



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.
2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?
3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.
4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?
5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?
6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.
 - [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015)
 - [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016)
 - [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017)
 - [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019)
 - [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)
 - [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending)
 - [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)
 - [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)
 - [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)

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for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

- 1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multi-family housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.**

Yes, the city should absolutely support the development of multi-family housing. We have a housing crisis. It is part of the responsibility of good government to assist and support housing development for all its citizens. It is especially important that we create opportunities for more affordable and accessible housing units and the best way to do that is to encourage multi-family housing and smaller housing units which are by nature more affordable.

- 2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?**

The most important mechanism for adding to the affordable housing supply is zoning reform. Good planning can identify appropriate sites for multifamily. I would like to see the special permit process streamlined, especially for smaller, less complicated projects. I am a fan of the triple deckers, which once were a key component to create affordable housing for new immigrants in the late 19th and early 20th century. Though Newton does not have a lot of them they do exist here and I think they can rise again as we look at ways to create more middle scale housing. We must be sure to encourage innovative design and construction methods and work on new financing models that are targeted towards people and families with modest incomes. Diversifying our housing supply can help diversify our city.

- 3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.**

Almost 90% of GHG emissions in Newton come from residential and commercial buildings and from the transportation sector. Future land use and zoning decisions are critical to meeting our climate action goals. Multifamily living is a much more efficient lifestyle. Siting these developments in village centers or transportation corridors give the residents more options to driving and reduces car trips. Our zoning must incentivize highly energy-efficient and climate-smart buildings in both by right and special permits.

Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes. Creating safe, comfortable public spaces for people and creating appropriate density in areas where people are not so car dependent is especially important. In particular, encouraging smaller housing units as part of zoning reform will help keep housing more affordable for families and individuals of moderate means. I think we could lower the local preference percentage, but I am cognizant of the needs of low- and moderate-income Newton residents and I would like some data on what percentage of Newton workers have participated in the program before I decide what the number should be.

4. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

We have an opportunity to create a more sustainable built environment, create more green spaces plant more trees create smaller and more efficient units of housing closer to transit and walkable to shops and amenities. Zoning reform is critical to meeting our climate action goals. I am enthusiastic about many of the new developments that have been approved, especially Riverside and Northland. These projects are transforming vast acres of pavement into vibrant, mixed-use development that not only improve the built environment with green spaces, stormwater improvements, daylighting streams and adding trees but also will provide highly efficient affordable housing and add to the economic health of our city.

5. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

28 Austin Street (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015)

Austin Street was the first really significant mixed-use development since I was elected that added significantly to the number of affordable units in the city. I thought it was a great use of an underutilized parking lot and we still kept most of the public parking spaces. The residents of Austin Street are frequenting our local stores and we now have an attractive public space. Bram Way Square which previously was a space devoted to cars has become a very active and popular spot

for people to gather and for public art and music. We also were able to underground the utilities and plant more street trees.

- **1521 Beacon Street (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked “safe harbor” 2016).**

I was unhappy with what ended up being built at this location. A lack of leadership by the (former) mayor was a big factor.

- **Trio/Washington Place (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017)**

Trios has included significant housing options for new residents including younger people, families and older adults seeking to downsize. It's another good example of a TOD being adjacent to transit and very walkable to amenities. It also added new restaurants and a space for a popular shoe store.

Northland (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019)

I think Northland is one of the best projects we have ever approved because it checks all the boxes and goes above and beyond with its innovative design, energy efficiency and public benefits. It is transforming an ugly, underutilized parking lot and an unattractive strip mall into a lively mixed use and a highly energy efficient development. In a nutshell, it will improve the environment and provide 140 affordable housing units. It has a very thoughtfully designed transportation system, including a free electric shuttle. It limits parking and the location will be eminently walkable to stores, restaurants, cafes and to the village of Newton Highlands. It will actually improve the amount of greenspace and daylight parts of the South Meadow Brook. It also preserves the beautiful and historic Saco Pettee Mill building.

Riverdale (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)

The Riverdale developer worked closely with the neighbors and Ward 1 councilors to discuss the needs and wants before coming before the ZBA. The good communication created an even better development. Riverdale is transforming a long vacant, one-story building and parking lot into a mixed-use building with affordable units and it will improve public access to the Charles River Path and all the amenities the river offers. I

think it will be a huge improvement for the neighborhood and help our local independent businesses on the California Street corridor. It is across the street from a supermarket, a pharmacy and a gym and a short walk to the Downtown Express buses and the 71 bus which has great service to Harvard Square and connections to the Red Line. Riverdale will be a great place to live and help us move the needle on climate impacts and reduce stormwater impacts to the Charles River.

Dunstan East (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending)

Dunstan East is looking to be another promising development that will offer more housing choices, including affordable units. It will also improve public spaces and daylight a portion of Cheesecake Brook.

1149-51 Walnut Street (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)

This development situated in the middle of the village of Newton Highlands is a perfect spot for density being right across the street from the Newton Highlands Green line. I just wish the process did not take so long. Our special permit process does improve projects but it can also be a costly, drawn out process.

- **Riverside (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)**

Another project that took a long time but one that we can be very proud is Riverside. of will meet high energy efficiency standards and dramatically improve stormwater runoff into the Charles River. It includes space for biotechnology companies which will result in significant tax revenue for the city. Right on the Green line, it is the perfect TOD.

- **145 Warren Street (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)**

I would have voted yes if I had the chance.



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8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Yes the city should support the development of multifamily housing. Primarily because our region is experiencing a housing crisis. We need diverse housing options from affordable subsidized housing to the missing middle housing which include duplexes, courtyard buildings, townhouses and medium multi-plex. This will greatly diversify the choices available for households of different ages, size and income. Multifamily housing will help fulfill the Metro Mayors Coalition commitment to build 185,000 housing units by 2030 to meet demand and reduce or at least stabilize housing costs. In addition to a housing crisis we are experiencing a climate crisis. Transit oriented multifamily housing will also help us meet our city's Climate Action Plan goals. The urgency in addressing both of these issues is paramount.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?
Unfortunately, Newton has received poor grades on the Greater Boston Housing Report Card of 2019 by the Boston Foundation. Newton has low scores in the percentage of multi-family rental housing, affordability of current housing stock, community racial composition, and production of multi-family housing. This is why I am a strong supporter of the Housing Choice Zoning amendments signed by Gov. Baker this past January which includes --simple majority votes for certain zoning amendments and special permits, multi-family housing zoning by right in MBTA communities, and reduced parking requirements for residential developments in the special permit process. This Act will help provide economic relief to those affected by racial and economic inequality by offering more diverse housing opportunities. In addition I support the creation of an affordable housing trust in Newton. The proposal calls for Newton to create a trust where the city could set aside money to purchase property or invest in the development of affordable housing. Another strategy described by the Metro Mayors Coalition Regional Housing Task Force is to offer property tax abatement/exemption to renovate multifamily buildings or convert commercial to multifamily residential. I can see this to be an effective tool to reuse empty office buildings and shopping malls that have become vacant due to the pandemic.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

I am a strong supporter of the city's Climate Action Plan with the goal to become carbon neutral by 2050. The Plan includes programs like Newton Power Choice, solar installations, EV charging stations, and the replacement of the city's fleet with electrical vehicles (all of which I supported). However, the key to addressing the climate crisis in regards to housing is Zoning Redesign which would include requirements to reduce or eliminate parking requirements, to incorporate transportation demand management planning into the development review process, sustainable building design with passive house construction being the standard for new construction and increased density near transit. Simply, with transit oriented development we have more folks living near public transportation resulting in less driving reducing the impact on our environment and traffic congestion and sprawl.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

I believe an important first step for the city to actively promote economic and racial diversity is to pass Zoning Redesign. Clearly stated as one of the purposes of Zoning redesign is to "promote a welcoming community where people of diverse demographics, origins and income levels will be able to find a home and opportunity for success." With Zoning Redesign a greater diversity of housing will be made available to meet the needs of all Newton individuals and families of all income levels, ages and disabilities. There will be more opportunity for affordable housing units, home ownership and a reduction of folks being house burdened. Laying a foundation for social and economic equity.

