

[Lin Jensen](#)

1. Why should people who care about social justice vote for you?

As a Chinese immigrant, and someone who has worked and lived in different countries, I hope to offer the Planning Board a diverse voice and new perspectives. I have lived in apartments in Beijing, New York, New Jersey, and Germany. Our Lexington home is actually the first and only single-family house I have lived in. I have seen different planning approaches, and know how a ray of sunlight or cherry blossoms outside a window can bring in the beauty of nature and brighten up your mood no matter where you live, whether it is an apartment or house. I think that now in 2024, we have the know-how to plan new denser districts in an inclusive and sustainable way so that all residents will feel they are welcome, valued, and part of the larger community.

I have worked in larger groups of advocates and volunteers for waste reduction, clean heat alliance, and bylaw amendments for better zoning that address both housing and preservation for 19 years. I have learned so much – from my colleagues in the community and town staff – about equity issues and social justice in America. Racial and socioeconomic equity is an integral part of sustainability solutions. I would like to contribute to the Planning Board's work on both.

2. Why did you support or oppose Article 34 (Amend Zoning Bylaw Map - Multi-Family Housing for MBTA Communities)? In your answer, please explain how your position promotes housing justice.

Article 34 was to add housing stock, reliant more on market-force, trickle-down economics. It missed the precious opportunity to truly regulate for smaller, attainable units.

I supported an amendment to Article 34 that attempted to give the town the opportunity to a) satisfy the state requirement with some of the districts and b) fix the issues in the other districts after the Town Meeting. The amendment garnered a lot of support but not enough to pass.

I voted no to the original Article 34, in the hope that the town would be given time to strengthen the language to yield more affordable/attainable housing and result in more welcoming integration to the immediate abutters. For example in some of the districts we could:

1. Set a limit on the square footage of each dwelling units in some of the districts (not allowed under MBTA Act).
2. Have more reasonable setbacks (currently 0 feet if at least 50% of the facade is for commercial use, i.e. no frontage other than the sidewalk).
3. Looking into affordable housing contributions for smaller projects, which are a significant portion of the districts.

The article will increase land value in the MBTA districts, which will make potential changes hard if the change is perceived to be taking some of that value back. One of my planning principles is to err on the conservative side, and you can always relax later when necessary.

Additionally, according to a recently passed state law, zoning changes for multi-family housing need 51% to pass, but 67% to roll back. Therefore, it makes even more sense to try to get it right the first time.