



Chiesa Farm wetlands (panorama)

2022 DUES ARE DUE!

The status of your dues can be found on the address label of snail-mailed newsletters or near the top of the email announcing this issue. If it says, "Dues Paid through February 2022 (or earlier)", it is time to renew your membership for 2022.

Annual membership to CLC is only \$20.00 (what a deal!). Suggested membership levels are:

_____ \$ 20 (Twig)

_____ \$ 50 (Branch)

_____ \$100 (Tree)

_____ \$ Other

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

If you prefer to contribute by mail, please send this form, or the information listed, along with your check payable to "Citizens for Lexington Conservation", to:

Citizens for Lexington Conservation
P.O. Box 202
Lexington, MA 02420-0002

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone Number: _____

____ New Member ____ Renewal

____ Go Green and save a tree (or at least a branch)! 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 version.

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

CLC 2022 QUESTION FOR CANDIDATES, sent to all candidates:

Citizens for Lexington Conservation, our local environmental advocacy and education organization, has been collecting and publishing candidates' responses to environmental issues for many years. CLC has chosen to focus this year's candidates' question on Article 40 for the Annual Town Meeting: Amend Zoning Bylaw - Sustainable Residential Incentives proposed by Cynthia Arens and 9 or more registered voters. From the Warrant:

DESCRIPTION: This article would create zoning incentives to encourage residential construction and major renovations consistent with the Town's emission reduction and sustainability goals by:

- a. Defining performance standards for energy efficiency, sustainability, and on-site fossil-fuel use, and;
- b. Reducing allowable Gross Floor Area for unsustainable residential construction and major renovations, and;
- c. Providing tiered gross floor area incentives, up to current allowable limits, for residential construction and major renovations that meet the defined higher performance standards.

CANDIDATES FOR TOWN-WIDE OFFICE Candidate for Select Board Member: 3-Year Term

Joseph Pato
Joe@joepato.org

Yes, I support this article. When the Clean Heat Alliance was developing its Commercial Zoning amendment to provide incentives to reduce fossil-fuel use in the Hartwell Avenue Innovation District during the summer of 2021, I suggested that the next step should be to create a similar set of incentives for new residential construction across the whole town. I am pleased that the alliance was able to move forward and bring this thoughtful zoning amendment to Town Meeting.

Residential fossil fuel use is responsible for about a quarter of Lexington's CO2 emissions. Some homeowners have begun to transition their homes from being fossil-fuel dependent by installing heat-pump systems like I have done in my own home in 2019. It will, however, take many years to make substantial townwide reductions in the more than 10,000 existing homes. New construction, however, is well suited for eliminating the use of fossil fuels immediately. New homes can be designed and be well sited on the lot for solar energy collection and built to be all-electric avoiding costly refits in the future.

The incentive structure proposed in article 40 is creative and fair. New construction that meets all of the sustainability targets (i.e., tier 2) will continue to be able to be as large as allowed before article 40 is adopted. These size limits are generous relative to those in other communities. New construction that meets only the tier 1 targets can still be built to three quarters of the old size limits.

As the old adage goes "if you find yourself in a hole, stop digging." Mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change requires us all to act. Beginning by not making things worse is the first important step.

Candidate for School Committee: 3-Year Term

Eileen Jay

Eileen.jay@lexingtonmma.org

I support Article 40: Amend Zoning Bylaw - Sustainable Residential Incentive (Citizen Petition). Providing zoning incentives that encourage new residential construction or major renovation that meets energy efficiency and fossil fuel use standards is consistent with the sustainability goals of the Town. I like the idea of tiered incentives that provide the ability to build larger Gross Floor Area (GFA) buildings depending on the tier of sustainability performance standards achieved, up to the maximum GFA allowed.

At first, under 6.13.3 which defines the Tier 1 incentives, it wasn't clear to me what the 50% increase in allowable GFA was relative to, but then I saw that under amended 4.4.2, the base starting points for the maximum GFA calculations (not including the lot size multiplier) are half of the previous starting points. The same applies in 6.11.4 which allows a 100% increase if Tier 2 standards are met. Essentially, this would mean that a construction that does not meet any of these sustainability standards could only build a residence that is half the size of the maximum allowed. Tier 1 construction would allow 75% of the maximum size and Tier 2 would be allowed the full maximum.