Another important step would be to continue to have conversations with leaders of the BIPOC an LGBTQ+ communities to hear directly from them what they would want to see and have happen to advance equity in our city. These leaders would best know how to direct the City Council and the Mayor's office in implementing appropriate and effective policies to promote inclusivity. I would continue to follow their lead.

Since these groups have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic I support the Mayor's proposal to use ARPA funds for a community needs assessment

particularly focused on the needs of our lower-resourced residents to ensure that programming responds to their specific concerns and promotes economic stability. I would support the hiring of a DE&I (diversity, equity and inclusion) manager to implement DE&I initiatives, such as diversifying the composition of city employees. The Charles River Regional Chamber has also made a strong commitment to supporting DE&I--"We believe businesses and nonprofits should foster workplace and customer environments that provide equal access and equity of opportunity through the intentional inclusion of all." Similar resolutions from the City Council regarding city employees will reinforce our declaration that Newton is a welcoming city. As a city councilor I will continue to support all within the city. I support everyone having a voice and being represented both in city government and our workforce.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

- [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015) •
- [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016) •
- [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) •

The approval of Austin Street and Trio were approved before my time on the council but I would have supported them.

[Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019 and • [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)

As a Land Use Committee member I have been through the approval process from the very beginning for both Northland and Riverside. Each will be vibrant, attractive live/work communities that will offer a variety of housing options, retail, restaurants, workspace and outdoor amenities. These projects will provide increased tax revenue to the city and will be constructed using more sustainable building design and practices to fight climate change.

- [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)

- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending)

Riverdale and Dunstan East are 40B projects which I strongly supported. These mixed-use developments will revitalize an underutilized area of Ward 1 and Dunstan East is consistent with the city's Washington Street Vision Plan. Both projects will provide a significant number of affordable housing along with transportation related improvements in the neighboring streets and sidewalks and enhancements to outdoor community spaces and parks.

- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)

I voted in support of the Walnut st and Warren st projects. These are two TOD projects that are consistent with the city's Comprehensive plan, Climate Action Plan and Newton Leads 2040 Housing Strategy. I am disappointed that 45 Warren st withdrew.



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8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

* Yes definitely. Particularly in village centers and near public transit. I also believe we should allow detached Accessory Dwelling Units in addition to attached.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

* Continue to work on education and advocacy addressing the need for more housing at a variety of sizes, locations, and types in Newton. Vote in favor of projects that meet the criteria for location, type and quality. Try to connect with other MA towns and cities around regional housing needs and solutions.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

* Yes -climate change is inextricably bound with environmental sustainability including transportation and housing. Housing types, materials and construction methods play a part in our multi-tiered response to climate change. Having housing available near job opportunities vs. having to go further out to

sprawl towns also reduces vehicular use- more walkability, bikeability and transit use helps offset climate change.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

* A DEI position in City Government, like the one the School Dept. created, but with more overarching reach beyond the schools, would be a step in the right direction. I recommend the City adopt the goals, efforts and collaboration of Newton's various FORJ groups into public policy. Revise the Comprehensive Plan to include a section on racial, economic and social justice. Urge city departments to get out of union contracts that discourage hiring people of color.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

* clarity, fairness, consistency mainly. The zoning ordinance should reflect a balance of maintaining "character" as well of opportunities to change, adapt and move into the future.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

- [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015) : supported fully, great

location for a mixed use project with retail and housing, while improving and keeping public parking, love the public plaza space too

- [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked “safe harbor” 2016) : what a waste of a great location for MF housing, close to a village center, walkable to amenities and public transit. We got more garage-centric mega houses instead.
- [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) : fully supported, good location to add 24-hour mixed uses that will benefit existing shops and restaurants
- [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019) : fully supported, the additional housing units, commercial, office, and open space is a plus for Newton
- [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020) : the CC didn’t have a say in this one, but I am in favor us using 40B to create housing until we reach safe harbor
- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/ increase unit total [302] pending) : am in favor of this one also, a real improvement to the site, close the WN Sq., enhancing Cheesecake Brook in this area
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021) : aside from some very tight underground and undersized parking

spaces, I supported this project as this location, near NHighlands center and the T

- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending): all is looking positive for this proposal after much vetting, I like the mix of architecture and housing types, close to Rt. 128/95 and the Green Line, looking forward to the life sciences/lab space going in
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021) : I very much appreciate that the original, Arts & Crafts style façade was preserved, giving a relate-able scale and aesthetic to the street. The current proposal to add three units to the rear is well done design. This location near Newton Centre and the T is certainly appropriate.



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

The City of Newton should absolutely support the development of multifamily housing. The need for multifamily housing in Newton is driven by both economic and social factors. Newton is an inner-ring suburb whose economy is linked inextricably to Boston's and the economy of the greater Boston area. Over the last three decades, Boston has developed a vibrant, growing, knowledge-based economy. In the last decade alone, job growth in the region has topped 16%, while housing growth in Newton during the same time period has barely topped 2% (putting us far below Boston, Cambridge, Watertown, Needham, and Brookline).

Meanwhile, the cost of housing in Newton has risen sharply (currently over \$1.3 million median home price), younger families are being priced out, housing for our workforce is in short supply, and our rapidly growing senior population (estimated to reach 30% by 2030) needs accessible housing for downsizing. Additionally, without governmental intervention, this booming economy and housing market (along with high land and construction costs) make it difficult for Newton to produce the affordable (and deeply affordable) housing necessary to ensure economic and racial diversity.

I have long been a supporter of multifamily and mixed-use development in Newton as such development (especially on underutilized sites and/or sites that are currently zoned for obsolete uses) offers the best opportunity to diversify the City's housing supply (especially by creating smaller units), create a pool of permanently affordable housing (more on this in question #2), and build in an environmentally sustainable way. Such development can also offer significant community benefit in the form of new open/green space, infrastructure and utility improvements, transportation subsidies and support.

Finally, prioritizing multifamily housing in our village centers will not only help provide the housing that we need, but can also help revitalize the village centers themselves. Vibrant villages (particularly in the time of big box stores and online retail) usually do not arise by happenstance; they are generally the product of governmental leadership and thoughtful, forward-looking policies. Part of this planning should include zoning that permits residential and mixed-use development in our villages to encourage pedestrian traffic and support our local merchants and restaurants.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

Increasing affordable housing in Newton requires a multi-pronged approach. While we have been fortunate to have nonprofits like CAN-DO and NCDF working hard over many years to create affordable housing in Newton, high land and construction costs (and the challenges of securing large local/state/federal subsidies) currently limit the ability of organizations like these to meet all of our affordable housing needs.

Therefore, the creation of affordable housing will require creativity and use of a number of other tools. Some examples include:

- Mixed-use and multifamily development that includes affordable set-asides (per inclusionary zoning);
- Revisiting inclusionary zoning percentages to determine whether it is feasible to require higher percentages of affordable units and/or deeper levels of affordability;
- Public-private partnerships, including identifying development opportunities like the Armory, where the land is already owned by or gifted to the City;
- Rezoning of village centers (in whole or part) to allow for more mixed-use development *and*, at the same time, building into the code all of the preconditions we require from developers (e.g., highest levels of affordability, sustainability, open/green space, infrastructure improvements, support for public art and/or payment into a fund). Rezoning could also include height or density bonuses for higher levels of affordability;
- Supporting use of CPA funding to subsidize affordable housing;
- Creation of an Affordable Housing Trust Fund to enable the City to be more proactive and nimble in moving on affordable housing opportunities and working with non-profit developers;
- Exploring various options for funding Affordable Housing Trust Fund, including CPA funds, inclusionary zoning payments, negotiated developer fees, and funds from special ordinances (such as real estate transfer fees);
- Other zoning changes that may allow smaller units in residential zones, such as creating more flexibility regarding multifamily conversions; and
- Further strengthening ADU ordinance.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's recent report makes it clear that we need to move rapidly away from our country's fossil fuel-based economy if we are going to avoid the catastrophic impacts of climate change. Here in Newton, buildings (residential and commercial) account for the vast majority of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Housing policy should therefore play a role in the City's response to climate change. The City's Climate Action Plan lays out a compelling framework for reducing GHG emissions from housing.

