



# **Citizens for Lexington Conservation**

PO BOX 292, LEXINGTON, MA 02420-0003

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**Kate Fricker, Editor**

**February, 2004**

**Eileen Entin, President**

## **CANDIDATES' FORUM ISSUE**

Citizens for Lexington Conservation, Inc. devotes this annual issue of its newsletter to candidates' statements in order to help you, the voter, cast your ballot effectively. All candidates for office were sent a letter soliciting their response to the following question: (not all responded)

*Budgetary constraints during 2003 reduced or eliminated some town services that impact the environment:*

- *Near elimination of Lexpress stranded citizens dependent on this service and increased automobile traffic with its attendant negative environmental impacts.*
- *Yard waste pickup was eliminated, encouraging citizens to dump it illegally in conservation lands or include it in their weekly trash at a \$140 per ton disposal cost to the town.*
- *The town composting station reduced its hours, further curtailing opportunities for proper yard waste disposal, increasing incentive for its illegal disposal.*
- *Because no conservation work crew was hired over summer, trails and meadows in conservation land became overgrown, devaluing the town's investment in these lands for passive recreation.*
- *The Conservation Administrator position had its hours cut in half, reducing the town's ability to adequately oversee the long term investment it has made in the acquisition of its conservation lands.*

*What should the town's responsibility be regarding each of these services? For those services for which you feel the town should be responsible, what steps would you suggest to allocate funds or devise alternative means to provide these services?*



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**CLC does not endorse any candidate.** Rather, we urge you to read the candidates' statements, make your own decisions, and VOTE for your candidates on Tuesday, March 2.

**CLC publications**, guides to the conservation land of Lexington and other interesting materials, are available on the CLC website:  
<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>

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- Natural History
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Mail to: CLC Inc., P. O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003

**Early Announcement of First Spring Walk**

**Meagherville Past and Present**

Sunday, April 4, 1:30 - 4:00

Explore traces of Mark Meagher's 1891 proposed street layout for an ambitious residential development, now overgrown with woodlands and wetlands. Using the trail built in 2000 as an Eagle Scout project, we will also observe evidence of the land's geologic and agricultural past. Sturdy walking shoes or boots are recommended.

Meet at the Garfield Street playground, corner of Garfield and Hickory Streets.

Follow Reed Street from Bedford Street (blinking traffic signal) and turn left on Garfield.

Leader: Bart DeWolf (781-891-7968)

**CANDIDATES FOR TOWN-WIDE OFFICE**

**Margery Battin**  
**Candidate for Moderator**

As Moderator, however, I cannot discuss my opinion of the town's responsibility regarding each of them. If the Moderator is to preside fairly and impartially over Town Meeting, her opinion on issues, persons or groups should not be known.

Town Meeting members must give careful thought to the town services that were reduced or eliminated due to 2003 budgetary constraints.

All questions facing Town Meeting deserve balanced, thoughtful consideration. Therefore, the Moderator should make certain that the subject under debate is

clear, town meeting practices and procedures are understood, and all points of view are fully explored. As Moderator I feel it is my role to protect and improve the process by which decisions are made which can affect the quality of life in Lexington. Last spring I held a meeting with town boards, committees and the TMMA to critique and refine the streamlined Town Meeting procedures that had been instituted to enable members to concentrate on the issues more quickly.

As Moderator I will continue to do everything possible to see that Town Meeting members receive the information needed to make informed choices and that citizen participants thoroughly understand Town Meeting procedures. Citizen article sponsors have been sent written instructions to aid them in preparing for Town Meeting. These citizens will be included in the Moderator's meeting with article sponsors during which we establish Town Meeting format, timing, chronology and note areas of potential disagreement. A workshop will again be held for new Town Meeting members to answer questions, explain legal issues, parliamentary procedures and land use as well as financial terms and concepts. I will be readily available for consultation and explanation of meeting procedures to all citizens and officials wishing to be heard at Town Meeting. I will write a newspaper article to explain the protocol for citizen participation.

**Jeanne Krieger**  
**Candidate for Selectman**

Services that impact the environment should be part of the balanced set of services that are addressed through an operating override.

- A 6 route Lexpress should be supported by the tax levy and supplemented by state funding, donations and increased parking meter fees.
- Included in the municipal 'Needs Based Budget Request' are overtime to permit 16 hours of weekend operation for 34 weekends at the compost facility and 10 yard waste pick-ups. I will support the inclusion of these items in the at-risk list.

Environmentally sound programs can generate revenue. We should instruct the proposed grant writer to seek funding for equipment necessary to enhance our composting operation to raise more revenue from sale of loam.

A new position of Conservation assistant is included in the FY2005 base budget to supplement the work of the Ass't Director /Conservation Administrator with regulatory enforcement and land management.

Given the constraints imposed by the downturn of the economy if Town funds are not available for summer

interns, can maintenance of conservation land be conducted by volunteers?

