

Precinct 7 Town Meeting Candidates

Eight to be elected for 3 years, eight on the ballot

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

(* indicates incumbent)

Deborah DePeter*

deb@bryantparkdesigns.com

Community Activities

- Town Meeting Member, 2013-present
- Winchester Foundation for Educational Excellence (WFEE), former President, current Board Member, 2015-present
- Member of WFEE Grants Committee, 2017-present
- Winchester High School PFA Social Committee member/volunteer 2019-2023
- McCall MPA Volunteer, 2016-2019
- Co-President, PISC (Parent InterSchool Council), 2015-2016
- Member, Winchester Chamber of Commerce, 2014-present

Candidate Statement

I've enjoyed serving as a Town Meeting member since 2013. I've lived in Winchester since 2007, and have twins who are recent Winchester High School grads, and a 9th grader as well.

As a former high school teacher, educational issues are top of mind for me! I've loved volunteering in the schools over the past 14 years, and remain committed to following and engaging with WPS through my work with WFEE and beyond. I see the literacy issue we're facing as a top recent concern, and support the district's plan to survey families and staff and hire outside experts to advise on a sustainable plan moving forward. While I'm disappointed to learn of the struggles of so many young readers, and the perhaps outdated approaches sometimes used in elementary classrooms, I'm confident that the district will work with outside advisors, staff, families, WFEE and all stakeholders to move forward with an effective plan.

As a local business owner with a downtown storefront (Bryant Park Designs at 9 Winchester Terrace), the vitality of Winchester Center is of paramount importance to me. It's been concerning to see how many storefronts have closed their doors since the Pandemic. I'm very interested in how the town can help support the various small local businesses and restaurants who help make the center a "destination" for our kids, their families, and other visitors.

Beside these priorities, I also feel affordable housing is a critical issue facing Winchester. It is crucial we establish a diversity of housing size and affordability, to create a balanced citizenry in our town. Focusing on the MBTA 3A Communities Act and 40B projects, I believe, will help us reach this goal. Lastly, I support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act. Once adopted, matching funds from the state Community Preservation Trust Fund could aid Winchester in preserving open space and historic sites, creating affordable housing, and developing and maintaining outdoor parks, fields, and playgrounds.

Christopher Jones*

Elizabeth Schreiber*

Isobel Magee

Joshua Bers

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Community Activities

Since 2021, I have volunteered on the Town's Climate Action Advisory Committee. The CAAC is mandated with providing guidance to the Select Board in helping the Town to achieve its Climate Action Plan 2020 which includes reducing carbon pollution by 80% by 2050 and building resiliency to climate change. Activities include promoting WinPower100 adoption at Town Day, organizing an Electrical Vehicle showcase during Climate Solutions Week.

This winter, I volunteered to help with the setup and strike of the lighting for the Lynch/Parkhurst School's performance of Frozen at Town Hall

At this past Fall's Town Meeting, I volunteered, and was accepted to fill a vacant Town Meeting seat for precinct 7.

Candidate Statement

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

Reducing pollution

Encouraging civic engagement

Updating Town's Zoning to support Multi-family community act

What are your positions on these important issues?

Reducing pollution as a town is an important step towards ensuring a clean, healthy planet for the next generations. In hiring a sustainability director in 2021, the Town is moving in the right direction, and I support efforts to expand Electric Vehicle use by Town staff and adopt the state's new opt-in stretch energy code to ensure energy efficient new construction.

As a town with a town meeting representative government, we depend upon engaged citizens to make informed decisions for our future. However, when less than 10% of the voting population of the town turns out for local elections, we know that we need to make some course corrections to improve civic engagement with Town Government. I would support outreach at the schools by Town Meeting members to provide hands-on learning on local government.

Up for vote in this Spring's town meeting is the Planning Board's proposal to change zoning to be compliant with the MBTA 3A law and its objectives to increase housing supply close to commuter rail stops. We have an opportunity to update zoning that hasn't changed in over 50 years while revitalizing the Main St business district. This process needs to be done carefully, with full community buy-in, so that we don't repeat failures of towns like Milton.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

Yes, I support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act. I believe that the Town benefits from the presence of many historically significant buildings and sites including the Lincoln school, the Town Green, Ginn field and more. Unfortunately, the state of the playgrounds in town parks is not good and we are not keeping up with needed renovations such that some of them are unusable by our children. I believe that the CPA is a good funding vehicle to stay ahead of the maintenance required to keep Winchester the best place to live.