First, for example, we can work to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in existing residential buildings through municipal electricity aggregation programs, like Newton Power Choice, which allows residents to purchase electricity from renewable sources; by encouraging homeowners to do energy audits and improve insulation; and providing information and incentives to encourage a switch to electric heat pumps.

Second, we can use housing policy to reduce reliance on fossil fuels in new construction/substantial renovations by encouraging multifamily housing (especially smaller, energy-efficient apartments and condos) near transportation and infrastructure (e.g., village centers); adopting the new net zero stretch code once it is finalized; requiring electrification of new construction and substantial rebuilds (with appropriate carve outs for redundant energy sources for uses like hospitals, nursing homes, and laboratories); and reducing parking minimums for new multifamily construction near transportation (which both reduces reliance on cars and avoids waste of materials when parking is overbuilt).

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Advancing racial equity and promoting inclusivity in Newton is an important goal that requires a mix of “hard” and “soft” actions to be successful, including:

- Streamlining of business permitting, small-business-friendly zoning, and more resources and programs aimed at minority-owned businesses ;
- New approaches to public safety, including those recommended by the Police Reform Task Force (e.g., creating a Newton Police Commission to build community dialogue and accountability, improving diversity in hiring and promotion, developing non-police response strategies for behavioral health crises and nuisance complaints, and improving overall training and communication);
- Promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the City government through more diverse hiring, enhanced trainings, and creating a position of DEI Coordinator who would work across departments;
- Providing arts and culture programming that showcases the diverse backgrounds and experiences of Newton residents; and
- Elevating the voices of BIPOC and other minority residents and groups that support them (like FORJ).

It is also essential to identify and address the major impediments to economic and racial diversity in housing. As I wrote in an email to the City Council last April in support of the commendation to the Fair Housing Committee (FHC), the WestMetroHOME’s Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice is a key tool in this process. Many housing tools that could advance economic and racial equity are mentioned in that document, including:

- Reviewing/revising zoning ordinances for discriminatory effect;

- Assessing impact of local preference on affirmatively furthering fair housing (and revising as necessary);
- Budgeting resources for fair housing testing and identifying discriminatory practices in the private real estate market; and
- Providing education to landlords and brokers surrounding discriminatory rental practices.

In addition, other tools to explore could include: establishing an Affordable Housing Trust Fund; imposing a high-value real estate transfer tax to fund affordable housing; and creating a robust first-time homebuyers program.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

Almost 70 years have passed since the last comprehensive re-write of our zoning ordinance; reviewing and updating is necessary to ensure that the code both reflects current realities and also acts as an actionable blueprint for the community we want to become.

The general goals identified by the Zoning Reform Group in 2010 are still applicable today: to make the ordinance and the process more user friendly, to create housing opportunities, to support commercial areas and village centers, to protect neighborhood scale, to address parking regulations, and to improve sustainability. The key will be striking the appropriate balance among these diverse and sometimes competing goals.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.
 - [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015): *Supported*. Excellent example of private-public partnership in a village center near transit and shops. Created market rate and 33% affordable housing, added landscaped public plaza, new retail, rooftop solar, and funded other community benefits where previously a dilapidated parking lot existed—while maintaining almost all the public parking. (*Disclosure*: my husband is a principal of the owner, Austin Street Partners)
 - [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016) *Did not follow closely*.
 - [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017): *Supported*. Redeveloped and revitalized key stretch of village center, adding affordable units, public plaza, and new, dynamic retail.
 - [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019): *Supported*. I was an active supporter of Northland (phone banked, sent emails, held signs, recorded a promotional video for the "Yes" campaign, and was listed as a supporter) This project was a model of affordable housing, green space, sustainability, and affordability on a site that was home to a largely vacant shopping plaza, deteriorating industrial uses, and a sea of asphalt.

- [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020): *Did not follow closely, but supported*. Good re-use of underutilized industrial site, close to bus routes, providing 25% affordable units, built to high level of sustainability (Passive House and LEED certified).
- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending) *Supported*. Wrote letter to ZBA in support, applauding variation in building size and shape; provision of deeper affordability for several permanently affordable units; green space and rehabilitation of Cheesecake Brook; 1:1 residential parking limit; and sustainability features.
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021) *Supported*. Excellent transit-oriented location in village center, small unit size, well-scaled to village, reduced parking minimums. A model project for village locations.
- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending approved) *Supported*. Will revitalize very large, underutilized site in excellent transit-oriented location with good mix of residential and commercial plus open space and community benefits (including green space and tax revenue). Regarding recent amendment: supported more affordable units and replacement of hotel with life sciences.
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021) *Supported*. Located near T-stop (and literally backs up to Green Line), preserved façade/massing of historic house, created small units, scaled and sensitively designed to fit into neighborhood. (Wished proposed onsite parking had been further reduced, however.)



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8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Yes, the city should support multifamily housing. Multifamily housing is important for Newton as the city continues to grow. It provides more housing opportunities for people which can add to our vitality. Proposals should be reviewed with an eye toward the following:

1. Public transportation and walkability,
 2. Location and scale to the neighborhood,
 3. Additional green space, trees, and the reduction of the heat island
 4. Range of affordable units
 5. Community space and other amenities
 6. Building to LEED and passive house standards
 7. Electrification of the building and other environmental considerations
2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

I support an affordable housing trust, which can react faster when properties become available. Why is this important? For example, at the Walker Center on Grove Street, the city was unable to make an offer by the deadline that could compete with private offers.

We should also be partnering with nonprofit developers for projects on city property. Austin Street is a good example. Had the city given the project to a non-profit developer, the development would have provided more affordable units with greater benefit to the city as a whole.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes. Our Housing policy should reflect our shared concern and response to climate change. Buildings in general use 41% of the energy consumed, as compared to Industrial use 30%, and transportation at 29%. The biggest contributors to that are heating and cooling (42%), and water heating (13.2%). We should implement the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan to become carbon neutral by 2050 as we approve any new housing projects. This includes:

1. Requiring “green” standards on all new developments and special permits including solar panels, electric vehicle chargers, electric heat and cooking, and passive house standards.
 2. Allowing a slight increase to FAR (house square footage) if a house is built by right to passive house standards with electric heat.
 3. Offering low interest loans for lower income residents to switch to electric heat pumps.
 4. Protecting and expanding tree canopy and green space.
 5. Writing stronger ordinances to incentivize residents/developers to preserve existing trees.
 6. Adding electric car charging stations in the village centers.
 7. Build in areas where people can walk more - like village centers. This will reduce car usage.
4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes, the city should actively promote economic and racial diversity. Three examples:

1. Lower the local preference percentage in our affordable housing units. It has been shown that the current system doesn't increase diversity.
 2. Increase the percentage of affordable units in large projects.
 3. Offer free comprehensive financial courses and mentoring to help people acquire the skills needed to improve their personal finances.
5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

Changes to the zoning code should include (but not limited to):

1. Give a FAR bonus (increase square feet) if a house is built to Passive House standards and includes all electric heating and cooking.
2. Incentivize smaller apartments and condos near village centers.
3. Reduce floor area ratio (FAR) and increase setbacks so a new house does not overpower a lot and neighborhood.
4. Allow garage accessory apartments by right.
5. Limit developers tearing down smaller adequate homes and replacing them with “McMansions”. This will decrease the amount of construction debris in landfills and a remodeled home reduces the embodied carbon of a new home.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

I support mixed-use developments. They are crucial for Newton's future as they offer more housing choices to people. Each project should be reviewed with an eye toward accessibility to public transportation and walkability, location and scale to the neighborhood, additional green space, and the overall reduction of the heat island. Further, the range of affordable units, community space and other amenities, building to LEED and passive house standards, and the electrification of the building(s), must be taken into account.