**Patrick Mehr**  
**Candidate for Selectman**  
**day: 781-372-1055; evening: 781-372-1057**  
**fax: 781-372-1056; mehrco@aol.com**

I was intimately involved in drafting the Lexington tree by-law -- the first by-law in Massachusetts to provide some protection for mature trees on private lots -- and getting Town Meeting to enact it in 2001. I am a volunteer steward of Hayden Woods, and I have been active in fighting commercial and cargo aviation at Hanscom.

I believe the protection of our natural and urban environments and of town aesthetics (I have also worked on getting the utilities to finally start removing their illegal double poles.), conservation of natural resources, and the preservation of open spaces are important priorities in Lexington that can only be implemented by Town government. These issues, as well as public transportation, must receive public funding.

Unfortunately, the trust of many citizens in our Town government has been seriously eroded (in part because of how Pay-As-You-Throw was put in place), and following the failed override, cuts have affected the environment. We must rebuild citizen's trust in our government by moving away from the "business-as-usual" approach, cuts followed by requests for additional taxes (overrides). Instead, we must provide clear and compelling communications to our citizens, show that services are delivered at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers (a volunteer "strategic audit committee" of town and school operations should advise the Town). We must pursue new money-saving ideas (such as a municipal electric utility, like Concord's, to save 20-25% on residents' electricity bills, and to start placing utility wires underground) and bring more of our talented citizens into town government. We must provide tax relief to the residents who most need it: as Selectman, I will support a \$100,000 exemption on the assessment of each home to shift taxes from smaller houses to larger ones, reducing taxes for approximately two-thirds of our residents; in addition, an annual tax cut of \$2,000 for seniors on limited incomes can be provided at the upcoming Town Meeting.

Such measures will help citizens regain confidence that Town government is providing the appropriate leadership. Funding will then be more forthcoming for the important environmental and transportation issues listed above, all of which I support. As Selectman, I will also attempt to bring back Pay-As-You-Throw, but in a way that is acceptable to citizens: the program should

be openly discussed with citizens, and must be revenue-neutral, and as easy to implement as possible (allowing each household one bag of trash per week with no tag).

**Richard Pagett**  
**Candidate for Selectman**  
**and for Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6**  
**781-862-1294**  
**jrpagett@rcn.com**

The Town does have responsibility for protecting and supporting the conservation land under its stewardship. Unfortunately it frequently treats this responsibility as an "orphan stepchild" in its budget allocation process even though we take pride in stating that open space is one of our core values. A major example of our failure to put money where we say our values lie, during the time I was a direct participant in Town Meeting, was our reluctance to fund brook cleaning and other maintenance activities. And now, as a result of the override failure, we find ourselves in much, much worse shape.

But the simple truth is that we do not currently have the resources to support our open spaces. There is no excess in our Town budget and there are no reserve funds to restore eliminated items or even provide substitutes for those services and positions. Escalating health insurance costs consume the increases allowed under Proposition 2 1/2, so restoration of any positions or services requires corresponding cuts in other areas of the budget. Without an override, the question becomes not only "what do you want to put back into the budget?" but also "what are you going to cut in order to restore that item?"

The cuts you have outlined unquestionably diminished the Town's commitment to conservation. But we have to acknowledge that the cuts were made to keep the budget within our financial resources, not to hurt the conservation effort. They represent value judgments on the part of our current boards and committees that these choices resulted in preserving something else considered to be more essential - a painful, but useful, example of having to make an unpopular choice to stay within fiscal boundaries.

Our best hope for restoring these services is to develop an override that allows the citizens of this town to clearly express their willingness to fund them.

**Jeff Crampton**  
**Candidate for Planning Board**  
**and for Town Meeting Member, Precinct 5**

As a member of the Planning Board, my first commitment to all Lexington citizens who are concerned about the environment is to work

constructively with developers and owners so that they take the best steps to mitigate the environmental impact of development.

I agree with Citizens for Lexington Conservation that many of the Town's cuts in 2003 were shortsighted. Stopping curbside yard waste pickup may have been the worst example. It not only hurt the environment, it created great inconvenience and saved very little money. And can anyone say that reducing conservation work crews made Lexington a better place to live?

An override may pass this year, but that may not restore these services. Moreover, my sense of the voters is that they will not support continued tax increases. The town needs to manage its assets and expenses wisely while looking to expand its revenue base. Otherwise, conservation will remain a tempting target for cost-cutting.

In this respect, the Planning Board plays another critical role in supporting conservation. The Board will help balance Lexington's need to grow its commercial tax base – which will allow more spending on conservation measures – against the less environmentally friendly aspects of development.

I fully understand this big picture, and am looking forward to working constructively for conservation in Lexington.