I'm not certain if half of the maximum is the right starting point for construction that does not meet the Tier 1 or Tier 2 standards, but would welcome hearing Town Meeting discussion on that point. Nevertheless, I am in support of the concept of this article and applaud the efforts to reach residential sustainability goals through zoning incentives.

Candidate for Planning Board: 3-Year Term

Robert D. Peters

rdpeters@rcn.com

I support this article in concept and I expect to support it in its final form to be presented at Town Meeting. I view this as the Town making a statement of policy that reinforces Town Meeting's declaration of a climate emergency. Every day there is more and more evidence of the critical nature of the very real climate emergency that we are going to be living and dying with well into the next century. This article represents an effort to put our goals and ideals into concrete action and I think it is a creative approach to the problem, when there are few opportunities to take on climate change in any direct way.

Some communities in Massachusetts have attempted to ban new connections to the natural gas system and were ultimately unsuccessful. The structure of this proposal as an incentive where building green would yield the opportunity for greater Gross Floor Area (GFA) seems to be an appealing and creative proposition. We need to move away from burning fossil fuels and providing incentives is a great way to move forward.

I recognize that a potential downside to adoption of this article is that an aggrieved developer could litigate against the Town over this provision, and litigation is best avoided if possible. Litigation could be costly for the Town. However, we have so few readily available tools to address our climate emergency, I am willing to accept some risk.

CANDIDATES FOR TOWN MEETING

NOTE: Candidates are listed in alphabetical order in each precinct.

Precinct 1

Valerie Overton

valerie.overton@erg.com

Yes, I would support a Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article in concept. As with all articles that come before Town Meeting, I would conduct more research and listen to arguments from all perspectives before making my final decision. I offer this caveat because I believe Town Meeting members have an obligation to consider all perspectives—and the possibility of unintended economic, social justice, or sustainability consequences—before voting.

I would support a Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article because I believe that environment, climate, and sustainability issues are at a critical point—and in Lexington we must work from as many angles as possible to reduce our contribution to the problem and mitigate impacts. Given that Lexington is a desirable place to live, and many buyers seem to want large houses, this seems like a sensible approach to addressing the impacts of large houses without undue burden to homeowners. To the same end, I also support incentives for reduced emissions and waste from other sectors, such as transportation, restaurants, other business, and landscaping.

Precinct 2

Rita Goldberg

goldberg@fas.harvard.edu

No one could argue with the laudable, indeed necessary goal of reducing emissions and creating greener buildings, and I support that. The generous provision for a variety of house sizes also appears reasonable.

The language on details is still highly technical and difficult to understand, and I look forward to the clarification that will come with review and discussion. At the moment this looks like an omnibus article, primarily directed toward climate-friendly changes but also, to some extent toward affordable housing because it permits the construction of two-family houses.

I worry about this part, because “affordable housing” has become a catch-phrase that few people really understand. We talk about affordable housing as a means of creating diversity in our town, but the price of even “affordable” housing is prohibitive. Yet housing is one of the most important tools we have for creating the equity and opportunity most of us would like to see. Until I learn more, the housing equity part eludes me. It may not be possible for this article to include both goals—green buildings and a wider price range in housing—but that’s what I’d like to see in any planning and zoning decisions we make from now on. Again, I look forward to the discussion and clarification of an article that, in theory, at this stage, I’d be able to support.

Charles Hornig

Hornig.lex@charleshornig.org

The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Article 40 on Wednesday, February 16th. As a Planning Board member, it would not be appropriate for me to express an opinion in advance of the hearing. I encourage interested citizens to

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attend the hearing via Zoom (<https://www.lexingtonma.gov/planning-office/pages/access-virtual-meetings>).

Ricki Pappo
Rick.pappo@gmail.com

I enthusiastically support the Article 40 - Sustainable residential Incentives (SRI) Warrant Article. The goal of this Article is to incentivize all new construction to be cleaner, healthier and more resilient homes. These homes would be electrified for heating and cooling and would not need to be retrofitted as Lexington and the State work to reach their carbon reduction goals.

Confronting climate change requires using all tools in our toolbox to stop burning fossil fuels! This Article is an important tool to help Lexington achieve its climate goals. Building a new house without fossil fuels is both practical and affordable. While it may be new to some of our local builders, there are many builders who are embracing this type of building and I want our local builders to adopt these building practices.

