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Biographical Questions

1. *Please include a brief biography outlining relevant experience, including public offices held, public boards and/or committees, and other volunteer service.*

A – Town Meeting Member, 1973 to 2014; School Committee Member, 1974-1977; School Committee Policy Advisory Committee, 2014---; School Committee Policy Sub-Committee, 2010-2013; Moderator, Concerned Citizens for the Lexington Public Schools, 1978-1982; President, Five Fields Inc, 1983-1984.; Member, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, South Lexington Civic Association, Mass. Audubon.

2. *Why are you running for the Board of Selectmen? What qualities would you bring, and what is your leadership style?*

A – Lexington needs a new Selectman who can bring proven executive experience, a long history of innovative problem-solving in a variety of local and global positions, and an ability to ask the right tough questions at the right time. The town faces deep fiscal and infrastructural questions that cannot be postponed. I am the candidate for Selectman who has the experience and local knowledge to help to answer those and many other critical questions, and that is why I am running for Selectman at this time.

Leadership style: Collaborative, based on a lot of listening and pulse-taking. I have also been professionally engaged in global conflict resolution negotiation and mediation, all of which depend on deep listening and engagement, plus collegiality and building coalitions among divergent interest groups. My experience in town government and in university and foundation executive positions has taught me to listen critically to competing arguments, and to examine budget assumptions carefully.

Qualities: Proven executive experience at the college, university, and foundation level. In those positions I had to be a careful problem-solver, a skill and a long-practiced trait that I would bring to the Board of Selectmen. As an executive I also had to be an innovator (inventing new programs, policies, and solutions) and a manager of crises. I would bring that experience to the Board in its deliberations.

Because our well-managed town must continue to be well-run, the work of the Board of Selectmen would be assisted by someone with my executive experience, deep local knowledge and commitment, and intimate acquaintance with issues of management and innovative governance (about which I have written and researched professionally).

Candidate Platform

3. *Please describe your top two priorities, if elected, and how you plan to achieve them.*

A –

1 – Help to steer the town through an efficient and tax-conscious consideration of how best to finance new schools, additional school classrooms, and teachers; a new fire station; a new police station; and – in time – a new high school. The Board of Selectman and other town committees must together weigh various alternatives and innovatively (see an answer above) and intelligently decide when and how to build and afford this improved infrastructure. I will bring my accumulated project management experience and expertise to bear on such deliberations.

2 – Lexington is more diverse than ever. That new diversity is a blessing to all of us who live and work in Lexington. I want to find new ways to help to give our recent arrivals a richer sense of belonging to the warm community that we cherish in Lexington. Nearly a third of our enlarged school population consists of young people whose parents recently moved to Lexington to take advantage of our excellent educational and municipal services. This group represents a wide range of backgrounds and heritage. I would like to enhance its stake in civic as well as school Lexington. The Board of Selectmen has a responsibility to balance competing interests and to provide sensible leadership in this area. I dealt with these kinds of questions as a university administrator and will bring that accumulated experience to help the town move forward.

Policy Questions

4. *How would you balance the short-term and long-term needs related to the town-wide student overcrowding problem against other capital construction needs, including for public safety buildings (fire station, police)?*

A - We must accommodate our new students by using old Harrington, constructing a bigger Hastings than planned, purchasing modular classrooms, recruiting new teachers, and providing the necessary tools to accomplish our mission properly. Then we must proceed to replace or rehabilitate our public safety structures. Thus the answer is not whether but exactly when and by what method of financing we can best serve the appropriate needs of the town. Shall we use debt exclusion and an override? Shall we bond short-term or long-term? Shall we take advantage now of low interest rates and our enviable bond rating? These are issues for experienced and budget-savvy Selectmen. I can help by bringing my accumulated knowledge and acquaintance with such issues to bear, to the benefit of the town.

5. *The Center Streetscapes project is intended to address safety of pedestrians, bicyclists as well as automobiles in the center. What is your view of this project?*

A - The Town has retained three consultants to work on inter-related Center projects: one to help on traffic in the Center, one to help on streetscapes, and one to help on parking. .

The traffic consultant has recommended that two lanes in each direction be maintained on Massachusetts Avenue due to heavy volumes at rush hour. I am concerned that if we allocate two lanes of parking and four lanes of traffic we will not be able to create the livable Center we are trying to accomplish by means of streetscape planning. I will work to ensure that the solution reached by the Selectmen regarding the Center achieves the best balance among on-street parking capacity, sufficient through traffic capacity, Center livability and aesthetics, and a sense of place. I will try to urge bike lanes, too.