**Sherry Gordon**  
**Candidate for School Committee**  
**and for Town Meeting Member, Precinct 3**  
**781-862-8927**  
**s4tow@aol.com**

The town's budgetary constraints greatly impacted services to me, students, and our community. The Lexpress' near elimination greatly impacted the way students travel to and from school and nearly curtailed transportation for adult citizens to their place of employment.. Many students and adults increased their reliance on automobiles for transportation which negatively impacted the environment. I am hopeful that the Town will put the Lexpress on an override list and/or find a corporation newly located in Lexington to subsidize Lexpress for a number of years.

Similarly, the yard waste pickup, the town composting station, the conservation work crew, and the Conservation Administrator position should be restored through the base budget or each item put as high priorities on an override list. In this way, the Town will be fulfilling its responsibilities to the environment and the residents.

## **Precinct 1**

**Paul G Topalian**  
**781 861 0763**  
**pgtopalian@aol.com**

Item 1: Your heart is in the right place but you are blaming the wrong offender when it comes to negative environmental impacts. The big polluter I believe is that ugly looking, noisy, foul smelling and mostly empty bus that plied our beautiful back roads prior to June 2nd 2003. When I'm on my daily walk and hear the roar bearing down on me I hold my breath and keep my fingers crossed. The few cars that would replace the bus are annually inspected for emissions and the negative impact I'm sure is negligible.

Items 2 thru 5: I believe all four items can be reinstated only when our leaders in Town Hall have a change of attitude and a change of priorities. All things are possible if the town government doesn't try to be all things to all of the people. My only COLA in these past eleven years was the increase in my Social Security checks. Anything above a 2.1% increase in taxes will hurt.

## **Precinct 2**

**Karen Dooks**  
**781 861-6062**  
**dooks@ix.netcom.com**

Lexington has very responsibly served its residents over the years, but is now in a position where fixed costs keep increasing and revenues are not increasing at a fast enough rate to meet those costs. Even basic safety and educational services were cut as a result of the failed override in 2003. Although I have been a strong supporter of the environmental issues and services cited, I find myself in the unfortunate position of having to put them lower on the priority list behind basic safety and educational issues. Until new Town operating funds can be generated either through increased State aid or increased taxes, these programs cannot be fully funded and will be dependent on the generosity of its citizens to survive. Lexpress has done that this year. Yard waste is not permitted in regular pickup and proper disposal should be enforced. Education of the Town's citizens as to alternatives, such as volunteer cleanup efforts, neighborhood cooperation in collection and disposal of yard waste, working with the Town to optimize the hours the composting station is open, or raising of funds to benefit a particular project, might at least aid in putting off some further deterioration of these assets.

**Betsey Weiss**  
**8 Dover Lane**

I support all the town services that impact the environment. Lexpress is a very important service. It provides transportation for multiple groups of people in town. School age children need to ride Lexpress to and from school and seniors who do not drive need it to get around town and to the Burlington Mall. I am for yard waste pickup and increasing the town composting station hours to reduce illegal dumping. We also need a Conservation Administrator who has enough hours to oversee the town's conservation land and a summer crew who is able to maintain Lexington's trails and meadows.

I support the school, police, fire, and town services, which have been cut. If we are to maintain Lexington's excellence, we will have to pay for services. I understand that we live in fiscally challenging times and I will look for alternatives, however I feel that we will need an override to restore past cut services and prevent future cuts. However, to obtain partial or complete funding this spring, we will have to unite together as a community and work very hard for a successful override in these economically difficult times.

## **Precinct 3**

**Sherry Gordon**  
**See Candidate for School Committee**

**Henry Lau**  
**1 Burns Road;**  
**Tel: 508-725-6708**  
**Email: yhlau\_2000@yahoo.com**

The town should not eliminate the yard waste pickup service. The service should be treated just like the regular trash pickup service. Both services are basic necessities to Lexington Citizens. It would be more economical for the town to do due to the economy of scale. If the service can be resumed, it is acceptable to cut the composting station hours as fewer individuals will go to the station. Unfortunately, the cut back on both services will greatly increase incentive for illegal disposal of yard waste.

The conservation work crew should be rehired over summer once our budget allows, otherwise the trails and meadows in conservation land will be overgrown. The town's investment in those lands for passive recreation will then diminish. Similarly, the cut on the hours of Conservation Administrator position should only be temporary. As soon as our financial situation improves, normal duty hour should also be resumed.

**Patrick Mehr**  
**See Candidate for Selectman**

**Alex Nedzel**

Many of the items the Selectmen chose to place at risk in the last override election did not reflect the overwhelming wishes of Lexington's voters, and they deserve restoration independent of an override. This includes whatever funding for Lexpress is needed beyond its very enterprising grants, donations and fares; it also includes yard waste pickup and composting. A large potential funding source that may help to cover the Town's share of Lexpress is mitigation revenue that we should negotiate for from the imminent Avalon/Met State development project -- it will add as many as 430 new residences to the town, with commensurate transportation needs.

