



[Lex-Wiki.Org](http://Lex-Wiki.Org) is a local Wikipedia for Lexington, MA. [Lex-wiki.org](http://Lex-wiki.org) covers Arts and Entertainment, Local Flora and Fauna, Local History, City Life as well as Town Government and other issues of public interest in Lexington.

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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.**

I was born and raised in Lexington. I attended Pilgrim Nursery School, Estabrook Elementary School, Diamond Middle School and Lexington High School class of 1984. I hold a degree in accounting minoring in management from Bentley University. My husband Michael and I have two sons, Mike, a sophomore at American University and Tommy, a Lexington High sophomore.

My broad professional and supervisory experience includes serving as an Accountant and Manager of Finance for a privately held search firm, Business Manager for a start-up publishing firm, and Department Manager for a women's clothing store chain. Following a professional hiatus to be a full-time parent for our two boys, I looked for a flexible position that could accommodate the needs of our school-aged family and became a school crossing guard for Fiske Elementary School. As our children got older, I worked as the Assistant to the Master Planning Committee for Sacred Heart and Saint Brigid Parishes and also served as the recording secretary to the parish councils. I am currently employed as the Church Administrator for First Church of Christ, Congregational in Bedford.

My diverse and innovative town government and community volunteer experience has served Lexington for 24 years, and includes: Town Celebrations Committee (1995 – present) Chair from 2009 – present, Co-Chair from 2007 – 2008 and Vice Chair from 1999 – 2003; 300th Anniversary Celebration Sub Committee (2007 – present) Liaison; Sidewalk Committee (2008 - 2010); Commission 2000 (celebrating the 225th Anniversary of the Battle of Lexington) (1997 – 2000): Member and Executive Secretary; Town Meeting Member for Precinct 6 (1995 - 1999); Town Meeting Members Association Executive Board Treasurer (1995 - 1996). Community volunteer

highlights include: Estabrook School PTA (2000 - 2010): varied responsibilities including: Room Parent, Library Volunteer, Gift Wrap Sale Coordinator, Big Backyard Volunteer, Estafest Silent Auction Coordinator. Estabrook School Safe Routes to School Coordinator (2007 - 2010) Scout Volunteer for Cub Scout Pack 137 (2004 - 2010): Den Leader and Pack Committee Chairman and Boy Scout Troop 160 (2012 - present): Eagle Scout Ceremony Coordinator. Saint Brigid Church Religious Education Teacher (2010 - present) Sodality - Past Prefect, Past Treasurer and Member (1990 - present).

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

After serving Lexington for nearly 25 years, I strongly believe that it is time to put my lengthy town government and community volunteer experience as well as my broad professional and supervisory skills to work on the Board of Selectman. Being a member of the board requires strong listening skills, open-mindedness, being inclusive and maintaining a teamwork attitude to be able to work together as a board to make the best decisions possible for our Town. I feel I have a pragmatic approach to issues. All sides need to be heard with all of the stakeholders involved and then the issue needs to be evaluated individually and then in its totality in terms of how it fits into the overall bigger picture.

## Candidate Platform

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

Communication and Planning would be my two top priorities.

Communication: As a Town, we need to work on efforts to make it easier to navigate the communication process – how the town communicates with residents and how residents communicate with the Town. We seem to be somewhat behind the curve when it comes to social media and electronic communication from the town. An updated, easier to navigate website with fillable forms and online transactions (including permitting) would seem beneficial in today's busy world. Whatever the issue, the community would benefit from a better understanding when all the appropriate stakeholders are included; improved transparency that proposals or solutions are being clearly communicated and fully explained; and that a mechanism exists for checks and balances to ensure that this process continues until the issue is resolved. Such a user-friendly approach would make problem solving or finding information more streamlined. Communication also requires clear conversations. Lexingtonians need to come together as a community and have open conversations about topics that are on people's minds. I envision a "Community Conversation" type venue, where two Selectmen on a rotating basis would host a monthly discussion forum. Topics might include: mansionization and the loss of the neighborhood feel, the business mix in the center, the impact of the changing demographic of our Town, the pros and cons of rotaries versus signalization to handle our growing road traffic. Once the community is able to engage in true and honest conversations, then common ground can be identified and momentum built to embrace clearly communicated solutions. There is also much that can be done to improve the communication with community

groups. I would also propose the establishment of a Lexington Community Partnership. I have seen this work effectively in other towns. The partnership would be comprised of representatives/stakeholders from the Town and the community. The group’s focus would be to foster clear communication and relationships between the Town and the community. The program would meet monthly to share information. Topics would include: program updates, upcoming events, resources available to share, and identification of community needs. This regular exchange would help the Board be more responsive to community needs, would strengthen interpersonal associations and be a new way to strengthen community ties. Proposed membership would be inclusive and consist of representation from such groups as: Board of Selectman, Town Manager’s Office, Library, Recreation, Fire, Police, DPW, Board of Health, Human Services, Schools, along with representatives from the PTA/PTOs, Rotary, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Lexington Retailers Association, Lexington Interfaith, Newcomers Club, Historical Society, Chinese American Association of Lexington, Indian Americans of Lexington and other community organizations.