- **Tool #1: No fossil fuels** used in the home is cleaner and healthier and this protects these homeowners from having to retrofit in the future!
- **Tool #2: Make sure the home is solar-ready** or has solar installed. The homeowner can be their own power plant and avoid the rising cost of fossil fuels.
- **Tool #3: Electric Vehicle (EV) charging.** Soon you won't be able to buy a gas-powered car in MA so our new residential construction should provide charging infrastructure.
- **Tool #4: Encouraging high performance buildings** so these homes have a better building envelope and yields a tighter, cleaner home.

I believe we should be encouraging cleaner, healthier homes that are built to be resilient in the face of climate change. If I was paying 2-3 million dollars for a new home, I know I would want it to be built using the best building practices of today, not yesterday.

Article 40 is the next step in creating better building practices for newly constructed homes in Lexington. I support Article 40 and hope that Town Meeting will pass this Article and embrace these sustainable building practices while also addressing climate change.

Joseph Pato
Joe@joepato.org
See p. 3

Betsey Weiss
betseyweiss@hotmail.com

I support smaller, green, sustainable, energy efficient features in new construction.

I want to thank the Clean Heat Lexington Organization for bringing Article #40 to Town Meeting, but I feel that zoning articles should go through the Planning Department and the Planning Board. This is a complex issue and needs several Public Hearings, Community Input, Builder Input, and then final input from our Planning Department before Town Meeting votes on a permanent zoning article that impacts builders and future Lexington residents' homes.

Article #40 has cut Gross Floor Area by 50% and then gives square footage bonuses for sustainable features. The more sustainable features that are agreed to, the more square footage the builder is given. **I believe that all homes in Lexington should have sustainable features and standards.**

The Table 4.4.2.1, in Motion #40 has a **2,000 square foot Gross Floor Area (GFA) home** on a 5,000- 7,500 sq. ft. lot which has **no sustainable features**. (A 2,000 GFA home is actually 1,200 square feet or 1,400 square feet of livable space since GFA includes the basement, garage, and the attic.) LexHAB builds 1,000- 1,200 sq. ft. units and LexHAB's goal is to achieve "net zero" energy impact.

Therefore, I support the concept of more sustainable features. However, I feel **that Article #40 needs input from our professional Planning Department, our Planning Board, Community Hearings, and Lexington builders to get the important “details right” the first time and have viable sustainable features and standards for every size home.**

Precinct 3

Sallye Bleiberg

sallyebleiberg4@gmail.com

Climate change is on my mind every day as I think about the world I want my four young grandchildren, children all over the globe, to inhabit. Consequently, I do support The Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article. While there are many causes of climate change, heating buildings with fossil fuels is a large source of the heating of the planet. This article addresses the heating problem in a constructive way, holding out carrots rather than sticks, to encourage builders to incorporate sustainability features into Lexington homes. It does not prohibit builders from utilizing fossil fuel heating mechanisms, but the article does provide generous incentives to create sustainable homes. This allows builders a choice. The expectation, of course, is that builders will choose to take advantage of the larger size allowances for more sustainable homes, which will continue the process of moving Lexington, already a leader, toward greater sustainability.

And I very much approve of the incorporation of EV chargers into the article as more and more Americans want to purchase electric vehicles. The difficulty for many home owners to date is the lack of easily accessible EV chargers. Encouraging the purchase of EVs is critical to stopping climate change before we reach the tipping point. This article certainly creates the opportunity for EV owners to charge conveniently from home. It, not coincidentally, also creates a good market for builders who want to appeal to the growing body of EV drivers.

Jeanne Krieger

Kriegerjk44@gmail.com

I support Article 40: Sustainable Residential Incentives (SRI) and in fact played a minor role in drafting the motion. In the absence of action by the State to promulgate an opt-in net-zero stretch code as called for in the landmark Next Generation Road Map bill and while we await the passage of our Home Rule Petition to limit the use fossil-fuel in new construction, Article 40 offers a practical, achievable alternative to assure new residential construction is built to sustainable standards. SRI expands upon the requirements of the Home Rule petition by setting standards for increased building energy efficiency, inclusion of solar panels, and charging stations for electric vehicles.

