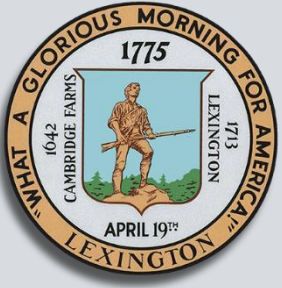




Accessory Dwelling Units: New Opportunities

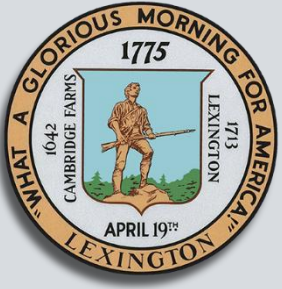
Lexington Housing Partnership

April 4, 2025



Introductions

- **Charles Hornig** (Lexington Housing Partnership, moderator)
- **Tim O'Reilly** (Backyard ADUs, builder)
- **Jennifer Conroy** (Cambridge Savings Bank, finance)
- **Olivia Lawler and Bruce Dempsey** (Town of Lexington, permits)
- **Todd Burger** (ADU owner)



Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

A dwelling unit subordinate in size to the principal dwelling on a lot, located in either the principal dwelling or an accessory structure

Also known as an accessory apartment, in-law apartment, basement apartment, cottage, ohana dwelling, etc.

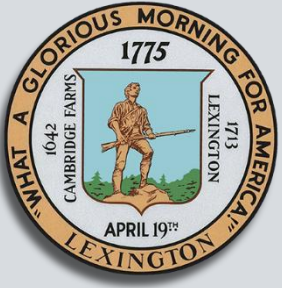




Lexington Timeline

1924	Multi-family dwellings first restricted to limited areas of Town
1979-1982	Zoning Bylaw changes fail to pass Town Meeting
1983	Zoning Bylaw distinguishes ‘accessory apartments’ from 2-family dwellings
1988, 2005, 2016	Zoning Bylaw changes to relax restrictions
2025	Affordable Homes Act takes effect





Affordable Homes Act

Small (<900 SF) ADUs are permitted ‘by right’ with a building permit, independent of most Zoning Bylaw restrictions

- In any zoning district where one-family homes are permitted
- May be within the dwelling, attached, or detached
- No occupancy restrictions
- Same setback and height limits as a one-family dwelling
- Other permits (building, wetland, stormwater, tree, etc.) apply as for a one-family dwelling

Larger accessory apartments are still permitted with their current restrictions.



JENNIFER CONROY

VICE PRESIDENT

SENIOR MORTGAGE LOAN OFFICER

NMLS# 704490

978.201.9513 (M)

FINANCING OPTIONS

3 OPTIONS

- CASH-OUT REFINANCE
- HOME EQUITY LINE OF CREDIT OR HOME EQUITY LOAN
- CONSTRUCTION LOAN

FINANCING OPTIONS

HOME EQUITY LOANS OR LINES OF CREDIT

- If you Currently have Equity in Your Existing **Primary Residence** (Not available for Investment Properties)
- We can lend up to 85% LTV of existing home value
- Can be in First or Second Position
- Available for Projects the do not **Structurally Impact** the Primary Residence
 - Over **Garage or Basement Conversions**
 - **Detached Units**
- No closing costs
- HELOC Interest is only paid on balances disbursed. Can pay interest only on amount drawn.
- Bank will not be involved in the Project or with Contractor payments

FINANCING OPTIONS

CASH OUT REFINANCE

- Allows you to Borrow against the equity in your home
- New first mortgage often with lower interest rates than Home Equity Line or Loan
- Must confirm the dollar amount needed and begin interest and principal payments on full balance
- Must be completed prior to beginning the Project

FINANCING OPTIONS

CONSTRUCTION LOANS

- For Projects that impact the **Existing Structure** - Roof Line and Footprint of Primary Residence.
- Or if you need to include the **Value of the new addition** to finance the Project
- Loan is submitted with **Full Project Plans, Specifications and Budget.**
- Appraised Value is based on the “As Completed” value which will include the value of the new ADU
- Bank will conduct Project inspections to verify completion and the disburse funds. Normally 4 to 8 disbursements.
- Only one closing
- Existing mortgage will need to be rolled into new construction loan





ADU PERMITTING



THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Wetlands
- Historical Status
- Existing Site conditions
- Existing sewage disposal system (On-site or municipal?)



