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Eileen Entin, Chair

February, 2017

Elaine Quinlan, Editor

CANDIDATES' FORUM ISSUE

Citizens for Lexington Conservation is Celebrating Its 50th Anniversary

Citizens for Lexington Conservation proudly celebrates its 50th birthday this year. To honor our birthday we are planning a number of events that will focus on the effects of climate change on the New England landscape and what implications this might have for our local environment, wildlife, and plant life. Our first event is screening of a video, *Urban and Suburban Meadows*, which explains and illustrates the virtues and practicalities of replacing a conventional lawn with meadow landscaping. In the movie, author and photographer Catherine Zimmerman weaves her personal journey of changing her own landscaping choices into a guide that demonstrates both the need to change current, detrimental landscaping practices and the practical know-how and resources to accomplish that change.

Following the video, a panel of local experts with experience in creating natural backyard habitats will answer questions from the audience based on their own experience. At a later date, to be determined, we plan to offer a tour of Lexington homes that have established such meadow-like environments.

This first event will be held on Sunday, March 26, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm in the large lecture room at Cary Memorial Library. The event is free and refreshments will be provided. Please join us for this video and panel discussion.

2017 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 e-mail announcing this issue.

Pay your dues using PayPal on the CLC Website (CLCLex.org) or mail to:

CLC, Inc.

P.O. Box 292

Lexington, MA 02420-0003

Suggested membership levels:

\$20 (Twig)

\$50 (Branch)

\$100(Tree)

\$ (Other)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL _____

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 501C(3) organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

CLC 2017 Candidate Question, sent to all candidates:

Are you in favor of continuing to add to the Town's tool kit to limit or otherwise control the pace of residential development in our community? If so, please indicate which types of measures you feel the Town should take to add to the controls already in place. Please also include a brief statement as to why you feel the position you are taking is important for the future development of our community.



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CANDIDATES FOR TOWN-WIDE OFFICE

Candidates for Selectman

Michelle Ciccolo

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I am in favor of expanding the Town's toolkit to help control the pace of residential development so that our growth is measured, sound, and sustainable. Failing to do so puts too much stress on our infrastructure, transportation network, and operating budget. Moreover, I believe I am in a unique position to help the Town manage growth. I have been involved in regional planning for my entire professional career and serve in positions that enable me to bring best practices back to Lexington. As past President of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), now serving as Chair of its Legislative Committee, I can promote legislation that gives municipalities more tools to improve self-governance. I also serve as Vice-President of the Mass. Selectmen's Association on the Mass. Municipal Association (MMA) Board. Both MMA and MAPC are directly engaged in the zoning reform package making its way through the Legislature, and at those tables I make sure Lexington's views and concerns are represented.

Locally, we should work to amend Lexington zoning so that it favors and steers developers to use what is called "Site Sensitive" design in place of Conventional Subdivisions. Conventional by-right zoning tends to clear out an entire site instead of leaving portions of it in its natural, original condition. We should also

be promoting Low Impact Development techniques which can, for just one example, reduce water site run-off by minimizing impervious areas.

We may need to explore regulations on blasting and we need to fully implement Lexington's Stormwater Management regulations. I also favor combining the Balanced Housing zoning option with the Public Benefit zone because if density bonuses are allowed for the developer, we must be sure to get housing that is actually affordable, provides a variety of housing types, and is of a scale that makes sense within our existing neighborhoods.

Finally, we need to work to recapitalize the Community Preservation Act fund at the state level because the state match has fallen from 100% down to the 20% vicinity and is anticipated to drop down to the 11-13% range now that larger cities such as Boston have joined. Several of the groups I am working with have proposed legislation to bring this match back up to 50% which will directly assist communities like Lexington to purchase or protect more open space. CPA funds are critical to local land preservation efforts and I will be advocating to make sure this tool is fully funded so that it can work for Lexington.

Douglas Lucente

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<http://www.douglucente.com>

As you drive through town, it is obvious that Lexington is currently facing significant growth challenges given the number of development projects in the works. Our community is not unique in our struggle with this growth. The struggle to balance our need for affordable housing with the over-development of housing,

both in size and number of units, continues. This has resulted in a considerable impact on our infrastructure, including the resources of our municipal government and our schools. We need to continue to examine the policies of other communities to find creative ways to combat this issue.

What is unique about Lexington is that we are a community with a rich history. I would support efforts to expand the designation of historic areas. If implemented it will not only prevent some over development, but it will also maintain the character of this beautiful town. I would also support restrictions of the height of retaining walls. If this regulation is properly crafted to curb the growth on significantly sloped lots and possibly prevent some of the more absurd developments that have been witnessed. Both of these measures will have a long-range impact on the extent to which a property can and cannot be developed in Lexington. In developing our by-laws, we must be reasonable and realistic in our approach. This means we need to work with developers and not to work against them to uncover any loopholes in advance so we can avoid future growth controversies. The reality here in Lexington is that newcomers will still move here for our excellent schools, they will still pay extremely high prices, and the fact that their new home is a bit smaller will not have a significant impact on the sellers price, but it may help maintain the character of our neighborhoods and prevent offensively large mansions. The conflicts surrounding residential development will inescapably appear again, but using long-range thinking in our policy development will minimize the future impacts.

Glenn Parker
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As a Town Meeting Member for Precinct 3, I have voted in favor of most of the Planning Board's proposed reforms to zoning regulations. I believe that changes requiring lower height restrictions, reduced floor area to lot size ratio, and reasonable setbacks will result in homes that are more appropriately scaled, both for the lots they occupy, as well as the neighborhoods they share. I also supported the bylaw changes simplifying requirements for accessory apartments. In addition to making more efficient use of land and town resources, these small apartments extend the range of housing options, which helps to maintain economic diversity in our town.

I would consider certain restrictions on retaining walls and the use of blasting. My interest here is based on the need to better control storm runoff and erosion. As a result of climate change in the coming decades, we can expect storms in New England to grow in intensity. We already face a federal mandate for major improvements in our handling of storm runoff. It would make sense for all new development to improve this situation, or at least avoid making the problem any worse.

**Candidate for School Committee:
3-Year Term**

Kathryn (Kate) Colburn
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Yes. I supported the dimensional and height controls proposed by the Planning Board last year and I would be willing to support further measures. For example, I

would support restrictions on significant blasting in residential zones. When explosives are used to alter the landscape, they can result in environmental degradation, unhealthy dust and debris, and disturbance to neighbors. The blasting and deforestation that occurred recently on Grant Street, to allow building on an otherwise unbuildable lot, illustrate our need for these protections.

I also support placing further conditions and restrictions on dense development. Recent balanced housing developments have created dense, expensive homes that add nothing to the economic diversity of the town. I believe that any dense development must bring a well-defined and enforceable benefit to the town, by providing a generous percentage of truly affordable units, by allowing a significant portion of the parcel's buildable area to remain undeveloped, and/or by providing low-cost senior housing to allow more seniors to remain in town. The total number of dense units in a particular development must be limited as well, due to the strain on infrastructure Lexington is already experiencing, particularly in our overcrowded schools.