It is unconscionable to continue to construct new residences with fossil fuel heating systems, knowing that they will have to be replaced before the end of their useful lifespan to achieve the State's net-zero commitment.

Lexington has become a leader in our commitment to sustainable design. Article 40 is the next step in setting the pace and encouraging other municipalities to follow our lead.

Frank Smith

fes@fesmith.com

On 2/1, it is of course too soon to know all the details that may emerge through further public discussion and the Planning Board's analysis. But I am a strong supporter of the sustainable energy initiatives that have come to Town Meeting, and I support the concept of using zoning incentives to achieve clean energy goals that is behind this article. I hope to be able to vote for it at Town Meeting this year.

Precinct 4

Eileen Jay

Eileen.jay@lexingtontmma.org

See page 4

Gerry Paul

gerry@bu.edu

I strongly support the Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article. It is a common-sense way of increasing the use of more sustainable methods of energy use. Lexington will be contributing directly by using energy from renewable sources as well as setting an example for other communities to follow. As larger homes requiring more energy are built in Town, the article provides a way for property developers to contribute to the effort of mitigating climate change.

Sandra Shaw

sj.shaw@verizon.net

While I appreciate the good work of the Citizens for Lexington Conservation through their many years of conservation advocacy, I was dismayed to see this year's question. I believe it is far too technical and quite complicated for a candidate for Town Meeting to answer, especially without the background and detailed discussion of the issues raised in this Planning Board article. I do favor sustainability incentives for all buildings, especially when building new structures. But I continue to be dismayed with the very large houses being built which are always replacing affordable smaller homes. We are changing our Town into a rich ghetto, and make it impossible for folks of less economic means to live here. Among those numbers of folks unable to live here would be young people starting out, older residents wishing to down-size but stay in Lexington, and our own Town workers and teachers. So, while I would encourage sustainable features in buildings, I am worried that we are at the same time encouraging a continuation of these costly larger homes being built all over Town. I have always relied upon the open discussion of pros and cons at Town Meeting when considering such complicated technical articles. I look forward to that discussion to help clarify the various issues this article raises.

Precinct 5

Marilyn Fenollosa

Mmt.fenollosa@verizon.net

I am in favor of any measure that seeks to promote energy efficiency and reins in the escalating size and cost of new construction for housing in Lexington. However, before I take any position on this proposed bylaw change I would want additional information as to bylaw's effect on affordable housing – whether these new measures would discourage or encourage developers to scale back their projects, enabling those of lesser incomes to successfully compete for the purchase of the new homes. I would also wish to know the position of the Planning Board with respect to these changes in the zoning code: I believe that whenever the Planning Board proposes changes, it is on the basis of empirical data that indicates that the changes would be successful in accomplishing their stated goals. I fear that for many developers the added sustainability measures would not seriously affect their total project cost and expected return on their investment, thus defeating any attempts to scale back the size of new construction.

Andrew Friedlich

ajfriedl@aol.com

Article 40: Sustainable Residential Incentives is a creative, incentives-based approach to reducing energy waste and reducing barriers to non-carbon-based alternatives. It is consistent with Lexington's sustainability goals. Per the analysis done by this article's proponents, the outcome of the proposed zoning changes would be implementation of relatively easy electrical system improvements and installation ready for EV cars and roof solar without significant cost burden to builders. The incentive is a push to meet the higher tier standards, thereby allowing continued new construction on the scale we typically see today. The proposed changes are narrowly focused on reducing some residential carbon emissions versus the status quo.

This proposal is not a solution to all new construction sustainability problems (nor is new construction our only sustainability problem), but it is another "low hanging fruit" solution brought by the Clean Heat group to modify building practices in meaningful ways with minimal cost or lifestyle impacts on builders or home buyers. Though the state leading with a more comprehensive set of sustainability improvements in the building code would be better, taking what actions we can at the town level now is vital. Our worsening climate crisis creates a more urgent timeline for change. I am grateful for the work the Clean Heat group has been doing, and support this article's goals.

I have questions about some of the details in the article's motion and look forward to dialogue between Town Meeting members, Town Boards, and other stakeholders in the weeks leading up to Town Meeting's vote on the motion. These examinations and discussions help ensure that any article's outcomes are consistent with its goals.