Restoring Conservation Administrator hours and the conservation work crew may need to be balanced with restoration of other town services that have been reduced, but I would support their inclusion in the first/lowest tier of any override the Selectmen choose to put forth. I am also interested in figuring out how some of the crew work could be obtained on a volunteer (services not involving professional skills and materiel) and/or donated (professional services and materiel) basis, thereby enabling inroads into the needed maintenance at less cost to the town. Among other things the crucial skill set that may be needed is identifying, persuading and organizing the necessary manpower.

**Loren Wood**  
**781 862 1278 (H); 781 981 3380 (W)**  
**wood@ll.mit.edu**

I am a strong proponent of yard waste pickup, composting and maintenance of conservation lands. My presentation to Town Meeting showed that weekly recycling actually paid for itself, and helped defeat a proposal to put it on the override. I was distressed when yard waste pickups were eliminated and composting hours were reduced. This undoubtedly cost the town money in increased incineration costs. It also sent exactly the wrong message about the importance of environmental awareness. The reduction in maintenance of our conservation lands is as ill advised as not keeping the roads in good repair.

Lexpress should not have been on the override. Were it not for the heroic efforts of citizens to find private funding the Town would have lost Lexpress entirely along with the permanent loss of \$80,000 in yearly state subsidy.

It is clear to me that overrides should never again put vital services that the citizens clearly want at risk. No "all or nothing" override should ever again be proposed. The Selectmen must frame future overrides to give citizens a responsible set of balanced choices. Were that done last time, I have no doubt the citizens would have voted to retain Lexpress and yard waste services.

**Precinct 4**

**Norman P. Cohen**  
**(781) 862-3098**  
**linorm@comcast.net**

I supported the override budget, which provided for all of the reduced or eliminated town services noted in the question. These particular services are as much a part of the fabric of our community as are our excellent schools, public safety and public works departments. Surveys have shown that residents of the town highly value the care and protection of our natural resources. Failure of the last override compromised these values. Lexpress and our composting programs are evidence of the Town's progressive nature and deserve to be continued. An organized volunteer program could be instituted with respect to the trails and meadows in conservation land and for expanded hours at the composting station. I believe all of the other services should be fully funded, and if, as seems likely, an operating override will be necessary to restore and continue them, the voters should be fully informed as to the consequences of their votes. Following the last override election, the first call received at the town hall was from a voter who said she voted "no" because she had been told prior to the election that "they" would never take away Lexpress even if "they" threatened it.

**Charles Lamb**  
**781-674-9101**  
**charles.lamb@rcn.com**

With the failure of the override last year, we have cut too deeply into our services. All of the items listed in the question (Lexpress, yard waste pickup, etc.) represent essential services that the community has come to expect. It is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to put forth a bundled override that does not pit constituency against constituency, and it is the responsibility of Town Meeting to pass a budget that appropriates necessary amounts contingent on the passage of an override. Such an override can be structured using a "tiered" approach that provides one level of services in a base tier, and a higher level of services at a higher tier. For example, a baseline tier might provide six-route Lexpress service, yard waste pickup, 4 hours per weekend day compost facility

staffing, a minimal conservation work crew, and administrator. A second tier would increase those levels of service and allow voters to choose the level they wish to have.

Many may think that it is taking the easy way out to fall back on a Proposition 2 1/2 override and that we should "live within our means". But 2.5% is an artificial number that does not take into account factors such as sharp decreases in state aid and local revenues, and increases in other costs that exceed 2.5%. If we are going to expect these services as a community, then we must be willing to pay for them. These are not "Cadillac" services, but simply services which are needed to maintain our normal way of life. I support appropriating money for all of these services by using an operating override. I have worked for passage of an override in the past and I will do so this year too.

### **Ellen McDonald**

Lexington is enduring a difficult fiscal crisis that has illuminated a basic truth about our town services and programs: you get what you pay for. Every town department is contemplating more devastating cuts, and it's difficult to argue that a full-time Conservation Administrator is more essential than the LPS Director of Human Resources. There's pain all around. I'm hopeful that, this year, more citizens better understand the necessity of supporting a budget override in June, and I'm working to ensure a successful campaign so that restorations can be made.

Whatever the outcome of that vote, we need to heighten awareness about Lexington's conservation and environment; that eliminating supporting services manifests costly externalities. What looks good on the bottom line today, will likely create vastly more expensive behaviors and outcomes tomorrow.

In creating a more informed voting constituency, I offer these humble suggestions: The CLC might consider authoring a bimonthly column on Lexington's environmental health, or a Q&A column much like the popular "Let's Talk Trash." Coordinating an expanded monitoring and public reporting effort about pollution incidents might also capture public attention. Providing a "hotline" for reporting on environmental degradation can expand citizen involvement and action but requires staff and enforcement. Practically speaking, only the clearing and maintenance of trails and meadows is suitable for volunteer labor. Other communities in similar circumstances have marshaled the energy of student populations looking to fulfill community service requirements for this task.