The streetscape consultant has not yet reported on how best to improve our Center, but wider and possibly brick sidewalks, and other beautification measures are involved, which I favor. This project, when fully realized, could address some of the critical concerns in the Center.

Parking may be a more vital problem closer to a solution. We have approximately 3300 parking spaces within ¼ mile of Depot Square. Seven hundred of those are not efficiently used; other areas are always full. This year’s parking study and proposed improvements will help to resolve some of the critical concerns that have always made parking a passionate focus (since at least 1966) of everyone who uses or visits the Center. The proposed new meters could help, as could a reconfiguration of some of the spaces over which the town (and the Selectmen) exercise direct control. All new commercial developments in the Center should provide parking in accord with Town

bylaws. Again, because of my experience here and on university campuses -- especially with parking questions -- I can help make innovative improvements.

6. *Many neighborhoods are concerned about traffic. What is your opinion about traffic calming measures? What can be done to make streets safer for all modes of travel, including bicycles and pedestrian?*

A - The Selectmen recently approved speed humps on Shade Street. The Town Manager, the Chief of Police, and the Selectmen should look at other areas where traffic calming measures might make streets or areas safer for pedestrians and bicyclists. These improvements are particularly needed to protect children and pedestrians and bicyclists on feeder streets that are now used as shortcuts. I supported the Shade Street measures publicly. I will encourage the Board to adopt a Complete Streets Policy and take advantage of newly created state funding.

7. *In 2013, Town Meeting has passed the following non-binding motion: "Resolved: That the Town (a) consider climate change in all appropriate decisions and planning processes; (b) take action to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate; (c) reduce greenhouse gas emissions; (d) develop and implement a comprehensive climate action plan; all with the goal of making Lexington a truly sustainable community."*

Yet, by 2014, no statistics are readily available to even estimate Lexington's overall greenhouse gas emissions. Please describe the practical steps that the Board of Selectmen should put in place to make Lexington a truly sustainable community.

A - Sustainable Lexington recently reported to the Board of Selectmen about the excellent progress being made to solarize Lexington's town buildings and many of its residences. We are now (or about to be) the second most solar town or city in the Commonwealth. That is progress! With 110 solar installations so far, and the roofs of Cary Library, the high school, Bowman and Harrington Schools about to generate power, we will soon be producing 763 kw of electricity from the sun. Using the Hartwell Avenue Landfill for a solar installation is being considered. The Selectmen have an obligation to monitor and support the continued efforts of Sustainable Lexington (a volunteer committee). I will happily be part of that effort.

8. *In the past years, Lexington has seen an increased number of teardowns. These are smaller homes, often but not always built after WW2, which are replaced with larger and more expensive new constructions. The new homes are built closer to the property boundary setback limit, often requiring the removal of old trees to make space for the larger home footprint. What should Lexington do to address the teardowns phenomenon?*

A - Bigger houses increase our overall tax base. Yet diversity of housing stock, one-family homes, and affordable housing are all positive values many of us share. Lexingtonians believe in and lament

any loss of a sense of community and of economic and social diversity, which mansionization seems to accelerate. Newton is trying to limit demolitions and house conversions. We should look at something like that, but not without immense thought and careful planning to see if doing so makes any sense for Lexington. For many of us our house is our most significant asset; limiting mansionization might harm people who want to benefit from that asset. There are no easy answers and very strong opinions on both sides. We need to balance the competing interests, think innovatively, and devise a solution worthy of Lexington. I am reminded that we debated the question in town meeting in the 1990s and a bar against mansionization narrowly failed to receive the necessary two-thirds support. I favor a renewed look at these issues by the Selectmen and Town Meeting.

9. Many residents are concerned about the large number of banks in the Center. More generally, what is your opinion about the Lexington Center's difficulty in sustaining diverse and vibrant businesses beyond the restaurants, real estate firms and beauty shops that we have? And how can the Board of Selectmen improve the situation?

A - We have more banks (about a dozen) than we might need, and the Center has indeed become less diverse in terms of a variety of small businesses catering to consumers. (At one point there were seven shoe stores in Lexington Center!) There have been studies and committees. I would support a renewed look at this issue by the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, other town committees, and Town Meeting. We may be able to make useful changes in our zoning by-laws. (Some towns have special zones for diverse businesses.) As for a concrete solution, we should await study and discussion.

10. What is your view of the draft plan to renovate or expand the Visitor Center? What do you think is an appropriate tourism strategy for Lexington?