Overall, I believe Lexington's housing policies should aim to protect our open spaces, require sustainable and environmentally-responsible building practices, encourage the availability of lower-cost homes to allow more economic diversity in town, and keep total housing units at a level where the town can provide services to all residents. I would support policies that would move us in that direction.

Candidate for School Committee: 1-Year Term

Stephen McKenna II

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During my time as a Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member I have always supported articles that allowed for the Town to purchase land. I firmly believe that preserving open space and conservation land in Lexington is critical to maintaining its historic character. To that point, we have a tree bylaw that helps to ensure that we maintain our tree canopy and I support programs that plant more trees throughout Town. I would also support any plans to allow for the designation of historic or scenic roads. Having lived on the Battle Green I have a great respect for the wealth of history that exists throughout our town, and having a degree in History I fully support efforts such as this to preserve the different historical areas and open spaces in Lexington.

Lexington has done a lot in recent years to mitigate the influx of residential and developmental strains on our schools, infrastructure and natural resources, and we need to allow these mechanisms time so that we can study their full effects. That being said, I would support an aggressive approach to purchasing properties that meet our open space and preservation goals. In fact, the ability to fund the purchase of such spaces was one of the benefits to approving the CPA legislation. By the Town purchasing parcels of land, we have the ability to balance the need to grow the levy while limiting the number of developments that are possible.

I grew up in Lexington attending Hastings and Diamond before graduating with the

Lexington High School Class of 2009. Along the way I learned to respect that I am a product of where I grew up, and understand that I had a good education because the people of this town made sure of it. As a result, I feel a responsibility to ensure the next generation gets that same quality education. In standing for the School Committee my hope is to foster the youth of our Town to get involved in where they grow up because more than anything else, they are what is important to the future development of our community.

Candidates for Planning Board

Charles Hornig

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Lexington's problem is not so much the pace of residential development as the type of development we are seeing. What we need are tools that encourage the production of a variety of housing options rather than solely large multi-million-dollar houses sprawling across large areas of land. The Town has moved in that direction over the last year on two fronts, by limiting the size of new houses based on lot area and by making accessory (in-law) apartments easier to construct. We need to continue these efforts, starting with the Planning Board's 2017 initiatives allowing more two-family housing and updating our special permit residential development provisions to require affordable housing and significantly smaller housing units while continuing to protect increasingly scarce open space.

Given the unmet demand for housing in the Boston area, nothing we can do can or should stop all residential development. We can work to make sure that the new

housing meets our community's real needs.

Robert Creech

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Yes, I do favor additional controls for residential development in Lexington. I was a resident participant with the Residential Policy Committee (RPC) during 2015/2016 and attended many RPC and Planning Board meetings. I was responsible for the research that quantified certain aspects of New Construction in Lexington. In 2014 there were 55 different builders constructing new single family dwellings. In 2015 the number was 64. In 2 years, more than 200 new homes. The vast majority of these were the result of the removal of a modest house and the construction of a very large house which, in many cases, consumed the lot and seemed to not consider the fact that there were much smaller homes all around them.

Given that this level of construction is driven by demand and by money, I don't see that we can control the pace of construction except perhaps through additional regulations. This is what I would propose:

a) Do the research needed to understand, in some detail, the nature of demand for housing in Lexington. Our decisions should be based upon good information.

b) Consider the following changes: lower height limits for houses on conforming lots; lower GFA limits - they are still too big; place limits on the alteration of our natural topography.

c) Reduce the number of units allowed via any special permit like Balanced Housing and the proposed

Flexible Residential Development. The former are currently of such value to the developer as to prevent Conservation, and, perhaps, even Town purchases of property.

I am not opposed to new construction and many homes in Lexington would benefit from a degree of renewal. I think that we should wrest some degree of control over how this happens. Town and neighborhood character are important.

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

Weidong Wang
weidong@yahoo.com

Yes, I am in favor of continuing to add to the Town's tool kit to limit or otherwise control the pace of residential development in our community.

The booming of real estate market has led to much faster residential development pace, and sometimes larger development with more units. We are already seeing the impacts to the town's infrastructure, in particular, the school overcrowding conditions. It is a complicated problem to solve and I believe that it needs close coordination and cooperation among major town offices, not just the Planning Board. While I know that Planning Board has been meeting with Board of Selectmen and School Committee, I think we need to have some guiding principles for how we want the town to be in the future, which should drive our decisions in community development.

. Of the type of measures to consider, I am more in favor of municipal acquisition of larger parcels to limit their development. By comparison, amendments to existing

Zoning By-Laws governing the development of private property, while it can do its job, often leads to specific technicalities and fairness questions. With town holding onto larger parcels, we reserve our options for the future. Out future generations will thank us for keeping open space and conserving the natural resources. Of course, specific amendments to Zoning By-Law are still important. Changes like what the town meeting voted for last year are good examples.

**CANDIDATES FOR TOWN
MEETING**

Precinct 1

Nancy Adler
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I am troubled by the physical changes to our community from a lovely Boston suburb to a community replete with mega-homes which not only change how Lexington looks but also has enormous impact on the economic diversity of our citizenry. I am especially interested in the community addressing our needs for more and varied senior housing - from smaller homes on one floor to assisted living opportunities. It is sad to me that those who have lived here many years have very limited housing options should they decide to downsize and wish to stay in Lexington. I do believe that with good foresight and planning we can address this need more successfully than we have so far and still be a beautiful and more diverse community.

Ellen Basch
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I am in favor of continuing to add to the Town's tool kit to control residential development in our community. I empathize with residents who are concerned about the character of their neighborhood changing due to tear downs and rebuilds that are out of scale with surrounding homes. If a home is to be torn down and rebuilt, we need to consider and preserve the natural resources on the site as much as possible. It is the Town of Lexington's responsibility, through its Planning Board, to update and maintain General and Zoning By-Laws which address these concerns. I would expect to favorably consider these types of By-Laws as they are brought to Town Meeting.

I am less inclined to support municipal acquisition of developable parcels (via CPA or other taxpayer funds) and would need know the details of the property being considered for purchase as well as the options for the private sale of the property before making a decision.

Leslie Zales
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Yes, I favor limiting/controlling the pace of our town's residential development. I am an avid trail runner and conservation land enthusiast and would like to preserve these natural resources for the benefit of all living things (humans, wildlife, pets, nature) in our community for eternity. I am also in favor of maintaining/increasing affordable and/or smaller housing in Lexington in order to attract a more socioeconomic community as well as to retain the seniors aging in our town. I am

in favor of sustainable development with respect to our land, our neighbors and building materials. I believe we can serve our community and nature simultaneously.

Precinct 2
Paul Lapointe
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Limit or Control Pace of Residential Development:

I am in favor of developing further measures to limit or control residential development. I am less interested in controlling the pace of development; it's the nature of such residential development that most concerns me.

