

Precinct 1 Town Meeting Candidates

Eight to be elected, twelve on the ballot

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Peter D'Antonio*

Eric T. Shediac

Community Activities

Assistant Coach for Winchester Youth Baseball Football, Basketball, and Hockey.

Chaperone on Scout Camping Trips.

Volunteer for the EnKa fair.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important? I believe the most important issues are fiscal responsibility, economic growth for downtown, and better transparency for town planning and management.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue? I am most passionate about fiscal responsibility. For example, the Waterfield project. The Select Board voted to sell the Town's real estate property to a developer without a proper financial analysis. Even after the residents of Winchester voted to have the Select Board revisit the Waterfield project and have a proper analysis performed, the Select Board is moving forward without the analysis anyway. By not having a proper analysis done for the Waterfield project, the Select Board is shortchanging Winchester on the value of one of its most precious assets. We can do better.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved? Winchester does a good job providing the basic services to its residents, schools, police, fire, and public works. I believe the handling of special projects need improvement.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House? I do not support this project at this time because the Lynch and Muraco school buildings need to be addressed first.

Patrick Gill

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Community Activities

My name is Patrick Gill, I am a candidate for a Precinct 1 Town Meeting seat as well as the open Assessor's seat. I am a proud graduate of Winchester Public School system as are my three children. I have resided on Nathaniel Rd in Precinct 1 my entire life. I bought my childhood home from my father back in 1994. I have successfully volunteered with many groups in town

for the benefit of its residents for decades. I proudly assisted with St. Mary's youth ministry group known as Encounter as well as Winchester Sports Foundation, Winchester Field Development council and the Winchester Youth lacrosse and Football programs.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

- Fiscal Responsibility
- Responsible Planning & Management of Town Assets
- Smart growth policy
- Non-political decision making
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Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue? Smart growth policy and Non-political decision making. With many important decisions approaching, with local and national divide growing, I felt this is an important time to get involved to help the town make these decisions fairly and efficiently for all the citizens. I care deeply about the future of our town and feel the need to be a part of the solution and help maintain the towns core values and character.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

I believe a Town is at its best when its residents come together and work productively for the common good of the entire community.

It is my opinion that a successful elected official is one that communicates and listens to its constituents, and believes in transparency and accountability.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

As for the carriage house, as materials get released, I can better evaluate this project on its merit and see if this makes sense for the town and the school system. Winchester faces many challenges in the present and near future such as the development and building of the new Lynch and Muraco schools. We are also a Town with a narrow revenue stream but one that needs much work on our infrastructure (Roads and Buildings). We also must work hard and smartly to ensure that the high standard of education that has been established in Winchester is given the assets that it requires to stay at the high level.

I would like to take my passion for my hometown and the skill and drive I have demonstrated of working with others to set goals and meet objectives and put them to work for all of Winchester.

Anthea Brady

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Community Activities

- Personnel Board, Town of Winchester
- Admissions Co-Chair, A Better Chance Winchester
- Secretary, Family Action Network
- Membership Co-Chair, Family Action Network

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

There are several pressing issues facing Winchester. Affordable housing and real estate is the most prominent, as we have limited land available for development and empty lots and construction are very visible.

That said, traffic safety and a lack of transportation options need to be studied across town, but especially in Precinct 1, where there will be plenty of upcoming construction from the Eversource line. We need to support our neighbors in having safe streets and safe routes to school and into the town center.

We likely will face overrides in the upcoming years for rebuilding the Lynch and Muraco schools; both overrides need to be passed to bring the quality of school buildings in line with our other elementary schools. Muraco has been the site of patchwork repairs for far too long. We also need to include parks and recreational spaces in planning, and increase the safe outdoor spaces frequented by children and families, such as Leonard Field and the playground there.

