

## Precinct 6 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

Todd J. Cataldo

**Margaret L. Counts-Klebe**

e-mail address: [Margaret.Counts-Klebe@lexingtontmma.org](mailto:Margaret.Counts-Klebe@lexingtontmma.org)

Phone number: 781-862-4933

Community Activities: Board Member, Dana Home Foundation and Special Nees Arts Program (SNAP), Treasurer, Committee to Elect Michelle Ciccolo, Town Meeting Member (Precincts 6 and 7) 2001-present, Former PTA President at Estabrook School, Former member of Site Councils at Estabrook and Diamond

I do favor allowing well planned and designed commercial development in areas of town that are currently zoned for commercial use. I would like to see projects in those areas that include mixed uses which can benefit nearby residents. This model could increase commercial revenue with less impact on rush hour traffic. For instance, there has long been talk of creating a mixed-use shopping center on Hartwell Avenue that could include services such as a dry cleaners and takeout restaurants with dinner options. I feel very strongly that any commercial projects that get the point of coming before Town Meeting should include a high standard of green building practices, energy efficiency and traffic mitigation.

**Andrea J. Fribush**

Email Address: [dawnforlexington@yahoo.com](mailto:dawnforlexington@yahoo.com)

Phone Number: 781-862-6690

Community activities: League of Women Voters, Mothers Out Front, Temples Emunah and Isaiah, Lexington Democratic Town Committee, Parent of Fiske, Diamond, LHS graduates

I favor more commercial development in Lexington. I think the best place for this is Hartwell Ave. I voted in support of the expanded commercial development on Hayden Ave when it came to Town Meeting also.

**Frederic S. Johnson**

e-mail address: [fredjohnson10@gmail.com](mailto:fredjohnson10@gmail.com)

phone number: 781-248-0970

Community Activities: Lexington Center Committee 2003- present, Tourism Committee liaison –current, Town Meeting Member 2015-present, Cary Memorial Hall Building Committee, Grain Mill Alley Steering Committee, Parking Management Group, Lexington Symphony Board Chair 2006-2012, Lexington Historical Society Board of Directors – current, Lexington Chamber of Commerce Board Secretary 2016-present, Meriam Hill Association Board - current

Yes, I favor more commercial development to increase the percentage it represents of our property tax collections and reduce the burden on residential taxpayers. There are many opportunities to increase business development – most obvious is the Hartwell Avenue corridor, but there are others, some more modest (on Haydn Avenue, in Lexington Center, and in the Bedford St corridor near DPW).

Trisha Perez Kennealy

**Dawn E. McKenna**

Community Activities: Town Meeting Member for 25+ years; Tourism Committee Chair (New Visitors Center, Liberty Ride, Battle Green Master Planning, Antony Sister Cities); Former Member and/or Chairman: Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting Members Association; Fund for Lexington; Cary Library Executive Committee; Space Needs/Building Assessment; Policy Manual; Historical Commission; Town Celebrations; Suburban Responsibility; Business Roundtable; Center Committee; Personnel Advisory Board.

Having a multi-faceted economic development strategy will help reduce the burden on the residential taxpayers. That is why I have invested 20 years of volunteer service with the Tourism Committee. Lexington has taken advantage of the economic opportunity that hundreds of thousands of annual visitors provide to increase non-taxpayer revenues by \$1 million since FY2010. Likewise, I have voted to support smart commercial development along Hayden Avenue, Spring Street and elsewhere to provide non-residential revenue. Several of our existing commercially zoned parcels along Hartwell Avenue and Bedford Street provide additional opportunities that can be developed in a way that is sensitive to the neighbors and

could provide much needed support for public services. One such project at 186 Bedford Street will be considered by Town Meeting this spring. My approach to this issue is similar to how I view each decision that I make as a Town Meeting Member. I educate myself on the pros and cons, attend meetings, speak with residents and developers, and then weigh the proposal in light of the balance that allows Lexington to maintain the high quality of services expected from our citizens, while keeping in mind the goal of holding the tax burden to a reasonable standard. Ultimately, Lexington is primarily a residential community and I am not interested in substantial commercial development that would lead to changing Lexington from a town to a city. However, carefully planned commercial developments have to be adopted as part of an overall economic strategy.

**Deborah Cohen Strod**

deborah\_strod@yahoo.com

781-862-7910

Community Activities

Deputy Town Moderator (2010–2012,2015), Town Meeting Member (2004-Present). Busa Land Use Proposal Committee (2010-11), Ad Hoc Human Rights Organizing Committee (2007-8), Co-Chair of Town’s Health Benefits Review Committee (2004-5), Co-Chair of Fiske and Diamond Site-Based (School) Councils (2002-5 & 2009-10). Moderator for neighboring towns’ Candidates’ Nights for League of Women Voters, and facilitator for various public input sessions for Lexington and local organizations. Participated as artist in Open Studios and showed my photography at Cary Library exhibit. Mentor to citizens seeking engagement regarding traffic, zoning in a neighboring town, and school crowding. Lexington 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Acting Troupe volunteer (2013) Lexington Citizens Academy (2009). Parent of two Lexington High School graduates (2014 & 2017). Long-term member, League of Women Voters and Temple Isaiah; member, Lexington Beats intercultural dance troupe (2018-9). Lexington resident since 1994, employed by local business DMA Health Strategies since 2006. Hold Masters in Social Work and in Social Policy; current PhD student at Brandeis’ Heller School for Social Policy & Management.

