

Precinct 7 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

George A. Burnell

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phone number 781-862-2023

Community Activities: Appropriations Committee (9 yrs), Capital Expenditures Committee (6 yrs), Selectman (6 yrs), Economic Development Committee, (6 yrs), Town Meeting, 40 years.

There is no obvious additional commercial space available and it is very unlikely that we will maintain our present ratio of commercial tax revenue to residential but we should continue to upgrade our existing commercial property.

Fifty percent of our commercial revenue is centered on Hartwell Ave. I am not persuaded that the current Hartwell North proposal is a step forward. We need to preserve our priority there as Bio-Tech Lab space. Further, we can reduce or eliminate set-backs and raise building heights but only with incentives to combine properties, with an improved jug handle, and with a crosswalk at Eldred St.

There has been a fever for mixed development. The most obvious place for that is the Center District and we are overdue for a dialog about that. It will not improve the commercial/residential tax ratio, the road width must be retained or increased and our historic nature preserved. Not so easy.

We will see some interest in development along Bedford St, Mass. Ave (East Lexington) and Woburn St, any of which is marginal contribution accompanied by congestion.

That leaves Forbes Park and Hayden Ave. Current zoning there is adequate and we are receptive with property owners for further development there.

Mary Burnell

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phone number: 781-662-2023

*Community Activities: Town meeting member, board member for Friends of Cary Library, board member for Fish

Yes, I favor limited commercial development whose scope suits the town's neighborhood. For example the zoning changes passed by last spring's town meeting for the small commercial

development on Marrett Rd. near Spring St. is the type of commercial activity that provides service for the community as well as supporting our tax base. I also support development, especially of medical and pharmaceutical nature along Hartwell Ave. provided such development includes traffic mitigation on Bedford Street.

Patricia Elen Costello

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Community Activities: Volunteer Tax-Aide - Lexington Community Center, Precinct 7 Town Meeting Representative since fall of 2003, Co-Chair, Selectmen's Tax Deferral and Exemption Study Committee, Vision 2020 Subcommittees on Demographics, League of Women Voters (LWV) of Lexington , LWV Massachusetts – Program and Action Specialist: Elder Affairs

I would definitely favor more commercial development to help alleviate the residential tax burden. Although Hartwell Avenue seems to be the likely location, I would suggest that the current commercial zones could/should also be enhanced – starting with East Lexington and the Center. Two story mixed-use (residential/commercial) buildings could be considered in these zones as well as a penalty for store fronts that have been empty for long periods of time. (Arlington has such a penalty.)

Mary Causey Hamilton

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Community Activities ; Town Meeting member since 2013. Board member of Lexington Scholarship Committee. Board member of OWLL. Driver for FISH. Lexington Battle Green Tour Guide

Yes, I am in favor of increased commercial development, in order to keep residential taxes down. And, even though I live in Precinct 7, very close to Hartwell Ave, I am in favor of more development on Hartwell Avenue, as long as it is scrutinized and supervised carefully by the town. There are wetlands issues in this area that will need to be addressed by the Conservation Commission. There are also, already, traffic issues on Bedford Street and Hartwell Avenue that will need to also be dealt with. Town officials and Town Meeting members need to be closely involved in any sort of development that takes place, and they need to make sure it is environmentally sustainable and does not have a seriously negative impact on residents.

Vikas Kinger

New Candidates

Robert D. Peters

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Community Activities: Lexington Town Meeting Member 2005-2011

Member, Board of Commissioners, Lexington Housing Authority, 2007-present

Co-President, Drummer Boy Homes Association 2010-present

I support commercial development or re-development in Lexington in the areas currently zoned as commercial. This includes the larger commercial areas such as Hartwell Avenue and Hayden, as well as some of the smaller commercial areas in town. I am generally in favor of mixed use development that includes a housing component. There are many areas in town which are largely residential but have small one-story commercial entities that in many cases have all the charm of a strip mall.

We also need to provide the opportunity for builders to build housing stock that provides some degree of economic diversity, which does require accepting some increased density. However, it's important that people who work in and for the Town have the opportunity to live here in our community.

Any development decision has to balance many factors. As a resident living adjacent to Hartwell, I hope and expect that a redevelopment plan for Hartwell Avenue includes significant and effective traffic mitigation measures so that those of us living in the vicinity are not bearing an undo burden on behalf of the entire town.

I am thrilled to have lived in Lexington for the past 16 years and I hope to be able to serve again on Town Meeting.

Umesh Shelat

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Phone number: (781) 328 - 2652

Community Activities:

Active proponent for a short term and long term, permanent solution for a swim pool for the Lexington High School Boys and Girls Swim Teams.

Active proponent for the development and construction of the Estabrook Elementary School.

I believe commercial development should be undertaken to enrich Lexington. But the question asks about commercial development to *offset* residential development. If, by this offset, net residential housing stock declines, residential property taxes will rise. This would not enrich Lexington residents. If, however, commercial development generates commercial business

taxes that *net reduce residential property taxes* then suitable commercial development mix should be undertaken. As a precursor, the reduction in residential property taxes necessitates prudent town spending. The big question is, under this scenario, what this commercial mix should be - and consequently, where. Perhaps, mixed-use properties (residential/retail) may make sense in some areas (Bedford St. across from Hayden DPW, or East Lexington), while continued medium sized tech company development might make sense on Hartwell Rd. Residential/retail mixed use serves a dual purpose of creating potentially affordable housing and also generating commercial taxes. Whatever the mix and location, the objective should be to cost effectively enrich Lexington.

Sophia Zhao