



[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 Question

1. *What can you tell us about yourself? Please include a brief outline of your relevant experience, whether from private or public life – including public offices held, and volunteer work.*
  - a. I grew up in Quincy in a multi-generational family that included my maternal grandmother. In my youth, my jobs and activities included caddying at the Hyannis Port Club, non-office work at the Quincy shipyard, custodial work in a Quincy school, as a helper in my uncle's steel fabrication shop and playing baseball, hockey and golf. I learned about the lives of many working people and I learned to complete my college education. I hold a bachelor's degree in Math from Boston College.
  - b. During parts of 2015 and 2016, I was a resident participant with the Residential Policy Committee. I contributed new construction activity analysis and attended many RPC and Planning Board meetings. I am a current member of the Turning Mill NCD Study Committee. Professionally, I worked in Information Technology for 40 years. I designed, developed, implemented and managed Customer Management, Product Management and Distribution systems both in the U.S. and in Europe, where I lived for 8 years. I gained great satisfaction from redesigning Business Processes and from the data capture and information delivery that was part of these systems. I was credited with designing Gillette's first database. I know that no enterprise runs well without good Processes and enabling Systems. Throughout most of my career I also owned, maintained and managed small scale residential income property. I will put all of this experience to use as a member of the Planning Board.
  - c. My wife, Jolanda, is Dutch. She has made language an important part of our lives. We lived in France for 6 years and, upon returning to the USA, Alexandra and Lionel attended the International School of Boston followed by middle school and high school in Lexington. In addition to English and French, they also speak Dutch and Spanish. In retirement, I enjoy doing all kinds of house projects including building the deck, installing pavers, re-tiling bathrooms, woodworking and much more. Our travels focus on family visits in Europe.

## Candidate Platform

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2. *What are your top three priorities, if elected, and how do you plan to achieve them?*
  - a. I want the town residents to regain control over the building frenzy that we all see. We need more controls and less permissiveness in this area. It is one thing to be accommodating and something else to be taken advantage of. I think that it is now clear that that line has been crossed. See “Policy Questions” below.
  - b. I think that some of the housing solutions that have been implemented are based upon a model for housing Demand in Lexington that no longer exists. For example, Balanced Housing is aimed at affordability (attainability) - but for whom? I do not believe that families with normal salaries are pinching pennies in order to move to Lexington. Only people who already have money can move here. But my anecdotal observations are not good enough. I would like to see the town commission a study to define Lexington housing Demand in detail. This will allow us to forecast the future and to implement sensible housing policies that take into account the Demand for housing in Lexington.
  - c. I will advocate for Process analysis and Process redesign followed by information systems in support of redesigned Processes. This will require spending some money but I consider it to be a must do. As far as I can see, this does not have to be complicated. Successful enterprises have excellent processes, systems and information. The town may not have been needed these 20 years ago, but it does now. Good information is an essential and powerful tool.

## Policy Questions

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3. *The 2016 Town Meeting passed zoning changes to limit the size and height of residential buildings in proportion to the size of the lot. Have these zoning changes been successful, from your perspective – and what, if anything should be done next in this regard?*

The Residential Policy Committee was not unanimous in implementing the new controls in 2016. There was a lot of compromise and, so, the improvements have been very modest. For example, on smaller, non-conforming lots: The non-conformity of setbacks becomes a big deal when a smaller cape or ranch is replaced with a very big and tall new home. In these circumstances, I would consider reverting to current zoning standards, according to a fair formula, in order to discourage the relentless removal of the most affordable housing that we have. We might also acknowledge that some neighborhoods are going to be transformed over time, identify these neighborhoods, and, if necessary, establish appropriate rules on a neighborhood by neighborhood basis. And why wouldn't we look at every single neighborhood in town? That is exactly what the builders and their agents are doing. The new Comprehensive Plan may help make this possible.