Planning: Lexington is very fortunate to currently be in sound financial shape. However, looming on the horizon are several large capital projects to address both municipal and school needs. Strategies need to be developed now to account for our long-term financial health, school enrollment growth, utility needs, street and sewer maintenance, and to strengthen our economic development to increase our Town revenue. Our Town needs to align our priorities to minimize impact on taxpayers and town resources.

## Policy Questions

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**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)?**

For the next several years, one of our biggest issues for the Town is going to be the major capital projects. According to the report of the Ad-hoc Town Wide Facilities Master Planning Committee that was presented to the Board of Selectmen in the fall of 2013, many town owned buildings are in need of some type of refurbishment or replacement. Forefront for municipal buildings are the replacement of Fire Headquarters and the Police Station. Both buildings have significant challenges from structural issues to antiquated systems to lack of building wide accessibility, significant lack of storage and programmatic space. The town-wide student overcrowding problem in the schools is a significant problem in all of our schools and needs to be addressed both in the short term and long term in a balanced way across all of the schools with a clear long term vision. The total cost for all projects may feel daunting or give us reason to pause. It is time to commit to a mid-term and long-term plan that looks at a variety of funding scenarios that would address these important capital needs. It is important to approach the plan with balance both for the taxpayer and for the building type and to clearly prioritize the goals. However we cannot go down this path alone or fractured, we need to come together as a community and go down the path together to bring these projects forward and we need to stay tuned as the issue continues to develop and more data is reported.

**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?**

There is an increasing amount of traffic on our streets and in particular in Lexington Center. The goal of the Center Streetscape project is to address the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists and automobiles in the center by moving some crosswalks to safer locations, adding bumpouts for pedestrian safety, adding shared marked bike lanes, increasing signalization and implementing other traffic calming measures. These are all items that are warranted in the name of safety. The project is currently at the 25% design stage and a decision was recently made by the current Board of Selectmen for a traffic signal to be installed at Massachusetts Avenue and Woburn Street. The data indicates that this will make the intersection significantly safer for pedestrians and traffic however, such a significant change at one of the major intersections so close to the center of town gives me pause to wonder how it will actually work out and what the average motorist's reaction to the change will be. The other aspects of the plan appear as though they are long needed 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?**

Traffic and transportation challenges continue to increase especially as more and more people are using gps devices to navigate around traffic which then takes them into neighborhoods. The Board of Selectmen needs to develop a comprehensive town wide neighborhood traffic mitigation plan. The plan should be developed by a core group of stakeholders who are given a specific set of directives and a timeline for reporting back to the Board. The plan should very clearly spell out a policy not only for implementation of the plan but also include plans for community education about the plan and a clear way for citizens to report a neighborhood issue and what to expect during the process. The Board should also move to adopt a complete streets approach to all of our roads that takes in to account to the broadest part possible the incorporation of all manners of transportation (vehicle, bus, bike, pedestrian) when building or rebuilding roads.

**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.**

Lexington is moving in the right direction in terms of sustainability however, the question is are we moving fast enough and what data is available. In June of 2010, the Board of Selectmen established the Sustainable Lexington committee who were tasked with “advising the Selectmen on proposals which affect Lexington's sustainability and resilience and will recommend, develop and monitor

programs designed to enhance Lexington’s long-term sustainability and resilience in response to environmental, resource and energy challenges. The Sustainable Lexington Committee will: 1. Recommend sustainability goals and recommended priorities for implementation, 2. Develop and recommend programs required to meet the Town’s sustainability goals, 3. Monitor and measure effectiveness of sustainability programs undertaken by the town, 4. Educate and raise awareness among Lexington residents regarding Lexington’s sustainability and resilience, 5. Review and provide recommendations regarding proposals put before the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting which affect Lexington’s sustainability and resilience, 6. Coordinate with other relevant boards and committees on sustainability issues to enhance effectiveness and avoid redundancy, 7. Stay abreast of state and local issues which affect Lexington’s ability to achieve its sustainability goals, and, 8. Perform other related projects as may be requested by the Board of Selectmen.” In four short years, the committee has made great strides in terms of increasing the amount of solar arrays in town both on residential and municipal buildings through a community outreach program. As of July 2014, the committee estimated that by 991 home energy assessments having been completed and action taken to weatherize homes that 800 metric tons of greenhouse gasses had been prevented. We need to work with the Public Facilities Department to see if they have any data available or any estimations in relation to savings and reductions achieved with all of the municipal buildings. From a municipal standpoint we have been making great progress with working to have our new projects be LEED certified as the Public Services Building and the new Estabrook School both have Silver Certification.

