



**Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation**

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Eileen Entin, Chair **FEBRUARY 2023** **Ruth M. Ladd, Editor**

CANDIDATES’ FORUM ISSUE

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Chiesa Farm wetlands (panorama)

2023 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 2023 (or earlier)", it is time to renew your membership for 2023.

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

CLC BOARD

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Chaula Patel



Walking through Liberty Heights in December 2022



Princess Pine (Dendrolycopodium obscurum) at



*Wet meadow in the back field of Wright Farm in
March 2022*



*Trail from Wright Farm towards Burlington's Land-
locked Forest (behind Jefferson Dr in March 2022*

LEXINGTON'S BIG TREES

Barbara Katzenberg



The large Chiesa Farm red oak, embedded in a stone wall

Which are the biggest (thickest, tallest) trees of each species in Lexington? I'm in the middle of an effort to identify trees in our public land and streets that are notable for their size. You can assess tree dimensions with a variety of cell phone apps or an old-fashioned tape measure for width. I was recently directed by a fellow Conservation Land Steward to Chiesa Farm where I found the largest red oak so far with a diameter of 76". The largest diameter white pine found so far (51") is off the Across Lexington walking trail near Valley Road. There is an impressive sugar maple (45") along Tavern Lane behind Munroe Tavern.

Lexington has an average annual rainfall of 45" a year which can support dense forest growth if the land is undisturbed. However, most trees on our public lands are young. Trees were mostly valued by European settlers in the 17th-19th centuries for such human uses as heating and cooking fuel and construction materials. Early settlers were harvesting a mind-boggling 40 cords of firewood a year. A typical farmstead might maintain a 20 acre wood lot for this purpose.

The deforested land was largely used for subsistence, dairy, or market farming. In later years, the areas which became

Lower Vine Brook and North Street conservation land were used to excavate sand and gravel for road building. Suburban development in the 20th and 21st century has been notable for its love affair with close-cropped lawns. So, we have to appreciate the few old trees we have.

Our oldest oaks were probably left intentionally to provide shade for grazing animals. The oldest pines, which always have crooked or divided trunks were likely saved as "seed trees" for the next generation of their species.

The idea of planting trees solely for aesthetic purposes only became popular in the US in the late 19th century and only among the wealthy. Lexington has a few examples, notably the European beech, which can grow to huge proportions.

This project will continue into the spring and summer. If you find any old tree to add to the list or would like to participate in the project, you can reach me via this newsletter at clclexington@gmail.com

Barbara is a Lexington Conservation Land Steward



*Manual measure of the Chiesa Farm oak
19'10" circumference = 76" diameter*

CLC IS SEEKING VOLUNTEERS!

Help support our expanding set of projects and activities.

Each spring and fall CLC's walks coordinator organizes a number of walks in Lexington's conservation and open space locations. We are seeking a **Walks Publicity Coordinator** who would be responsible for publicizing the walks to a variety of groups using as wide a range of mechanisms as possible. The major responsibility for this position would be in the early fall and early spring.

Signage Coordinator CLC has begun an ambitious project to put information signs in a variety of conservation areas throughout Lexington. Thus far, we have installed an information sign about vernal pools in Hayden Woods and a sign about habitat variety in Parker Meadow (see September 2022 newsletter, page 4). The conservation department installed a sign about wetlands at Cotton Farm and CLC will be working with the conservation department to install a sign in Willards Woods. We are seeking individuals who will help identify other locations where an informative sign would be meaningful and work with a small group to develop the content for these signs. We urge people who have particular interests in and knowledge about aspects of our conservation habitats that they would like to share to join us in this ongoing project. We envision this project as continuing over several years, with the goal of developing two new signs each year.

Conservation Restriction Organizer and Monitors A Conservation Restriction (CR) is a legal agreement between a landowner and the holder of the restriction. In Massachusetts, the CR is approved and accepted by the state and recorded at the Registry of Deeds. CLC has agreed to hold the CRs for several conservation properties in Lexington that were purchased by the town at least in part using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. To formalize a CR, we must prepare CR documents that are submitted to the state for approval. Once the CR is approved, CLC is required to inspect the property annually and report any violations to the property owner – in this case the Town of Lexington. A small team of CLC members are in the process of completing the applications for three properties, and are seeking people who are interested in joining the team to help develop the application documents for the remainder of the properties. We are also seeking individuals who will be responsible for annual monitoring of the properties

Public Relations Materials Developer CLC is sometimes asked to participate in fairs, displays, and other activities held by other groups in town. We are seeking one or two individuals who can develop a set of materials that are appropriate for different activities and audiences, including both information and interactive materials, that are readily available for use at Discovery Day, fairs, school events, and other types of community activities that whoever is participating in the activity can use.

