made my final decision about the three articles pertaining to the Tree Bylaw, I'm generally supportive of the idea of reimbursing the Town for appraised value of Town-owned trees and of increasing the per diameter inch replacement cost for removal of trees greater than or equal to 6 inches dbh from the setback area during major construction. At this time, I'm more dubious of the value as written of the article proposing to require landowner application for an automatically approved permit for the removal of trees greater than or equal to 6 inches dbh from private land outside of major construction. I will look forward to hearing more about how this article is anticipated to protect and enhance the canopy while still respecting private landowner rights.

## **Precinct 8**

**Lin D. Jensen**

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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

Tree canopy is critical to the Lexington community for many aesthetic, functional, and environmental reasons. Tree canopy not only gives our historical town character, it provides shades for people, animals and grass, mitigates floodwater, improves soil health and air quality, and last but not least, helps combat climate change by sequestering and storing carbon. In other words, one cannot overstate how important trees (both their number and distribution) are to all of us.

Yes, I have heard from many constituents their concerns for the shrinking population of mature trees in our town. I applaud the effort of the Tree Committee in addressing this issue.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

Yes. We are in this together--the municipal government and private property owners-- to make it a common-sense practice to treat trees as the valuable resource it is.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I support all three articles. For the fines, considering 1. the effort involved to update bylaws, 2. price inflation between bylaw updates 2. the actual cost of replacing the same tree of a similar size, 4. the intention to encourage keeping the tree than fiscal fine, 5. importance of tree canopy's distribution rather than planting a new tree somewhere else, if it makes sense to the Tree Committee and other constituents, I would support an increase to \$300.

I support requiring permits to remove trees. As someone who had to cut down an ailing tree after multi-year efforts in saving it, and planted multiple more after the removal, I hope the educational material for permit applicants would include recommendations of native trees to plant. (It is online and Mr. Gerald Paul on the Tree Committee had graciously provided me with the newer edition.)

**Lisa Farias Mazerall**

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As the proud daughter-in-law of Lexington's Tree Warden of 40 years, Paul E. Mazerall, I feel it is extremely important to preserve and consult experts regarding Lexington's tree canopy. As a 46-year resident and 10 year Town Meeting Member, I haven't received much feedback from constituents regarding tree removal and/or replacement. However, I believe it is important to solicit feedback from constituents, especially when analyzing and voting on articles on the warrant.

**Brielle Kissel Meade**

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It is important to me to hear directly from article sponsors and other Town Meeting members during presentations and debate at Town Meeting before making final voting decisions, but at this time I would support the first two draft articles proposed by the Tree Committee. Requiring an appraisal and compensation for removing Town trees, along with raising the tree removal mitigation fee to be more in line with the actual cost of losing those trees seem like common sense proposals to help preserve Lexington's tree canopy and deal with tree removal and replacement more fairly. I see examples in my own neighborhood all the time of trees coming down due to construction, and I welcome the Tree Committee's work to preserve more if possible.

For the third article (no-fee permit for private tree removal), I would like to hear more from the article sponsors about the goals and implementation of such a program before supporting it. I think that this bylaw would require a lot of effort to make residents aware of it, it would be impossible to enforce, and as another Town Meeting member suggested, I think an annual survey asking residents to voluntarily provide information about the removal of trees on their property would potentially yield more useful information for the Tree Committee than the proposed permitting process would. I look forward to hearing more about each of the proposed articles.

**James Arthur Osten**

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I support the articles addressing payment for removal of a Town-owned tree and the increased fee for removal of a tree in a setback. While I support better ways to educate

homeowners on the value of trees, the proposed mechanism for licensing removal of trees outside of setback and interior to lots is intrusive with excessive process without direct effect.

I have numerous unique trees on my lot that are aging and require substantial care. These trees are very valuable for shade in summer, beautiful foliage and privacy. However, aging, infirmity and disease are threats. Most of my neighbors also use trees for privacy and their only comments on trees concern how they screen unattractive views.

Perhaps what we need is a tree census or a baseline measurement of the Lexington tree canopy perhaps using google earth. Working with the tree services to educate homeowners could also help. As a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals, many permits have trees as a major topic with developers, often for screening and often because of disputes with abutters. Many of the issues come from teardowns and building to the limit of the lot, with detriment to both interior and setback trees. I support using the Tree Bylaw to preserve a robust canopy in Lexington but the details need careful consideration.

**Sanjay Padaki**

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As Lexingtonians, we are proud of our history and have taken many measures to preserve it over the years. Conservation of our natural surroundings is an integral part of how we retain the unique character of the town and we have many laws in place to protect wetlands, tree canopies and wooded areas. Although none of my constituents have contacted me (as yet!) about the proposed bylaw changes being considered at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting, I know that they will agree with my view that cutting down trees is generally not a desirable thing. There are obviously certain circumstances when it is unavoidable due to diseases & rot, storm damage, or construction. However, ensuring that this is done in a thoughtful way is important, especially since it fundamentally changes the look and feel of the place.