**John S. Rosenberg**  
**john\_rosenberg@harvard.edu**  
**781-861-9568 home, 617-496-6707 work**

Elimination of yard-waste and Christmas tree pickup should be reversed. This may even be revenue-neutral for the town: costs of collection may be offset, or nearly so, by the savings realized from not paying disposal fees on the waste improperly put into the trash stream. The current situation makes neither environmental nor, probably, fiscal sense. I would support financing restoration of this service within the budget, and/or on an override; I worked vigorously in favor of the override, which would have covered these services, last June. (I compost all leaves, grass cuttings, and suitable kitchen and paper waste in my yard now, and am feeling the effects of having to store woody yard waste, the only thing I formerly put out at the curb.)

Restoration of hours at the composting facility, of the conservation work crew to maintain trails and meadows, and of the conservation administrator are all-important priorities. In the current town fiscal situation, I would support funding each through the override mechanism; again, I was a vigorous proponent, and will be again if we are given another opportunity to vote. I also hope we could encourage volunteer work on our trails and open space assets, but that is outside the budget issue. Lexpress is the most difficult issue. Given ridership and finances, it is better seen as a social service than as an environmental issue. There are real mobility needs (as opposed to convenience) for those without cars or unable to drive (youth, elderly, disabled). But we ought not to run buses nearly empty at off hours, burning fuel with few passengers. The current level of service, with private contributions, needs to be carefully assessed; we need to retain Lexpress capacity for Met State and other edge-of-town developments. In the current fiscal situation, we need to operate a system that is maximally efficient and cost-effective. I want to be a supporter; the reports we will receive at Town Meeting will inform us about operating an appropriately sized system, and how we can sustain it.

**Sandra Shaw**  
**51 Wachusett Drive**

In good times, the Town would be responsible for all of the services listed. These are not good times. Therefore, we need to be prepared to support regular over-rides to Prop 2 1/2 so that our level of services, including most importantly schools and public safety, will not be decimated. Citizens who expect yard waste pick-up, more accessibility to the Town composting station, and regular maintenance of conservation lands need to be pro-active in supporting the override votes. The vote failed last year because many citizens were not convinced that cuts would result from the failed override.

Some savings have been realized with Lexpress through consolidation of routes and eliminating weekend service. Also, a reasonable reduction in the hours for the Conservation Administrator position may enable us to keep the administrator, without damaging our overall conservation efforts. We need to involve more citizen volunteers as stewards of our public lands.

**Steve Turner**  
**260 Marrett Road**  
**781-274-6567**

As you know, Lexpress provides a valuable service that mainly assists senior citizens, and school-age children safely arrive at their destination while decreasing traffic, air pollution, and wear & tear on our roads. This service should not have been cut at all during the last budget process and should be one of the highest priority items when reconciling the upcoming budget.

A few residents (including myself) that I have met with in person mentioned that they missed the yard waste pickup service. We all have our stories as to how many biodegradable leaf bags we delivered to the Hartwell Ave location and the sometimes long lines and inconvenient hours we endured. Even though the weekend hours were later restored after residents voiced their disagreement, the facility's hours should not have been cut originally and there should have been better planning on the weekend that had both yard waste drop-off and hazardous waste drop-off (Residents like myself waited in long lines with many leaving frustrated when the facility closed for the day abruptly by the overwhelmed policeman).

I also believe unless a resident can't (old age, physical disability, etc.) that each resident has an obligation to bring their biodegradable materials to the Hartwell Ave location and not dump them in the woods or leave out for the trash pickup. This message should have been conveyed strongly and repeatedly to residents by somebody in town govt.

Upkeep of our conservation land is very important. If there was no way financially to hire the work crew or maintain the Conservation Administrator's full time hours, did the town reach out to groups like yours, Friends of the Bikeway, etc., to coordinate any programs to have residents volunteer their time. Each resident has a responsibility to help maintain this land that improves our quality of life. Did the town reach out to teachers, school administrators to help develop programs where children could receive school credit for volunteering their time to help preserve our conservation space? Did we ask nonresidents that use our bike path free of charge to volunteer their time to help its upkeep? These are just a few of the questions

that I would have asked and pursued to ensure our conservation land upkeep

**Judy Uhrig**  
**781-861-0388**  
**uhrig01@rcn.com**

CLC has done an admirable job focusing on some of the benefits the town has lost over the last year. All are services the town did, and should be providing. We need a citizenry willing to pay for that that makes for a good town. Unfortunately, it appears at this point, that unless and until townspeople really feel the pinch things will not improve. We need to keep up pressure such as yours to remind them what they have lost.