Please consider whether you can help us fill any of these open positions.

If you would like to learn more about any of these positions, please send a message through the CLC website (CLCLex.org), and one of CLC's Board members will respond. Or, if you prefer, please call Eileen Entin at 781-862 6418.

CLC 2023 CHALLENGE 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.

This year's CLC Candidate's question is not a question, it is a challenge! It is focused on the state of Lexington's tree canopy. Anyone who has driven past the Watertown St. fork at Pleasant St. in the past month has seen a graphic example writ large of how quickly stark changes can occur. While changes on this scale to Lexington's overall tree canopy will continue to be a rarity, the cumulative annual toll from trees lost to individual property redevelopment and other causes is having a significant impact.

The most recent development in the effort to raise awareness of this issue has been the publication of a Statement of Concern for Lexington's Trees by a small group of residents, many of whom are engaged with environmental and sustainability organizations in town. The group's website (<https://www.lexingtontreestatement.org/home>) provides relevant research sources about the value of trees and invites residents to sign the Statement, which calls on the Select Board and town to do more to protect our trees. This will be followed by the scheduling of a town-wide workshop on the threats to Lexington's tree canopy, and further dialog with town leaders.

The Tree Committee itself is considering new provisions in the tree Bylaw that better address the challenges we are facing for consideration by Town Meeting 2024.

Our challenge to the candidates for town offices is: **Offer one or more suggestions on steps that you would support that the Town could take to further protect and enhance Lexington's tree canopy.**

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

Doug Lucente

doug.lucente@gmail.com

The protection and enhancement of Lexington's tree canopy is an important issue in our community. Trees play a crucial role in improving our environment and quality of life by providing clean air and water, reducing energy costs, serving as habitats for wildlife, and enhancing property values.

However, as development in the area continues, protecting and maintaining trees on private property has become a significant challenge that requires attention. To address this challenge, the Town could explore a variety of incentives for property owners to maintain and protect trees on their property.

One way to incentivize property owners is to offer tax benefits. For example, some municipalities such as Washington DC offer property tax credits for tree planting. Through its Trees for the Future program, property owners may be eligible for a property tax reduction based on the number and type of trees they plant on their property. Additionally, the program also offers cost-sharing assistance for the purchase and planting of trees and provides technical assistance and educational resources to property owners. To be eligible for

these incentives, property owners must comply with certain standards and guidelines set by the program, such as selecting appropriate species, planting in the right location, and properly maintaining the trees after they are planted.

In addition, Lexington could provide property owners with workshops, outreach programs, access to tree care professionals, and low-cost or free tree care services. Further, financial incentives such as grants, low-interest loans, or other funding programs could be offered to property owners who invest in tree planting, maintenance, and protection efforts.

By working collaboratively with property owners, we can help to protect and preserve our urban forests for future generations to enjoy.

Mark Sandeen

msandeen@lexingtonma.gov

"The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eyes of others only a green thing that stands in the way." - William Blake

Trees make Lexington a better and more beautiful place to live. They provide shade and shelter while providing sustenance for pollinators and wildlife. Trees clean our air and water while producing 25% of the oxygen we breathe. They reduce flooding, soil erosion, and the impact of climate change.

Trees are also an indispensable element of good neighborhoods. Trees create pleasant walking spaces, reduce traffic speeds, and buffer pedestrians from moving vehicles. Neighborhoods with healthy, mature street trees add an average of 10 percent to a property's value.

In addition to their awe-inspiring and mesmerizing beauty, older and larger trees are much more effective at capturing carbon. A 50-year-old tree captures 8 times more carbon per year than a 25-year old tree. Amazingly, a 160-year-old tree captures 17 times more carbon than a 25-year old tree.

