

Precinct 2 Town Meeting Member

7 For 3 Years

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

Matthew P. Daggett

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781-316-2725

Community Activities: Member, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee and Special Permit Residential Development Zoning Bylaw Amendment Committee.

Over the past 30 years the ratio of commercial to residential tax burden has shifted significantly, with just over 79% of the tax levy being provided by the residential base today. If the town is going to increase potential opportunities for commercial development to shift this balance, it needs to be done in an objective, data-driven, and holistic manner that recognizes and mitigates potential impacts to residents and neighborhoods.

Kathryn Mayes Fields

Rita B. Goldberg

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phone number 781 454 5374

Community Activities: Incumbent member, Town Meeting—interests include pedestrian and bicycle safety, openness to diversity, support for gun safety, green development

Member, Cary Lecture Committee

Board member, Citizens for Safety/ LIPSTICK (inner-city gun safety, especially involving women)

LWV has put its finger, as usual, on a central issue for Lexington, one that involves pretty much all the aspects of life here. I'm told that the town has come to be seen as unfriendly to business (and we need business for our tax base and for the general liveliness of the town!),

because the political opposition to new building is so great. Indeed, residential development is also controversial in our fairly built-out town.

We've struggled with finding a comprehensive vision for our future, but this is the way we must go. Hartwell Avenue is an obvious area for development, but only if proper public transportation, a human scale to building and amenities, and strict environmental innovations are put into practice there. It should not stand alone, however. Even on Route 2, where our largest commercial buildings stand, I was shocked when I saw what we in Town Meeting had voted into reality, yet there's no consistency to what gets a nod from us and what doesn't. It's time to get imaginative about the whole town, not just Hartwell or 186 Bedford Street or the town center, but about what we want our future to be. We certainly need some commercial development, but we need to rethink residential development as well to some degree. It's a balancing act, to be sure, between individual autonomy and enterprise and a vision that includes income inequality, transportation and safety, ecological responsibility, finance, the schools—everything that will make Lexington even better in the future.

Ricki Pappo

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phone number 781-862-6144

Community Activities: Present: Town Meeting Member: 6 years; Chair, Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition. Member: League of Women Voters, Lexington Community Farm.
Past: While children were growing, sat on site councils in each school

Lexington is experiencing a time with big financial challenges, as we are in the middle of a multi-year period of rebuilding and/or replacing schools and municipal buildings. My husband and I moved to Lexington in 1976 and we bought our first house in 1982. At that time, the commercial tax base was significantly higher and our residential taxes were low in comparison to other towns. Now, that has flipped. If Lexington can't raise additional funds to help offset the costs of the current building plans, the residential tax base will have to bear the burdens of these necessary expenditures. Additional commercial development will help to increase our revenue stream and we can plan development to benefit our community.

I would like to see more commercial development in Lexington if it is done in using the principles of "smart growth," As defined by the EPA, "Smart growth" covers a range of development and conservation strategies that help protect our health and natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse. [<https://www.epa.gov/smartgrowth>]

Lexington is exploring commercial development on Hartwell Avenue and a discussion for a strip on Bedford Street and there will be more. I would like Lexington to develop a comprehensive

plan to identify areas that are best situated to be developed. This will depend on the neighborhood, the environmental impacts and the traffic implications. Commercial development can also be built to enrich a neighborhood.

I would suggest that Hartwell Avenue is an area that should begin the process of evaluation for suitability for smart commercial development. Here are some ideas for building up commercial space while also protecting our community:

- Maximize impervious surfaces
- Energy efficient buildings
- Renewable energy instead of fossil fuels
- Walking paths
- Bike paths
- Increased access by public transportation
- Vibrant area that offers access to food and places to socialize
- Plantings that reduce the CO2 in our air
- Native plantings
- Encouragement of plantings with deep roots to prevent runoff of soils
- Adequate storm water drainage to allow for 100-year storms every year
- Composting to decrease the trash burden
- Protection of flora and fauna of the area
- Encourage zero emissions transportation
- Install EV chargers
- Net zero buildings