Precinct 6

Sara Bothwell Allen

sarabothwellallen@gmail.com

Article 40: Sustainable Residential Incentives is a creative, incentives-based approach to reducing energy waste and reducing barriers to non-carbon-based alternatives. It is consistent with Lexington's sustainability goals. Per the analysis done by this article's proponents, the outcome of the proposed zoning changes would be implementation of relatively easy electrical system improvements and installation ready for EV cars and roof solar without significant cost burden to builders. The incentive is a push to meet the higher tier standards, thereby allowing continued new construction on the scale we typically see today. The proposed changes are narrowly focused on reducing some residential carbon emissions versus the status quo.

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Andrea Fribush

afribush@gmail.com

As an incumbent Town Meeting Precinct 6 member, I support The Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article. For your readers who are looking for details about Article 40, I recommend the Clean Heat Lexington website: <https://www.cleanheatlexington.org/incentive>

Town Meeting members and other interested citizens are waiting to hear more details once the Motion is in its finalized form. Please note that, in contrast to the language on the Town Meeting information page on the Town's website, <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2022atm>, this Article applies only to new construction.

I am interested to hear the Planning Board's recommendations when they have a public hearing on this on 2/16. I hope that the details will be ironed out so that the Article will pass easily at Town Meeting.

Dawn McKenna

dawnforlexington@yahoo.com

Generally, I support sustainability efforts, I have learned in my decades of public service, the devil is in the detail. The motion which would govern is not yet final. I will withhold my position until I see the final motion. Providing incentives to encourage new construction consistent with the Town's emission reduction and sustainability goals I would support. Incentives for renovations gives me pause. Many houses are historic and built prior to the turn-of-the-century. My restoration knowledge helps me understand that modernizing older homes is expensive and can be difficult to integrate. Those who help retain the variety of architecture in our historic community should not be penalized if including such features would not be feasible. The purpose outlined in the draft motion I support. Many of the standards I could also support. This is a valuable debate for the community and a reasonable approach. My ultimate vote will depend on a fair response for new and existing properties.

Deborah Strod

Deborah_strod@yahoo.com

Article 40 is an appropriate option to encourage new construction supporting Town sustainability. I would prefer the state building code lead on climate; but, we use the tools we have.

Incentives aim to change behaviors to achieve an outcome. This incentive zoning proposal offers that if a proposed new home is designed sufficiently sustainable, current size limits are allowed, while environmental impact is decreased. Conversely, if proposed new construction is not sufficiently sustainable, size limits are constrained.

Proponents say the changes will affect about 100 new homes/year. They were responsive to my questions, saying about half of new homes already meet the lower requirement proposed, but almost none are being built with high efficiency electric systems or solar panels, which meet the higher requirement (and there is insufficient data on electric vehicle chargers, also in that requirement). I agree with a bigger benefit to encourage activities where we have not made enough progress.

We should do reasonable due diligence on potential unintended consequences. Proponents were responsive to questions about impacts on existing homes, and home sales. Requirements for existing homes and additions to them will not be changed under the proposal, only for new construction. No one can predict housing markets, but I believe that since the cost of sustainability has decreased, the number builders who use sustainable approaches has increased, and the value both environmentally and in the cost of home ownership have been demonstrated, people would be able to sell existing homes at the kind of price they have anticipated. I will be interested to hear at the time of the vote how much public input has been gathered from which stakeholders, with what impact on the motion ultimately presented.

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My opinions used information available 2/2/2022. When considering such proposals, I compare to current zoning by-laws available here: <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/planning-office/pages/planning-forms-regulations>.

Eran Strod

eransterling@gmail.com

I support Article 40 (Sustainable Residential Incentives) and additionally support Article 7 (Climate Action Plan), which allocates funds to work toward updating the town's Climate Action plan. Further, I will support any well-constructed measures that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare our town for the impacts of climate change.

Article 40 incentivizes large construction projects – teardowns and renovations – to meet higher sustainability standards, proven cost-effective. Encouraging major new construction to utilize renewable energy is an incremental step in the right direction. My only concern about Article 40 is that it doesn't go far enough.

If we wish to limit the planet's warming to 1.5°C, we must halve global emissions by the year 2030. As the world enters a critical decade, the window of opportunity is narrowing, and we will need to take decisive steps. Why allow any construction at all that does not at least meet the Tier 1 Standards cited in Article 40? Let's pass Article 40 and then look for additional ways to transition to net-zero emissions, hopefully even sooner than the long-term targets in Lexington's "Getting to Net Zero Emissions Roadmap and Recommendations."

