

## Precinct 5 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

### **Irene M. Dondley**

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\*Community Activities: Town Meeting Member (since 1995), Treasurer, Lexington Democratic Town Committee (current), Treasurer, Rep. Jay Kaufman (2014-2018), Current staff member at LexMedia, Campaign committee member for Town campaigns (Selectmen, School Committee, Overrides and Debt Exclusions), Active in schools in various roles including PTA President, PTA Treasurer and Chair of several school fundraising committees (2001 – 2011)

We need to lower the residential tax burden by encouraging business development in our current commercial districts, not in new areas. Zoning changes that would attract today's businesses and their employees include allowing a larger footprint for the buildings and providing for mixed use (restaurants, cleaners, coffee shops, etc.) that have now become the standard in commercial districts.

### **Marilyn M. Fenollosa**

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Community Activities: Town Meeting Member since 2007, Community Preservation Committee Chair since 2013, member since 2006, Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee since 2018 Historical Commission since 1994, Historic Districts Commission 2007 - 17 Planning Board Residential Policy Committee 2015 – 16, Election Official (Assistant Clerk and Inspector) since 2012

Any significant commercial development proposal that affects traffic patterns, land usage and population density will necessarily have long term consequences. While I am mindful of the tax benefits accruing to the town from such proposals, we must be careful to consider all of the non-quantifiable but irreversible effects on our scarcest resources. Lexington is a community that is essentially residential and highly protective of its natural and cultural resources.

Affordable housing is at a critical shortage. The benefits of increased commercial development at the edges of town -- Hartwell Avenue, Hayden Avenue -- should be carefully considered keeping all of these other considerations in mind. I would not support new development in areas that would have a significant effect on the quality of life of the nearby residents.

**Andrew J. Friedlich**

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Community Activities: Town Meeting Member since 1990, Town Meeting Member Association (TMMA) Executive Committee since 1991, TMMA Officer since 1991 and current Chair, Past TMMA Chair ('96-'97, '01-'03, '15-'16) , Vice Chair, Clerk and Treasurer, Past Chair, TMMA Vote Recording Committee, Appointed to the Selectmen's Strategic Planning and Implementation Group, Appointed to the Selectmen's Ad Hoc Budget Schedule Committee, Appointed to the Selectmen's Ad Hoc Fiscal Task Force, Lead Conservation Steward, Coached Lexington Youth Soccer, 14 years, Founded the Coalition of Neighborhood Associations to counter open space development, People Against Hanscom Expansion (now ShhAir and SOH) – Original Organizer

In light of Lexington's looming capital needs, it's critical we have more commercial development in order to relieve the pressure on the residential tax base. The most obvious areas are Hartwell and Hayden Avenues but we have to be sensitive to the traffic impacts. From a "smart growth" perspective, other areas should be developed but without impacting neighborhood characteristics.

**Ginna Johnson**

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781-454-7044

Community Activities: Senior Center Siting Committee, the Tree Committee, the Design Advisory Committee and the Busa Land Use Planning Committee. I also served as Associate Planning Board Member and I was appointed to the Planning Board to fill a vacancy during the summer of 2014. I was elected to the Planning Board in 2015 and reelected in 2018.

As we are all aware, to pay for Lexington's current and planned capital projects the Town has raised tax rates. Concerned about residents struggling to pay these increased taxes—especially residents on fixed incomes—the Select Board established as a priority expanding the commercial property tax base to offset residential tax increases. I agree this is a worthy goal.

The Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee Working Groups are currently evaluating residential and commercial zoning Town-wide to determine how changes to current zoning can make the entire community more livable, more resilient and more economically sound. We can reinvigorate our less than lively (or less than useful) commercial districts and improve the quality of life for residents as we increase the value of these properties.

**Jerold S. Michelson**

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781-861-6716

Community Activities: Town Meeting Member, 2004-present, Lexington Center Committee, member 2000-present, chair 2008-present, Lexington Retailers Association, board member

Increased commercial development is essential for our Town to maintain its services without an intense burden to the residential tax base. We have designated commercial zones throughout Lexington which each have their own rules and restrictions. The zones with easiest access to the highways have the most opportunity for growth. These commercial zones became more restricted back in the 1980's. An article was passed 10 years ago to increase commercial density in the Hartwell Ave zone but upon review was not appropriate enough to stimulate growth. Reassessing these zoning laws should lead to a proper recommendation to make these commercial zones more attractive., which in turn will increase our commercial tax base.

**M.Masha Traber**

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Community Activities: Former PTA president; Harrington School and Lexington High School, Town Meeting member since 1997, Tourism Committee: 2002-2016  
Founding director of the Liberty Ride, Assorted campaigns

Yes, I do favor more commercial development in Lexington in the areas where we already have it. I would like to see some of the regulations loosened to accommodate more modernization and expansion of our existing sites, which are located on the edge of town. We need to make it more attractive for businesses to come here and help expand our tax base.

New Candidates

**Jyotsna Kakullavarapu**

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Community Activities:Physician, Public Health Specialist, Owner and CEO of Interim HealthCare of Lexington MA a Home Health Care agency, Currently serving 3-year term as appointed Council on Aging Board member, Lexington. Liaison Vision 20/20 Committee and Mental Health Task Force Prevention Advisory group.

I am a strong supporter of business development in Lexington being the owner of one. For more businesses to establish commercial development is necessary. Commercial development proposals arguably represent a very large component of policy debate in many jurisdictions across the nation. Provided the permits and licenses are worked out, Hartwell avenue district and Forbes Rd/ Route 2A districts that has land where the high-tech business is in proximity would be best for commercial development in Lexington. As these are near Boston easily accessible there would be lot of demand for these commercial developments which would likely to offset residential taxes in Lexington. Though the traffic is a major concern, shopping close to residential areas would make the town more desirable

**Melanie A. Thompson**

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Community Activities: Housing Partnership Board Member; Town Manager Search Screening Committee; Diversity Advisory Task Force Committee

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

Yes, I favor a sensible approach to more commercial development in Lexington in order to address the growing tax burden facing residents. I believe that reasonable changes in zoning laws can help address this concern voiced by many residents. Possible locations for commercial development could be Hartwell Ave, Forbes Ave, lower Spring St. I also believe we must fully embrace green building and maximize open space.

Lin Xu

**John Zhiqiang Zhao**

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Community Activities: Council on Aging, Residential Exemption Policy Study Committee, Translator for town survey, candidate interviewer for hiring town staff, Interfaith Food Pantry, CAAL, Boy Scouts

Lexington is facing challenges on affordable property taxes. Seniors' retirement income cannot keep up with the increase of housing costs; and high property taxes are already negatively impacting the town's economic diversity. At the same time, we need to finance major investments for schools. In recent years, the share of residential property tax revenue had been increasing. So ye, I favor more commercial development in Lexington to relieve the tax burden on residents.

Developers are proposing commercial outside of Hartwell Avenue. Regardless where development is located, developers and the Planning Board must listen to neighbors and address their concerns. New developments need to mitigate traffic impact and ensure the safety of pedestrians. We treasure Lexington's natural beauty and rich history. New commercial development must be environmental, sustainable and minimize any impact on conservation lands; and it has to consider historical preservation. Lastly, commercial retail development must promote economic diversity, especially to address seniors' downsizing needs.