- [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015) I support mixed-use housing here, but this project was built by a for-profit developer. A non-profit proposal offered all affordable units.
- [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016) I am not familiar with this project.
- [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) I would have supported it if one story was removed, or if the façade of the previous building was used and the rest of the building set back.
- [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019) As the biggest mixed use project in Newton, I would have supported it if the development had been phased, allowing for "tweaks" to the plan if needed. A similar sized project in Boston (Washington Village in Andrew Square) was approved at the same time, and it's being built in 3 phases. Northland should have been phased as well.
- [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020) I support this project.
- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/ increase unit total [302] pending) I would support it if one story was removed, and the building on Dunstan Street was split into two. The proposal is massive along Dunstan and very dense, 84 units/acre – double anything else recently built.
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021) I voted for this project.
- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending) I voted for this project.
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021) I cannot comment on this proposal as the project is set to come before the city council.

Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates 8/30/21

James Cote, Candidate for City Councilor Ward 3. Previously served on the City Council from 1/114 to 12/31/19 as a City Councilor at Large.

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible. **There are areas of the city that historically have multi family housing in a variety of styles. These units are located in clusters such as Noble St in West Newton, or in single family zoning such as those units found in and around Waltham St in West Newton. The city should support multi-family housing as a way to increase housing stock and create more affordable options by building units in the ranges of 1200-1700 sq ft. A good example of this is on the corner of Derby and Cherry St's where you will find a 4 unit house that blends right into the neighborhood. As a contrast, a very large single family is being constructed on the corner of Adams and Cherry St's, that does not fit the neighborhood and as a single family uses up square footage that could've been enough for 3 or more units.**
2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton? **As a long-ago member of Habitat for Humanity in the Berkshires I have always been concerned with the shortage of housing to address a very well-known shortage problem. Specifically, I would work to encourage incentives for builders to build multi-family instead of large "so called McMansions," as we can solve many problems and not alter neighborhoods. As a councilor that always met with developers, I plan to engage the administration in doing a better job of getting ahead of needs and projects so that we can dictate to the builders/developers of our goals in building more housing in the same locations. I will personally serve as a lightning rod to make this happen rather than stay quiet as change languishes.**
3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain. **I am very concerned with housing policy as it relates to ongoing changes in the climate and the local environment. I would like to see less destruction of areas that are currently open space and forested, and instead build above existing footprints with increased units to better manage housing space. This could serve the building of more green units better as the cost of building a green building would be possibly more effective in a denser space. I caution that increasing the cost of being green could take valuable units from the low income and increase living costs keeping all types of residents on the outside.**
4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal? **The city should certainly seek to promote economic and racial diversity as the city would lose valuable contributors to our culture for no real gains. During the marijuana debate, I was one of only a few city councilors who were pushing for licensing the retail stores to minorities only. The minority population provided the marijuana in the past to the wealthy, and then bore the brunt of drug trade incarcerations. I felt that those that paid the price should now benefit in the legalization of retail marijuana. The council went the way of big money operations that ignored the minority community. As another example, my wife as a Hispanic immigrant has succeeded in building family businesses in the past and has now started an empanada company that has opened its first location in**



Worcester, and has a lease in Newtonville. This has been a real lesson for us as opening in Worcester was fast and efficient as the city there worried about delaying openings of minority businesses for slow moving city regulation. Newton has a way to go in this regard and needs to provide technical and financial assistance to get minority businesses off the ground. As a City Councilor I urged the builders of Washington Place to work out a “local” rate for small city businesses and they did so retain several Newton businesses. This so called “affordable business rents” is a must have need in Newton.

Housing choices need enhancing to add affordable and low income units, but we must also focus on the minority middle class to live in Newton and add value and diversity to businesses in the greater Boston area.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton’s zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish? My one goal in all of this would be fairness. There seems to have been decisions made quite awhile ago that created neighborhoods reflecting economic class and leaving out valuable contributing members of society. Newton zoning has to be planned to ensure that the City has many more options for multi-unit housing to take advantage of bus/subway/train service to bring in workforce contributors of all levels.
6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you’re not sure about a project, just skip it.
 - [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015): **I was a newly elected Alderman when this project came in, and I was deeply concerned that we were taking open space and building too many units. I was on Land Use at the time, worked diligently with my colleagues and representatives of the project to try and put together a package that I could vote for. I did not vote in favor of Austin St.**
 - [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked “safe harbor” 2016): **I was all in on doing a project at that address and was disappointed at the final approved project which was not at all of what could have been! The city missed a great opportunity to add affordable housing to a well placed location featuring T-access and new schools.**
 - [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) : **I was on Land Use, had worked on the Project with my collègues and the developer and then voted in favor of the project which is awesome.**
 - [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019): **I voted in favor of this project of which I was well informed, and then once I left the Council supported the developer and the city to gain approval and win the special vote. I would say that I played a**

key role in working among my colleagues to gain a favorable vote and then win the special vote

- [Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020) : In favor but not involved in the process.
- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending): **I played a key role all along the way in working with the developer, taking the temperature of the residents, and then working to get it through the ZBA. I also secured funding for West Newton Common, and Wellington Park as part of the agreement to ensure kids had places to play.**
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021): **N/A**
- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending): **In favor of this project worked with the neighbors and the developers in reaching an early agreement in 2019. Unfortunately, my opponents used this project against me to defeat me in the 2019 Council race.**
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021): **N/A**
- [Armory Project on Washington St](#) : **Prior to the end of my 2019 term, I worked with the Mayor's staff in putting together an Advisory Group that would review the former National Guard Armory as an affordable housing site. Once elected back to the Council I will work to make this happen.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues.

James R. Cote
508 983 4535
Candidate for City Council Ward 3



Engine 6 Questionnaire

for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

- 1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multi-family housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.**

Yes! Although most of our city is zoned single family, with some two family by right zones, Newton land use rules do not allow multi-family (3+ units) “by-right” anywhere in the city, not even in multi-residence or mixed use zones. Rather, three or more units are allowed only by special permit, requiring discretionary review of the city council. This process makes sense for projects over a certain size, but not for everything everywhere.

This process is lengthy and uncertain. Since we are clear that having more compact housing near village centers with transit access will benefit both the local economy (shoppers) and provide needed housing at a wider range of price points, we need to get to work to define exactly how much multi-unit housing to allow by right – and exactly where.. The state has recognized the huge gap in housing opportunity and passed the Housing Choice bill. When the specific state rules are issued, communities who want to continue receiving state grants for infrastructure projects, will have to identify at least one district where this type of housing is allowed by right.

- 2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?**

I believe my record of working collaboratively with colleagues, citizens and staff has brought positive results. On the Land Use committee I worked constructively for ten years to help bring good development to Newton where it is needed, and to do it in a way that respects and builds upon existing community fabric. I will continue to participate in this committee. We must continue to accept projects that will diversify the housing stock, increase affordable housing at a range of price points and build better projects that are more affordable to maintain and operate through this process.

Perhaps more important though, is that we fix our rules. This term the Council ZAP committee, which I chair, unanimously agreed that expanding housing

opportunity at a range of price points is a primary goal. As we advance the analyses of Newton's village center districts, how to make and keep them as vibrant local economies. We seek the right balance of uses and infrastructure supports (multiple modes of travel, shared parking, walkable environments) where business serves the needs of the people and there are enough people to keep local business healthy.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Absolutely. How we build and where we build are key ingredients to a more sustainable, attainable and resilient future. Although it has been known since the 1970s that fossil fuels are finite and the climate is warming, it is only recently that the urgency of our response to climate change has been in the news. New building must be built to the higher standards to reduce energy demand, then serve that demand with electricity so that *as we green the grid* – the infrastructure is in place. WHERE we build housing is critical. Our 1950s zoning codes caused a suburban sprawl that has wiped out forests and farms, and spread out infrastructure that is now very expensive to maintain. The big idea in the climate action plan is to build compact, energy-efficient smaller units accessible to transit. That is how we both meet the increased demand for housing, and do it in a way that uses resources more efficiently and equitably.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

In every respect our city – and all of us - should be welcoming to everyone. Achieving economic and racial diversity, is in part about how people feel about being included in the community. But it is also, and I think primarily, about providing access to our city, economically attainable housing for a wide spectrum of income earners.