Precinct 7

Christian Boutwell

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I am generally supportive of the Sustainable Residential Incentives article. I appreciate the approach of revising the current bylaw to require some threshold sustainability measures in order to build to the maximum but still allowing building, albeit at smaller dimensions, for those that choose to not meet the threshold. I believe there is good logical rationale for linking sustainability measures to home size. I believe there is potential for negotiation and/or compromise around the exact nature of the thresholds to be met to achieve maximum size, and I look forward to hearing the debate at Town Meeting before I make my final decision.

Mary Burnell

macburnell@gmail.com

While I am all for any incentives to increase the energy efficiency of new home construction here in Lexington, I am uneasy with incentives that would substantially increase the size of new homes above the current guidelines. I look forward to hearing the pros and cons of both sides of the issue before the vote takes place.

Patricia Elen Costello

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The well thought out incentives for new residential construction provided by Warrant Article 40 would go a long way in helping Lexington attain its sustainability goals. I would support the article as I understand it now but hesitate to endorse it until I've "heard from the experts" and see the article in its final form.

Bob Creech

bobcreech@aol.com

Nothing is easy and this question comes at a time when a definitive answer is premature. I do not know the thinking that went in to the proposal and cannot judge whether or not it has been adequately thought through.

Conceptually, I support the idea of controlling fossil fuel use in newly constructed homes. At the same time, insulation standards, especially above the conditioned living areas, are far from good enough as witnessed by the many homes, both new and old, that had roofs that were virtually free of snow just a couple of very cold days after our last snow storm.

I could not state my support for the Article in its current form until I understand all of the reasoning. For example, why were the existing GFA limits cut in half? Is there a better approach? Could a usable home still be built? If the builders would actually run with the proposal, why are they still being allowed a percentage GFA bonus for extra large lots which can generate substantial additional GFA? If Article 40 is adopted and then the GFA limits are increased 4 or 5 years down the road, what will that mean to the owners of homes built to Article 40 standards? I am sure that there will be more questions as well.

I could support this proposal if insulation standards are improved as much as possible and if the proposed new GFA limits are built on a solid rationale. I would also have to be convinced that hot water generation using heat pumps produces reasonable results.

Summary statement: Insulation is low hanging fruit which requires neither electricity nor greatly increased costs to a builder or buyer. It could require some framing changes.

If, after discussion and modification, I find that the final proposal is workable, I will support it.

Mary Hamilton

mhamil13@hotmail.com

I am in favor of any incentives that would encourage sustainability in the construction of new buildings in Lexington -- both homes and businesses. This seems like a very sound proposal. I would want to listen to discussion of the issue at Town Meeting, before I made a final decision on how I voted, but from reading the information that you have sent me, it sounds like a very reasonable and positive approach to the issue of sustainability.

Precinct 8

Margaret (Peggy) Enders

peggyenders@gmail.com

Although the public hearing on Article 40 with the Planning Board won't take place until February 16, I was glad to receive the helpful material provided by members of the Clean Heat Alliance describing in detail the goals of the article. A concern that I had before reading the material was that Article 40 would have an unexpected incentive for the building of more 6-bedroom/6-bathroom houses at the expense of smaller, greener homes. I no longer worry quite so much about that (it may result in builders constructing smaller homes if they don't want to meet the requirements) but wish there existed such incentives to construct greener moderate and smaller homes, as well. Article 40 is another step in the direction of reducing fossil fuel emissions and pollution in line with goals Town Meeting has supported through approval of earlier Articles (Clean Heat Home Rule Petition and ByLaw and the Sustainable Hartwell Avenue Zoning article) and, most recently, Article 10, where we hope the ban on the use in Lexington of Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers is upheld at the March 7 town election. I am very inclined to support Article 40 on the face of it but will wait

to decide until I have heard the discussion at the Planning Board and in subsequent remarks by thoughtful Town Meeting members, elected boards, and other stakeholders.