## **Precinct 5**

**Jeff Crampton**  
**See Candidate for Planning Board**

**Carol A. Liff**  
**781 681 9616**  
**Carolliff@AOL.com**

It is most unfortunate that budget cuts and the failure of the override last year have reduced and eliminated many town services that impact the environment. In some override failure situations, such as the elimination of a secretarial position, these cuts have meant less than ideal working conditions for the few remaining or cutbacks in hours. However, inadequate oversight of conservation lands and illegal dumping of trash impact all of us.

I do not see that this year will bring additional monies or restoration of these and other services. As an alternative to paid town employees, we need to again look to volunteers to lend a helping hand. I propose that some of the services, such as attending the compost station could be done in part by volunteers. Perhaps a group of high school students or older boy/girl scouts could make a project of clearing some of the most used trails of overgrowth.

We need to advertise the need for people to step forward and help and perhaps then we can get the citizens to take over a few of the services formerly done by our town employees.

## **Precinct 6**

**Paul Chernick  
14 Somerset Rd.  
781-863-1326**

**paul.chernick@verizon.net**

The simple fact is that the overturning of Pay-As-You-Throw trash collection, cuts in state aid, and the defeat of last year's override have combined to leave the Town unable to support the services we value so much as residents. That is true for environmental and conservation activities (including all the issues listed in CLC's question, plus tree-planting and maintenance), education, public safety, maintenance of roads and public spaces, and almost every other aspect of the Town's functions. Being proud of Lexington's performance in any of these areas is much harder than used to be.

Lexington needs to pass an override this year to maintain current service levels. Additional overrides will likely be needed in future years to gradually restore services to the levels we knew in the 1990s, let alone improve on them.

One reason for the failure of the override and PAYT, and for other disappointing election results, is that only about a quarter of the professionals in town bother to vote in the typical election. We can all help by encouraging our friends and neighbors to participate in local democracy.

**Gerald A. Lacey  
Tel: 862-5923  
GALacey@aol.com**

Lexpress should continue in its present mode supported by user fees and donations. It serves a very limited audience and while worthy, in this time of budgetary constraints does not merit town funding.

Yard waste pickup should be reinstated and paid for through user fees..

Composting station hours should be expanded and again user fees could be considered..

Lexington has a wonderful history of volunteerism. A group such as Friends of the Bikepath should be started sponsored by Citizens for Lexington Conservation to work on the trails and the meadows. I am told the Boy Scouts are already involved in this type of endeavor. We should get the middle schools and high school involved. It would be a worthwhile extra curricular activity to burn off some of the students' excess energy. We could also get the churches, the Lions Club, Rotary, The Masons etc. involved. As has been demonstrated

many times, government is not always the answer. I am sure we would find support among the general population for this activity if they became aware of the problem, The Conservation Administrator should be responsible to get the ball rolling.

Who determines the hours of the Administrator? What is the cost benefit relationship? Can volunteers help? What is not being done, and who is aware of it?

**Alan Lazarus  
Phone: 781-861-0093  
ajlazarus@rcn.com**

The answer to all of the questions is dependant on the town budget: I think that many of the items on your list should be funded if possible. My priorities are as follows:

I think that the town should be responsible for picking up yard waste. Our one-year experience has revealed the problems with each family bringing their own yard waste to the dump; it seems far better to provide the service if possible.

Lexpress needs continual monitoring. It fills an important need for school and Senior transportation. We need to review the experience of the private/public funding this past year.

Conservation is a critical long-term trust. Its funding needs to be maintained at as high a level as is feasible; reducing those efforts means greater expenses in the future. Long-term funding will require a sustained effort to establish and maintain a Conservation endowment fund. The recent impressive private funding of the Library suggests that a combined private/public effort is well worth exploring.

**Richard Pagett  
See Candidates for Selectman**

**Frank Sandy  
fsandy@rcn.com  
781-862-1365**

As a Town Meeting Member, I have actively supported land acquisition, effective zoning, and environmental protection for 35 years. During that time Lexington acquired more municipally owned open space than any other Town inside of Route 128. This open land, along with our excellent schools and other Town services has made Lexington so desirable that increased land values now make significant future acquisitions unlikely.

However, funds should still be made available to maintain this land. Combinations of forest, open meadows and wetlands are both environmentally and aesthetically desirable. With the cuts in DPW funding, the beautiful meadows in Willards Woods have not been mowed in over a year. If this continues they will quickly revert to brush, then woodlands. Even if mowed this year, they will need expensive hand cutting where the new young trees have grown too big to be mowed.

I strongly supported Pay-As-You-Throw trash collection and still do. The taxpayers are now paying hundreds of thousands of dollars a year to dispose of yard waste that is illegally put out with the trash instead of composted.

The failed override caused many Town services to be cut. Most still exist in adequate if not ideal form. Only Lexpress was completely eliminated. This was not just a loss of convenience for a few people but a public safety problem. Some senior citizens should no longer be driving. Without public transportation they would be forced to either leave Lexington or drive when they can not do so safely. This should not be allowed to happen.