While focusing on the issues of being both environmentally sensitive and sustainable for all the stakeholders, it is possible to encourage growth and sustainability at the same time

Betsey Weiss

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781-863-5602

Town Government Experience:

Special Permit Residential Development Zoning Bylaw Committee (Ad Hoc)(Nov. 2018 - Present)

Town Meeting Member, Precinct Two (2004- Present)- advocated for commercial tax growth and commercial tax revenue, affordable housing proposals, and senior housing at Town Meeting,

before the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board; **Community Preservation Act (CPA)**

Campaign Co-Chair (2005- 2006); Community Preservation Committee Chair (2006- 2010);

Community Preservation Committee Member (2010-2012); Housing Partnership Board (HPB) Vice Chair, previously served as Chair (2003- Present).

Community Contributions:

Lexington Field and Garden Club Member- designed a garden for the rear entrance of the Cary Memorial Library which will be installed in March 2019 and a garden at the Hartwell Avenue Compost Facility (2017- Present); **LYFS (Lexington Youth for Strength), Founder and Member**, an after- school teen suicide prevention nonprofit program on the Green. LYFS programming includes crisis counseling, an LHS teen resiliency program “Sources of Strength,” and a Friday evening LGBTQ drop-in group (2008- present); **LHS Landscaping Committee , Founder and Member (2002-2017)**; Worked on **Override and Debt Exclusion Campaigns**, including the DPW Campaign Committee that successfully built the new Samuel Hadley Public Services Building (2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2007); **Lexington High School PTA Co-President (2000-2003)**; **Bowman PTA Co-President (1993-1994).**

Yes, I favor more commercial development in commercially zoned areas to offset residential taxes. Constantly rising residential taxes are a key issue facing Lexington residents. Lexington presently has approximately \$70 million dollars in capital debt for projects such as the new fire station, the new Hastings Elementary School and the new Lexington Children’s Place. In addition, the new police station will cost approximately \$25 million dollars and more space is needed now at the high school, due to overcrowding. There is discussion about portables, a brick and mortar addition or a completely new high school building. A new high school will cost over \$300 million dollars.

I believe to mitigate rising residential taxes, Lexington needs to amend the Zoning Bylaw to increase the commercial tax revenue base with sensible redevelopment of commercially zoned areas such as Hartwell Avenue. I also support necessary traffic mitigation measures to help relieve the traffic congestion on Bedford Street between Rte. #128 and the Hartwell Avenue jug handle turn. This measure should be done at the same time as the Hartwell Avenue rezoning.

In addition, Hayden Avenue District, Forbes Road/ Rte#2A District, and Lexington Center are all business districts and should be explored, to see if there is potential for more commercial or mixed-use growth.

New Candidates

Avram Baskin

Matthew Cohen

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phone number – 781-640-8362

Community Activities: Worked in the Lexington Town Manager's Office and Tax Collector's Office, Served on the Lexington Human Services Committee, Worked as a Research and Budget Director at the Massachusetts State House, LexPride, CALex, and the Association of Black Citizens of Lexington, Serving as a mentor to students at Northeastern University and Merrimack College, Regular participant in the Lexington Community Coalition Coffees

The number one concern I hear from residents is that it is difficult to afford to live in town. I support increased commercial development as a method to offset the burden on residential taxpayers. There is the additional benefit of having more good jobs close to home. However, we should only undertake such development in a thoughtful and sustainable manner that reflects the character of our community.

Currently, residential development is growing in Lexington, while commercial development is not. More housing units can lead to increased costs if families with school aged children move to town. The amount of money it takes to educate a single child is more than the revenue brought in from the taxes on a single residential property. This is an even larger issue if a family has more than one child. To address revenue needs, the town has three options: increase tax rates on residential property, reduce services, or increase commercial development. I believe that the third option provides the best outcome for our community.

