



Town of Lexington
PLANNING BOARD
1625 Massachusetts Avenue
Lexington, MA 02420
Tel (781) 698-4560
planning@lexingtonma.gov
www.lexingtonma.gov/planning

Robert D. Peters, Chair
Michael Schanbacher, Vice Chair
Melanie Thompson, Clerk
Robert Creech, Member
Charles Hornig, Member
Michael Leon, Associate Member

To: Town Meeting Members

From: Planning Board Members

Date: April 6, 2023

Re: Planning Board Recommendation on Article 34 Amendments

McKenna et. al Amendment –

On April 4, 2023, the Planning Board voted 3-1-1 to recommend Town Meeting ***disapprove*** the amendment of the substitute motion (Hornig, Thompson, and Schanbacher voting in favor, Creech voting against, and Peters abstained).

JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATION:

- The substitute motion's zoning map isolates multi-family homes to the less walkable outskirts of Town, in areas furthest from public transportation, furthest away from other neighborhoods, furthest away from amenities such as parks, retail and personal services, as well as government and civic uses.
- Isolating multi-family housing at the edges of Town near the highways epitomizes traditionally exclusionary zoning practices;
- The districts on the revised zoning map are not equitably distributed throughout Town;
- The districts on the revised zoning map are not consistent with the spirit of the legislation nor the stated purposes of the article's Bylaw to promote family supportive housing, diversity and equity;
- The maximum height reduction eliminates the incentive for mixed use, which will lead to commercial land being converted to housing and lead to a lower commercial tax base;
- Eliminates the possibility for upper story housing in Lexington Center where population density is need for a thriving center;
- Not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan's stated goals for [diversity and inclusion](#);
- Not consistent with 2020 Town Meeting's adopted Article 8 [Systemic Racism Resolution](#)

- The October Creative Housing Workshop and the year-long public process included support for more housing types dispersed throughout town and integrated with the community ([resident created map](#));
- Allowing housing in East Lexington and the Bedford St./Reed St. areas by special permit does not provide clear approval or disapproval criteria leaving future decision making ambiguous and unpredictable;
- Only permitting housing in two areas of Town consisting of larger lots will lead to greater housing production at one time and not smaller incremental growth;
- Districts on the revised zoning map are not cohesive nor integrated into the community;
- Minimal compliance does not help solve the housing crisis by being part of the solution;
- Removing the Planning Board's most desirable locations for future housing is not the right thing to do;
- The Planning Board has worked extensively dedicating hundreds of hours hosting 26 public meetings, presentations, and events since last Annual Town Meeting.

JUSTIFICATION FOR ABSTENTION:

- Concerned about securing the Town Meeting vote to adopt the main motion and political ramifications.

JUSTIFICATION AGAINST:

- Support for the amendment to get the Town Meeting vote.