**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?**

This one is a sticky wicket. On the one side some feel that “teardowns” is changing the neighborhood feel and pricing the middle class out of town however on the other side how can you regulate how much people can sell their houses for, to whom and for what purpose? I think part of the answer lies in focusing attention on our zoning by-laws. They must be aligned with our vision for the future of the town. We need to come together as a community and have a serious collaborative community conversation managed by the Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Planning Board. There needs to be some creative thought about what the appropriate mix of housing stock is for now, what it should be in 5 years and even 10 years from now and we need to figure out how do we meet the needs of all age groups in town in terms of making affordable housing available. The felling of mature trees is distressing and the by-laws surrounding it should be updated.

**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?**

Many people feel that the retail mix in the Lexington Center is not diverse enough and often talk of other towns where the mix is more vibrant. It is difficult to tell a landlord who their tenant should be however, a review of the current zoning by-laws in relation to center business requirements and parking regulations would be in order to see if any by-laws need modification or if an additional local ordinance would be applicable to help balance the mix somewhat more. That being said, there is quite a mix of businesses in the center, many of them locally owned that we as residents should be doing our best to help support.

**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?**

The Visitors Center was built in the mid 1960’s and currently does not meet the needs of today’s tourists. Design money was appropriated at the March 20114 Town Meeting however it was contingent on a programmatic review of the facility being completed. Because of the wonderful history of our town, tourism is a given and visitors should have a building sufficient to meet their needs (accessible, informative and modern) when they visit. Visitors come to Lexington year round and we have two very definite peak tourism seasons (one in the spring and one in the fall). I think it is important that the Board of Selectmen set a timeline on the programmatic review and encourage all of the stakeholders involved to meet regularly to work towards accomplishing the goal so the design process can continue with minimal impact on our visitors.

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

Lexington approved the Community Preservation Act in 2006 adding a 3% surcharge to property taxes. That amount is matched by the State CPA Trust Fund and originally it was a 100% match but that amount has fallen over the years and now ranges from the mid 20 % to as high as the mid 60 % depending on a whole host of factors. The funds collected can be used for capital projects that involve open space, recreational use, community housing and historic resources. The town has benefitted greatly from the program in terms of having an alternate revenue stream from which qualifying projects can be funded outside of the typical funding methods thus freeing up traditional tax revenue to be used on other projects.

**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?**

Lexington needs to have an honest conversation about its affordable housing needs and how it can move forward to achieve those goals. Those who work in the community such as members of the Lexington Interfaith Community and members from the town’s Human Services department should be involved in the conversation to ensure that the needs of all of our residents regardless of age are being identified and strategies determined on how to move forward to meet the needs are identified. There needs to be a strong commitment from the Board and the Town to maintain and

increase the number of affordable housing units on our subsidized housing index not only so we are in compliance with the state's statutory requirement for percentage of affordable housing units but also so we retain a well-balanced socio-economic community. It is a growing concern that with the increasing number of teardowns, it is removing the middle to low income single family home housing stock and pricing people out of town.

**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?**

Stricter regulations are becoming more popular in communities all across Massachusetts in regards to the sale of tobacco. It make sense that if there is a certain age for buying alcohol that the age should be the same for buying cigarettes. Data suggests that the earlier people start smoking the harder it is to quit and the more health damage that is done. Increased education programs regarding the effects of tobacco should be undertaken as well. Perhaps the Board could encourage other businesses in town to follow the lead of CVS and remove tobacco products from their stores.

**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?**

While it hasn't always been easy, the Board continued to do a good job at proceeding with appropriate capital projects. In the coming months and years, the Board will need to maintain the high level of scrutiny of projects and continue to understand the need to sometimes realign the priority list for the benefit of the whole town. Adopting a clearly stated and communicated neighborhood traffic mitigation policy is needed so it is clear to residents how to proceed if there is a problem in their neighborhood with traffic that they want to have evaluated. The policy should lay out all of the steps involved from reporting an issue to possible solutions to resolutions so they then will have an idea of how the process will work, the timeline and what to expect.

## Budget and Taxes Questions

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

At this time I would need more information on what criteria would be applied to determine the residential tax exemption amount and how it would be applied before I could evaluate it one way or the other.

**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?**

Increasing our commercial tax base and diversity of our local businesses is important for the overall growth of the Town. However, the Town needs to look at any potential TIF very carefully and on an individual basis and weigh all of the benefits and the drawbacks from entering into such an agreement and then factor those into the larger overall financial picture of the Town before moving ahead. Not every project would necessarily be a good fit for a TIF so some guidelines should be established and followed when vetting projects for TIFs.

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*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](http://lex-wiki.org) in PDF format and announced through other town media. Questionnaire coordinator: Andrei Radulescu-Banu ([bitdribble@gmail.com](mailto:bitdribble@gmail.com), 617-216-8509). Questionnaire reviewer: Deb Mauger.*

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