APPLYING FOR A PERMIT

- **Where:** Online Permitting System, OpenGov
- **Cost:** \$100 per \$1000 of proposed work
- **Approximate time to get a permit issued:** one month
- **Who can apply:** Homeowner or Licensed Contractor
- **Who can help:** Building Department
- **Next Steps:** Inspections → Certificate of Occupancy



COMMON REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Plans: floor plans, structural plans, electrical plans, etc.
- Gross Floor Area Calculations for the primary dwelling & ADU
- Height Calculation Form (if new construction/addition)
- Plot Plan (if new construction/addition)



DEPARTMENTS THAT REVIEW PERMITS

- Building (Electrical, Plumbing & Gas, Building, & Mechanical)
- Zoning
- Engineering
- Conservation
- Planning
- Historical Commission/Historic Districts Commission
- Health
- Tree Warden
- Sustainability
- Fire



BUILDING CODES TO CONSIDER

- Fire Separation
- Egress

386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners



**Re-Use of our 85-
year-old Horse Barn**



386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners



**Partial Demolition –
Siding Removal and
Structural Repairs**



386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners

Project Overview

- Design Approach: Adhere to a Net Zero Design and Exceed Building Codes in Place in 2019
- Initial Design: A 1,200 sqft ADU with a 3½ car, 4-bike garage below, a shed for yard tools and a greenhouse
- Builder: Platt Builders, 109 Central Avenue, Ayer, MA
- Owner Role: Takeback of 4,000+ hours of work from the builder over a 2-year period [during the Pandemic]
- Financing: Owner-financed [HELOC and savings]

386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners



... into a multi-use dwelling: **1040 sq ft ADU**, 3 ½ car garage, storage shed and greenhouse



386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners

Lessons Learned

- For 2 years, our design architect muttered only one phrase over and over: “Lexington will never let you build this”.
 - Tree Warden – Tree removals [left side of barn]
 - Board of Appeals
 - ADU permit
 - Setback variance
 - Exceeding 1,000 sqft limit variance, restricted to 1,040 sqft
 - Driveway design acceptance
 - Building Dept
 - Sewer and water hookup approvals
 - Garage Floor drain plumbing sign-off
 - Fire Dept - Occupancy permit
 - Engineering Dept/USPS Address Div - Mailing Address
 - Construction insurance issues
- . . . So our architect was almost right, but ultimately wrong

386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners

Results

- Four Awards for Project, including:
 - 2022 PRO New England Award for Best Garage
 - 2022 Chrysalis Award for Best Detached Outbuilding
 - Qualified Remodeler Master Design Silver Award for Best Detached Structure
- Occupied since Fall 2021 – Easy to rent
 - 1st Tenants – Next Door Neighbors
 - 2nd Tenants – Young Just Married Couple
- Adjustments
 - Sharing the Driveway
 - Rental Income Makes it Easier to Remain in Lexington
 - Nice Neighbors
 - Fully Functional Building
 - Complements Our Home

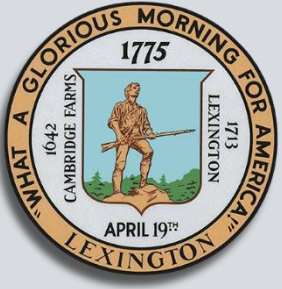
386 Lincoln St.

Todd and Deborah Burger, co-owners



For more information
see Lexcan Green
Homes Tour from
2:40 on video on
LexCan YouTube site:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_-b6sPjotf0





References

- Commonwealth of Massachusetts: <https://www.mass.gov/adu>
- Town of Lexington: <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/2226/Accessory-Dwelling-Units-ADUs>
- Backyard ADUs: <https://backyardadus.com>
- Cambridge Savings Bank: <https://www.cambridgesavings.com>
- AARP: <https://AARP.org/ADUs>

