

Town of Lexington
Motion
Annual Town Meeting 2022

ARTICLE

ZERO WASTE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, Town Meeting has voted on multiple policies and resolutions that recognize and take action on threats posed by climate change, including:

2005: Lexington adopted our Sustainable Design Policy, committing to designing and building our municipal buildings with an adherence to sustainability through electrification and improved building efficiency.

2010: the Sustainable Lexington Committee was created to examine and guide Lexington's sustainability goals and priorities for implementation.

2013 : Lexington Town Meeting adopted a Climate Change Resolution to consider climate change in all appropriate decisions.

2016: Lexington Town Meeting approved the Community Choice Aggregation program to move the Town's electricity to 100% renewable energy.

2016: Lexington Public Schools contract for compost pickup in all nine schools.

2018: The Board of Selectmen adopted the Sustainable Action Plan and Getting to Net Zero Emissions Plan.

2019: Board Of Selectmen & School Committee jointly approved an Integrated Building Design & Construction Policy for schools and all other town buildings. This policy expanded on and replaced the Sustainable Design Policy.

2020: Lexington Town Meeting approved a resolution endorsing the declaration of a climate emergency and called for regional collaboration to reverse global warming and to move towards a more sustainable economy; and

WHEREAS, these resolutions and policies taken together reflect the values of our community with respect to environmental justice and sustainability; and

WHEREAS, solid waste contributes directly to climate change through the generation of greenhouse gases during product manufacture and disposal, with locations most often near financially disadvantaged communities; and

WHEREAS, the Guiding Principles of Zero Waste ("Zero Waste") are:

- preserving natural resources by means of responsible production and consumption;
- conserving natural resources through waste prevention;
- promoting reusable products and the use of materials (glass, metal, etc.) that are durable, reusable and made from non-toxic materials;

Town of Lexington
Motion
Annual Town Meeting 2022

- reducing the use of single-use, non-recyclable products and materials;
- treating waste as a resource;
- regenerating natural resources through composting and recycling;
- turning discarded resources into jobs and new products instead of trash; and
- managing waste without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment and human health.

WHEREAS, Zero Waste minimizes resource consumption and eliminates waste whenever possible in order to conserve energy, mitigate climate change, reduce water usage, prevent the creation of toxins, and stop ecosystem destruction; and

WHEREAS, Zero Waste redesigns our systems of resource use from a linear model of take, make, use and dispose to a circular model of reuse; and

WHEREAS, Zero Waste captures our discards and uses them, instead of new resources, to make new products, creating far less pollution; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Lexington generates over 9000 tons of trash annually, which is incinerated at the Wheelabrator Incinerator in North Andover with residual ash disposed of at the Ash Landfill in Shrewsbury, at an approximate cost of \$1.7M for hauling and disposal combined, or \$189 per ton; and

WHEREAS, MassDEP projects that in-state landfill capacity for solid waste will decline to nearly zero by 2028, making source reduction and diversion efforts even more important; and

WHEREAS, organic compostable waste makes up at least 25%, and thus the biggest component, of residential waste; and

WHEREAS, Lexington collects over 3600 tons of discarded materials and products annually to be sorted for recycling, at an approximate cost of \$1.6M for hauling and disposal combined, or \$322 per ton; and

WHEREAS, voluntary recycling of plastic does not achieve high levels of resource recovery and waste reduction; and

WHEREAS, current waste incineration and landfilling of our trash can cause damage to human health and the environment, waste natural resources, generate greenhouse gases, and wrongly transfer health and environmental harms to environmental justice communities and our future generations; and

WHEREAS, the reuse and recycling of discarded products and materials can stimulate and drive local economic development and job creation; and

Town of Lexington
Motion
Annual Town Meeting 2022

WHEREAS, as Americans we represent 5% of the population and generate 50% of the world's waste; and

WHEREAS, the state's 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan has set a goal to reduce the state's total solid waste from a 2018 baseline by 30% by 2030 and 90% by 2050.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

The TOWN OF LEXINGTON hereby adopts and agrees to model the Guiding Principles of Zero Waste as overarching goals for the community and all municipal and school operations, and commits to the following specific goals:

1. Meet or exceed the state's 2030 Solid Waste Master Plan waste reduction goals by committing to reducing Lexington's waste disposal from a 2018 baseline by 90% by 2050 with an interim milestone of 25% by 2025 and 35% by 2030, including providing town-wide compost services to divert the biggest component in solid waste;
2. Develop a Zero Waste Plan through existing town committees by 2023. This plan would:
 - a. assess the TOWN OF LEXINGTON'S current levels of resource use and waste generation;
 - b. identify objectives for waste reduction;
 - c. recommend short-, medium-, and long-term actions to reach these objectives including: infrastructure, policies, local and regional programs, and education and community engagement.

Through a public process, the Zero Waste Plan would seek to effectively, efficiently, and quickly address the issues identified.

3. Prioritize solid waste reduction programs that minimize the impact on environmental justice communities.

(DATE)