Types of Measures the Town Should Add: I look forward to learning more about the excellent work of the Planning Board's Residential Policy Committee. In the 2017 Town Meeting. I would be guided by the Committee's analysis of development issues and its recommendations. However, I am inclined to vote to support the following tools to foster better residential development:

- Additional Dimensional Controls to limit the mass of additions and new construction proportional to lot size.
- Site Plan Review for non-conforming lots to minimize impacts on abutters.
- Controls and/or Disincentives to Tear Downs to preserve the Town's inventory of smaller, more affordable homes
- Neighborhood Conservation Districts to empower neighborhoods to preserve open space and other valued neighborhood resources.

- Attainable Housing Incentives to reduce the economic barriers to buying into the Lexington housing market.
- Senior Housing Incentives to create opportunities for Lexington's senior residents to down-size, live in accessory apartments, and otherwise remain in Lexington

Rationale for Position:

We must better control the nature of residential development to preserve the character of Lexington's neighborhoods and promote greater economic and social diversity.

Barry Orenstein

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I am in favor of all the sensible measures that restrict the size and mass of houses, as well as limits on tree removal. Town Meeting has passed other measures over the past few years, and I have voted for all of them. I am not as sure about the designation of historic districts measure, but I still study the pros and cons and listen to the debate on the floor and make my decision based on what's best for the town, as long as it does not unreasonably disadvantage

Kenneth Shine

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I support efforts to control the pace of development in Lexington in order to preserve the character and diversity of our town. I am also aware that regulations can have unexpected and/or unwanted effects. In general, I support height and footprint-to-lot-size zoning laws and I support the buying of conservation land. I also support zoning laws that preserve

historic building. I realize that these actions can have detrimental effects. By toughening zoning laws, we decrease the value of property which harms current residents, including senior citizens for whom the home is a major asset. Such zoning laws changes could be seen as a taking by the government.

Spending town money to buy conservation land would more fairly spread the financial burden over the entire community. But having Lexington spend money to buy conservation land will increase the tax burden. This, in turn, makes it harder for lower income people to live in our community, limiting diversity. We can explore the possibility of purchasing development rights from land owners as a way to limit development. Some jurisdictions have decreased the cost of obtaining conservation land by instead of buying the property completely, they buy the development rights. The current owner retains use of the land but the land cannot later be developed and so the town's desires are met. In summation, I support the zoning regulations and the conservation purchases, but I am cautious when making changes.

Juan Matias Stella

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Il am indeed in favor of continuing to add to the town's tool kit to limit or otherwise control the pace of residential development in Lexington. My stance was further supported by my experience at the February 1 Planning Board meeting. At this meeting I learned that although many residents and neighbors have legitimate concerns about the Grove Street subdivision, the Planning Board's decision is strictly confined to the parameters of applicable bylaws. Thus, I believe Town

Meeting Members must consider revising and/or adding sensible bylaws that address citizens' concerns while respecting the rights of homeowners.

Potential amendments to the town's zoning bylaws that I strongly support are limitations on tree removal and any other bylaw that addresses environmental preservation, designation of historic districts and roads, and any measures that balance homeowner rights, citizens' legitimate concerns, and account for the impact to our town's infrastructure.

I believe my position is important for the future development of our community so as to do our utmost to ensure preservation of our town's unique qualities, of which we are all profoundly proud. As Lexington residents, it is our duty to respect our history and the town's character. Furthermore, as citizens of the world and representatives of future generations, it is our duty to protect our natural resources and the environment.

Roberta Best

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I am in favor of continuing to add to the Town's tool kit to limit or otherwise control the pace of residential development in our community.

I have lived at 48 Golden Avenue here in Lexington for the last 40 years. This last August my neighbors and I became aware of Belmont Country Club / Hanover Company's desire to build 345 apartments next to us. I have looked out over a 60 foot buffer of trees and a field used now for maintenance by Belmont CC all these years. They wanted to rezone the area and build 181 apartments in the 4 acre field I look upon and another 164

apartments across Watertown Street on 13 forested acres. Also, not only did they want to place the four story building 30 feet from my property line, they wanted to run a driveway between my property line and the building. My 1/3 acre lot is pie shaped. I have 114' on the circle at the end of Golden Avenue where I may see 12 cars a day. The driveway would have run along my 318' property line and into the back of the apartment building. They planned it as the only entrance/ exit to the building for 181 apartments. All cars for the apartments were to be garaged. Every tree on their property between me and the building would have had to come down. If a four story building were erected 30' from my property line, I would never have seen the sunset from my property again. Fortunately, the Hanover Company did not get a warm welcome from with the Lexington Planning Board or the general public which attended the presentation meeting on August 24, 2016. Belmont CC/Hanover Co have not asked Town Meeting to rezone this spring. Maybe they will come back with another plan later this year.

After I attended the Belmont CC /Hanover Co presentation, took a strong interest in the Planning Board and all the construction going on in Lexington. I've attended most of the Planning Board meetings since, trying to understand the development process. The Comprehensive Plan calls for the Town buying open spaces as they become available but recognizes that the Town can't buy every space that becomes available. It would be so nice to save the Grove Street property from development; it doesn't seem as though that will happen. We are so lucky to have as much conservation land as we do have, thanks to all who have and continue to work to

make it happen. The Town bought Busa Farm. The Town bought the Community Center and the land near it. The Town bought the golf course. There's no such thing as too much conservation land. I bought where I bought because of the open land and the string of mature oaks on my property. I'm in favor of limitations on tree removal.

I listened to the proposal for 25 units off of Waltham St. Building 25 units would probably necessitate high retaining walls because the land is quite steep. I think height of retaining walls would help limit the number of units which could be built on that site. I think that is a good idea.

I understand that the blasting on Grant Street was a real problem this summer. I think the area looks ugly. I understand that there can be damage to other structures in the area when blasting is done. I'm in favor of restrictions on blasting.

I think that designations of historic districts or scenic roads could help maintain the rural character we prize here in Lexington. According to the Town's Comprehensive Plan, Lexingtonians are dedicated to keeping open space that maintains a "semi-rural" character. They are committed to preserving and maintaining a sense of community that includes historic tradition as well as its public and open spaces. I feel that these tools will help maintain the Lexington I love.

Precinct 3

Steven Heinrich

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I am in favor of adding to the Town's tool kit to control the pace of residential

development in the community. We have been fortunate in the last few years to be able to add to our open space through land purchases, but we also need to encourage Lexington to maintain open space within our existing residential neighborhoods by discouraging takedowns and the restricting the size of new replacement homes.

Lexington made a start in 2016 by beginning to address height restrictions and the ratio of gross floor area to lot size. But the restrictions we approved were only a start. We have much more work to do to restrict the size and density of housing in town. The regulations we approved last year still allow too much of the lot to be developed. This year we need to lower the gross square footage by restricting the development of basements and attics in new homes so that we stop the McMansionization of Lexington, on small lots.

If we do not take additional actions, Lexington will become a town affordable only to the very rich. As of 1/29/2017, there are only two homes on the market currently that are priced under \$1 Million! We are losing the economic diversity that is very important to a healthy community.

In addition to limiting development, I support strengthening the tree by-law to further restrict taking down mature trees even further and encouraging developers to build into the existing terrain rather than stripping the lots of trees and regrading hillsides into flatlands.