A - Expanding the Visitor Center makes sense. We have been very pro-active re tourism in recent years, thanks to town officials and the voluntary committee. We need to continue those efforts, possibly even putting more money behind such efforts, professional and volunteer.

11. Lexington adopted the Community Preservation Act some years ago. What is your opinion of its success in Lexington?

A - The CPA has been a great success. We have been able to afford the new Community Center and the rehabilitation or construction of a number of very important town buildings and projects. It has brought extensive state matching funds to the town. Some people think that we should reduce the level of CPA taxation from 3 percent to 1 percent. The Board of Selectmen will have to weigh such a reduction against our upcoming infrastructural needs (discussed earlier). Certainly, we should scrutinize all requests to employ CPA funds as meticulously as we examine all uses of tax revenues and employ CPA funds only for high priority projects. Further, if our CPA reserves accumulate beyond our needs, reducing the CPA tax would make obvious sense.

12. *How would you address affordable housing needs in Lexington? Do you believe there is community consensus about the goals and strategy for affordable housing, and if not, how would you achieve consensus?*

A - Although there may not be a clear community consensus about affordable housing, it is a goal and a moral imperative that I have always supported. Fortunately, we have met the artificial 10 percent requirement of the 40B state law through 2019, but in reality less than 10% of our housing is now affordable. We will possibly need additional qualified affordable housing units to come on line in the next five years to stay above the 10% mark. We should take advantage of opportunities to encourage developers and others to increase our stock of affordable housing in a manner that would enhance Lexington's quality of life.

13. *The Board of Health has proposed a bylaw change for raising the minimum age from 18 to 21 for purchasing tobacco in Lexington. Do you support that proposal?*

A - Yes. Anything that we can do to curb smoking is important and necessary. Smoking is the major cause of preventable illness and death, even now. The results of smoking adversely impact medical care costs, including the insurance cost that the town carries. CVS has already agreed to stop selling tobacco products, which helps.

14. *Over the last year, can you describe one issue which the Board of Selectmen handled very effectively? And one issue that could have been addressed better?*

A - The most important item that the Selectmen bring before Town Meeting and the town each year is a sensible budget. The Selectmen handled that major issue very well, balancing school needs, capital improvement needs, recurrent items such as road maintenance and sewer inspections, and funding our long-term pension requirements while striving to increase the tax rate only marginally.

A few items may have been explained too briefly or without full transparency on the part of the Selectmen. Those include decisions to provide TIF financing, to arrange transportation set-asides for businesses, and to set aside parking requirements for businesses in the Center. Before Town Meeting, the Hartwell jug-handle landscaping and signage issue was not handled with the kind of full transparency that I favor.

Budget and Taxes Questions

15. *Some Massachusetts towns have introduced a Residential Tax exemption, in effect making residential taxes more progressive. Should Lexington introduce a Residential Tax exemption?*

A - Ensuring that the property tax is equitably apportioned is an important priority. But the residential exemption approach authorized by state law may not be the best tool for doing so. It shifts taxes from lower-valued owner-occupied houses to other property-tax payers, notably

increasing taxes on rental properties. And the correlation between greater ability to pay and higher-valued homes is only a very loose one. Other tools will likely provide greater benefits in addressing the real problems, including expansion of the property-tax circuit-breaker, liberalization of the program for senior tax deferral, and support of Rep. Jay Kaufman's efforts to improve the fairness of the state tax system so that we can rely more on state revenue to diminish reliance on the property tax.

16. In the past years, Lexington has entered into TIF (Tax Increment Financing) agreements to reduce the real estate tax bill with the companies Shire, Vistaprint and UniQure. Under what terms, if at all, should in the future Lexington enter into TIF agreements with other companies?

A - Attracting and retaining business investment in Lexington is a key priority for the Board of Selectmen, and me. But a massive body of research at the national level indicates that TIF deals at the local level rarely prove effective either in attracting, sustaining, or retaining companies. Nor are they decisive in adding to tax revenues or employment over the medium- or long-term. In the absence of very convincing evidence of particular circumstances that make a specific TIF proposal beneficial to the town, I will not support another TIF deal.

All candidates are asked to limit the response to each question to at most two or three paragraphs, and to provide the questionnaire responses by Friday, Oct 10th. Responses will not be edited, and will run as submitted. They will be posted on lex-wiki.org in PDF format and announced through other town media. Questionnaire coordinator: Andrei Radulescu-Banu (bitdribble@gmail.com, 617-216-8509). Questionnaire reviewer: Deb Mauger.