Amending local zoning rules to facilitate more, various housing options affordable to a much wider spectrum of income earners, is key to furthering socio-economic diversity. We need both subsidized units to attain deeper affordability as well as more “missing middle” income housing, to accommodate next generations. Since 1953 Newton prohibits both multi-family (3+ units) housing and more than one story in village center districts/ commercial corridors, except by Special Permit. This impedes development that may increase opportunity for more socio-economically diverse families to access housing. 2019 amendments require 20% deed-restricted units affordable at 50-80% AMI in larger developments; consider a higher rate. Lowering the local preference percentage may help diversify the pool, but there are other more serious barriers to address (see below).

We must also require accessible affordable units, and find ways to subsidize units for low/ very low income families using local, state, federal HOME and ARPA funds.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and re-writing Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

A clear, predictable set of rules, that will allow and *encourage* the kind of development we want in the city – and prevent that which is not desirable.

In 2011, city leaders collaborated to draft a strategy by which to achieve the zoning reforms needed to advance the broad vision in the adopted Comprehensive Plan. In 2015, the Board of Aldermen adopted Phase I: a thorough recodification, reorganizing the book of rules to make navigable, illustrate the concepts within it, clarify and modernize language to make it readable, but make no substantive revisions to the rules. Important amendments have been made since that time, like a complete redrafting of the accessory apartment ordinance, allowing anyone who has the space and can meet building codes to create an accessory unit. The inclusionary ordinance was amended to increase the level of deed-restricted affordable units – and we need to revisit that mix to include deeper levels of affordability as the economy changes and as new resources can be identified.

These are difficult times. COVID has taken a steep toll on many families' ability to pay the rent. The city can also work to assist in maintain the affordable units we have for the families in them today – as they work to get back on their feet. We used CPA funds to do this during 2020 – and we can do it again as needed.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.
 - [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015)

I supported the *concept* for 12 years! Voted for the final project because it is a terrific example of how a public private partnership can be a win-win-win for the city. The developer paid to: - rebuild/renew the municipal parking lot, - put resident parking underground, - underground wires around the project, - contribute to sewer rehabilitation, and - create a now very well-used public plaza - a great success for the community! The developer also contributed funds that the city contributed toward renewal of the village streetscape. Newton got all this plus 1/3 units deed restricted

to rents affordable to middle income earners. And the modular system used was a well-built energy efficient model for the time.

- [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked “safe harbor” 2016)

This project would have been far superior to the oversized, garage-fronted, single and two family homes built “by-right” – because the developer could not afford waiting out an appeal of the ZBA-approved project. In this walkable to the T and peripheral village location, with smaller units mostly in one very nicely designed building fronting Short Street, and townhouses along the parallel street behind, would have been more attractive, more pedestrian friendly, a better building. ... it was a loss for Waban village that these did not get built.

- [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017)

I supported the concept early on, and the ‘winning’ plan after many months of negotiations and improvements. The recently completed at 3-4 and 5 story, blocks, appearing as three buildings separated by a public plaza, this project provides a strong edge to the street – as well as an improved and more pedestrian friendly streetscape that we were hoping would begin to show how Washington Street can be improved and relate more strongly to Newtonville village. My particular emphasis for this building was to articulate a sustainability plan, and commit to a range of specific measures that would meet our SP requirement – and go beyond what we had achieved previously. For the first time a developer hired a sustainability consultant both for improving the building envelope and systems, as well as to understand the range of considerations from transportation management to mapping rooftop solar, that we must be conscientious about.

- [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019)

This project will be “in my backyard”. We worked for years in the community and on the land use committee before approving the final plan – and I was thrilled with the result. It was a highly collaborative effort, after much planning and a lengthy public process. The resulting project, was highly responsive to multiple stakeholder input – and rises above the rest in quality, care and a comprehensive approach.

I advocated strongly in favor when some citizens put the underlying zoning we approved to a further test by public referendum. Here’s part of what I wrote at the time:

This project provides: - much-needed elevator-accessible housing, including 140 units permanently affordable to a range of incomes; - two layers of underground parking allowing for generous public outdoor spaces including a central village green, restored woodland and South Meadow Brook, landscaped public plazas, a playground and splash park along the Greenway; - a walkable, inviting, active streetscape, 750 new trees; - super high efficiency building standards, water conservation and storm water management; - frequent and free electric shuttles providing access to public transit and T subsidies for commuters; - restoration and refurbishing of the historic Saco-Pettee Mill building for small offices ... and significant monetary contributions to improve city infrastructure and transit - to name a few things.

It promises to be a beautiful addition to our community. Despite the controversy and angst, I believe that Upper Falls will be proud of the result in the end. Construction begins in January 2021, and I will serve on the liaison committee.

[Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)

This project required a comprehensive permit under Ch40B, which are approved by the ZBA. It is in a good location for mixed use housing and commercial /retail. However, I must say I am less familiar with the details.

- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/ increase unit total [302] pending)

This project, also a Ch.40B Comp. permit approved by the ZBA, I think demonstrates the value of city planning ahead of proposed development. The developer took guidance from the Council's adopted Washington Street Vision Plan, even though Council had not passed the zoning to facilitate that plan. It separates the mass of building into sections, creates a lovely pedestrian space along a section of Cheesecake brook that will be restored, and will add retail activity on the ground floor. Support.

- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)

Support. Excellent concept, perfect location across the street from the T, replacing a tired one story strip that had long outlived its useful life – this housing over retail with underground parking is a model for what can be accomplished to add well-designed, “gentle density” that fits well within a village center. We need more patrons to serve Highlands shops!

- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)

Finally approved by the full Council just this week, the third iteration of a mixed use project on this site – is the best. The COVID-ravaged economy created conditions where the hotel approved in the previous plan became economically unviable – but the life sciences sector is building – and will bring a reliable workforce to this mixed use development. Although there are fewer units, the number of affordable units increased. The developer’s contributions to connecting to miles of DCR trails along the Charles, city infrastructure and reconfigured roadways and bikeways to improve access while accommodating structured commuter rail parking, bus and vehicle access – makes this a truly transit-oriented development.

- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)

I was very disappointed that this project was withdrawn because it could not achieve the 2/3 majority required for adding three units to an historic landmark home on a large site just a few blocks from the Newton Center T. This was an opportunity to restore a treasured landmark while enabling a bit more density close to a village that needs more customers to thrive. Building to Passive House performance standards would make this project an exemplar of both where and how to build to address climate issues. However, the solution to add a fifth unit but with no more square footage, and no additional parking – may be an even better solution – if there are the votes for that!

**1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multi family housing?
Please explain, as specifically as possible.**

A. Yes. Newton needs to do its part to alleviate the housing crisis, give seniors and young families smaller, energy-efficient (or net zero) places to live, add to the diversity of housing options. I would also like Newton to continue to include a middle class, not just the very wealthy or those who qualify for rental subsidies. That means increasing supply. This supply should be close to transit/active transportation corridors and/or services (ideally both) to further offset sprawl and our greenhouse gas emissions/energy use.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton.

I advocated for the housing choice bill (state) that allowed more supply across the state, but particularly near transit stations. I would like to see that promise bear fruit in zoning near the D line. I would also like Newton's Commuter rail upgraded to allow for better service and more housing opportunities on that corridor.

The city has a housing study and plan, which includes adding units in prime locations near services and transportation nodes. Amending our zoning to allow smaller, more affordable units by right in these spots will reduce the cost of permitting housing. Adding housing in these locations can also add customers to local stores and service providers, ensuring the vitality of our villages.

I have been inquiring about ways to cross-subsidize or provide guaranty for the lowest income renters who might not qualify under current rules because of past evictions or credit issues.

But really, individual cities can only do so much. Same with individual states. We need the resources and capacity of the national government to help with this and other anti-poverty issues if the country is ever going to adequately address the issue. That doesn't totally absolve Newton doing what it can, just a reflection of how much needs to be done.