With respect to blasting, I favor restricting blasting, but I do not favor a total ban on blasting.

I need to get a lot more information on the subjects of retaining walls and historic or scenic roads.

I take seriously the recommendations of the various boards and committees and support those actions that have the very best chance of preserving open space and economic diversity in town.

Kenneth Kreutziger
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Most problems cited in the CLC statement cannot be addressed by restricting the pace of development. All that a developer has to do is to have a project ready to submit when the next time slot opens up. The most effective means to address the scale and impact on the environment, infrastructure and character of local neighborhoods is to address specific impacts in those areas. Many of these issues are affected by height restrictions, ratio of gross floor area to lot size and the setback from lot lines plus what can be altered within the setbacks. Historic districts and scenic roads can be contentious community proposals as we have found out. I suggest the planning board evaluate those projects approved under last year's new height and gross floor area restrictions to see if those projects achieved anticipated results. If not, then those controls probably need to be modified. Maybe some setbacks and what can be altered within them need to be adjusted. The town cannot afford to purchase every developable parcel that comes on the market because we have schools to pay for as well as police and fire facilities in the pipeline. To do otherwise we would disregard our residents who live on fixed incomes and have trouble rationalizing ever increasing tax rates. Can

we spread out our financial commitments and steady our tax rate?

Precinct 4

Lawrence Chan

781-860-5120

lawrencechan508@hotmail.com

As a Town Meeting member, I promise to represent and honor my constituents. I believe we must strike a balance between protecting our town character and resources while also allowing for responsible development. I will leverage my decades of corporate experience to engage and evaluate warrant data concerning this significant issue. I will envision if the proposed solutions are true to our town heritage, character, my constituents and vote according.

Kathryn Colburn

This candidate's response is under Candidate for School Committee: 3-Year Term.

Nancy Shepard

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I have lived in Lexington for over 20 years and I am running for a second term as a Town Meeting Member from Precinct 4. In the time that I have lived here, I have seen many changes in Lexington that cause me concern. I personally enjoy the many green spaces in Lexington and spend a lot of time walking in conservation areas. One of the best parts of living in Lexington is to have so many places for walking and enjoying nature. I was pleased that Town Meeting voted last year to restrict the height of houses and to change the ratio of gross floor area to lot size. I am also pleased that other

issues will be raised at the next town meeting. I am in favor of continuing to limit or control development in Lexington.

I am very concerned about the removal of trees and the blasting that is needed to construct some very large homes. I find the construction on Grant Street called "The Internationals at Meriam Ridge" to be an example of this.

In the Loring Hill neighborhood, there is a proposal to develop land at the top of Bushnell Drive that will require the creation of a new road and the removal of many trees. I am very distressed by proposals that will increase traffic, eliminate green space and increase pressure on town services, especially our schools.

I am in favor of careful planning so Lexington will continue to be a community that can provide for all of its residents.

Ruth Thomas

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I have consistently supported efforts to modulate residential development in town especially regarding building footprints - the amount of a lot's area that can be built upon. I favor increasing lot line footage to compensate for ever increasing house height and mass. Trees in Lexington are rapidly disappearing from utility, developer, and homeowner cutting as well as old age and disease. Healthy trees should be protected by law. Trees along our streets should be replaced without interfering with wires. Such measures would contribute to a healthier and more pleasant environment and ensure the integrity of our neighborhoods now under assault by uncaring developers and profiteers.

Norman Cohen

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The continued economic health of Lexington depends on thoughtful planning and a zoning bylaw that is responsive to changing demographics and financial needs of the community. At the same time, we have to protect the rights of landowners. Fortunately, during the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Town acquired approximately 1200 acres of conservation land along with a number of conservation restrictions. Having participated in the acquisition of most of this land, I have been pleased to support acquiring additional conservation land and open space through my votes on the Community Preservation Committee. However, in view of the pressing and costly capital projects that are now pending and needed in Lexington, only a very limited number of parcels of land can be acquired at this time. Basically, we must continue to rely primarily on our Zoning Bylaw to deal with residential development. State law does limit municipalities from instituting measures which overly restrict residential development. With that in mind, I do support amending our current Zoning Bylaw relating to Balanced Housing Developments that regulates the overall square footage of a development rather than the number of units that can be built. Short of outright repeal, a limited number of smaller affordable houses should be required. As other zoning amendments are proposed, we should let our legislators know that land use decisions should be made at the local level and not be preempted by the State.

Katie Cutler
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In 2016, Town Meeting Members added two new items to limit residential development in our community. These additions were:

- Height restrictions: The height restrictions limit the height and additions to lot lines. This amendment addresses residents' concerns over larger homes either via teardowns or additions near lot lines. "In short, the closer construction occurs to a lot line, the lower the overall height allowed on the lot." Town Website
- Ratio of gross floor area to lot size: The ratio of gross floor area (GFA) addresses the neighbors' concerns relating to large homes built in Lexington vs older homes and their values. This GFA model limits house size based on set floor area and decreases the review process saving cost and time. It also allows one to seek appeals for construction if needed.

I believe these added measures will:

- maintain the moderate size homes in Lexington
- maintain neighborhood charm by limiting size and height of newly constructed homes
- save money and time to town staff
- allow us time to see the impact of lots and space in the town with standard measures applied
- allow others seeking bigger homes to apply for special permits therefore adding public input and process

These two new tools should assist the town in limiting residential development in a uniform way. Therefore my recommendation is to allow the existing tools to guide us in 2017 and compare the 2016 expansions to see if we can make any improvements.

Precinct 5

Pamela Lyons
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pammy57@rcn.com

The nature and pace of development in Lexington borders on the alarming. I support limiting the height of retaining walls, limiting tree removal, and strong restrictions on blasting because these elements and activities impose a heavy burden on the landscape, both structurally and in terms of visual impact. I am cautiously in favor of designation of historic districts, but want to know more about potential unintended consequences, if any, on property owners. Finally I strongly support continued acquisition of Lexington's fast disappearing open space. Zoning by-laws are choices we make for the future. Today, we enjoy the trees planted by the Victorians and the architecture of the mid 20th century. Let us be careful stewards of the land for tomorrow.

Ephraim Weiss
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eph@ieee.org

The market, influenced by our excellent schools and life quality, controls housing prices. Only publicly owned housing can be controlled for affordability. The cost is at least partly borne by the taxpayers, and increases the burden on seniors and low-income retirees. Lexington currently has

sufficient affordable housing units for our community, if public housing were administered primarily to address the needs of long-time Lexington residents, including seniors and low-income retirees. Current policies are inadequate to meet these needs.

Increasing the number of housing units in town will not make housing more affordable; it will only enrich the developers. It will also increase property taxes, since new development (or new housing units) never covers all their infrastructure costs, such as schools, roads, utilities, etc., and tends to impose an excessive tax burden, particularly on current residents who are barely able to afford present taxes, and especially retirees and low-income residents. We have been doing our share, but we cannot address all affordable housing needs alone. For these reasons, I oppose permitting additional housing units by right in any part of town.