Pandemic recovery for residents is critical and we cannot leave anyone behind as we come out of the past two years. The town should look at how ARPA funding can be used to support residents.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Increasing our affordable housing is important, not just as a means to protect from the hostile 40B projects, but to increase the cultural and economic diversity in town. Town Meeting may face future similar votes. It is important for the town of Winchester and Town Meeting members to be supportive of these initiatives.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester is a well-managed and effectively staffed town government, with a budget that many towns would envy. We need to continue to balance town initiatives such as traffic safety and parking, ensure that our most vulnerable residents are supported, and manage budgets for the financial health of the town.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

Winchester Public Schools is in need of central office space, and the Carriage House is in need of restoration after lying fallow for many years. A well-designed central office will likely save costs in the long run, given that existing space at the Parkhurst School will likely be renovated in future years, and currently also houses the growing preschool program.

Kathleen Duncan

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Candidate Statement

My husband and I moved to Winchester in 2015. We have a 3-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son, both born in Winchester. We have loved getting to know this amazing community and

raising our children here. We are members of St. Mary's church; our children attend Creative Corner daycare and we are members of FAN.

This is my first experience with town government. My family has benefited greatly from being part of this community and I want to give back - to participate actively in keeping and enhancing the welcoming community it is today. I also feel strongly that we are better when we work together and respectfully listen to a broad variety of viewpoints. Lastly, as my children approach school age I'd like to be more involved in decisions that impact their future in this town.

The National political landscape has become very divisive, bucketing people into "teams" and pitting neighbors against each other. The Covid experience has both brought us together as a community and pushed us further apart. Being new to town politics I am coming in without any preconceived notions or agenda. I want what is best for this town. My husband and I are registered independents and have voted for candidates from all parties. I promise to listen to all sides of an issue, do appropriate research and ask questions before making an informed decision about how to vote. I will represent all of my neighbors and will seek to understand their wishes and viewpoints.

I would appreciate your vote and look forward to meeting you all!

Cecilia Carrion-Carmona*

Tara M. Hughes*

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Community Activities

Town Meeting Member

Communications Study Committee Member

Volunteered with Residents for Waterfield Facts

School volunteer including room parent for several years

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important? I think all issues facing Winchester are important and should be considered thoughtfully. I also believe that the issues are ever changing and that we need to adjust to the times. Right now, Covid, schools, affordable housing, environmental concerns/climate change and communication are some of the currently important issues.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue? I would have to say affordable housing. Reaching an affordable housing threshold is a state mandate. If we do not approach this issue wisely and with consideration, we will be forced into adversarial developments. Therefore, we need to do what we can to greatly increase our stock of affordable housing on our terms.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved? Winchester is generally very good at finding a pool of people willing to volunteer their time for the MANY boards,

commissions, committees and societies supporting this town. We have many hard-working volunteers and also hardworking staff/employees. However, Winchester could improve the lines of communication between all working parts. Thankfully, Winchester has updated the town website and will continue to make necessary improvements. Winchester has also formed the Communications Study Committee. I believe Winchester is committed to improving communications, though it may take time.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House? I did vote as a Town Meeting Member to appropriate funds for the design/study phase of this project. I also know that the Historical Society supports restoring the Carriage House, which is listed on the National Record of Historic Places. In addition, with the influx of new residents and students to town due to the need for additional housing, which is continually being developed, and the need to rebuild schools and relocate the students, this space may become important. However, I am looking forward to obtaining more information on the cost and need scenarios and on learning more about town wide support before I determine whether I support the restoring of the Carriage House.

Timothy Matthews

I'm grateful to be considered as a Town Meeting member for Precinct 1 this spring. While I've lived in the Boston area for nearly 20 years, my husband (a pediatric pulmonologist at Boston Children's Hospital) and I moved to Winchester at the end of 2018 to take advantage of all this town has to offer as we raise our two children, who are now 5 and 1. Having moved from an urban condo, we've particularly enjoyed the many open spaces nearby and the chance to garden in our own yard!

I bring diverse prior work experience, having started my career in nonprofit fundraising and corporate marketing; about 10 years ago, however, I transitioned into work at the intersection of early education, language and literacy. I completed my Doctorate at Harvard in 2020. I am now doing consulting while providing plenty of stopgap care for our young kids due to the pandemic.