Kara Nierenberg

Margaret Browder

maggiesarahmoran@gmail.com

Community Activities

Treasurer of Lynch Parents Association

Parent of children at Lynch Elementary School and St. Mary's School

My husband and I have lived in Winchester since 2015. Our son is a first grader at Lynch. Our daughter is presently at St. Mary's School and is excited to begin kindergarten this upcoming fall in the Winchester Public Schools. In addition to our involvement with our children's schools, our children participate in many activities here in town, including Winchester Recreation, Kid's Corner, and Winchester Soccer Club. We love being a part of the Winchester community, and my desire to give back to the community is why I am running for town meeting.

Candidate Statement

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

Maintaining and building upon our excellent school system, investing in the maintenance and improvement of our town recreational and community spaces, attracting foot traffic to our downtown area, and integrating affordable housing opportunities into our larger community.

What are your positions on these important issues?

One of the main reasons why my husband and I moved to Winchester was because we were looking for a community with a strong public school system that we could trust with educating our children. It is very important to me that our schools continue providing high quality education to all of our students, including students with learning differences. This requires that we support our teachers by ensuring that there is adequate staffing and training, and that we help teachers and administrators to identify and utilize the most appropriate curricula for all students.

It is also a priority of mine that we invest in our community spaces and recreation facilities. It benefits every member of the community to have well-maintained communal spaces where people can gather and enjoy each other's company. From the sports fields where our children play to the town center where small businesses operate, an investment in the physical infrastructure is an investment in our community.

The beauty of prioritizing and investing in these public goods is that it benefits everyone, directly or indirectly. The challenge, of course, is making sure that these incredible public goods are accessible to and utilized by a diverse population, in every sense of the word. I support expanding affordable housing in the town. I don't pretend to have the answers, but I will approach all ideas guided by the values of inclusivity and community.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I support adopting the Community Preservation Act. Although adopting the Act would result in a small increase in our property taxes, it would also enable us to receive matching funds from the Commonwealth to maintain and improve our parks and playgrounds, preserve historical buildings, and invest in affordable housing- all necessary investments for a vibrant and diverse community. If we do not adopt the Act, we are leaving money on the table that could be used for necessary expenditures in the future.

Victoria Hopcroft

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/victoria-hopcroft-55631/>

Community Activities

I've been a member of the Winchester community since December 2005 when my husband and I settled into our home on Pond Street. I've been employed full-time at a consulting firm in Boston since then while raising two children (currently in 4th and 9th grade). My husband and I are very involved in our community and have invested time advocating for various local efforts (e.g., Friends of Winter Pond, equitable remote educational instruction during the pandemic, greater parental involvement at our daycare, and traffic safety on and around Pond Street). While my professional and parental commitments have limited my ability to formally volunteer, my commitment to our community remains strong.

I care deeply about mental health issues and serve in the following leadership roles:

- Member, McLean Hospital Women's Mental Health Leadership Council
- Board of Visitors, McLean Hospital

Candidate Statement

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

- School funding
- Access + community engagement
- Affordability

What are your positions on these important issues?

- **School funding** – I'm passionate about providing access to an equitable education across all our elementary schools. I'd like to see more discussion about gaps that should be addressed, whether in infrastructure, enrichment programs, special education, talent attraction and retention, identification of programs needed to close achievement gaps, and preparing the next generation to contribute to society as good citizens equipped with the skills needed to succeed in a rapidly changing global world.
- **Access + community engagement** – Participating in volunteer work and community engagement often hinges on having the time, financial backing, or resources necessary to actively contribute within our town. Unfortunately, this means that many voices from

individuals who lack such privileges may go unheard. I believe we're overlooking valuable perspectives and contributions from residents who face barriers to participation. We should explore avenues for connecting with a broader spectrum of citizens and fostering a more inclusive and accessible process for community engagement.

- **Affordability** – Winchester must confront the pressing issue of affordable housing shortage to avoid the legal battles faced by communities like Milton. Affordable housing promotes greater socioeconomic diversity, helps attract and retain a workforce that can afford to live near their jobs, allows seniors with fixed incomes to stay in their community near existing networks of support, and, if well planned, helps contribute to environmental sustainability.

Do you support Winchester adopting the Community Preservation Act? What reasons do you have for your position?

I support the town adopting the CPA. The fiscal burden of our town falls heavily on residents and the opportunity to pair state CPA matching funds with an incremental tax increase will enable us to prioritize and fund a number of projects that would otherwise be entirely funded by the community or go unfunded, including historic preservation, open space, recreation projects, and affordable housing. The CPA empowers communities like ours to prioritize our own unique needs. This means we have the local control to direct funds towards projects that have the most impact and support from our community while getting matching funds from the state. How we implement this will be important as it could be another vehicle to encourage broader community engagement around projects that impact our community members and increase engagement in the decision-making process.