Altering natural terrain often has unintended consequences, and should be controlled. Natural wetlands have a role which should not be readily altered, except perhaps in unusual situations for a public purpose. Blasting, terracing and construction of large retaining walls should not be permitted, except perhaps in unusual situations for a public purpose.

David Williams

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As a past member and chairman of both the Conservation Commission and the Planning Board, I am well aware of the ramifications of uncontrolled growth and illogical zoning regulations, while remaining cognizant of the positive

implications of good zoning and land acquisition by fee, easement or part of a zoning change.

I am in favor of changing the balanced housing provision. As a member of the Land Acquisition sub-committee of the Conservation Committee, I am in favor of purchasing all land that either expands existing conservation areas or allows for the acquisition of new lands, whatever size they might be. I am also in favor of partnering with LEX HAB in the joint acquisition of both open space and increasing our low and moderated income housing units.

Sarah Higginbotham

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As a candidate for Town Meeting in Precinct 5, I am strongly in favor of adding to the town's tool kit to control the pace and scope of residential development in Lexington. Indeed, it was the warrant articles pertaining to residential zoning amendments before Town Meeting in 2016, coupled with my experience of unwanted development in my small neighborhood, that helped to inspire my decision to seek election. My neighborhood's experience with a hostile developer is, sadly, not unique. I am alarmed by the lengths to which developers go to build oversized structures on parcels of land where trees are clearcut, the contours of the land are irrevocably altered, and asphalt becomes the primary surface. I am deeply concerned about preserving green spaces and wild places throughout Lexington. I believe that we must put common sense limits on residential development before we lose the open spaces, well-proportioned homes, and welcoming

neighborhoods that have characterized our town. My small, historically intact neighborhood of homes built in the 1930's along the railroad track is pursuing the designation of a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD), an option that is only available to us because of smart changes to the town's zoning laws. I look forward to exploring more opportunities to make our zoning laws work for Lexington neighborhoods, not for developers seeking financial gain.

Jennifer Ray

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I am very much in favor of limiting the pace and size of residential development in Lexington. My belief is that the best way to remedy the current situation is for the town to utilize all the tools available. The town should both acquire land that might possibly be made available for development, and it should amend zoning bylaws, specifically on size and number of houses allowed on a parcel. These actions would be a significant deterrent to the tremendous growth occurring all over town.

I was raised in Lexington and attended the Lexington Public Schools. When I married, I returned to town to raise my family here. Therefore, I have had the opportunity to observe the changes in town since the 1970s. While ethnic diversity continues to frame the town, economic diversity, which gave Lexington a special appeal, has drastically diminished since I graduated from the High School in the late 1980's. The number and size of developments are making affordable housing a thing of the past, and as a

result diminishing the unique character of Lexington. Moreover, with the number of developments comes the further strain on already over-crowded schools. Replacing one house on one lot, with restrictions that would limit the HOUSE SIZE based on LOT SIZE, is a reasonable requirement. Replacing an existing single house with more than one house, even if the lot can accommodate the multiple dwelling, negatively impacts the landscape, increases road traffic, and further over-crowd's schools. Amending the current laws and allowing for funds to purchase open lands, will enable us to begin the process of regaining both an ethnically and economically diverse population, something of which Lexington has always been justifiably proud.

Richard Neumeier

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As a longtime member of the Appropriations Committee (since 2010) I am acutely aware of significant expenses facing the town in the near future: new fire station, Hastings school, new police station, and, eventually, new high school. This means that the ability of the town to acquire large parcels of land to forestall "McMansions is limited for the foreseeable future. Instead we must focus our efforts on amendments to the Town's Zoning Bylaws.

Lily Manhua Yan

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I am definitely in favor of continuing to add to the Town's tool kit to control the pace of residential development in our community. Below is a list of additional measures I feel

the Town should take to add to the controls:

Implement and enforce the requirement of No Negative Fiscal Impact from developments that need special permit: Any developer that requests special permit for residential development should submit required information to the Planning Dept for fiscal impact study. The municipal staff, finance committees or their designee should conduct the fiscal impact analysis and advise the Planning Board of the conclusion. (Fiscal impact analysis conducted and/or paid for by developer, realtor, or anyone who could potentially gain from the development, is not acceptable due to conflict of interest.) Development that will bring deficit to the Town budget cannot be granted special permit.

Implement and enforce the requirement of No Disturbance to Conservation Land, Trees, Vegetation or Wildlife in it. Certain land that abuts conservation land is home to thousands of trees, a variety of wildlife, and is itself a mature forest. In fact, the conservation land and the abutting forest belong to one ecosystem. The town should minimize the destruction of trees, limit the size and scope of residential development, and protect the wildlife to the best of its ability.

Precinct 6

Morton Kahan

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As a member of Town Meeting for nearly three decades, I have fully supported efforts to control development in our community. The goals of this position are

to maintain open space, protect our environment, encourage diversity and enhance the special character of our town, including the center. I have supported and, if elected, will continue to support acquisition of conservation land and by-law amendments to control the nature and pace of development. These have included height restrictions, controls on ratio of floor area to lot size and limits on tree removal. Concerns about the pace of development should extend to the commercial as well as the residential community.

Frank Sandy

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Lexington Special Permit Residential Developments, better known as cluster zoning, serve two purposes.

They allow houses to be clustered into the most usable portion of a parcel instead of being uniformly spread about in approximately equal sized lots. This reduces excessive cut and fill, blasting, and removal of mature trees. It doesn't prevent these bad practices, only purchase of the land by the Town can do that, but it does reduce it. These improvement in house sighting have the secondary effect of reducing the infrastructure costs to the developer and reducing his costs of complying with wetland regulations.

The second and more controversial effect of the cluster rules is that developers are allowed to put in more units in exchange for making some of them more reasonably sized. Unfortunately reasonably sized means different things to different people. I do not believe that million and a half dollar McMansions are significantly better

for the Town than two or three million dollar McMansions. Neither are affordable by most middle class families. They certainly are not enough better for the Town to warrant a large increase in the number of units a developer can build.

This year the Planning Board is proposing to amend the cluster rules by requiring smaller units and less increase in density. The exact numbers they will propose are still being debated. I support as largest a reduction in the total gross size of the development that is still economically attractive enough to persuade a developer to use the cluster provisions rather than the "by right" conventional subdivision. The reduced costs of infra structure, that I mentioned previously, in addition to the profits from increased density go a lot further toward making a cluster development attractive to developer than the Planning Board has previously assumed. The much higher prices developers offer to land owners, subject to approval of their cluster permits, shows a very large leeway exists in the current regulations.

The increase in value of large open tracts, if they can gain cluster approval, also makes purchase of land by the Town for conservation, needed school sites, or other purposes extremely difficult.