If Lexpress hadn't been kept running this year by contributions, including my own, it would have permanently lost its state subsidy and not been revivable in the foreseeable future. However, it can not be sustained with private contributions. The current, temporary, two bus system is very inadequate. The Town should fully fund Lexpress again.

**Deborah Strod**  
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I am an environmentalist. I printed my Town Meeting postcard on tree-free Kenaf paper. I recycle and I compost. I participated in a Substitute Science Teacher program two years ago, developed by Fran Ludwig, the elementary Science Curriculum Coordinator, in which a cadre of parents and some kindergarten teachers were trained in a specific recycling and paper-making curriculum, and we were used to cover classrooms while teachers received their Science professional development. In order to resurrect the town's fine tradition of taking conservation seriously and sustain it through the lean years we will need to be creative, combining the small things we can do by supporting personal responsibility! , to larger things with groups of volunteers and the largest projects with support of paid staff.

As with other areas, such as capital investments in buildings, the short-term gain of not paying for maintenance results in a long term greater expense in damaged assets. But at least in the case of the field work, I believe volunteers could be used more easily

than in building maintenance. However, not all functions can be performed well, or legally, solely on a volunteer basis; and volunteers, in order to be effective, need experienced leadership. Thus, I believe the Conservation Administrator's time should be used in part to coordinate a "citizen's conservation corps," group which might include high school students seeking to do their public service hours, as a means to address some of the trails and meadows. I would hope that some hours could be added back in to the Conservation administrator's position.

We have to look for and acknowledge the linking benefits. For example, in the Substitute Science teacher program, children were given important education, recycling was supported at the schools, the full cost of substitutes was not needed, and the teachers' time was better used because they did not have to make lesson plans for substitute to follow. It was a win all the way around.

The town should be seeking adequate public transportation options to meet the needs of its citizens, visitors and businesses. Parking is an issue downtown, pollution caused by cars is as well, but so is getting an adequate number of shoppers to the stores. We also have a population some of whom cannot use Lexpress because they need more door-to-door service. Lexpress should be part of a comprehensive response to these converging needs, perhaps in combination with restoration of the chair car to help those who can't wait far from their home for the bus. Better public transportation within Lexington would help the town on several fronts at once.

Placing yard waste in the trash wastes the town's money. It is clear that the long lines to place yard waste in the town facility led to stress on our human and environmental eco-system by taking hours of citizens' time, creating anxiety in the surprise long line and among those who physically could not take the yard waste or who had to hire someone, and creating much pollution in one spot as the cars sat waiting. We have a responsibility as a town to educate our populace and make it possible for them to continue to conserve, and to teach stewardship of the environment.

We moved to the town expecting services, and now at many levels we need to take responsibility for providing some of them. That is not necessarily a bad thing, if we use this crisis to affirm our values and to come together to accomplish goals. It is not what we expected, but it is what we have to do, and it may just bring us together with pride, at least until we can fully fund what we want to do.

## Precinct 7

**Joyce Miller**

I applaud CLC for raising these environmental concerns, and the need for acting on them..

In addition to basic services that the Town must provide, there is a need to protect the quality of the environment by reducing negative impacts. We are facing difficult economic times, and until we pass an override, or there is a tremendous improvement in the economy, and/or contributions from the state we must look at alternatives such as financing an assistant to the Conservation administrator through the use of filing fees, working with volunteer groups and with the DPW to help maintain conservation lands.

**Sheryl Mason**  
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In response to your topic: Lexpress is a real asset to the town and a service I would not like to see end. I am aware of the efforts being made to study how to best keep Lexpress running in the future. I look forward to hearing their suggestions for modifications. We need to look for the best ways to meet the citizens' needs and alleviate the traffic in and around Lexington center.

I also feel that the town has a responsibility to oversee conservation of all the resources of Lexington. In the past there have been endowments from citizens for the upkeep of various parks and neighborhoods around town. Perhaps through new endowments to the Trustees of the Public Trust we could support maintenance of conservation areas.

I would strongly support reinstating some yard waste pickup and taking a look at the hours at the town composting station. I urge all citizens with feasible ideas for alternative means to provide these services to put those ideas in writing to the Town Manager, Selectmen and the Town Meeting Members for consideration.

**Jane A Trudeau**  
**781-861-1557**

I do believe conservation and environmental issues should be in the equation when we allocate increasingly scarce Town resources. I voted to keep weekly recycling. I plan to vote for an override. It is particularly disheartening to see the dramatic decrease in Lexpress ridership as a result of curtailed routes. I would like to

see its former service restored. I have been proud to live in a community that invested in and preserved open land, funded town wide public transportation, and enforced the wetlands protection act with adequate professional staff. I hope the last override vote was an aberration and that the community will vote this year to maintain the quality of our town services.

