

## **Planning Board 2021**

2 for 3 years

### **League Question**

How should Lexington address regional housing needs?

### **New Candidates**

**Leonard Morse-Fortier**

**Michael Schanbacher**

**Melanie Thompson**

Precinct 5

[melaniethompson2020@gmail.com](mailto:melaniethompson2020@gmail.com)

781-254-7073

### **Community Activities:**

Town Meeting Member - Precinct 5

Lexington Housing Partnership Board - Member

### **How should Lexington address regional housing needs?**

Housing is a very complex, multifaceted topic and is a critical issue for our town and state. The housing market in Lexington has remained strong, and according to MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) prices are higher than in most other municipalities, and are increasing at a rapid pace.

On the other hand, there is a continued need for more diverse housing options in Lexington and the entire 128 region, starting from affordable (below 50% Area Median Income - AMI), moderate-income (50% - 80% AMI), and middle-income (80% to 120% AMI) households. We should, as a town that embraces equity in its charter, continue to seek ways to create more housing options across all economic levels.

Lexington's development needs to work for the residents and the town of Lexington. We need clear priorities for both commercial and residential development, bylaws that promote our town priorities, and consistent enforcement of those priorities. One of the main issues is the very high cost of land acquisition in Lexington. Making sure that our town offers places to live that are safe, sustainable, healthful, and convenient to workplaces and some transportation are big challenges but are necessary to confront if we are to successfully address regional housing needs.

I think we need to follow Smart Growth principles that are being adopted in other regional towns similar to ours that are also experiencing a housing crunch. We need a range of housing options with a mix of residential and commercial buildings with defined boundaries. We need to have an ongoing process to review zoning codes to update them to 21st century needs. This might include redefining building types and uses, creating accessible sidewalks, bike lanes, and public transportation, and I believe we need community engagement as well. The Planning Board's focus on a vibrant and livable community is so important.

Lexington will always be an attractive place to live. We have an educated populace and great schools. Homes are in demand. We have to find a way to follow the vision the town has toward mixed-use and developments, while continuing to maintain open space and welcoming neighborhoods. Through inclusionary development policy and other zoning initiatives, I plan to work with the Planning board members, the Planning Office, and the community to look at the big picture, embrace the changes that we need, and research areas that we can improve upon.