Bridger McGaw

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After almost 20 years in the private sector and public service in federal public service in President Obama and Clinton's Administration's, my family and I moved to Lexington in 2013. I am eager to contribute my knowledge and experience in emergency management, public-private

partnership creation, and capital and strategic planning to our community. I am a graduate of Harvard College and the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. I grew up in Belmont, MA attending Belmont public schools and enjoying many of the open spaces and conservation land around our communities. I have enjoyed our open spaces as a gardener in Rock Meadow, cross-country skier in the Habitat, as well as just walking through our local parks with my 5-year old daughter, Livy. I greatly appreciate all the work that has gone into creating a robust "tool kit" to preserve the nature and character of our neighborhoods and conservation land. I was supportive of Town Meeting and the Planning Board's 2016 efforts to prevent the "McMansioning" of our town. I am also conscious that "old home" does not equal "historic home." Just because things are old, does not mean we need to expend town resources preventing them from being replaced by newer homes. I believe the effort to denote what is and isn't historic is a slippery slope and requires more than aggressive district designations. Many potential retirees may be trying to downsize and efforts to prevent sales to developers can put undue burdens on our neighbors. As a member of town meeting, I will be advocating for stronger analysis and balance in our town's approval of new rules around new construction while ensuring the rights of our older homeowners are not impinged upon as they downsize. I will also be advocating for greater long term planning to better place in context the costs of greater expenditure of taxpayer dollars on conversation efforts in line with schools and town infrastructure. I am asking for your vote on March 6th.

Mark Andersen

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As I have written (<https://markandersentownmeeting.wordpress.com/>), Lexington is facing a financial crisis driven by increased enrollment in schools. Enrollment is the largest driver for tax increases, and the town response has been passive.

At a high level, the enrollment problem is obvious. Lexington has a population of 31,394 (2010), but now has 7,100 students and a projection to have nearly 8,000 within a few years. This is an increase of 60% in 20 years, and far exceeds the facilities footprint of our school system.

Today we have 1.69 households supporting each student, which is an insufficient basis for operating costs. Tomorrow the basis will be smaller. At least one override is inevitable. 8,000+ students extends beyond the facilities of our schools, and capital costs will add to increased operating costs.

While enrollment projections were a logical first step, the next logical step is to control. Development is among the largest factors driving enrollment, and specifically expansions in the number of residences. Additionally, the Enrollment Working Group documented that school children are being pressed into small apartments.

Our foremost objective should be Lexington's financial stability, so our community can thrive and most residents can afford to remain here. With this in mind, I propose the following specific steps to curtail surging enrollment.

1. The Planning Board should favor development proposals directed at our aging population, and discourage those

aimed at squeezing more households onto a property.

2. Town Meeting should continue to impose reasonable limits on setback, sight lines, and appropriate materials. Also restrictions should be in place on crowding in houses and apartments.

3. The Board of Appeals should enforce the spirit of these measures.

4. School Committee should reduce the number of Boston students educated in Lexington (250), thereby reducing our capital expansion.

5. The Lexington Selectmen should create a study group to identify key factors driving decisions to leave Lexington. Some of these factors will be outside our control, but others we can influence. With this list, public policies can be created to reduce out migration, which in turn will reduce the rate of student in migration and enrollment.

I understand that these proposals may seem radical, and believe these are required until this enrollment crisis passes.

Despite my suggestions, we should appreciate that tax revenue from new construction has saved Lexington from a recent override, and so we should not impose unrealistic or unreasonable restrictions.

Some have argued that Lexington has largesse to share and we should maintain generosity in housing and enrollment.

However, we need to be equally concerned for the many families in our community which cannot afford to subsidize unrestricted development and enrollment. Lexington provides education to far more students than other sized communities, and we have squeezed in far more properties to accommodate a diverse and growing population.

Please support my candidacy in Precinct 6, but also consider these recommendations as you talk with other town representatives and vote in the upcoming election. More information can be found at <https://markandersentownmeeting.wordpress.com/>. Thank you for your support

Precinct 7

James Courtemanche

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I believe that the town should actively work to control the pace of residential development in our community. The character of our Town is rapidly changing as smaller dwellings are demolished and replaced by super-sized homes whose footprint extends to property setbacks and whose massing and height are out of scale with existing homes in our neighborhoods. Builders, who often do not live in our communities, are slowly and methodically purchasing properties, erecting enormous homes, reaping windfall profits, and then leaving. In (or near) Precinct 7 alone, we have seen the former Lexington Gardens property transformed into an enclave of closely-situated mammoth homes with virtually no tree coverage. We've also seen the out-of-proportion development at Robinson Woods - ridiculously-tall homes towering over the adjoining neighborhood. Most recently, Precinct 7 residents have fought to stop a development at 0 Grove Street, a deeply sloped and densely wooded property that abuts Lexington and Burlington conservation lands. The frustrating choice that we face is to deforest the entire property and build 17 huge homes or only ruin half the property and build 30+ homes as an ironically

named "balanced" development. Everyone loses in both of these scenarios - the Town, the neighborhood, the abutters - except the developer, who, once again, will reap windfall profits as he drives out of town. I supported last year's Zoning bylaw changes to address some of the issues addressed above.

Similar to the one year moratorium on banks in Lexington Center, I would support a one or multiple year moratorium on tear downs and all multiple home developments while the Town Boards (Planning, School and Selectmen) amend zoning by-laws to protect the character of our town. I would also support Town Meeting approval of all significant developments involving the construction of multiple residences by a developer or subdivision of a property for the purposes of such a development. We must use every planning tool possible to reasonably limit the size of homes and aggressively use the financial tools at our disposal, such as the Community Preservation Act, to purchase open land. After more than a decade of tear-downs and construction of large luxury homes, Lexington has sufficient stock of over-sized mansions to satisfy this slice of the real estate market for decades to come. I am confident that Lexington's desirable location, superlative schools, abundance of open space and financial stability will ensure that reasonably-sized homes will command well above average prices and allow Lexington residents to realize the full value of their property investments, all without the need for the seemingly endless and destructive cycle of tear-downs.

Pam Hoffman
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I believe the town has the right and obligation to control residential development in our community. We have many natural resources and should do a better job making sure new developments and rebuilds/teardowns protect and enhance them. This includes preserving open and green space, ensuring that new development does not introduce drainage or soil erosion problems, and protecting wetlands. I grew up in Lexington, am raising my family here and hope to live here for the rest of my life. I value our open spaces, housing diversity (which is disappearing), and economic diversity. I do not believe that towering big box houses, side-by-side with minimal setbacks, bring value to our community. As a long-time Town Meeting member, I have voted in favor of all zoning bylaws that have sought to minimize the negative impact of construction on our infrastructure and environment, and I will continue to do so.

Taylor Singh
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As Town Meeting member I will vote for the Tree Committee's upcoming article to provide incentives for planting large trees, but I intend to do much more.

The Grove St Development is an immense concern to many of my neighbors in Precinct 7. These 13 proposed new homes will destroy the Grove St Forest and will force the removal of 1,000 trees.

The developer has the right to purchase that parcel of land from the owner (though the sale has not yet gone through) and provided they meet the requirements of

the various boards in town (zoning, planning, conservation), they will lawfully be able to demolish the forest and further strain Lexington's water and public education resources.