Here is my opinion on the three articles being brought forward this year. (1) The Town should be compensated appropriately for removal (for any non-safety reason) of any publicly owned trees that are on private property. (2) Regarding removal of private trees on private lands, I am generally in agreement that if trees are cleared due to a major construction project that the owner/developer either replaces those trees or compensates the town appropriately. (3) However, I am not in favor of adding more permits and rules for removal of one-off trees on private lands. Getting tree contractors to respond is challenging (especially after storms) and the homeowner's first obligation is to protect damage to adjacent property. As I understand it, the third article is going to add an extra step and provide additional information about tree preservation that most homeowners will promptly ignore since they likely have already decided to remove the tree. It would, in my opinion, be more proactive to dedicate some funds to education of all residents and perhaps send out periodic information. Finally, although not specified, I would be interested in ensuring the money collected as part of these bylaw changes is somehow directly invested in the planting of trees elsewhere in Town within a reasonable period.

**Weidong Wang**  
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In general, I am in favor of preserving the trees in Lexington. Over the years, I have heard from my constituents expressing concerns about some neighbors taking down too many trees, and I have also heard from some neighbors about not being able to take down trees, even when they are willing to pay for it. In one particular case, someone wanted to take down a big tree so that he could put solar on his roof (too much shade makes it economically nonviable to put up a solar system), but he couldn't take that tree down. We know going green with net zero is another goal the Town has. How do we deal with the situation when two goals become competing to each other? Which is more valuable, to preserve a tree, or to have cleaner energy to help the Town towards net zero?

I believe the best solution will be the one that strives to achieve the goal to preserve trees while giving options to homeowners. Going to either extreme is not good for the Town. In the case above, I think the homeowner should be given credit for putting up a solar panel on the roof, which can be used to offset the payment for the tree.

Specific to the proposed the articles, I think I am for the first article and the 2nd articles. For the 3rd one, I agree with some others that section b should be removed.

**Dahua Pan**  
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Trees provide numerous environmental, economic and aesthetical benefits to us. It is important for Lexington to preserve tree canopy. I fully support article 1 and article 2. I think it is worth a little more discussion within the community on the effectiveness of article 3 on tree-preserving. For example, when there is no demolition or major construction, what are the main reasons that residents decide to remove trees, and has tree-removing under such circumstances had a big impact on our tree-preserving efforts? Would the permitting requirement have any meaningful influence on a resident's decision on removing trees on their property?

## **Precinct 9**

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I support the articles proposed by Lexington Tree Committee to update the current Tree Bylaws.

It is very important to preserve Lexington's Tree Canopy, not only for us but for future generations' well-being. We all must respect the nature & it is our responsibility to do our part to keep Lexington green. By making the by-laws strict, we can help with broader issue of climate change. It all builds up slowly, so preservation if required. Lately there are many tear down & new construction are cutting the trees on the property in large numbers. By these articles, the contractors will not get away with very little cost compared to the harm they are causing to the nature. I support mitigation fees to be more. I also support that, for removal of tree from private property, the owner has to follow the guideline & plant other trees, equivalent to what will be lost by cutting for particular reasons.

**Scott A. Bokun**  
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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

As we try to confront climate change in Lexington, it is important to combat it from all sides. Solar energy, geo thermal, reduction of fossil fuels, public transportation, divestment, and even trees. I have read that by planting over half a trillion trees, we could make a dent in greenhouse gas emissions and carbon in the atmosphere. Although I have not heard Precinct 9 constituents talk about this or express concern about tree removal and replacement, it is an issue that I believe can help with climate change.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

While it is hard to actually dictate what can or can't be removed on private property, I am all for trying to keep as many trees as possible on private and public property.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I support all of the proposed tree articles, except for the adding of the new section on non-protected trees in AMEND GENERAL BYLAWS- TREE BYLAW: DATA COLLECTION AND EDUCATION . I think it would be very difficult to get the public to do this, especially since there is no payment penalty involved. I believe my colleague Tom Shiple (Precinct 9) had a solid idea of trying to get this information through an annual tree survey.

**Richard L. Canale**  
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Tree canopy in Lexington is vital to quality of life in Lexington. Replacement of smaller houses with larger houses usually results in loss of trees throughout a private property lot.

In Massachusetts, installation of Solar equipment accounts for 25 % of the total loss of tree canopy. Mansionization and liberalizing of solar bylaws will result in an increasing amount of lost tree canopy in Lexington. Some constituents have expressed concern, but most are not aware of the dangers that loss of tree canopy pose to climate degradation.

Most of tree canopy in Lexington is on private property, so, of course, the Town has a vested interest in maintaining tree canopy on private property. Tree canopy is a natural resource that is vital to livability and to mitigating climate changes. Trees, wetlands, streams, ground cover, and other resources are essential pieces of our environment that can stand only so much destruction.

All of the proposed Articles are important, and I support all of them.

The Town, with new additional funding, should embark on planting and caring for additional street trees (within the right-of-way) to revive street canopies. The Town should make a fifty-year plan to remove all above ground utilities that interfere with street canopy. The Town should adopt the Massachusetts Scenic Road Bylaw to help formalize street tree preservation.

