

Candidate Name: **Jeff Calder**

Contact Info-- Email: calder4wenham@gmail.com; Facebook -- Jeff Calder for Wenham Select Board

Bio/Background:

- Married with one adult stepson, one dog
- Current Chair, Wenham FinCom
- Retired banking executive
- Attended public school in Sudbury, MA
- Moved to Wenham in early 2021
- Former Planning Board member in Cresskill, NJ
- Bachelor's in Accounting and MBA degree
- Graduated from Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS

1. Please state your position on the new MBTA housing legislation and the impact to the current elementary school landscape in HW.

The new law (section 3A of MGL c. 40A) requires that *an MBTA community shall have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria set forth in the statute.* The Massachusetts Attorney General's office issued an advisory that states "All MBTA Communities must comply with the Law" and "Communities that fail to comply with the Law may be subject to civil enforcement action ... and risk liability under federal and state housing laws."

In my experience as a Planning Board member, as it relates to housing legislation often the best course is to embrace the spirit of the law, negotiate from a position of strength and in doing so steer development projects toward the best outcome for the town rather than being obstructive and risking a court imposing terms that are harsher.

Other important considerations include:

- Zoning is not housing. It may be the first step toward housing but any housing development has a number of hurdles that must be met before shovel goes to ground including a willing seller of the land for development, a developer committed to the project, a subdivision plan that meets the applicable rules and regulations of the state and town *including working within existing water and wastewater constraints* and approval by the town's Planning Board.
- Housing near transit and downtown shopping supports walkable 'village-style' neighborhoods, the local business community, and climate and sustainability objectives by reducing reliance on automobiles.
- Diversity of housing stock supports a vibrant community and improves options for the segment of the population that earns too much to qualify for Affordable Housing but not enough to comfortably afford a \$1 million home (average assessment in Wenham is \$966K).
- Affordability is a challenge for not just young families but also seniors and others wishing to move to or stay in town.
- Multi-family housing would also have the potential of making Wenham more attractive to prospective hires by offering greater options for employees to live in town, including teachers.
- The impact of the legislation will be broadly shared. In total, 177 MBTA communities are subject to the new requirements of Section 3A.

Housing that may be built in Wenham as a result of the MBTA Community legislation is too far off to predict with any certainty the impact to Hamilton Wenham elementary schools but I think it will be incumbent upon the Wenham Select Board to maintain a clear line of communication with the Superintendent and School Committee as the potential impact of MBTA Community legislation becomes more apparent so the town and school district may react accordingly.

2. What do you feel your responsibilities would be as a member of the Select Board?

I believe it is the basic responsibility of every Select Board member to:

- listen, research, discuss and decide issues that come before the Board without personal agenda or bias.
- represent the interests of all citizens of Wenham, without prejudice.
- work collaboratively with other Select Board members to set the strategic direction for the town.
- be visible and accessible to the citizens of Wenham.

3. Describe the values you would bring to the town of Wenham?

I signed the Candidate Pledge to Human Rights <https://www.hwhumanrights.org/candidate-pledge> and believe it succinctly captures the values I hold and would bring to the position.

I commit to the citizens of Wenham that I will:

- Stand up for the fundamental values of human rights, including human dignity, freedom, democracy, and equality.
- Promote equity so that everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential, with no one being left behind.
- Foster strong engagement and dialogue with all local residents, to ensure that all voices are heard and considered.
- Call for more transparent and accountable governance, so that institutions can renew trust with those whom they serve.
- Promote an inclusive society and local economy for all by ensuring that every person, irrespective of gender, gender identity, age, race, differing ability, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, immigration status, national origin, economic class, incarceration record, or family status, has equitable access to educational and economic opportunities, housing, and social services.

4. How can you increase engagement with the residents on issues relating to any future large scale development?

I think it important to recognize that Wenham residents do not all wish to engage in the same manner so town government must develop multiple engagement channels to reach the largest segment of the citizenry.

- We can improve the promotion and advertisement of public meetings through better online engagement. The FY25 budget includes funding for a new and improved town website, so that's a good start.
- We can make it easier for folks to find and live stream meetings and view recordings of meetings after the fact.
- The town can host community workshops at venues like the HW Library, Council on Aging, The Maples, and Maple Woods, for example.
- We could run a series of short community surveys.
- The town could offer residents the option of receiving periodic emails with updated information on major initiatives.