The current tree bylaw allows a 60-foot, 42-inch diameter protected tree to be cut down and replaced with fifty-six 3-inch trees, each 6 feet high. We'd need to plant 1,960 trees to equal the volume of that one 42-inch tree. And where are we going to find the space to plant 1,960 or even 56 new trees? And we have no protections for trees that are located outside a property's setback area. We need to do a better job of protecting our older and larger trees.

The Town should consider revising the tree bylaw to truly protect our largest and most valuable trees, whatever their location on a property.

Let us strive to see the true value of trees and protect them in a meaningful way for the benefit of our community and the environment.

Candidate for School Committee: 3-Year Term

NONE

Candidate for Planning Board: 3-Year Term

Charles Hornig

hornig.lex@charleshornig.org

The Town should create incentives for landowners of all sorts to maintain existing native trees and plant new ones. One appropriate incentive would be to allow credits against a landowner’s stormwater fee for existing desirable trees on a property. This would be highly appropriate, as trees provide significant mitigation of stormwater impacts. The credit should be heavily weighted towards the largest trees, which provide outsized benefits both in mitigating stormwater and in reducing greenhouse gases. Claims for the credit would also provide information about the existing private tree canopy in Town.

CANDIDATES FOR TOWN MEETING

Click on the name of your precinct for the link to skip to those responses.

In the interests of saving paper and printing costs, those receiving paper copies can find the responses from these candidates by logging into the CLC web site and looking under Newsletters for the current edition where you will be able to access the link to your precinct’s responses.

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

[Precinct 1](#)

John Bartenstein
Albert Zabin

Steve Heinrich

[Precinct 4](#)

Nancy Shepard
Ruth Thomas

Ryan Wise

[Precinct 7](#)

NONE

[Precinct 2](#)

Charles Hornig

[Precinct 5](#)

Pamela Lyons

[Precinct 8](#)

Robert Avallone

[Precinct 3](#)

[Precinct 6](#)

Jon Himmel
Morton Kahan
Innessa Manning
Bridger McCaw

[Precinct 9](#)

Jeanne Canale
Suzanne Lau



*Yellow Birch at Paint Mine
in September 2022*



*Huge Silver Maple at Daisy Wilson
Meadow along boardwalk*

PRECINCT 1

John Bartenstein

john.bartenstein@verizon.net

Reflecting an understandable concern not to intrude unduly on residents' freedom to manage their properties, including trees on the property, without undue restriction, the Town's existing Tree By-Laws apply to private property "only when there is major construction or demolition as defined below and only within set-back areas." Code of Lexington, Section 120-2. The Tree Committee and Town Staff have also engaged in a laudable effort to inventory street trees and encourage their replacement when necessary due to disease or danger. I share concerns, however, about the progressive loss of the Town's tree canopy resulting from the clear-cutting of *entire properties* – not just trees in setbacks or bordering the street – in connection with teardowns and the construction of new homes. The speed with which this change occurs is, indeed, startling. As a first step toward addressing the situation, I have suggested to the Tree Committee for many years a simple addition to the Tree By-Laws which would not impose any substantive restrictions, but rather would have the primary goal of information-gathering. The proposal would require professional tree removal companies engaged by homeowners or developers to cut down trees over a specified size – *no matter where located on a property* – first to obtain a permit listing the number, size and species of trees to be removed. This process should be no more burdensome than existing requirements for contractors to obtain a building permit when rewiring, replacing windows, etc. It would, however, provide the Town essential data necessary to evaluate the loss of tree canopy overall, and to develop reasonable strategies to mitigate it. As is often said, "you can't manage what you can't measure."

Albert Zabin

ajzabin@gmail.com

When Mrs. Zabin and I bought our house 55 years ago there was only one tree— a sickly blue spruce tree. Over the years we planted four trees and let tree seeds sprout and grow. Other than to thin out some trees to let other trees prosper our lot has enough mature trees, so that we have a "wooded lot." Some weeks ago I drove down Wheeler Street and was shocked to see a partially demolished house on what was a lot with many mature trees, all of which were cut down. Another example how "quickly stark changes can occur. I would support by-law changes, perhaps in addition to the tree by-law, to the subdivision by-law empowering the Planning Board to regulate tree cutting.

PRECINCT 2

Charles Hornig

hornig.lex@charleshornig.org

The Town should create incentives for landowners of all sorts to maintain existing native trees and plant new ones. One appropriate incentive would be to allow credits against a landowner's stormwater fee for existing desirable trees on a property. This would be highly appropriate, as trees provide significant mitigation of stormwater impacts. The credit should be heavily weighted towards the largest trees, which provide outsized benefits both in mitigating stormwater and in reducing greenhouse gases. Claims for the credit would also provide information about the existing private tree canopy in Town.