**Mollie K. Garberg**

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I truly appreciate the efforts of the Citizens for Lexington Conservation. It is critically important to protect the natural environment and beauty of our world and our Town. Over the years, I have supported organizations working on conservation nationally through my support of the Sierra Club, and the National Parks Foundation; regionally through my involvement with the Appalachian Mountain Club and locally by supporting the conservation efforts of our Town. Most recently I voted in favor of Article 7 of Special Town Meeting 2020-3, purchase of 39 Highland Ave (the Ashley property) to add to the Upper Vine Brook Conservation area.

I applaud the Lexington Tree Committee for bringing forward articles to protect our tree canopy. The tree canopy helps remove pollutants from the environment and will reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, a key factor in mitigating global warming. The canopy also helps to mitigate heat and preserves a habitat for our local flora and fauna.

Given the importance of the tree canopy, the Town should be concerned with the removal of trees on both public and private property and I am in favor of the intent of all three of the Lexington Tree Committee's articles. I am strongly in favor of the first proposed article that makes sure fair market value is being collected for removal of a public or town tree. Similarly, I think the second article being proposed is appropriate as it will encourage replanting and, in the event a developer chooses not to replant, fees paid to the Lexington Tree Fund will be increased to fund additional mitigation and replanting efforts. On the third proposed article, I strongly support the initiative to collect information on the current tree canopy in Lexington and educate the citizenry. I wonder if an annual town survey and education

campaign might be more effective. This will allow monitoring of the existing tree canopy in Lexington over time versus cataloguing trees that have been removed. Nonetheless, I would support the third article and especially like the educational element of the no-fee permitting process as it will raise awareness of the detrimental effects of tree removal. Finally, I would encourage the Tree Committee to ask for a review by Town Counsel of all articles to ensure the clarity of the language used and surface any implementation issues before presentation to Town Meeting.

Thank you to the CLC for the opportunity to respond to your questions and more importantly for your work to protect our beautiful Town. I hope to be able to continue to serve your members as a representative to Town Meeting in Precinct 9.

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I generally support the three articles proposed by the Tree Committee. A healthy tree canopy in Lexington is important for sequestering carbon, providing shade, providing natural habitat, and removing pollutants from the air, water and soil. For this reason, the town should be concerned about the removal of trees on private property. Regarding public property, I trust that the town is properly managing trees on land that it owns.

My constituents have expressed concern about tree removal from redeveloped parcels. Typically, the new house has a much larger footprint than the house being replaced, leading to the removal of many trees. These articles will incentivize developers to preserve trees, and failing that, to plant new trees to mitigate the loss of trees.

I have not heard complaints from constituents about homeowners removing trees from their properties. My experience is that this is mostly done to remove diseased trees that pose a falling hazard to property and life. I find that generally homeowners like trees and want to keep them.

Regarding this last point, I'm not in favor of the provision of one of the articles to require homeowners to request a permit to remove greater than 6-inch DBH trees. I understand the Tree Committee's desire to track the removal of trees and educate the public, but given that "the Tree Committee is recommending that there be no fee associated with this notification, no requirement for an onsite inspection, and no penalty for failing to provide notice" I doubt that many removals will even be reported. To fill this need I suggest that an annual, voluntary, town-wide survey be conducted asking for the information that would otherwise be requested on the permit.

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Mature trees are an important amenity to the Town, providing significant environmental and aesthetic benefits. Streets and neighborhoods lacking trees look and feel unfinished, especially in a town with pre-Revolutionary roots.

The proposed articles represent reasonable steps to protect an asset of the Town by adjusting the balance between paying economic mitigation and saving mature trees. Under the proposed articles, developers and property owners retain the ability to remove trees when necessary, but the Town's preference to preserve existing, mature trees is more meaningfully expressed. The article addressing properties not currently covered by the tree bylaw is a measure way to educate and encourage property owners to consider the value of retaining mature trees without limiting their freedom to act; the information collected through the permitting process will be useful for assessing whether further, or different protections of mature trees is warranted.

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How important to you is preserving Lexington's tree canopy--the number and distribution of trees in town? Have your constituents expressed concern about tree removal and replacement?

Preserving Lexington's natural environment, including trees, is a priority for me. As we increasingly see the impacts of climate change—from melting polar ice caps to rising ocean temperatures—it behooves our community to be proactive in taking steps to keep Lexington at the forefront of preserving our green spaces, plants, and trees, all of which contribute to a healthier planet and healthier population.

Should the town be concerned about the removal of trees on private property? On public property?

The Town should work to preserve as many trees as possible. If saving trees—especially mature trees—is not possible, the Town should incentive property owners to plant new trees. Trees on public property belong to all of Lexington, and the Town should be very concerned about their health and well-being and should be involved in any decisions about the future of these trees, including offering strategies to avoid their removal.

Are there particular points in the three articles that you strongly support? Are there aspects of the articles that you think should be stricter?

I'm encouraged that the articles call for incentivizing property owners to replant trees when possible, as this will more quickly build up Lexington's tree population. I look forward to the discussion of these important articles at Town Meeting.