COVID-19 has taught us that local community and neighbor support is essential. Even while quarantined, socially distant, or masked, our town's residents have remained resilient – supporting local businesses; honoring our health care and front-line heroes; checking in on the most vulnerable among us; and working together to continue adapting our schools for the changing requirements of remote, hybrid, and now in-person learning. As we continue forging our way toward a brighter, healthier future, we can choose to carry forward the lessons of kindness, community, and transparency in the way we conduct town governance, building a more open and equitable Winchester for all.

Town Meeting should build a stronger Winchester by investing hopefully and strategically in the town's future. Through listening deeply to those experts situated closest to the work, we can best learn what resources are needed.

In particular, our children are the gateway to tomorrow, and the pandemic continues to strain and challenge our public education system in a variety of unanticipated ways. The American Academy of Pediatrics declared that the US faces a national emergency in child and adolescent mental health. As educators spend 5 days each week in classrooms, what better investment

could we make than empowering them and our school system more broadly with every tool necessary to support our kids? I am troubled by reports that WPS has fallen short of meeting the early literacy needs of all students, particularly those with learning differences. We could benefit from a town-wide effort to strengthen core reading instruction and differentiate appropriately for those who need it, as we know young children's challenges can compound over time if left systematically unaddressed.

Town Meeting members continue to consider a host of other, equally important issues. Following last summer's vote on the Waterfield project, I hope that the community can find an equitable path forward on affordable housing for this and other sites that meet state requirements, are faithful to the prior work of Town Meeting and committees, and provide much-needed opportunities for a range of residents to call Winchester home. The parcel at Washington and Swanton (Fall 2021 TM Article 9), along with other private projects (such as Converse Place), offer opportunities to consider how Winchester can make genuine strides forward. Our Safe Harbor status expires this spring, which could bring hostile 40b projects not meeting our community's planning, zoning, or affordability goals. Preparing for and following through on a host of needed infrastructure upgrades (particularly the long-overdue Lynch and Muraco upgrades, which necessitate investment in where to house central administration and how to provide "swing space" as these schools are rebuilt) continues to be a pressing concern. Finally, I believe that systems and processes at Town Hall (e.g., permits, filings, etc.) need to be streamlined and brought more online in a way that reduces headaches and meets the needs of a busy, tech-savvy population; I am glad that our new website takes an important first step.

I would be honored to serve as an advocate and partner for Precinct 1 on Town Meeting, and welcome any questions or requests for additional information.

Prassede Calabi*

Community Activities

I have been actively engaged in Winchester civic and political matters since 2004, and lived here much longer.

Committees

- Climate Action Advisory Committee (appointed by Select Board)
- Climate Action Task Force (nominated by Planning Board; appointed by SB) - -Davidson Park Committee (appointed)
- Advisory Committee to Town Manager on Recycling (appointed by Town Manager).

I have worked with, serve on or have formally addressed these

- DPW
- Aberjona Initiative
- Grow Local
- Friends of Winter Pond
- Town Center Initiative
- Conservation Commission
- Board of Health among others.
- TMM (since 2019)
- Brennan Speaker, 2017 Jenks Center

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

My biggest concern is our political process - the escalating sense of entitlement and lack of civility. While the country as a whole express those both, at one time Winchester did better. No longer.

I think we confuse logistics with morality. No one is morally degenerate for wearing a mask or not. For supporting or not supporting a logo, a development, or any particular cause. We just disagree.

Perhaps if disagreeing does not make anyone "evil," we will more likely find consensus on the issues before us.

They include

- Housing
- Taxes
- Implementing the new 'green' laws
- Schools

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

I care about finding and implementing best combinations of top-quality town services, mixed housing, slowing the rate of tax increases, and best environmental stewardship.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

We have many outstanding municipal staff, and volunteers. Town hall is incredibly busy with multiple meetings every evening.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

I voted 'no' on this article at Fall town meeting, where Fin Comm unanimously voted 'no.' While our schools might be the gem in Winchester's crown, this expense cannot be justified

Enzo Rascionato

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Community Activities

Winchester Finance Committee: 4 years, Chair (2021), Vice Chair (2020)

Waterfield Task Force, Finance Committee Liaison (2021)

Energy Management Committee, Finance Committee Rep (2019-2020)

Town Meeting Member (2021)

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important?

