

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.

- Town Meeting, Precinct 3, 2007–present
- Appropriation Committee, 2008–2016
 - Chair Aug 2010–Dec 2016
 - Liaison to:
 - Capital Expenditures Committee
 - Community Preservation Committee
 - Ad Hoc Streetscape Design Committee
 - Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee
 - Community Center Advisory Committee
- Conservation Steward and trail work volunteer
- Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, Board member 2015–present
- Cary Memorial Library Foundation, Board member 2006–2012
- deCordova Sculpture Park & Museum, Board of Trustees 2014–present
- Parker Family Foundation, Founder & Trustee 2000–present
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Undergraduate 1979–1981

I began working as a software developer at startup companies in 1981. I worked in a variety of application areas, from video games to electronic publishing and digital typography. In 1994, I helped found a spin-off from Siemens (Burlington, MA) focused on the emerging demand for large-scale email systems. Through a series of mergers, that company evolved into Openwave Systems, which developed and supported a suite of software used by internet service providers around the world. I retired from the software business in 2002.

Candidate Platform

2. Why are you running for Selectman?

I love Lexington and I dedicate my time to making it a great community where we can live, work and raise children. Over the next five to ten years, the town must balance its critical need for new infrastructure against the financial pressure this will put on its residents. I will use my financial experience and regional perspective to support an effective, practical and equitable plan to manage our revenue and expenses. I will work to make Lexington a place that welcomes and encourages everyone.

Policy Questions

3. What are the largest challenges Lexington faces over the next few years?

The combination of large capital projects that will require significant borrowing, and a rapidly growing school enrollment that will impact our operating budget.

4. Should Lexington promote more affordable housing through its zoning policies?

I would be supportive of an inclusionary zoning policy if the Planning Board brought one forward. The regional shortage in housing at every income level has a real impact on the affordability of our existing housing. We want to maintain our economic diversity. We want our residents to live in Lexington after their children have left school. Therefore, we must consider how to incentivize the development of housing that suits the needs and budgets of lower and middle income residents.

5. How can our town responsibly finance the construction cost of all the new school space it needs, and of the proposed new fire and police stations?

Financing large capital projects is, at its heart, planning for the long-term revenue commitment that will be required. Lexington is a financially strong town that uses its annual revenues to maintain the town while providing important and useful services.

6. Should Lexington create opportunities to expand commercial development within commercial zones to reduce the residential tax burden? If yes, how can that be achieved?

Lexington is already working to improve opportunities for commercial development through improvements to our commercial zoning bylaws, and the use of overlay districts that help to fund key traffic mitigation efforts. Lexington is still recovering from two decades when developers were discouraged from pursuing the kind of commercial projects that most of our neighboring cities and towns welcomed, and it will take a while to re-establish that momentum here. We should be open to creative proposals that make the best use of our commercially zoned land, but the experience of our neighboring towns, particularly Waltham, demonstrates the vital need to think carefully about traffic management. I would welcome a community conversation about increasing by-right density on Hartwell Ave. and Hayden Ave.

7. The Community Preservation Act (CPA) tax surcharge is used to fund affordable housing, recreation facilities, open space conservation, and preservation of historic structures. What is your opinion of how CPA functions in Lexington?

The CPA is a wonderful system that has allowed us to work on capital projects that enhance life for everyone in Lexington. However, it strictly limits the kind of projects that are eligible for funding. We are entering a period when the kind of capital projects the town needs will not be eligible, and I feel we should adjust our CPA surcharge to account for the expected increase in our debt service for other projects.

8. What changes, if any, would you like to see in property taxation in Lexington?

In addition to a reduction in the CPA surcharge, I would like to consider the use of a Residential Exemption, which would make the property tax into a more progressive system.

9. What should Lexington do to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety?

We should proceed with the Massachusetts Ave. traffic improvements, which were designed to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety. Lexington should continue to follow the policies promoted by the Complete Streets program, and we should work on improving understanding between bikers and drivers.

10. What is your view of the Center Streetscape design recommendations made by the Design Review Ad-Hoc Committee – including the proposed choice of materials for sidewalks?

As a liaison to that committee, I think the members learned a great deal about streetscape design, from lighting and trees to furniture and sidewalks. I was at the committee presentation where an expert in ADA compliance explained the current state of the regulations regarding wheelchair accessibility. Another expert gave a lecture on the mechanical wonders (and woes) of concrete. The committee learned that nothing lasts forever, and there are tradeoffs in initial versus ongoing maintenance costs, but when properly installed and maintained, wire-cut brick is considered an acceptable surface. They also learned that there is a very wide range of needs for people with disabilities, and it can be difficult to implement a perfect solution for everyone. The sidewalks are just one part of a much larger project, and I think the recommendations of the committee were a very reasonable compromise.