Creative solutions to funding the protection of future forested parcels is needed. I propose that Lexington move to create a Land Bank. Similar to the Land Banks in Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard, the money would be reserved solely for Lexington to purchase parcels of land for the purpose of conservation. Unlike the islands, where they charge a 2% fee on all home sales to pay for their Land Banks, I propose Lexington charge a \$5,000 fee applicable only to full demolition permits. Charging a fee on full demo permits, would not only help our town offset the damages of the "McMansions", but the fund could be put toward purchasing parcels like Grove St.

In 2016, over 80 full demolition permits were granted in Lexington. With this fee and Land Bank fund in place, our town would have secured \$400,000 toward conservation last year. The CPA funds are not enough, now that they can be used for Historical, Recreational and Affordable Housing purchases.

As a Town Meeting member, I will vote to prevent the destruction of the Grove St forest and with this Land Bank measure; we can prevent a future neighborhood forest from being destroyed.

Robert Creech

This candidate's response is under Candidate for Planning Board.

Alan Seferian
aseferian@gmail.com

Precinct 8

Robert Avallone
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I share the concerns you outlined in your letter to me. I am particularly concerned that the rate of growth in our town population does not outpace our ability to provide services to the growing population. Additionally, it is important to me that we retain, as much as possible, the natural resources in the town.

You don't cite any upcoming warrant items, but I will tell you my approach to any warrant item. I always like to listen to the debate before making the final decision on my vote. I will go to the information sessions and try to obtain as much information as possible. I often attend planning board meetings to learn more about zoning articles. I give a lot of weight to the opinions of the boards and committees on the articles within their purview.

Zoning articles are the ones most likely to affect the issues your question addresses. As I stated above I would like to limit the rate of our population growth and preserve our natural resources so I will keep these items in mind as I make my decision on any given article.

Charles Hornig
This candidate's response is under Candidate for Planning Board.

I believe our existing, recently strengthened zoning bylaws are adequate, and oppose further limitations to residential development. At the same time, I would grant almost no variances. There is no point to zoning bylaws if variances are routinely granted.

This a matter of equity. When the town incurs cost, the entire tax base, both residential and commercial, shares in that cost. But when development of particular properties is restricted, only the owners of those properties incur the cost, and it can be substantial. If "teardowns" are currently selling for \$700k to \$800k, and restrictions placed on them reduce the value to \$500k, the sellers of such properties will absorb a \$200k to a \$300k reduction in their net worth. The rest of us won't pay a dime. Is this fair? What if they were relying on those proceeds for their retirement?

The town currently has over 1,300 acres of conservation land, including 26 conservation areas with trail access. This is amazing - we should all feel proud and privileged to live here. I use one or more of these areas almost weekly. But with multiple debt exclusion overrides awaiting us in the near future (without even considering our need for a new high school), some hard choices will have to be made.

I am aware that CPA funds and the general tax levy are two different "pots" of money. However, there is again talk of reducing the CPA surcharge. While CPA funds are available, by all means let's use those funds to purchase vulnerable properties (e.g., Grove St.). But we must consider the uncertain future of the CPA, and our

need to keep debt capacity “dry powder” for the elephant in the room: the \$300m high school we know we need.

Our community is at a crossroads. We must balance the needs of our less affluent residents, those who have lived here for decades and are now moving on, and those of parents in search of outstanding schools.

Shailesh (Sunny) Chandra
sunny@chandralink.com

I am in favor of adding to the Town's tool kit of provisions that would enable the proactive management of the pace of residential development in the town of Lexington. I have been a resident of Lexington for over 20 years, and have personally witnessed the rapid development over the past two decades, and its impact on all aspects of the town, from increased traffic to flooding from runoff water.

Three key pillars support the attractiveness of the town: (1) the green look and feel of the town at large, (2) the nationally recognized school system, and (3) the infrastructure services in town, and I believe all these would be impacted by extensive residential development.

Green Look and feel: Adding residential space at the expense of green areas will destroy much of the look and feel of the town with abundant trees, and parks no more than a short stroll from any home. These are the spaces that the children in our community use extensively for both fun and school related sports/activities, as do the adults.

School system: Having two children in the public school system from elementary

school onwards, has let me experience the impact of ever increasing enrollment in all the schools and the strain it is putting on the resources available, from shortage of classrooms to increased workloads for the staff, all of which cannot be conducive to maintaining an outstanding learning environment.

Infrastructure services: The overbuilding and resulting reduction of "green spaces", if unchecked, will continue to burden both the town services/utilities (e.g., water, sewer) and the environment (e.g., street flooding, air quality) resulting in additional spending to keep up and maintain the infrastructure.

I would also like to add that having the tools does not mean that we use them indiscriminately all the time, but it gives us the option of judiciously leveraging the appropriate tool(s) at the right time to meet both the short and long term goals of the town. The needs of the town will evolve over time and so we need to be prepared to handle those requirements with the best tools we can envision at the current time.

In summary, I would support the current and proposed amendments to the Town's Zoning By-Laws, including the ones listed below.

- Height restrictions
- Ratio of gross floor area to lot size
- Height of retaining walls (which places limits on development of more steeply sloping lots)
- Limitations on tree removal
- Restrictions on blasting
- Designation of historic districts including designation of historic or scenic roads

Wendy Reasenber
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The high demand for homes in Lexington means that developers can expect a profit even while incurring additional land modification costs that they might have previously avoided because the builders are confident that they can pass on those costs to a buyer. Therefore, I would support increases to the town's "tool kit" that give the Planning Board more authority to insist on reasonable modifications to proposed projects to ensure that it is compatible with the surrounding area. One example of a tool that I would favor would be some restrictions on the amount of blasting, earth removal and slope modification allowed, especially for housing in a residential area.

I recently attended a Planning Board hearing on a proposed project in an area surrounded by single family homes. The site was on the lower portion of a large hillside and the plan was to convert a large, sloping tract of land with one large house into a multi-unit project. The plan would require severe cuts into the hillside and remove a huge portion of the hill to create an area flat enough for the project. This would also include removing several feet of earth at the lowest point to create an entry to the street.

Because the excavation would completely destroy the side of the hill, it would require constructing large, multi-stepped retaining walls after removing enormous amounts of earth and rock. The developer would have no idea of the amount of blasting and drilling needed until he actually started excavation. The threat of significant damage to the adjacent foundations, the

unknown impact of rain water and snow melt runoff both for the project and the abutters, the potential for erosion and flooding were valid concerns noted by abutters at the hearing. The Planning Board needs tools to address these concerns which go far beyond the transient inconvenience of the actual construction.

Precinct 9

Hemaben Bhatt
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I am in favor of adding more By-Laws to limit and control the pace of new development. I feel that town should place strict restrictions for tree removal, blasting and heights of retaining walls. The new developments have to comply with the strict by-laws in place by the town. This is very important for environment, culture of town and to preserve the nature. Town should also make strict deal with new developers before giving permission to have enough open green space, plant more trees, development of beautiful landscape. Town can enforce the developer for betterment of surrounding areas like roads, sidewalks, crossing so the new development can merge well with the surrounding.