Our biggest challenge as a Town is balancing our property tax level with rising town costs, especially for our schools. Winchester already has the 8th highest average tax bill in Massachusetts, and the upcoming and needed override for rebuilding the Lynch elementary school will push that higher. It's critical that we prioritize our goals and make balanced decisions in upcoming budget cycles to avoid large property tax increases in the next couple of years.

In addition, establishing a clear affordable housing strategy is of primary importance. Winchester must focus on driving to decisions on the Waterfield and Washington projects. Unfortunately, having too many competing goals has stymied the process to move the projects forward. We need to get a clear vision from the Select Board and use that to make decisions and act on them. Continued delay costs the Town money in interest on the \$5 million loan for the Washington parcel, as well as tax receipts from getting these properties developed. These projects can be a positive move towards making Winchester better and solving current problems, but they can't solve every problem in town. We need to prioritize and find solutions that move the ball forward.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue?

Having been on Finance Committee for 4 years, including Chair last year, gives me unique visibility into the Town's fiscal position. While we have a strong financial position and a AAA rating as a Town, we don't have a large commercial tax base compared to other comparable towns nearby. This means we have to be very thoughtful about how we spend our budget and make sure we prioritize which services and capital investments are most important.

Too often the Town makes decisions on individual projects instead of considering the overall budget. At Spring Town Meeting, as FinCom Chair I highlighted many of these challenges using data, and I will continue to do that if elected to Town Meeting.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved?

Winchester does a lot of things well. It has a strong school system, a great downtown, and beautiful public spaces. Those things coupled with its proximity to Boston make Winchester an incredible place to live, and I would love the opportunity to represent Precinct 1 as we work to make it even better.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House?

The Carriage House proposal is the perfect example of a project that must be prioritized with other needs the Town has. Central Office consists of 18 staff administrators, including the superintendent. Spending \$6 million to build out a separate building that will only support that small number of School personnel is hard to justify. Currently they reside in the Parkhurst building, which also supports other functions, such as some of our pre-K programs. I would much rather continue to invest in Parkhurst rather than add yet another school building that requires ongoing support and maintenance. Parkhurst also gives the Town more flexibility for future space needs, such as increasing population or a wider offering of pre-K programs.

In addition, we have to consider how this project compares in prioritization with other capital needs. The Capital Committee has a long list of over \$60 million of projects that require funding over the next 5 years. While the Carriage House would be a beautiful restoration of a historic building, it has to be ranked versus the other projects that may be more sorely needed

Deborah Jones Melkonian

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Community Activities

I've been a volunteer in a number of capacities, mostly school-related recently, since moving to Winchester in 2008. Some favorites have been my time co-chairing the Playgroups at FAN (Family Action Network), as well as at Muraco working on safety issues, and baking cookies as part of a number of efforts in town. I have been a Registrar for the Town of Winchester since 2015. My three kids are enrolled in Winchester schools, elementary and middle, participate in several Winchester sports, and I work here in town.

Candidate Statement

What Winchester issues do you think are most important? Right now, as with most families, finances are a very important focus - making responsible choices with limited funds so that the future will be secure for all residents.

Of those important issues, which one do you feel most passionate about, and what is your position on that issue? I am most passionate about ensuring representation for the residents of Precinct 1 in town-wide financial and development discussions. I have walked most of my precinct, working on other issues affecting our neighborhoods and have met so many wonderful people. We struggle with issues, such as traffic and congestion, that manifest in different ways here than in other parts of town, and it's important for our voices to be heard and for us to be part of the process for solutions.

What does Winchester do well and what might be improved? Winchester is filled with residents who are engaged and who truly embody the spirit of volunteerism. We're so lucky to be part of that.

Do you support the proposal to build a stand-alone administrative building for the Winchester Public Schools, to be developed by restoring the Carriage House adjacent to the Sanborn House? With several school buildings that directly serve our kids in poor condition (and years to go before they may be addressed), it doesn't feel right to ask the taxpayers for the millions of dollars for an admin building. We need to make solid financial choices that serve the town, and this feels like a "want" and not an essential "need". I'm certain that there are other good options for our administrators that would be less expensive and that this option could be explored again in the future when the finances might not require an override.

Denis A. Collet*