- 4. *How can Lexington find a happy medium in the trade-off between encouraging more affordable housing and limiting potential increases in housing density?*

In my opinion, there is no possibility of influencing the affordability of housing in Lexington until we understand, in detail, the nature of Demand for Lexington housing. The new housing Supply that we can see, and sometimes do not like, is all based upon Demand that we, ordinary residents, do not fully understand. Balanced Housing is a Supply side solution that was implemented with an inadequate understanding of the Demand side of the equation. See "Housing Statistics" at [www.bobcreech.com](http://www.bobcreech.com).

- 5. *The Planning Board is considering a change to reduce the density of balanced housing projects and to require that all such projects include a public benefit component. What is your view of this proposal?*

The Demand for Balanced Housing units is generically not different than the Demand for bigger and even more expensive housing, i.e., the Demand comes from people who already have money – it is just a matter of degrees. One Planning Board member suggests that the proposed changes to Balanced Housing (soon to be re-branded as Flexible Residential Development) will require that the developer will have to be granted even more units in order to make money. There is no information to support this – quite the contrary. The developers need no help from us. I want many fewer Balanced Housing units granted. Next year we may want to consider eliminating Balanced Housing altogether. As far as I can see, only the developers benefit from this type of housing.

- 6. *How can Lexington zoning be used to stimulate diversity and vibrancy of neighborhood businesses and retail shopping within the commercial zones?*

- a. The retailers can help us understand the issues. Working with retail consultants and the property owners, any comprehensive solution would be a multi-year process. We need win/win solutions.
- b. Through traffic on Mass Ave is moving too fast and is somewhat intimidating. We need to slow things down in order to make the town center a friendlier place for pedestrians.
- c. Clothing stores die in Lexington center. My wife says there are just not enough clothing choices to bother. Let's start by finding out why this is the case. Is it the nature of the Lexington consumer or are there factors within our control?
- d. The single story buildings seem a wasted opportunity to me. Adding second story retail space could make the center a much more interesting shopping experience. We have some nice shops in town but, in general, it is a pretty sad shopping venue.
- e. We could add a lot of parking in the Depot Square lot by adding 1 level of garage space. Depressing the lower level just a few feet will mitigate the unwanted mass of the

structure without creating a long or deep dive into the lower level. The design of such a structure would have to be approved by a town resident committee.

- f. The rents are very high and this is, in part, because the taxes are too high. We should consider significant tax incentives for downtown retail space.
7. *What can Lexington do in order to build up the infrastructure and amenities around Hartwell Ave – the largest commercial/industrial district in Lexington? How can the Planning Board help, in this respect?*
- a. Hartwell Ave is a wetland area and I would not be in favor of more encroachment on the environment. I would support taller buildings as long as there is no more asphalt and we solve (b) below. We would have to require garages like those between 101 and 115 Hartwell Ave. They work well and they look good.
  - b. One major problem is the traffic coming from route 128 in the morning and the intersection of Hartwell Ave and Bedford St. This should be a solvable problem.
    - i. Smart phone apps have made our Bedford side neighborhoods heavy cut-through streets: Winter St, Carriage Dr, Volunteer Way and Grove St.
    - ii. Consider a one-way restriction on Eldred St during morning and evening rush hour. A traffic light at that intersection would have cars backed up on route 128 so I do not see this as a viable option.
    - iii. Build an underpass at that intersection for all traffic going to Hartwell Ave. This would enable higher density for Hartwell Ave businesses.
  - c. Regarding amenities: I went into the lobby of 81 Hartwell Ave. I spoke with a man who works in the Purchasing Dept. at T2 Bio-systems (101 Hartwell Ave). He and some colleagues had come over to get lunch in the small cafeteria in the lobby. I don't know if this is the most practical way to get lunch or if it is due to a lack of amenities. We could reach out to the business leaders to find out keeping in mind that the Planning Board is assumed to be made up of part time resident volunteers.
8. *Can you describe one issue which the Planning Board handled very effectively over the past year? And one issue that could have been addressed better?*
- a. The Residential Policy Committee was well managed and produced some good work and some important information. I wish that the zoning recommendations could have been carried further but big compromises were necessary.
  - b. I don't know enough about all of the issues to say what was not handled effectively in 2016.

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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 end of day Sunday, Feb 19th, 2017. 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).*

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