PRECINCT 3

Steve Heinrich

sheinrich@rcn.com

Lexington's tree canopy is obviously a matter of concern. Many trees are removed each year, but many others are planted by homeowners, developers, and the Town. Pictures of Lexington taken in the early 20th century clearly show many trees lined our streets and roadways that no longer exist. Developers often take the easy way out by removing mature trees to make it easier to construct new homes. In some cases, they clear cut the lots; in other cases, they selectively remove trees, but those trees are healthy, mature trees. Developers are not the only ones who remove trees. Homeowners in Lexington remove trees from their lots for various reasons ranging from (1) the tree is dead or in decline, (2) the tree is overgrown but too close to the house or garage, (3) the tree is in the way of a proposed addition, or (4) the tree is in the way of a site for solar panels. While Lexington has regulations for removing trees in the setback area and regulations regarding the removal of trees by developers applying for building permits, there are few regulations limiting homeowners from removing trees on their property for other reasons.

We could require every homeowner to submit a notice of removal for any tree with a trunk larger than 5 – 6 inches in diameter. The notice would carry a small filing fee and require (1) a picture and description of the tree to be removed, (2) the caliper of the tree, and (3) the reason for removal. We likely cannot preclude a homeowner from removing mature trees not in the setback area, but a notice of the removal prior to the takedown would ensure that each homeowner thinks about the removal prior to undertaking it. No action to preclude the removals would be taken for trees outside the setback area. Town could review planned removals in a setback area. The Town would have a record of the trees scheduled to be removed on file.

PRECINCT 4

Nancy Shepard

nshep12@verizon.net

I am Nancy Shepard and I have lived in Lexington for over 25 years. I have been a Town Meeting Member for the last 6 years and I am running for re-election.

I have been in contact with members of the committee who put forth the Statement of Concern for Lexington's Trees. I have signed their letter and am hosting one of their signs on my property.

I am very concerned with the way many developers clear cut properties of trees when there is new construction. I feel that this is done for convenience and without thought to whether old trees can be saved. New trees that are planted do not replace the positive effect that old growth trees have on the environment. The benefits of older trees is clearly delineated in the Statement of Concern. With an average of 75 tear-downs per year in town along with other new construction, the number of trees being cut down will continue to increase.

I would like to see the town put out guidelines for residents with suggestions for what trees to plant on their properties.

I would support guidelines for developers that would encourage retention of older trees and prevent the clear-cutting practices that we are currently seeing.

In Cambridge, they are looking to establish a Tree Trust that would provide funds for residents to plant trees on their property. Cambridge also has a Tree Protection Ordinance. Would it be possible for Lexington to establish initiatives like these?

I will support Articles 28 and 29 at Town Meeting this year.

As a town, I think we can do a much better job of preserving older trees and encouraging the planting of new trees.

Ruth Thomas
rthomas@bu.edu

The Planning Board has identified 10 locations in Town where multi-family housing under the MBTA Zoning Bylaw can be built. Under Article 34 of the 2023 Annual Town Meeting Warrant, current and future building requirements in these locations, called overlay districts, are described. Nowhere are tree plantings noted and requirements set forth. Permitted buildings in the three overlay districts can range from a maximum height of 40 feet to 70 feet, approximately, three to six stories tall. Landscaping is mentioned, but trees and tree heights need to be specified and tree-canopied pocket parks and tree-lined walkways and driveways required. Many trees will be cut down in many of these locations during construction. These trees must be replaced with mature trees to contribute not only to the quality of life in the developments themselves, but also to the Town's overall tree canopy.

PRECINCT 5

Pamela Lyons
Pammy57@rcn.com

The Town should adopt by-laws that require (1) all Town and Town funded projects to disclose (with photos) whether any trees over a certain size will be cut down for such projects when requesting funding from Town Meeting; (2) developers/property owners found not to have complied with Tree by-laws must perform mitigation before **any** new building permits or certificates of occupancy are issued; and (3) developers/property owners must provide notification to the Town whenever any large scale trees are to be removed, wherever they are located, and appropriate mitigation (designed to deter such removals) should be provided. The details might be tricky, but they can be worked out. It's clear that we are rapidly losing our tree canopy, and we have to do more to protect it. To that end I serve on the Board of Citizens for Lexington Conservation* and the Steering Committee of Lexington Living Landscapes. There's a lot of work to be done.