Lexington can benefit from strategic economic development that will increase our commercial tax base, with developments in carefully selected locations. This will bring in additional revenue, thus allowing the town to reduce what residents are asked to pay. Our town used to generate roughly 30% of its revenue from the commercial sector. Today that percentage hovers around 10-15%. As a result, residential taxpayers must make up the difference.

Currently, only about 6% of the town is zoned for commercial development, which means that without re-zoning (which poses significant hurdles) we do not have much space in which to build businesses. Despite that, there are substantial options the town can undertake. I am in favor of developing Hartwell Avenue and further developing Hayden Avenue. Both of these locations have the potential to raise significant revenue for the town, and development does not threaten the predominantly residential qualities of our town. At the same time, both pose problems, including increased traffic flow, meaning that we should proceed carefully

and seek options to reduce the impact of developments. I also believe that further development should be encouraged in East Lexington, where commercial properties already exist. Encouraging an additional story to buildings along Massachusetts Avenue by the Arlington border would provide significant additional potential revenue to the town without fundamentally altering the character of the surrounding neighborhoods. Lexington should be pursuing such opportunities.

We can also encourage, and zone for, particular types of commercial development. Not all commercial property is equally valuable for the town. The type of development that brings in the most revenue is lab space, as it commands the highest property values. Technology businesses can also provide jobs for our residents. Local jobs are not just more convenient, they have less environmental impact. We should work to bring more such companies and properties to town.

More generally, we should work to change the reputation of Lexington from one that is not welcoming to businesses, to one that is friendly to businesses. This will make it easier to attract businesses to new developments. Relatedly, we need to take tangible steps to improve Lexington Center, with more stores that appeal to the many interests and needs of our residents. A more interesting and useful town center will create a more vibrant community, and can help increase commercial property values, as well, thus bringing more revenue to the town.

I strongly believe that we need to make Lexington a more affordable community for our residents. That includes long-time residents who wish to stay in Lexington. I see smart commercial development as one of a number of paths by which we can do so for young and old. Not every plan and proposal can or should be accepted, but we should keep an open mind and evaluate projects as they appear. And we can reach out to local businesses and entrepreneurs, including those living in town, to encourage proposals. As we design and evaluate each plan, we can ensure we are developing in a way that preserves the character of Lexington and has as minimal an impact on our neighborhoods as possible.

Charles Hornig

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Community Activities: Resident 1962-1976, 1985-present; Planning Board 2005-2019, Chair 20071-20091, 2013-2015; Community Preservation Committee 2016-2019; League of Women Voters Board 2016-2019; Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination 2018-2019; School Master Plan Advisory Committee 2018-2019; 2020 Vision Committee 2006; Capital Expenditures Committee 1997-2003 Chair 1998-2000; Town Meeting Members Association

Treasurer 2002-2004 Vice chair/Chair 2004-2005; Town Meeting Member Precinct 8 1990-1993, 1995-2019

I favor increased commercial development in Lexington. We need to encourage both large-scale development in the areas where it exists now, such as Hartwell Avenue and Forbes Road, and small-scale development in our existing local commercial areas, such as Massachusetts Avenue and Bedford Street. Large-scale development can provide significant incremental tax revenue with limited impact on existing residential areas, while small-scale development provides a variety of needed services for Lexington residents.

Ajay T. Joseph

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Community Activities: Cub Scouts Lexington and Scouts Troop 119
Adjunct Teaching Northeast University Business School

Commercial development only if responsible and sustainable and it has the ability to rebalance taxes

Target is Biotech companies

Ideal location is Hartwell Ave, Hayden Ave

Ingrid H. Klimoff

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Community activities: Town meeting member pct 8, for several years
Lexington Refugee Assistance Program, LexRap, Board, League of Women Voters, Board

I would like to see more economic or commercial development in town, in order to lighten the tax burden on homeowners. With a new police station and a new high school in the future, we know that property taxes will continue to rise.

Where? I would like commercial development primarily in areas already zoned for this kind of development .