

Precinct 4 Town Meeting Members 2021

7 for 3 years

Question for Town Meeting Member candidates:

What Lexington issues do you think are most important? What does Lexington do well? What could be improved? How do you view the role of Town Meeting in implementing improvements?

Incumbents

Gloria Bloom

Robert N. Cohen

Eileen S. Jay

Charles W. Lamb

Pct 4,
cwl@yahoo.com, Incumbent candidate for Town Meeting

* Community Activities
Town Meeting Member since 2001 (except 2014-2017)
Chair, Capital Expenditures Committee (several years)

What Lexington issues do you think are most important?

The biggest mid- and long-range challenge facing Lexington is school financing in the pandemic world. On the short term horizon (the upcoming fiscal year, FY 2022), the Town Manager, Superintendent and staff have presented a balanced budget to the Select Board through the use of "rainy day" reserve funds. However, reserve funds won't last forever, so the mid-range operating budget horizon looks more ominous. On the long-range horizon, the Lexington High School renovation/rebuild -- an absolutely essential project -- will require a substantial Debt Exclusion. When the project comes to fruition, passing this D/E will require a lot of voter outreach.

What does Lexington do well?

As a community, Lexington does many things "well". To name only four of the many:

- The Town is extremely well-managed, financially strong, and consistently receives the highest bond ratings (which saves us money on interest).
- The staff is professional and committed.
- The citizens are highly engaged in Town affairs and participate in their government.
- The schools are strong and receive general support from those same citizens.

What could be improved? How do you view the role of Town Meeting in implementing improvements?

The Town has many aspirations (good!). Generally, we can do better at prioritizing the many projects we have on our radars. (To be fair, the new Town Manager and staff have done a great job in improving the prioritization situation.) As Chair of the Capital Expenditures Committee -- one of the two Moderator appointed finance committees who advise Town Meeting on Capital matters -- I have guided my Committee and Town Meeting in refining and prioritizing the many projects on our plates.

Kathleen M. Lenihan

Precinct: 4
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* Community Activities

Lexington School Committee, Chair
20/20 Vision Committee

* Question for Town Meeting candidates:

The issues Lexington faces are many, but most important are those involving race, affordable housing, and financial concerns. Reversing years of systemic racism doesn't occur overnight and requires sustained focus for the long-term. We need to continue our efforts on diverse hiring practices, and the mentoring, retention, and promotion of our BIPOC staff. We need to create more housing that is affordable for families and individuals. Financially, we need to increase our commercial property tax base and grapple with managing town finances in our current suboptimal economic climate.

We are fortunate to live in a community that does so many things well. We have an abundance of engaged and active members of our community interested in tackling an array of issues. These residents are not just willing to talk, but roll up their sleeves and take action. The town affords residents a variety of ways to do this and be involved in civic affairs. As we navigate our way through a pandemic and economic downturn, we are led by an excellent financial management team that helps us make sound decisions about town resources. Finally, town officials are responsive to the concerns of residents. They listen to their needs and adjust priorities in response to feedback.

As in any community, there are always areas that need improvement. The pace of progress can sometimes feel very slow. We can do better at being decisive and taking action. There can be a

resistance to change in Lexington and a desire to preserve the status quo instead of recognizing the new and different needs of the town and the greater Boston area. Finally, we need to improve the makeup of town committees to better reflect the demographics of Lexington.

Town Meeting plays an important role in implementing improvements. As the representative body that approves spending, zoning, and bylaws, Town Meeting Members are the voice of Lexington. The creation of more affordable housing often needs the support of Town Meeting, and creating a more enticing environment for businesses requires zoning changes. Decisions of past Town Meetings has shaped the Lexington we live in today, and our decisions will shape the Lexington of the future.

New Candidates

Laura Champneys Atlee

Mark Connor

Jennifer M. Richlin

Precinct: 4

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Phone number: 781-771-8869

* Community Activities

Member, SURJ Boston (2020)

Board Member, Lexington High School PTO (2013 – 2017)

Board Member, Clarke Middle School PTO (2011 – 2013)

Co-Founder Clarke Middle School Green Team (2010 – 2011)

Member, Lexington CARES (2005 – 2006)

Board Member, Billy Dalwin Pre-school (2002 – 2004)

* Question for Town Meeting candidates:

Like many before us, my husband and I moved to Lexington for its excellent schools, beautiful open spaces, and vibrant town center. To build on Lexington's great qualities, we need to think creatively and work collaboratively on the issues we face. One of the most pressing issues is the increasing tax burden on residents and looking for ways to bring more economic development to Lexington while protecting our open spaces and suburban 'feel.' We need to provide more housing stock for low- and middle-income families. And, importantly, we have to improve on how we welcome and support all of our citizens – regardless of skin color, sexuality, gender

identity or political party. These are challenges that I am eager to work on as a member of Town Meeting.

I believe that the Hartwell Innovation Park is a good step toward broadening our commercial tax base with a thoughtfully designed plan that will bring employers to Lexington and help ease the tax burden on residents. As a Town Meeting member, I will be able to vote on various aspects of the project to ensure that it benefits the town financially and that its environmental impact is minimized.

Serving in Town Meeting will enable me to put my business experience of analyzing large budgets and projects to work. And I will be able to use the platform to advocate for Lexington residents to ensure that our town provides a safe and welcoming place for all of its citizens.