*I did not take part in the discussion or selection of this question and received notice of it at the same time as the other candidates.

PRECINCT 6

Jon Himmel

jonhimmel@verizon.net

“Further protect and enhance Lexington’s tree canopy” through better protection plus greater respect through awareness and care.

Better Protection: Why is the protection of trees not a Commissioner level function? If it is appropriate for buildings, why not trees? Fund a certified, preservationist minded Arborist for the town that reports to the Building Commissioner. As part of the building permit process, charge a permit fee to inventory site trees greater than 3” caliber for species, caliber and canopy dimensions, condition, carbon sequestration, and program of care. Add the “tree permit” to the required building permit approval and final signoff process. Raise the current fees for tree removal based on caliber and carbon sequestration, not all tree species are the same. Establish very stiff fines for trees removed in excess of those that were “permitted” and those compromised during construction.

Greater respect through awareness and ‘healthcare:’ 1). Every month, at a Select Board public meeting, task staff with summarizing what trees are slated to be preserved, moved, and/or sacrificed on 1) private and 2) on public land {for that month and cumulatively for the last 12 months}. 2. Include a Tree Preservation summary report in the Town’s Annual Report 3). Establish a contractor “Tree Preservation Training” course for contractors requesting building permits that involve removal of trees and top dozen tree service companies in town. 4) Establish an informal LEED like system awarding Bronze through Platinum recognition for preservation of trees (public and private). Educate the Realtor community about the benefits of a silver or better rating for the preservation and presence of site trees and other attributes that foster a sustainable community. 5) Employ a “Tree Commissioning Agent” to provide a third party assessment of trees and shrubs on public projects. And 6) More funding for public tree maintenance and care.

Morton Kahan

mkahan@partners.org

During my several decades in Town Meeting, I have consistently supported the policies of the conservation and environmental advocates for our town. These positions have now been shown to be wise and sensible as the climate crisis has become a critical concern for our times.

Our tree canopy is one of our most valuable assets and we are fortunate to have this resource and have a vital interest in its maintenance, preservation and renewal. We must increase our efforts to educate our citizens on the value of the trees on their property for their health and that of the community. These educational efforts should include instruction on maintaining and increasing the health of these trees through pruning and adequate watering.

Lexington’s tree planting program needs to be supported to increase the number of trees planted and provide adequate crews with the ability to maintain them.

Our bylaws related to tree protection must be fully enforced and updated as conditions change. Many trees are destroyed in building projects which might be saved with improved planning and bylaw enforcement.

Our tree canopy demands our attention and full effort to reverse the decline of another precious natural resource.

Innessa Manning

Innessa_manning@yahoo.com

Trees and other plant life are important for a healthy and pleasant living environment. In addition to cleaning the air we breathe, supporting a healthy ecosystem and animal life, and improving water quality, they also offer mental health benefits in the beauty and peace they provide as we walk amongst them. Yet, there are trees that do need to be removed for safety or other reasons periodically. Additionally, there is the reality that new development will continue in Lexington, especially if there are zoning changes approved as part of the state's MBTA rezoning requirements that will undoubtedly result in further tree loss. I believe that a sensible multi-pronged approach in protecting Lexington's trees should be taken. First, recognition and education that protecting our trees is vital, perhaps through a proclamation from the Select Board or an annual day of tree appreciation where a community walk through one of our wooded areas is organized. Second, if a resident does need to remove a tree for safety or other reasons, there should be information developed and readily available (perhaps through the town's website) to help them in selecting an appropriate replacement. Third, Lexington should explore if there are new regulations that could be implemented to mitigate the loss of the tree canopy as a result of clearcutting related to new property development, for example requiring replacement for more than just the property set back. The Citizens for Lexington Conservation has called for a public workshop to be organized to discuss this topic and I am sure there are many additional ideas that could be generated at such an event. I would fully support such a public workshop as the next step in the efforts to protect our town's trees.