3. Do you think housing policy has a role in the city's response to climate change?

Absolutely. As waters rise, as creeks overflow and remove transportation and housing options from some parts of the state and the city, replacement housing will be desperately needed. In addition, as buildings cause 40% of the carbon emissions, we can add housing that is greener, built to a higher standard of sustainability, further from floodwaters, more durable and more resilient—and Newton has, and should continue to do so. The country (and Newton) also needs housing that doesn't force people to drive everywhere by its location alone.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

What happens if the city does not? We are already seeing what the market does under our current zoning—larger houses for single families constructed where smaller homes stood. Not only does this mean that, despite higher levels of insulation and more efficient systems the new homes consume as much energy as the old, but that our housing stock is increasingly expensive. Who can afford these homes? Not the middle class and less fortunate. Few people of color. Encouraging smaller units and the reuse of current homes, but--where appropriate--allowing more households within them—all will help. Newton should do its part, but without regional cooperation, Newton's efforts won't be successful.

5. ZAP is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance. What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

First off, I would like to see the parking minimums in Newton abolished. This will make it easier for people to build less parking if they don't need it. Parking adds to the cost of a project and often stands unused. Waban has a music school surrounded by pavement merely because that's what our zoning requires. City Council regularly waives parking requirements in Village Centers and near transit —because our current requirements are not based on science or data.

As I say above, current zoning encourages the tearing down of modest homes and construction of large ones. It makes adding apartments difficult—and outlaws them in village centers except by special permit. Let's make it easier and less expensive to build the housing we want and need.

I would also like to see zoning require more open and pervious space around structures, which would help with flooding and heat islands.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you supported or opposed it and why.

First of all, I support and have encouraged the administration to build a web-based system that would make it easier for constituents to find this information out on their own.

28 Austin St. I was not on council, but supported this. kept village parking, but added stores & homes over a parking lot.

1521 Beacon St. Never built. I had concerns about the amount of parking (for the townhouses 4 spaces/unit seemed excessive with the T only 2 blocks away). I was otherwise neutral.

Trio/Washington Place—I supported, but again there's more parking here than the development will ever fill. Rents could be cheaper if the developer doesn't have to dig a story below grade to install garages.

Northland—I supported this. Largest passive house development in the region, stormwater controls, transit and biking options, really takes advantage of the Greenway as a transportation corridor—replaces a mostly brownfield and paved site.

Riverdale—also, overall, a good use of former industrial land near transit and a bike trail, with orientation toward biking.

Dunstan East 40B, amended. Haven't seen the new plans. The old ones were pretty good—retail and housing near a village center, and reduced parking, so less likely to induce driving and traffic. I liked the courtyards and open space, also the creation of the park along the brook—although this may need to be bigger given precipitation increases. Pedestrian mitigation, like safe crossings over Watertown Street, would make this project better for the neighborhood.

1149 Walnut St, Newton Highlands. I voted for this. A very well-proportioned in-fill development that is respectful of the architecture of Newton Highlands and across the street from the Green Line. Nice details, including a shared roof deck. Much better than the two concrete block structures and surface parking now there. Discourages driving. Small units, very energy efficient.

Riverside—I voted for this also. I like the addition of lab space and the extra tax revenue that may bring in. Again, this is a high efficiency development that adds housing, open space, retail and contains stormwater over a massive, but usually empty parking lot. Right on the T. The neighborhood was closely involved in negotiations, and mostly supports it. Park improvements, protected bike lanes to Lower Falls and other mitigations further enhance the neighborhood.

145 Warren St, Newton Centre. I voted with the majority in favor of this project in Land Use. The 4 proposed units were ownership, efficient, would be tucked behind the preserved existing home. Their combined size was not much larger than the by-right 2-family alternative, but would each be smaller, and thus more attainable. Because this is within 1/4 mile of the D line, it should allow car-light living, but experience in Newton shows that many ownership households use two parking spaces, whether or not they are included on the lot.

**Engine 6 Questionnaire
for City Council Candidates**
8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multi-family housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Yes, primarily in the village centers and immediate environs. I think it's important to note that some of our neighborhoods (such as Newton Upper Falls in my ward) already have a lot of multi-family housing and are zoned for this under the status quo, and my position does not necessarily represent a huge break from the present situation, contrary to what some people in other neighborhoods sometimes assume. I also think it should be easier to build (or convert to) accessory dwelling units and to convert large single-family homes to duplex or multi-family setups without rebuilding them.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

I have supported a proposal for a special permit zoning category in village centers geared specifically toward 100% low-income mid-sized projects eligible for federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit financing, as a parallel track to our recent approaches that have focused on cross-subsidies with high-price market units or senior-only specialized housing on the periphery. These tracks all need to be pursued together for a well-rounded city portfolio.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes, we should promote walkability in and around the village centers, as well as access to transit from housing, and we should reduce unnecessary teardowns and McMansion construction, which have a high carbon impact during construction and over long-term energy usage.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes. We should promote very low-income housing, greater production of family-sized affordable housing units, and reduce the Local Preference requirement.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

I want zoning redesign to rein in unnecessary teardowns, promote village center walkability, make owner-occupant renovations easier to preserve existing housing stock, and facilitate production of very low-income housing.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

- 28 Austin Street (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015) **Testified in favor.**
- 1521 Beacon Street (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016) **Supported.**
- Trio/Washington Place (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) **Testified in favor.**
- Northland (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019) **Supported in 2019 and voted to affirm in 2020.**
- Riverdale (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020) **Did not weigh in due to ZBA process and outside my ward.**
- Dunstan East (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/ increase unit total [302] pending) **Did not weigh in due to ZBA process and outside my ward.**
- 1149-51 Walnut Street (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021) **Voted in favor.**
- Riverside (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending) **Voted in favor in 2020 and expect to vote in favor in 2021. Pushed for maintaining the number of affordable units despite overall unit reduction.**
- 145 Warren Street (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021) **Would have voted in favor.**



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/30/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Multi-family housing provides opportunities for multi-generational living, something many families are returning to as the costs of housing, child care and elder-care continue to rise faster than incomes. It allows residents to rent out a portion of their home, making living in Newton more attainable to more people. It is more environmentally sustainable and less expensive to build. It is more fiscally sustainable due to more efficient use of public infrastructure and services while also increasing the tax base and sales taxes. Many neighborhoods already have a very good mix of multi-family housing with older homes that have been converted into condominiums and homes that have added accessory dwelling units.

Multi-family housing of appropriate scale in village centers can also be a great way to invest in updating and improving our village centers. Mixed-use developments with stores on the ground level and housing above returns village centers to their historic roots. Partnered with multi-family housing in larger developments like Riverside and Northland, enables the city to make good progress on housing goals.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

I support mixed-use projects in our village centers and close to important amenities. The project at 1149-1151 Walnut Street is 26 units directly across from the Newton Highlands T and is walkable and bikeable to amenities including many great employers. Even market rate units in this building will be more attainable given smaller unit size, and location near transit and amenities will make it easy for residents to live without a car, a significant savings for most people that also reduces parking requirements. Less parking in the development will reduce construction costs and enabling more units or open space.

Creating housing in Newton that is 100% affordable must be part of the solution, as it is the best way to get more deeply affordable units using state and federal housing money. However, these projects are seldom built in Newton because affordable housing developers can't afford the expense of a multi-year design/ approval process that is common for Newton projects. I support creating a zoning overlay for 100% affordable housing where the requirements and approval process are well defined and predictable much like the MU4 zoning.

Developing a more robust Fair Housing program that includes housing stabilization, testing, removes barriers for tenants using vouchers and increases fully accessible units would enable more apartments to be available to lower-income residents.

We need to ensure the affordable housing we do have is maintained. Some affordable housing units are in buildings that require maintenance and capital upgrades.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain..

The need to address climate change is growing more urgent with each passing year. The analysis in the latest IPCC report "AR6 Climate Change 2021" shows that even with significant reductions in greenhouse gasses (GHC), we will not be able to avoid all the effects of climate change. In fact, we are already experiencing the climate crisis, including extreme weather events that will become more extreme and more frequent as temperatures continue to rise.

At the federal level, aggressive targets have been set for reductions in GHG but these targets are only achievable if there is a significant reduction in the amount of energy used to construct and maintain buildings and a reduction in the amount of driving. The climate impact of sprawl is significant. Homes built further from where people work and from places they need to go, means more driving and more roads and highways being built. Often suburban homes are significantly larger with much higher embodied carbon and are usually built on previous open spaces, replacing trees and farms. In fact, The US leads the world in energy consumption associated with buildings and in vehicle miles traveled per person.