## Precinct 8

**Diana T. Garcia**  
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I believe the Town benefits from Lexpress and Conservation activities and needs to fund them to the extent possible. It's clear that our current fiscal situation will not allow us to have all of the services we conservationists would like and that we must prioritize. I believe the most important items from the proposed list are

- \* Stabilizing Lexpress's funding
- \* Restoring the Conservation Administrator's position

To provide revenue for Lexpress, I look to AvalonBay to become a major contributor and partner with Lexpress to service its large development at Met State Hospital. For additional funding, I would consider including both Lexpress and the Conservation Administrator as part of an override budget. It is difficult to predict what other services we can afford until Town Meeting gains a full understanding of all budget requests, but I believe the Town will need to continue to rely on volunteers and residents for items such as conservation land cleanup, yard waste pickup, and composting,

**David Horton**  
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In the best of circumstances, our town budget would be able to pay for all of the services that citizens in our town either require or would like to have. Since that does not seem to be the case, choices will inevitably be made and priorities set. I have faith in the process that the town uses to establish priorities and to determine what will appear in the budget within the parameters of Proposition 2 1/2 and what might appear on an override list. The "summit meeting" approach that engages town government, town governing boards, the school committee, and the residents of the town in a collaborative process is a sensible approach so that all town services and needs are considered as a whole. That being said, advocates are needed for topics directly related to conservation and the environment, because town government is at the very least their caretaker. Whether or not the services are paid for by

taxes, user fees, or provided by volunteers, the town has the responsibility to see that they are undertaken and provided.

**Lexpress:** If it is not fully funded by the town, I would suggest that perhaps the Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with Lexpress, could raise funds from some of the major corporations in the town that either benefit from Lexpress ridership or would support it as community service to the town. In other words, look for financial support from both public and private resources.

**Yard Waste/Composting Station:** The town could explore the possibility of private contractors collecting yard waste for a fee and perhaps, even operating the composting station at times when the town is not operating it. An alternative could be to consider a fee-for-service operation that would pay for town trucks and employees to collect yard waste and to expand the hours of operation at the composting station. The bottom line is to provide the service in some fashion.

**Trails and Meadows:** Just as organizations now maintain traffic islands and even land bordering roadways, they may now be interested in "adopting" a particular trail or meadow to maintain it. Businesses and service organizations, like Rotary and the Lions Club, groups like the Garden Club or even Boy and Girl Scouts, might be enlisted to do the work. High school students could do some of the work to meet their community service requirement for graduation.. There is certainly a benefit to the town and also to the individuals who do the work.

**Conservation Administrator:** I would support the allocation of funds to restore the position to a full-time basis. I can envision the administrator coordinating many of the initiatives I have outlined that might be undertaken by volunteers. It is unlikely that a volunteer could be found to coordinate all that would be required of such a position. The town also needs someone to be an advocate for conservation and the environment and to keep our focus on them, as well as to do the work!

**Alan M. Levine**  
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Reductions in revenue for the Town budget make it hard to fund many valued services and put conservation activists like myself in a difficult position. I have advocated at recent meetings that this year's budget, like those of the last half dozen years, be based on a comparison of the relative value, subjective as that may be, of the services to be included or cut. No item should be held sacred from the start and thereby escape scrutiny. It's hard to do this well as we know from the aftermath of last summer's failed override, but

there is no better alternative. While I would rank the first 3 items in the CLC question pretty high in priority and the last 2 items somewhat lower, I cannot comment intelligently on whether they should be in the budget until I see a complete budget proposal. If these items are not included in the budget, I hope that an override will be placed before the voters this year and that it will include these items. Perhaps it is unlikely that the Selectmen would include all five. Passage of the Community Preservation Act in Lexington would also be a great boon for activities related to acquisition and maintenance of open space, but is on the back burner. This is no doubt shortsighted. Independent of the vehicle, future funding of conservation-related services depends on whether Town officials view them favorably, and that often depends on constituents advocating for such services. So please contact your friends, neighbors and officials and let them and us know your point of view.

## **Precinct 9**

**Vicki Blier**

I will have to respond in terms of "the perfect world" and "the real world."

In a perfect world I would fund Lexpress fully (I personally gave a substantial donation to Lexpress during the crisis). I would continue yard waste pickup in some form. I would optimize town composting station hours and hire conservation work crews to preserve our trails and meadows. I don't know enough about the Conservation Administrator's hours to form an opinion.

But this is not a perfect world. With unprecedented and formidable budget constraints, this year everything is on the table. I pledge to listen carefully, read all available material and seek out informed opinion. And I will vote in the way I feel does the least damage to the Town. That's all I can promise.

May I suggest that those who are interested in preserving conservation interests in Lexington contact Town Selectmen and strongly encourage them to present a tiered override? I believe that a tiered override, with at least one tier big enough to pay for the essential services that were cut in 2003, will give us the best chance of funding the programs that we all care about.