Exhibits: Revised Map Attached

Burger Amendment –

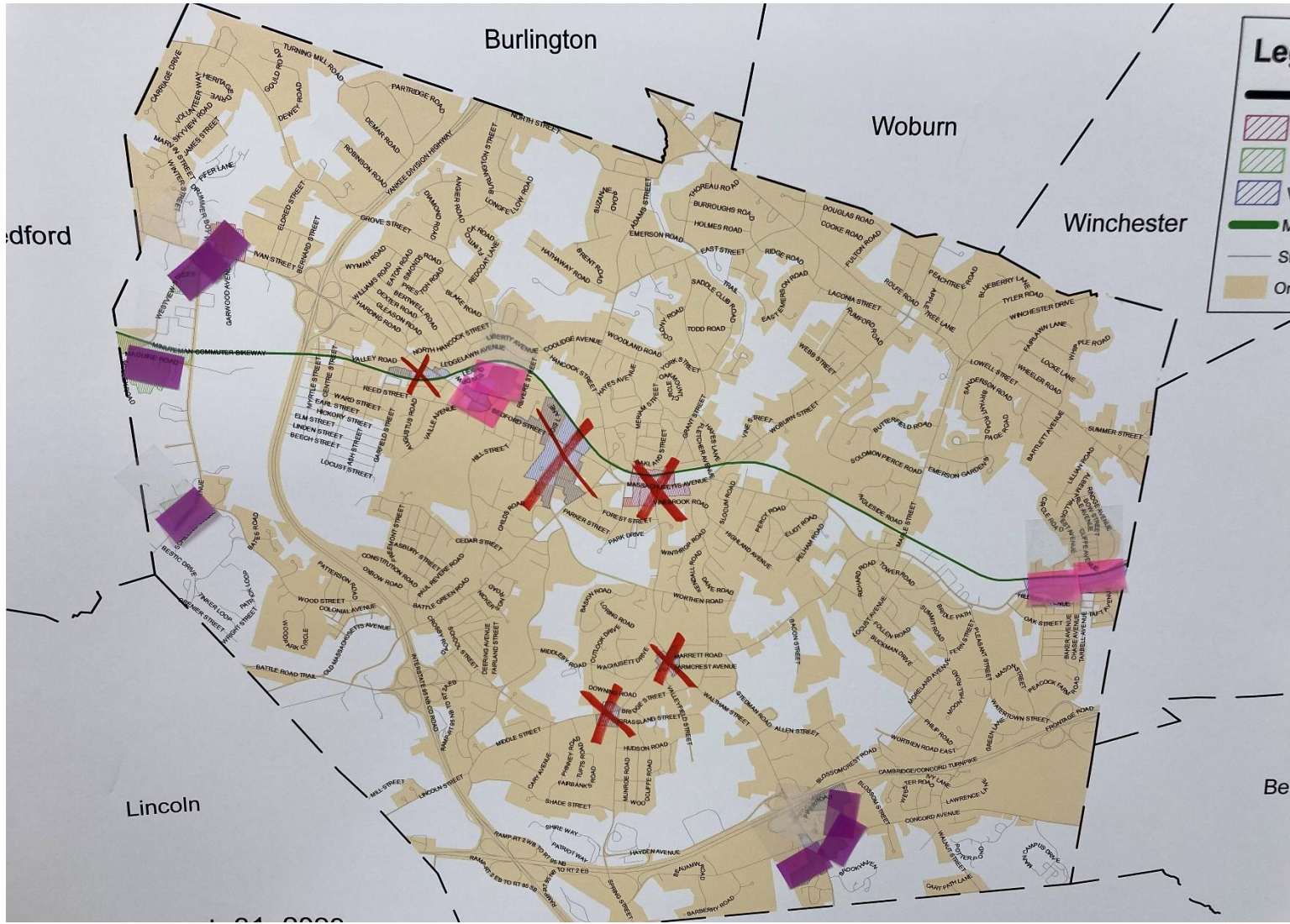
On April 4, 2023, the Planning Board voted 5-0 to recommend Town Meeting *disapprove* the amendment from Mr. Burger because the Board did not feel it was necessary and adds unpredictability to the application process.

JUSTIFICATION:

The Special Permit and Site Plan Review application process provides the same public process, a butter notification, and same Board purview relative to site and design review of future applications. Special permits are discretionary and can have unpredictable outcomes, which is the reason the legislation was enacted. The six-foot step-back can impede new housing construction. Lexington Center is subject to the Historic District Commission (HDC)'s approval and design guidelines for any future project proposals for additions, exterior alterations, and new construction.

Substitute Motion Zoning Map Amendment

from Dawn McKenna, Bridger McGaw, Kate Colburn, Pam Hoffman, Lin Jensen, Barbara Katzenberg, Steve Kaufmann, Alan Levine, Jay Luker, Tina McBride, Bridger McGaw, Tom Shiple, Deborah Strod, and Ruth Thomas



Substitute Motion Zoning Map Amendment

from Dawn McKenna, Bridger McGaw, Kate Colburn, Pam Hoffman, Lin Jensen, Barbara Katzenberg, Steve Kaufmann, Alan Levine, Jay Luker, Tina McBride, Bridger McGaw, Tom Shiple, Deborah Strod, and Ruth Thomas

Substitute Amendment from McKenna Et al.