In Newton, personal transportation accounts for at least 25% of GHG and 35% of GHG are from residential buildings. Newton should have a housing policy that encourages smart growth, with the development of more energy efficient housing that enables people to live closer to work, stores, public transportation, schools and other amenities to permanently reduce driving. This should be coupled with investments in making Newton more accessible, walkable and bikeable. These changes would not only be good for the environment, but would support local businesses, help people be healthier and provide great housing options for our aging population and others who want or need to live without a car.

Ideally these changes would be supported through policy changes and investments from the state and federal governments including improving regional connectivity with better public transportation and multi-use trails.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Newton has work to do to become a welcoming and attainable place for all to live, especially for Blacks, Indigenous Peoples and People of Color (BIPOC). Beyond the policy suggestions I made in question 3 on affordable housing, I think the City Council should be working to attract more minority owned businesses to Newton by streamlining the process for opening up new businesses and supporting pop-up businesses and



incubator spaces. I also think that it is critical that we move forward on the many important recommendations made by The Police Reform Task Force, starting with creating a Newton Police Committee. This committee's first priority would be to create an ongoing dialogue and mutual accountability between the Newton community and the Newton Police Department. And equally important is the third recommendation to improve training including understanding the impacts of historic, systemic racism on current policing practices.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

Zoning is a powerful tool to help Newton meet its most important goals: housing, economic development, fiscal responsibility, diversity and equity, and environmental sustainability.

Zoning redesign should allow a greater range of housing options to be developed to meet needs for more affordable housing, housing that is senior friendly, and delivers on the missing middle housing. Zoning redesign should continue to push for more sustainable housing including housing that specifically reduces the need for driving. Zoning redesign could provide incentives to developers of larger properties to establish even more usable open space, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, community space such as the Bram Way plaza or other public space. Zoning redesign should encourage thoughtful development of village centers, making them more vibrant and livable with a mix of businesses and housing that offers a walkable lifestyle and brings foot traffic, for the shops, restaurants and other businesses.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.
- [28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015)
I supported this project as an advocate for more senior friendly housing as this was close to restaurants, the grocery store, public transportation, coffee shops and the CVS. I also supported it as it made much better use of the parking lot space, while still providing many public parking spaces and now the beautiful community space on Bram Way.
 - [1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016)
I think that a good multi-unit project could have been welcomed here, if given the time to work through the design and number of units. A historic-looking brick garden-style apartment cluster with small units could have provided great housing for young families or seniors looking to downsize with decent access to the T and amenities and would have fit nicely with the neighborhood.

- [Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017)
I supported this project as an advocate for more senior friendly housing, like Austin St.. this was close to important amenities and will bring foot traffic that will help local businesses. I also supported it as I felt it rehabilitated a poorly-used block of Washington St. in need of a facelift and brought great businesses to the heart of Newtonville.
- [Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019)
I supported this project as an advocate for housing and because it rehabilitated significantly environmentally compromised land and waterways. The housing is in a very walkable location and it will create new commercial properties. It is also being built to a very high level of sustainability and the developer made important concessions to provide easy access to public transit for the property and anyone else who wishes to use the shuttle. As a councilor, I voted to uphold the permit granted in the prior term.
- [Riverville](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)
I supported this project as a councilor as it provides much needed housing close to amenities and is an easy commute by bus or bike to Watertown, Cambridge and Boston.
- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending)
I supported this project as councilor as it provides housing, close to important amenities and transit and will rehabilitate Cheesecake Brook.
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)
As I spoke about in question 2, I supported this project as a councilor because it is walkable and bikeable to amenities including many great employers and is directly across from the Newton Highland T. Even the market rate units in this building will be more affordable given smaller unit size.
- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)
I supported this project as councilor because it creates significant commercial properties, a large number of housing units and has significant package of investments in infrastructure around the site including \$3 million dollars invested into the Riverside Greenway project connecting the site to Lower Falls, Auburndale and previously inaccessible sections of the Charles River with hiking and multi-use trails.
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)
I supported this project as it presented the opportunity to update an historic home, while providing good housing very close to the Newton Centre T and the many amenities in Newton Centre. The project updated the original house and added three additional units on a lot of more than 21,000 square feet, thus not unlike many nearby properties that had two units on lots of 10,000 square feet. During the Land Use process, there were several revisions including scaling back the sizes of the three rear units and making the original unit more accessible with universal design concept and creating one of the units as very modest (1,800).

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain as specifically as possible.

Yes, I agree that the City should support the development of multifamily housing in our City. The City as well as the region suffers from a lack of housing in general - at a variety of points. Every community needs to add to its housing stock to accommodate the population of our City and region, whose housing needs are dire and growing. Multi-family housing can help us accommodate our housing needs of the future.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

I have and continue to support multi-family housing projects in the City. The projects built so far and those in the pipeline have greatly increased the affordable housing stock over what it was. Through Council action percentage requirements for affordable housing have increased to twenty per cent of all units built over a certain number. Newton is slowly gaining in affordable units. The goal is at least 10%. To increase the supply of affordable housing, I support our multi-housing efforts for larger projects and have supported the requirement on smaller projects that every seven units triggers the requirement for an affordable unit.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes, I do. I believe that all new projects and substantial rehabs should be subject to the requirement to install energy efficient HVAC and other utilities. Until we achieve compliance on this front, we will not be able to reach the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050. Allowing more multi-family housing contributes to energy efficiency as it is generally more efficient than single family construction. The City can also offer "carrots" to encourage more "passive house" construction of buildings of all sizes and uses.

Our Climate Action Plan shows that carbon emissions in Newton from residential buildings are 35% of total emissions. If we hope to achieve the goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 we must take every opportunity to reduce the amount of energy consumed by and embodied in buildings. Housing policy that reflects these goals can greatly help toward this end.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes, I believe that the City can and should encourage economic and racial diversity. Economic diversity can be helped through affordable housing units. Achieving greater racial diversity requires efforts to make Newton an attractive and welcoming place to people of all socio-economic levels.

Affordable housing is the greatest equalizer available. The lack of multi-family zoning has proven to be an impediment to economic and racial integration of communities. Multi-family housing options are one way we can begin to satisfy our growing housing needs. The City must make it possible for developers to build more housing at various price points including housing that is affordable to those shut out of the market due to the extremely high cost of housing.

The City Council can support and encourage multi-family housing options through zoning reform. The Zoning and Planning Committee is working hard with the Planning Dept. to create a zoning code that will work for all and allow for much needed expanded options for housing.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

Zoning regulates use as well as setting dimensional parameters. In the past, it was thought that separating residential from commercial uses was best. One result of this was the encouragement of car use to satisfy everyday needs. One had to use a car to do any of life's chores. Today, we think differently and want to discourage unnecessary car travel, so having housing over commercial uses works well. Allowing a mix of residential and commercial uses is just one detail that zoning can and should make possible.

I want our new zoning code to encourage housing in and near our villages and transportation nodes. Access to public transportation and proximity to fulfilling daily needs will help move Newton toward our sustainability goals.

The Council has already made accessory apartments easier to create. We can continue this work. I want our zoning code to make it easier for an existing single family home near villages and public transportation to add a modestly sized unit within its existing footprint or with a modest addition. This "infill" housing will help add needed affordability to our housing stock, as these units will tend to be smaller and hence lower in rent.

I also want zoning reform to address our sustainability goals in ways that it can: multi-unit housing tends to be more energy efficient; not allowing new construction or substantial rehabs to heat with fossil fuels will reduce carbon emissions; mandating EV charging stations in new construction over a given number of units. These are just examples of how the zoning reform project can bring our City closer to where we want it to be.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

- **28 Austin St. (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015)**

I supported this project and voted for it. I feel strongly that it adds to the fabric of vitality and walkability in Newtonville and provides needed affordable and market rate units to the City.

- **1521 Beacon St.(Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked "safe harbor" 2016)**

I supported this project and was sorry when it was withdrawn.

- **Trio/Washington Place (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017)**

I supported this project and voted for it. I encouraged the developer to create open exterior public/arts space, now a huge success.

- **Northland (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019)**

I supported this project and voted for it. It will transform a tired, underutilized 23 acres into a vibrant new community.

