

Housing Authority Candidates

If no candidate profile is shown, the candidate did not submit a profile.

(* indicates incumbent)

Housing Authority

One to be elected for 4 years

James Harris

Community Activities

- Current Member of the Winchester Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.
- Dedicated Board member and active volunteer at Fidelity House in Arlington.

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Housing Authority?

- Since May of 2023 I have been serving on the Winchester Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners after being specially appointed by the Winchester Select Board to hold the interim seat until the next Town Election.
- While I have been on the Board at the Winchester Housing Authority, I have helped the staff and other Board members secure a grant for a Resident Service Coordinator, which has been a big help to several tenants through outreach, activities, and basic needs. I have also participated in getting several other projects underway at the Winchester Housing Authority.
- I am currently pursuing a Master of Public Administration at the University of Rhode Island and am a graduate of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- I have spent the last eight years employed as a legal assistant at a local real estate law firm, where I have had experience dealing with both the legal and financial sides of real estate transactions.
- Prior to my current job, I worked for many years at Fidelity House in Arlington – a community center focused on youth development, but also offers many social and athletic programs for both children and adults alike. While at Fidelity House I worked closely with residents of Arlington and many of the other surrounding communities through social and athletic programs, various recreation programs, and community outreach work.
- I continue to support Fidelity House as a member of the Friends of Fidelity House, a Board of dedicated volunteers working toward ensuring Fidelity House's success and availability for generations to come through fundraising, outreach, and facility improvements.

What are the three or four issues facing the Winchester Housing Authority that you think are most important?

- The waterpipe project: this is a big undertaking. We are currently working on replacing the water pipes that serve our residents, as they have begun to cause issues and need updating.
- The aging complexes: many of the units we have for our tenants are in need of various updates.
- Finding ways to gain additional funding.

Is there an important issue facing the Housing Authority that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?

- Because the Winchester Housing Authority is budgetarily governed by the Commonwealth, we are left to decide what must take precedent when it comes to the order in which jobs get done. The waterpipe project is a massive financial undertaking and a huge priority. That said, once the waterpipe project has been completed it is a goal of the Winchester Housing Authority to begin updating our residential units with the intention of focusing on the units that are in most need of an update first.

Thomas Mourier

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Community Activities

My name is Thomas Mourier, a resident of Winchester since I was two. I have attended the Winchester Public Schools throughout my entire education and was heavily involved in community efforts as the founder of the WHS Finance Club by promoting financial literacy among fellow high school students. At Northeastern University, I am affiliated with the ACES program, a volunteer student organization that supports community development in the greater Boston area. This semester, my project involves supporting Boston Building Resources with ensuring that Bostonians have access to affordable home construction supplies and the training needed to increase the value of their homes.

Candidate Statement

What skills and experience would you bring to the Housing Authority?

My main skills and experience lie within the field of engineering, an area sorely lacking in the Housing Authority. I would bring a problem-solving mindset to fix public transit for tenants as I take the Commuter Rail to Boston every day for school and feel firsthand the inadequate service that the MBTA provides our town. If elected, I will work to ensure that tenants are not dependent on cars but instead have access to multiple options of getting around the area, as an urban community should be able to provide.

What are the three or four issues facing the Winchester Housing Authority that you think are most important?

The biggest issue facing affordable housing in this town is the lack of places for downsizing seniors to live in. 84.762% of the new housing is geared towards those in the working force but there needs to be more age-restricted units in Winchester to ensure that our aging population can retire in the town that they grew up in. Of course, transit is a large problem that current affordable housing tenants have. There is a stark need for units to be built near transit infrastructure, however this strains our already over-stressed roadways if not done in moderation. Lastly, the current Waterfield lot decision is an immense mistake for the town and frankly undemocratic. The voters of Winchester have already shown their opposition to the current proposal, and it is not fair to the trust of the public for the select board to proceed with it without even acknowledging the concerns that were brought up regarding the unusual length of the land lease. Waterfield should be a project that works for all of Winchester with transparent expectations from the start instead of keeping the public in the dark.

Is there an important issue facing the Housing Authority that is not being addressed or that you think could be addressed in a better way? What approach would you take to address it?

The largest issue facing the Housing Authority currently is how to provide tenants with adequate transit options. The current focus on building units near the center Commuter Rail is not sufficient as not all tenants are likely to work in Boston and require transportation to the city every weekday. A better focus would be to build units near bus routes as tenants will have more flexibility to go to surrounding areas while ensuring that the central business district is not overwhelmed by additional congestion. If elected, I would seek to work with the MBTA to convert current bus stops into stations with sheltered platforms to meet our transportation needs while providing tenants with better transit routes suited to their needs.