The premise of the question – that we can offset residential development with commercial development – must ultimately meet up against the reality that there is only so much space. Through zoning, we do exert some control over how many people move into a private property, or whether landowners sell to someone who builds more dwelling units than had been there before the sale. Yet, despite that, if we are in a spiral where more and more people are moving to new and existing residential areas, and we try to offset that with more and more businesses expanding into previously residential or natural spaces, we can lose more of what has attracted people here.

Areas that are already zoned for commercial use are easiest to consider for encouraging expansion or upgrade (though we must be cognizant of careful compromises previously crafted

which led to current conditions – undoing prior agreements can be unfair or perceived as unfair). A hodgepodge of ideas come to mind. Zoning changes to be proposed for the Hartwell Ave area could be promising. One area that has been considered before but might be worth revisiting is the Depot parking lot – if some parking could be put underground, we might be able to create some business or mixed-use single-story buildings, with good walkways and plantings and areas for out-door socializing. At a smaller level, when there are vacant storefronts downtown, we might consider supporting pop-up art shows or business demonstrations. Incentives to owners of high rent buildings to provide lower rent to desirable small businesses could be explored further. Maybe we could encourage a business which uses all the oil from restaurants in town to fuel retrofitted Lexpress. I am not currently in favor of the proposed 186 Bedford Street changes.

Areas not already zoned for commercial use raise more conflict for me. There are none I can think of where I would encourage changing from residential to commercial. I am also generally not in favor of trading trees for pavement, and if we do build, we should retain as much mature healthy growth as possible, replacing losses. Part of the reason I moved here was the Town's ability to sustain local business while maintaining a longstanding focus on preservation of natural resources. As we face financial crunches, we do allow more commercial areas to be designated, and we do not usually make changes in the other direction. I will try to defend those factors that are important to distinct local communities, while recognizing we may find some areas where it is possible to expand our commercial base by a zoning change.

New Candidates

**Sara G. Bothwell Allen**

E-mail address: [sarabothwellallen@gmail.com](mailto:sarabothwellallen@gmail.com)

Phone number: 831-325-3052

Community Activities:

Appointed member of the Residential Exemption Policy Study Committee, Estabrook Elementary School Big Backyard Coordinator/Trainer, LexFUN! Co-Treasurer, Temple Isaiah Knitzvah member.

Yes, thoughtful commercial development would help offset the tax burden on Lexington residents. Thoughtful development needs to include local community issues (such as traffic impacts), environmental impacts, and fit within an overall vision for Town vibrancy. Areas for

potential commercial development could include Hartwell Ave., East Lexington, and Hayden Ave.

## **Mark Sandeen**

mark@marksandeen.com

(781) 863-8784

### **Community Activities**

- Chair, Sustainable Lexington Committee for 8 years
  - Won Commonwealth's Leading by Example award last year
- Chair, Community Choice Aggregation Task Force
  - 100% renewable electricity saving \$3 million for 10,000 customers
- Member, Solar Task Force
  - Solar energy systems generating \$600K in revenue per year
- Co-chair, Getting to Net Zero Emissions Task Force
  - Getting to Net Zero Emissions Plan approved by Board of Selectmen
- Proposed healthy, 100% renewable, new school designs that will save \$500K a year, approved by Board of Selectmen and School Committee
- Chair, Lex Drive Electric program
  - Doubled number of electric cars in Lexington last year, while saving residents up to \$7K on purchase of new electric cars
- Co-founder, Interfaith Garden (now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year)
  - Hundreds of volunteers delivered 14,000 lbs. of produce to Food Pantry
- Chair, Building a Better Future
  - Unanimous approval of Stretch Energy Code
- Author, All Things Sustainable in Colonial Times Magazine (6 years)
- Founding Member, LexFarm
- Member, Hancock Church & LexGWAC
- Teach science classes at Diamond Middle School
- Judge at Lexington High School Science Fairs

One of the benefits of living in such a highly desirable community is that the value of our homes has increased dramatically over the last 30 years. Unfortunately, commercial property values have not kept pace with residential property values. The Town's 1987 Annual Report shows that commercial properties provided 31% of our tax revenue, while the 2017 Annual Report shows that commercial properties now only provide 17% of our tax revenue. One of the reasons for this trend is that about 30 years ago, the Town passed restrictive commercial zoning by-laws that discouraged commercial property investment.

Our priority for the Hartwell Avenue and Hayden Avenue commercial zones should be to attract more biotech and pharmaceutical companies to the area, companies that pay double

the taxes per square foot compared to normal office space tenants, while employing dramatically fewer employees per square foot. The largest commercial property owners in Lexington are asking for mixed use zoning that would allow for restaurants, coffee shops, and retail stores to be sited within walking distance of their properties and provide increased public transportation to the area to attract those high value tenants. If we do this properly, we can increase our commercial tax revenue while decreasing the impact of traffic in and out of the area.

We should also consider how to revitalize our retail business districts in Lexington center and throughout the town. Many residents have expressed their desire for more vibrant retail shopping areas that would support a broader range of shops. The harsh reality is that retail shops aren't getting the foot traffic they need to pay their rent.

One way of addressing that issue would be to consider increasing the height restrictions on buildings in the center of town. Landlords would then have new sources of revenue for their properties – from the upper floor tenants. This could potentially allow lower rents for retail storefronts, and those new upper floor tenants could become new sources of foot traffic and revenue for the shops in town. Revitalized retail commercial districts would also increase our commercial tax revenues while providing much-desired amenities for our residents.