

## **League of Women Voters of Lexington**

Election Guide for the Monday March 5, 2018 Lexington municipal election

Question for Town Meeting Member candidates: A motion to ban or reduce plastic bags in Lexington may come before Town Meeting this year. Some nearby towns such as Bedford and Concord have such restrictions. What are your thoughts about banning or reducing plastic bags in Lexington?

### **Precinct 7**

7 three-year terms; 1 two-year term

#### **Marsha Baker**

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Phone: 781-799-8892

#### *Community Activities:*

##### Current:

- 30-year Town Meeting Member
- Tourism Committee
- Lexington Historical Society, Board of Directors

##### Former:

- Ad Hoc Cary Memorial Building Renovation Design Committee
- Town Report Committee
- Lexington Special Needs Parent Advisory Council (now SEPAC) Chair
- Lexington Pre-School PTA (now LexFUN!), Chair

#### *Response:*

As with all proposals brought before Town Meeting I do not decide on how I will vote until I have read the materials accompanying a proposal and listened to the proponents and those in opposition.

I also try to educate myself on each particular subject. To date I have learned that:

- 61 cities and towns in the Commonwealth have banned plastic bags and a statewide ban has been proposed.
- Although plastic bags can be recycled the reality is that they are mostly discarded. The EPA estimates that only 5.2 percent are actually recycled.
- When disposed of indiscriminately they have the potential to become litter, harm wildlife, and cause suffocations.
- Plastic bags are non-biodegradable and are made using crude oil and natural gas.

I welcome the input of my constituents as I continue to educate myself on this issue and others that will come before Town Meeting.

### **Philip Hamilton**

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#### *Community Activities:*

- Lexington Conservation Commission (since 1992); Vice Chair 2000-2014; Chair 2014-present
- Town Meeting Member 1999-2005, 2015-present

#### *Response:*

I am in favor of reducing or banning single-use plastic bags. Plastic products have made life more convenient, but many of them are causing environmental problems, usually related to their presence in the waste stream. Any serious effort at environmental cleanup will have to include a reduction of plastic waste. A mandated reduction of single-use bags, which are now dispensed in great number at food and other retail stores, would be a good place to start. Such bans are already in place in many countries, as well as in some of our neighboring towns. From 2006 to 2014, I spent a month every summer in Ireland, where a tax on single-use plastic bags in 2002 led to a 90% reduction in their use, with few consumer complaints and very obvious environmental benefits. I'm sure that Lexington shoppers would adjust equally well.

### **Stacey Hamilton**

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#### *Community Activities:*

- Estabrook PTA volunteer (2013 - present)
- Lexington United Soccer Club (LUSC) volunteer soccer coach and division director (2013 - present); Board Member (2015 - present)
- Member of the League of Women Voters
- Member of the Lexington Historical Society
- Town election officer volunteer (2003 - 2015)
- Town Meeting Member representing Precinct 3 (2012)
- South Lexington Civic Association board member (2004 - 2012)
- Bowman PTA board volunteer (2012)
- LexFUN! member and volunteer (2009 - 2014)
- Town of Lexington 20/20 Vision Committee member (2004 - 2009)

*Response:*

I agree with reducing plastic bag usage in Lexington. I do think working in incentive programs makes it more approachable. Charging for the bag in the short term, for example, can have similar effect but not penalize people who may struggle with the transition to bringing their own bags or tourists who don't otherwise have a bag option. I would also like to see stores encouraged to provide truly workable alternatives, such as paper bags with handles. The Stop & Shop in Bedford, for example, went back to using thin paper bags that tear easily - you see a lot of wasted food and bags in the parking lot from bag mishaps. My approach tends to be more about encouraging the behavior we'd like to see, and less about mandates.

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