

Tina McBride

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

Born and raised in Lexington, I grew up in a town with relative demographic diversity and I returned to raise my own family here. The neighborhood in which I grew up was a working class, blue collar with an immigrant population. I have always been a social justice activist - in the 90's I started a non profit that I managed in Mattapan, then Detroit, the South Bronx and Harlem, worked as a board member for Mass Movement Reach program since 2009, and a METCO Family Friends Coordinator and host. I assisted my husband's numerous efforts in the social justice space including his hiring of Willie O'Ree at the NHL and the production of two documentaries - **Willie** and **Beyond Their Years** - about marginalized Black athletes and how they became social justice icons.

I have been following the Planning Board, attending meetings for years, and have proposed bylaw changes and collaborated on amendments to address some of those issues. In 2015 I proposed a Demolition Delay Extension Citizen's Article that failed. The hope was to preserve small, more affordable homes or starter homes, that were being torn down at a startling rate and replaced with large, overpriced homes that are way out of reach for most families. Happily, a similar article was finally passed in 2023 by another citizens group led by Robert Rotberg, but we have a deep hole to build our way out of as it pertains to inclusive housing. Dense housing must be enabled and it needs to be done in a manner that yields smaller units, increases our quality of life, and makes us all feel good to live in Lexington.

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.

The MBTA Communities Act was a welcome first step. The new state administration wanted to motivate more communities to allow dense housing zoning through incentive. I believed we should meet and exceed the required ask of approximately 50 acres in Lexington.

But there was a misconception that if you voted no on Article 34, you opposed multi-family housing. In my case, it is actually the opposite. I think the Article should have been strengthened to truly yield affordable and attainable housing.

A second misconception is that if you supported the amendment that took out the districts closer to the center, you are pushing the multi-family to the edge of town and being exclusionary. In actuality, the intent of the amendment was to give our town the opportunity to create Lexington-style MBTA districts where we can strengthen the language to yield better results. In fact, it would create more affordable and inclusionary housing.

There were three things that I wanted to amend in the MBTA Communities Act:

1. 10% affordable housing was too low. We know that the need is far greater than this.

2. With the mixed use bonus, five story buildings with reduced setback requirements in the designated districts, would put a disproportionate burden on people who lived in small homes - some of our most affordable housing currently in Lexington. That did not seem like social justice to me.
3. It requires 3/4 vote to make any changes after this zoning was initiated. After consent is given it is hard to pull it back despite the protections and advantages it can provide to the rest of the community.

Because of the size of the lots in most of these districts, we will end up with even less than 10% affordable housing being built. Smaller parcels will always allow the number of units to be just below the point at which the requirement kicks in and we will most likely end up with large expensive apartments. Currently we don't have a vehicle to get substantially higher rates of inclusionary or affordable housing and I believe through better Planning that we can prioritize affordability, sustainability, equity and smart growth. I want to get to work on that effort.

If elected, I will continue to weigh residents' concerns and feedback, listen carefully to Planning staff, and review development proposals, regulations, and bylaws using a wide lens including issues of sustainability, equity, affordability, quality of life and the desires and expectations of residents as voiced in the Comprehensive Plan, in every decision.