



Town of Lexington

Office of Selectmen

Suzanne E. Barry, Chairman
Michelle L. Ciccolo, Vice Chairman
Peter C. J. Kelley
Joseph N. Pato
Douglas M. Lucente

Tel: (781) 698-4580
Fax: (781) 863-9468

Summary of Legislative Topics of Interest

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1. **LexHab:** Request special legislation to allow the use of vocational education students (e.g., Minuteman High School) in lieu of filed sub-bidders (as required under Chapter 149) for constructing or renovating affordable housing units.
2. **Zoning/Housing Legislation:** There are a variety of bills being filed to encourage/require multi-unit housing in communities. It is not clear if these bills are progressing. Lexington's general concern is the impact on the School system as we continue to add housing units. Bills in particular that we are following:
S.94/H.1112 – An Act Improving Housing Opportunities and the Mass Economy. An ambitious bill that requires multi-family in all communities (40R-scale).
S.2131/H.1095 – An Act Relative to Housing Production. Will require multi-family units in every municipality.
3. **DPU Rate Setting:** The Eversource rate-setting proposal before the DPU will, if approved, significantly change the financial viability of existing municipal solar facilities in Lexington (e.g., existing school rooftop solar units; Hartwell solar facility) and limit the financial viability of future solar facilities (e.g., new Hastings School). Earlier State programs provided financial incentives for communities to enter into long-term contract for the construction and operation of solar facilities. Now these financial incentives may be reduced after the Town had these solar facilities constructed. At a minimum the DPU should 'grand-father' existing solar facilities from any rate changes.
4. **Property Tax Reform-Senior Tax Deferral:** Support of proposed amendment to MGL c. 59, section 5, clause 18A and clause 41A to permit a municipality to set a lower rate than 16 percent to apply to deferred taxes when they become due after the sale of the property or death of the taxpayer.
5. **Ambulance Billing:** The Senate is preparing to take up health care cost containment legislation (S. 2190) in the coming days. As currently drafted, the bill includes a provision to authorize the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish an ambulance services pricing schedule that would significantly reduce and cap municipal emergency medical service (EMS) fees. The bill would eliminate the long-standing authority of cities and towns to set EMS fees to cover at least part of the cost of the

service. This bill will limit municipal billing for ambulance calls to 1.6 times the Medicare rate. Most communities are at 3 – 4 times the Medicare rate. Lexington's rate is just about 3 times the Medicare rate. The Medicare rate is set very low and, in fact, was lowered recently by the federal government. Lexington's paramedic ambulance service costs approximately \$1,350,000 per year to operate. For Lexington, the proposal in S.2190 will mean approximately a 33% reduction in revenue, or \$450,000.

6. **Horizontal Procurement (roads, water, sewer):** Amend the recent legislation that allows for three phone/written quotes for small projects between \$10k and \$50k (Chapter 30 section 39M) but now also requires public advertising. Instead of simplifying the procurement on small projects it has actually made it much more cumbersome. The language should be consistent with that language in Chapter 30B for projects within that value, which does not require the dual step of advertising and quotes. This correction to the law will allow Public Works to bring in quality contractors quickly for small projects.
7. **Chapter 90 funding:** Chapter 90 funding does not meet the deferred road and bridge maintenance needs nor do recent increases in Chapter 90 reflect the inflationary increases in road construction costs. As one example, on Hartwell Avenue, the bridge over the Kiln Brook has weight limitations and needs to be replaced. This roadway is heavily used by the Hanscom/Air Force and MIT Lincoln Labs, which do not pay property taxes. Yet the Town will need to invest approximately \$6 million for this project. The Town receives approximately \$970,000 annually in Chapter 90 funding.
8. **Community Preservation Act:** Increase the deeds surcharge that funds the CPA. The Town's matching amount is now down to approximately 16% of the amount contributed by our taxpayers, as a consequence of more and more communities accepting the CPA.
9. **Senior Property Tax Relief:** Selectmen would encourage the exploration of general legislation along the lines of the Sudbury senior property tax relief/income-based model (which was special legislation).
10. **Renewable Energy:** Similar to the Complete Streets program, developed a program to provide financial support for municipal renewable energy programs (solar, geothermal, etc.).
11. **Regional Ballot Initiatives** – Any sense of why this has not been reported out of Senate Ways & Means?
12. **Air B&B & TNC data collection:** Need for general legislation (Planning for housing and transportation as it relates to inadequate data inputs) now that new technologies are impacting land use and transportation regulations.