Bridger McGaw

bridgerforlexington@gmail.com

Town Meeting has funded and the community recently completed the LexingtonNEXT Comprehensive Plan which identified the importance of minimizing the elimination of mature trees in town. I would like to see the relevant committees bring an action plan for this issue forward for SB approval. Specifically, the Plan notes specifically: "5.1.1 f. Establish zoning regulations and economic incentives to motivate developers to design homes that reduce the number of trees lost and encourage retention of green spaces that can serve as environmental corridors and water preservation." And also, "5.4.2. Reduce the number of mature trees being cut down." It is vital that the Conservation Commission and Tree Committee with support from the Planning Staff evaluate options for incentives together looking at tax relief for home buyers or developers who protect mature healthy trees when designing new or renovating homes. Incentives to keep the trees versus payments to plant newer trees should be prioritized, and higher fees that match the costs of replanting young trees added. Taxpayers should not shoulder additional costs of planting trees when we can adjust the fees to cover costs (at a minimum!) Larger, mature trees are much more valuable to the ecosystem than replacing them with a larger number of smaller trees thus a higher fee should be on the table and steeper mitigation steps added before removal of a Public Shade Tree for a private development project. Identifying opportunities early in the design process where the incentives and penalties can be clearer to developers and architects will keep design costs down while allowing commercial and residential development to occur in town.

Ryan Wise

Rswise25@yahoo.com

First, thank you for your efforts to organize for conservation. I've signed the Tree Petition. Simply put, I believe our trees are community assets, not just personal ones, and should be treated as such. I would strongly support mirroring Cambridge's model, notably application of replacement/payment requirements regardless of setback, a 4X+ increase in the contribution for removing significant trees, requirement for a 5-year maintenance plan for any replacement tree.

PRECINCT 8

Andrei Radulescu-Banu

bitdribble@gmail.com

When the 37 pine trees at the Central Recreation Area were slated to be cut down, I spoke up, challenging the decision, and especially its timing, which seemed designed to circumvent Town Meeting review. The trees were deemed unsafe - though clearly that was a discretionary decision not based in reality, and 34 of the 37 trees were perfectly fine. The decision was reconsidered. Not all trees were saved. But a number were. To save trees in the future, it is important to ensure that existing tree-friendly bylaws are applied fairly and to speak out when they are not. On the other hand, I also opposed bylaw changes that were deemed to be tree-friendly but were unreasonable, such as the 2021 Article 34 change that increased fees for protected tree cutting to tens of thousands of dollars per tree. These fees were excessive and could be applied unequally. In an affluent town, it is important to be mindful of equal protection requirements when creating bylaws, so I do not recommend making the tree bylaws more strict, but rather making them less punitive and more targeted at preserving the town's tree canopy.

PRECINCT 9

Jeanne Canale

Jeannecanale0@gmail.com

The Town, and its residents, need to be more proactive in protecting our tree canopy. Dwindling tree canopy has occurred both on Town-owned land as well as within private land. The Town can have more ability to control tree canopy on Town-owned land, but with a lot more effort, the Town can provide a reasonable limited regulation of tree canopy on private land.

The Town should develop a Tree Management Plan that would serve as a collective road map to conserve, protect, enhance, and sustain both Public and private trees and canopy.

We have lost a good deal of street tree canopy, in which the Town has the most leverage over, because of increased motor vehicle traffic and the continuing need for increased sidewalk and bike accommodations. Street trees should be replaced on a normal cycle as part of street re-construction, sidewalk improvements, and in other public projects. The Town should set a priority to increase the street tree canopy. Plans should

*****Citizens for Lexington Conservation Newsletter (clclex.org/newsletters)*****

encourage dialog among residential abutters, neighborhood groups, utility pole owners, and Town officials to determine planting along the rights-of-way or on adjacent private lots and allocate stewardship responsibilities.

Complete a Lexington Tree Canopy assessment using digital tools using a private consultant or partnering with a local University. Then set goals on the Lexington overall tree canopy with concrete dates for completion after a robust public process. The Tree Committee working with the Select Board need to set Town specific Tree Planting planning goals and regulations that are written into the Comprehensive Plan and Bylaws, guided by the Select Board, and enforced by the Tree Warden and Tree Committee. Funding should be an annual line-item budget expense.

The Town should partner with the utility pole companies to establish a 50-year plan to have all above wires put underground.



Chiesa Farm forested wetlands taken

March 30, 2022