Jeanne Canale
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The pace at which residential development is growing in town is excessive. Measures I believe the town should take to slow the pace as follows:

- Appropriate full funding to support an updated Planning Board Comprehensive Plan. The current 15-year old plan is out of date and touch with the town's present and future needs.

- Slow the pace by which the ZBA awards Special Permits. Permitting construction must be in compliance with the town zoning law and other land use regulations. Some special permits are awarded when town bylaws and regulations are stretched beyond their intended purpose.

- Control the pace of Variances the ZBA awards. Variances should be granted only when they meet the strict state statutes and only after careful consideration of town and residential values and needs. The burden of proof is on the property owner to demonstrate a rationale that can justify granting a variance.

- Redefine the residential "GFA" approved at 2016 Town Meeting. The increase in "GFA" was overwhelming approved at 2016 Town Meeting as a conservative step towards slowing the pace of residential development. The Planning Board needs to take a more aggressive move in reducing the "GFA" over the next year/2 years and return to Town Meeting for a vote.

- Articles for 2017 Town Meeting will include, limitations on tree removal and blasting restrictions Proposals to restrict residential development limits on sloping lots should be made next year. Tree removal must be justified and appropriate replacement should be required.

- Continue to advance and increase the (NCD) Neighborhood Conservation District General Bylaw to affect the size and structure of neighborhood buildings to encourage new construction that will complement and be compatible with existing Buildings, Structures, Settings and neighborhood character; and to foster

appropriate reuse and upgrading of Buildings and Structures in designated neighborhoods.

Wendy Manz

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I am particularly interested in two of the Planning Board articles this year.

Article TF amends the Zoning Bylaw to permit two-family houses in Lexington's major residential zones. Its stated purposes include increasing the number of small dwelling units in town and encouraging greater diversity of population, particularly with regard to affordable housing and senior housing.

I am strongly in favor of these goals, but I fear that the limitations placed on two-family homes by the Planning Board will result in very few such homes being created and very little progress toward the stated goals. The proposal calls for all two-family homes to masquerade as one-family homes and limits the maximum gross floor area for BOTH units in a two-family to 80% of that permitted for one single family home. Utilities, driveways and curb cuts are required to be sited so as to preserve existing trees and their rooting zones, a requirement not imposed on single-family homes. Finally, one unit of every two-family home must be deed-restricted to be affordable or restricted to senior housing, limiting the sales price.

There is no question that our Town needs more affordable units and more senior housing, but to impose all these requirements specifically on two-family units makes it unlikely that builders will find them economically viable and does not encourage the creation of more medium-

size homes, which are also badly needed in Lexington.

Article SPRD amends the Zoning Bylaw by eliminating the current "Balanced Housing Development" and "Public Benefit Development" options for housing developments requiring a special permit, and substituting a "Flexible Residential Development." Unlike a conventional (not requiring a special permit) development, the number of housing units is not limited to the number of standard size lots that can be accommodated. Any number of units may be built as long as the total maximum gross floor area of all buildings, however grouped, does not exceed 80% of the GFA permitted for a conventional development. The size of 75% of the units is limited to less than 3,500 GFA, so that a Flexible Residential Development is expected to yield homes of more modest size than are currently being built in Lexington. This is essentially a Balanced Housing Development curtailed to less overall square footage. My concern is that, like the two-family housing proposal, it may make developments of smaller homes sufficiently unprofitable for developers that they will not attempt to build them. In other words, what looks like a proposal in support of smaller homes may actually be a means of avoiding them. I hope that this is not the case.

Hank Manz

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I was not supportive of the GFA article put forth by the Planning Board last year because I thought it was a two-dimensional solution to a three dimensional problem, that it would be gotten around fairly easily, and that it ignored the real problems which included house placement on a lot rather than size.

Sure enough--very large houses are still being built and nothing has been done about the real problem which remains one of placement. Paper driveways on one street which are really on another. Excessive filling of land. Excavation to create walk-out basements which are really another story. Attics which long ago became another story.

Keep in mind that the constraints put in place to limit attic use as true living space were long ago ignored or thought to be unenforceable. The GFA article appeared to be headed in the same direction.

One new house which has gotten quite a bit of notice is built on a lot which used to be in a sort of bowl. Now it sits at least three feet higher than the neighboring house. Yes, it is large, but more of a problem is that there has to be at least nine feet of fill, possibly more, in what used to be an unobtrusive lot. There is another house on Maple Street which is large to be sure, but the real problem is that it is placed well back on the lot so that many trees had to be cleared and now the real entrance is on another street yet the rules have been applied as though the house still faced on the original street. Two neighborhoods of quite different character are now combined.

I have more hope for some of the articles this year. The limits on blasting might help although there is some doubt as to its legality. The attempt to keep attic and basement space from being converted later into living space may work where the limits imposed last year have not. I will be listening to the debate with interest, but I hope that this year there are some solutions which are workable.

Rob Lowrance
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I believe that government can and should act in the best interest of its constituents. There is significant polarization in 2017, particularly around the role of government but I remain convinced that laws, regulations and other actions in the municipal tool belt can be used to have a positive impact on a community. As a town meeting member I would have been in favor of the zoning by-laws that were enacted to ensure that houses are reasonably in-line with the size of a lot. On principle and within reason, I would also be in favor of restrictions on blasting and limits on clearing trees. I do however understand that communities change over time, and I don't believe that laws should be used in a knee-jerk fashion to maintain a status quo. We need to think carefully about all the impacts that development has on our town, both positive and negative, and we need to anticipate and then take into account potential indirect effects. Personally, I see value in Lexington being a community that is welcoming to people from a wide range of backgrounds, and I believe it's possible to enact laws that strike a balance between the market forces that impact development and retaining the qualities of Lexington that brought us and keep us here. I will use my vote at Town Meeting to support matters that I believe will contribute to achieving that balance.

Winter Birding at LexFarm
Saturday, February 18, 9:00-10:30 am

Keith Ohmart will lead a tour of the LexFarm property and adjacent Arlington Reservoir to look for birds that overwinter in this special place. He will also talk about Audubon's "Great Backyard Bird Count" taking place from February 17-20th and how to participate in this and other Citizen Science birding projects. Meet at the plastic hoop house on the LexFarm property. Suggested donation to LexFarm, \$10 per family.

CLC's Annual Meeting: Save the Date

CLC's annual meeting will be held on April 13th at 7 pm. Our speaker, Audubon naturalist Tia Pinney, will examine the Climate Change Impact on Native Habitats and Plants. Check the CLC website (CLCLex.org) for details.

Position Available - Walks Coordinator

CLC conducts walks on conservation and other open space lands in Lexington during the Spring and Fall. We are looking for a volunteer to serve as Walks Coordinator. The duties include contacting previous and potential walk leaders to arrange scheduling details, and publicizing the walks through local media outlets and listserves. Participation in bi-monthly board meetings, while beneficial, is not a requirement. Contact Eileen Entin (eileenhome@gmail.com, 781-862-6418).