Alan M. Levine

levfam4@rcn.com

I plan to support Article 40 unless some unexpected negative reason surfaces before the vote. Changes in energy policy at all levels have been much too slow to develop even though the ill effects of climate change and their rapid intensification are very clear. The new homes being built in Lexington are very large and their construction requires proportionately large amounts of lumber, concrete, and other resources including energy. Such large homes have large exterior wall and roof areas that drive heating and cooling energy requirements over their lifetimes. Even so, one should consider whether the proposed sustainability requirements will result in unintended consequences such as increases in the costs of housing for people who could not otherwise afford reasonable-quality housing. The latter seems highly unlikely. Because of their sizes and the demand for land in Lexington together with other reasons, the new houses are very expensive, and approval of Article 40 is hardly likely to affect any household's ability to obtain good housing. I thank the sponsors for putting this article on the warrant, and I raise the question as to why it is a citizen's article, i.e., why it and similar initiatives are not, at least, jointly sponsored by the Planning Board or other major town boards.

Precinct 9

David Sheehan

davidmsheehan@yahoo.com

Several years ago, both the Select Board and Town Meeting pledged to reduce Lexington's greenhouse gas emissions to a target of net zero carbon dioxide emissions over a period of 25 years. To reach that net zero goal, Lexington will need to undertake a number of strategies focused on residential, commercial and municipal buildings, so the Sustainable Residential Incentives Warrant Article is just one piece of an overall plan intended to (hopefully) reduce the impact of climate change.

I agree with the town's goal and believe that the Warrant Article – which clearly reflects thoughtful discussion on how to incentivize decisions made by developers and residents seeking new construction – is a positive step toward Lexington achieving a net zero target. However, I recognize that there may be a difference of opinion regarding specific provisions in the Warrant Article and am open to dialogue on whether revisions are needed provided that there is agreement on the importance of Lexington, as well as other communities, attaining the net zero emissions goal.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Lexington Living Landscapes and Cary Library invite you to two lectures, both co-sponsored by the Lexington Conservation Division.

"It's Nighttime -- It's SUPPOSED to be Dark!"

James Lowenthal, Professor of Astronomy, Smith College

Thursday, February 24, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

Virtual event. Register [here](#).

When was the last time you looked up at the stars on a clear, dark night, far away from streetlights? Artificial light at night has become ubiquitous and harms virtually every kind of living creature that's been studied, from insects to migratory birds, mammals, fish, trees, crops, and even coral and plankton.

Join us as James Lowenthal, Professor of Astronomy at Smith College, leads us on a multi-faceted virtual tour of the night-time environment and how important natural darkness at night is for all species, including humans -- and how beautiful and magical it is. Learn what we can do to bring back the stars while supporting the health of all ecosystems.

James Lowenthal is the Mary Elizabeth Moses Professor and Chair of Astronomy at Smith College. Prof. Lowenthal uses some of the largest telescopes on Earth and in space to study the formation and evolution of galaxies in the early Universe, as well as exoplanets orbiting stars in our own Milky Way Galaxy. He is a member of the American Astronomical Society's Committee on Light Pollution, Radio Interference, and Space Debris, and leads the Massachusetts Chapter of the International Dark-Sky Association. He spends as much time outdoors under the stars as he can.



Kill Your Lawn

A presentation by Dan Jaffe Wilder, Norcross Wildlife Foundation

Thursday, March 24, 2022, 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Virtual event. Register [here](#).

Every house in America should be fronted with a non-native monoculture with the maintenance requirements of a golf course and the ecological value of a strip mine; a place where all flowers are called weeds and signs essentially saying “keep off” are the norm.

Does that idea seem a bit odd to you? It’s time to take a second look at this idea we call lawn. Join Dan Jaffe Wilder, co-author of *Native Plants for New England Gardens* and Director of Applied Ecology at Norcross Wildlife Foundation, to learn about the various options available to us, from whole lawn replacement to strategies for managing existing lawn in more ecologically beneficial ways. From well-known plants to brand new introductions, we will discuss various options that fit the needs of various lawn spaces.

Dan Jaffe Wilder is an ecologist, horticulturist, and botanist with over fifteen years of experience working with native plants and their associated ecology. His work has ranged from classrooms to nurseries to botanical gardens to wildlife refuges, specializing in native plant ecology, propagation, wildlife habitat construction, and native edible landscapes. Dan is currently the Director of Applied Ecology for the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, whose mission is to protect, enhance, and expand wildlife through conservation, education, and support.



West Farm—view over the valley to the far hill