

## Precinct 1 Town Meeting Member

7 for 3 years

1 for 2 years

1 for 1 year

Question for Town Meeting Member candidates:

Do you favor more commercial development in Lexington to offset residential development? If so, where would you choose to locate it?

Incumbents

Jonathan G. Cole

Brian Hefferman

Hongbin Luo

**Eric Jay Michelson**

e-mail address [eric@michelsonshoes.com](mailto:eric@michelsonshoes.com)

phone number 781-863-1139

Community Activities : Appropriation Committee - member; Lexington Retailers Association – President;

I believe that growing Lexington's commercial tax base is a necessary tool needed to stabilize the increases in our residential property tax bills. Encouraging the development of the highest value types of commercial property will assure that we get the most tax revenue with the least amount of negative effects, such as increased traffic, on our town. A smart restructuring of the zoning in Lexington's current commercial zones would be the most timely way to bring these additional revenues on line.

**Valerie G. Overton**

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781-258-5434

Community Activities: Town Meeting Member, Precinct 1, LexPride (Co-Chair, organizer, trainer, speaker, webmaster), Lexington MLK Day Planning Committee (member, organizer), Lexington Community Coalition, Steering Committee (member, webmaster), Lexington Community Coalition, Mental Health Committee (member), Lexington Mental Health and Wellness Task Force, Postvention Committee (member), Lexington Says #Enough (member, organizer, speaker), Lexington Diversity Advisory Task Force (member), Lexington Human Rights Committee (LexPride liaison), Lexington School Health Advisory Council, LGBTQ+ Task Force (member)

Yes, I favor more commercial development in Lexington to offset property tax burden on residents. As a proportion of total tax revenue, our commercial tax base has declined substantially over the years, placing disproportionate burden on home owners. I believe we need to shift to a more appropriate balance. To accomplish a greater balance, I recommend that Lexington:

- Examine patterns of commercial versus residential tax burden in Lexington and similar communities in order to establish a target balance.
- Review historic and geographic patterns of commercial property values to create targets for where we can enhance existing commercial value, increase commercial density, or site new commercial developments without undue impacts to residential neighborhoods.
- In so doing, identify potential environmental impacts, sustainability requirements, parking needs, traffic mitigation needs, and public transportation needs in order to increase commercial activity with minimal negative impacts to the community.

Hartwell Avenue (where I work) is an obvious location with potential for increased commercial development. This will require careful planning, however, as traffic impacts on Wood Street and other side streets as well as Bedford Street and Hartwell Avenue could be substantial. Traffic impacts could be mitigated by dedicated turn lanes, a possible overpass, increased public transportation (buses, shuttles), staggered shifts for employees, and incentives for bicycling and other alternate forms of transportation (particularly since the Minuteman Bike Path runs across Hartwell Avenue).

In addition, some existing commercial subzones still have expansion capacity, and certain areas also could benefit from additional access to local retail stores. Retail is a small subset of commercial activity in Lexington, but contributes disproportionately (and rightly so) to our community's character and convenience. Lexington has a lower rate of in-town shopping than many other communities, and strategically placed retail could enhance the experience of residents in certain parts of town.

Barry E. Sampson  
Bella D. Tsvetkova

**Lucy Ann Wall**

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Community Activities: MLK Day of Service, Lex Eat Together, School Site Council, PTO, high school sports booster clubs, religious education

I am open to more commercial development. I have not yet studied Lexington zoning maps, but my general sense would be that before allowing commercial development where it is not currently allowed, Lexington should first consider broadening the types of development permitted in areas that are currently not strictly residentially zoned, and perhaps expanding areas that currently are zoned for commercial uses.

**New Candidates****James L. Avery**

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Phone number 781-863-8477

**Community Activities**

Current board member of the Isaac Harris Cary Educational Fund, former two term Town Meeting Member, former Youth Hockey Coach and board member of Lexington Bedford Youth Hockey. former board member of the Children's Center of Lexington.

I would favor more commercial development in Lexington to offset residential development as long as all stakeholders had an opportunity to provide input into the development and there was sincere collaboration between all parties involved. It's important to take into consideration environmental, neighborhood, traffic and public safety concerns.

I would choose areas that are currently zoned for commercial development.

**Larry D. Freeman**

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Community Activities: Association of Black Citizens of Lexington , LexPride Member, Trainer, Lexington Public School Principal Selection Committee, Community Coalition Academic Sub-

Group, Lexington's Citizen's Academy, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Class Room Parent, School Site Council (Harrington)

Question for Town Meeting Member candidates:

I am in favor of more commercial development in Lexington with certain environmental requirements. The increased Corporate Tax revenue would greatly benefit the Town's capital projects that must be addressed, such as building the new Police Station and a new High School. The Corporate Tax revenue has significantly reduced over the years which leaves more of a tax burden on the residential community. However, I do not support turning Lexington into an industrial wasteland. I support the development of creative and environmentally sound mix-use areas. Areas that provide opportunities for both small businesses and corporate firms to flourish. The proposed rezoning of Hartwell Avenue is an opportunity for the Town to prove that growth and environmental responsibility should be and can be equal partners. One cannot carry a more significant importance than the other if long term success is to be achieved. I support the rezoning initiative with the understanding that the Sustainability Action Plan and the Net Zero Emissions Roadmap be the major contributors in all renovations and new builds. It is of the utmost importance that our Town adopts policies that demonstrate that we believe it is possible to have both measured growth and protect the environment in unison.

**Michael Molla**

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Community Activities: My family and I have lived in Lexington for the past 10 years. My daughters currently attend LHS.

As over 85% of Lexington's revenue comes from property taxes, it would seem that residential development is largely self-supporting. It is, thus, not entirely clear to me why residential development would need to be offset by commercial development. That being said, to the extent that appropriate commercial development can be made, several suitable areas exist. Pending input from all stakeholders, areas along and west of I95 hold particular promise in this regard.

Yingjie Wei