- **Riverdale (Nonantum, 201 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020)**

I supported this project.

- **Dunstan East (W. Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 (234 units), petition to amend/increase unit total (302) pending)**

I supported this project and support the increase in units.

- **1149-51 Walnut St. (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021)**

I supported and voted for this project. It will be a great addition of housing very near the T station in Newton Highlands.

- **Riverside (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending)**

As you know, Councilors must weigh all information on special permit projects that are before them before deciding on how they will vote. What I can say is that this project checks off many boxes in what the City is looking for in a development; it is near public transit and Rte 128, it is an underutilized parcel that can be called an eyesore and it will add both needed affordable and market rate units to Newton's housing need.

- **145 Warren St. (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)**

I was in favor of this project at 4 units. I am currently working with colleagues, the Planning Department and developer to try to resurrect the project in another form.



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Yes. The City of Newton already supports the development of multi-family housing, and we should continue to do so. For example, interior Accessible Dwelling Units (ADU) are allowed by right. This effectively means all homes may become two-families by right. However, our City should make it easy for home owners to take advantage of this benefit. Additionally, almost 40% of our housing stock is already two or more-family units. As a person who grew up in Newton in a multifamily house, I was only able to move back to Newton by living in a two-family house.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

We can and should get more affordable units from for-profit developers working in our city. Using Austin Street as an example, we were able to go from 15% to 33% affordable. The Armory is another example of how we can increase our affordable housing stock. We should not rely on only for-profit developers which is why I support working with not-for-profit organizations to develop more affordable rental and condominium units.

I'd like to see Newton Housing Authority expanded. Currently only 1300 residents benefit from this opportunity. There are several types of private-public partnerships that could be explored for housing, especially for our older residents.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes. I favor fewer tear downs. All new developments should have solar or be built to add solar easily. We must have incentives for builders who will build LEED Certified projects. And we must work with developers to get the absolute best projects we can so that we may avoid 40B projects that do not need to comply with local ordinances or by-laws in relation to wetlands protection. Lastly, if our City chooses to enact green policies, we must also consider any financial burdens to residents and small businesses.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes. At the city level, we need to explore a variety of options including increasing home-ownership opportunities (perhaps community land trusts), not just rentals. We must increase inclusionary zoning for larger projects and reduce the local-preference percentage.

I will add that promoting racial equity and an inclusive Newton is not part of a single program or programs. It must be incorporated into our *daily* work. Our schools do that now and our city government is taking measures to start doing that. But there is more work to be done. We must

continue to actively outreach to *all* members of our community to make sure they feel welcome and included. This is work that needs to be done every day, in everything we do.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

We have spent years engaged in a divisive effort to completely rewrite our zoning code and have little to show for it. It is time to work together to tackle specific zoning issues, including measures to discourage teardowns, make our construction more environmentally friendly and sustainable, and improve the business districts in our village centers. We must include those of us who are more economically challenged and allowing very expensive, new housing everywhere will further decrease our middle-income and working-class populations.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

Mixed-use developments should be welcome in our city. They are important projects and it's imperative that these projects are carefully vetted. Is each project transit-oriented? Is each one designed to be in scale to abutting neighbors? The job of the city council is to scrutinize to get the best possible projects.

Riverside and is an example of how mixed-use developments have the potential to be a positive benefit to our community. It was carefully vetted with neighbors, promotes a variety of housing, sits next to a major highway; and takes a site that was not well used and is transforming it.

149-51 Walnut Street is another project that worked with the community and adjusted so that it would be a project that the community wanted and could be proud to have in the village center. Unfortunately, 145 Warren Street did not use the neighbors to help make a project that would be an asset to the street and greater community. There are some great parts of the project, passive house, green space on the garage, bike stalls, but those should be expected from any developer in Newton. The addition of 4 or 5 condos on this space will bring more expensive housing to this entire, multi-family neighborhood and will ultimately increase taxes for the homes surrounding it which in turn will make it harder for the residents in this neighborhood to continue living in Newton and will also increase rents in this area.

Austin Street was a missed opportunity to create 100% affordable housing.

As a Councilor I will judge each project independently, on its merits.



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

The City of Newton should not be supporting the development of new multifamily housing in its residential neighborhoods. Our existing affordable multifamily housing should be protected from developers seeking to demolish these structures to build larger unaffordable housing.

Multifamily housing in mixed use developments that are built on commercial property should be supported by the City if these developments are built in scale with the surrounding community and provide trees, green space and green roofs to mitigate the effects of our urban heat island.

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

We need zoning that discourages developers from competing for modest homes and driving prices up. These developers are taking advantage of our zoning laws to maximize lot coverage and build luxury homes that are out of scale with the surrounding neighborhood. The zoning redesign provision, that allows homeowners to bump out their homes another 25%, should not be allowed for teardowns unless a special permit is obtained with neighborhood input. This will help tamp down the run on affordable housing.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes. We need to discourage increased density in our residential neighborhoods as it will increase our urban heat island effect (surfaces that absorb and retain heat). Instead density should be restricted to commercial property and integrate trees, green space and green roofs to mitigate the urban heat island effect that is usually associated with these properties.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes. The best approach is to create low-cost ownership opportunities. Some exist in Newton's inventory of modest homes. Unfortunately, our zoning laws incentivize developers to compete for these homes, driving up prices. Once developers buy these houses, they are torn down and

rebuilt into expensive luxury homes. The next best opportunity is building sustainable, in scale mixed use condo developments with a certain percentage affordably priced. Developers and the City should provide access to down payment assistance as well as access to affordable credit to our minority communities.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton's zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

I want the Zoning and Planning Committee to schedule docket # 75-21 regarding the demolition of existing homes that are replaced by much more expensive structures. We need to hear what residents think about the ongoing loss of less expensive homes.

Zoning Redesign needs to control the proliferation of out-of-scale homes shoe-horned into small lots. This can be done by inserting a clause in the proposed zoning code that would require a special permit when a house is torn down and wants to take advantage of the 25% bump out.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you're not sure about a project, just skip it.

I believe in multifamily projects that are built on commercial property and in scale with the surrounding neighborhood. Although it will be larger than I would have liked, I voted for Northland because I felt that the promised affordable housing opportunities, trees and green space represented a better use of the property than a strip mall. Yet, I believe the developer should do more to mitigate traffic by providing shuttle buses into Boston/Seaport.

I like the Trio project because the size is in scale with the building it replaced. Yet, I believe that the housing could have been made more affordable. My feelings are the same regarding Austin Street.

I like the idea of mixed-use development being built on commercial property. Yet, I want Dunstan East and Riverdale to be reduced in size to be in scale with the surrounding neighborhoods.

I am glad that the Riverside developers are speaking with the community and hope that adjustments will be made to better fit in with the surrounding community.

I am opposed to the 145 Warren Street project because it is a large out-of-scale multifamily project built in a residential neighborhood. This project claims to be a transit oriented development, yet it has two garage parking spaces for each unit. Although this project is LEED certified, it builds over scarce green space and increases our urban heat island. It is supported by our Ward 6 City Councilors, but not by the neighborhood or anyone interested in preventing the urbanization of our neighborhoods.



Engine 6 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates

8/31/21

1. Should the City of Newton support the development of multifamily housing? Please explain, as specifically as possible.

Yes-The City of Newton should support multi-family housing specifically near village centers and transit as it has many benefits to our community including: expanding the tax base and commercial vitality of an area, and it provides an increase in much-needed housing in desirable areas with greater employment opportunities, easier access to transit, and generally a higher quality of life, as these areas typically are more land-constrained and expensive to build in. In addition multi-family housing can provide for a wide range of types and sizes of housing, producing different housing price points and levels of affordability.

PLEASE NOTE AT THIS TIME I AM NOT ADVOCATING TO ELIMINATE SINGLE FAMILY ZONING THROUGHOUT THE CITY

2. What are your specific plans to increase the supply of affordable housing in Newton?

I would advocate we use every tool in the toolbox to increase our affordable housing stock in Newton, including increasing density in our village centers. I supported and would lean on our inclusionary zoning ordinance, pushing developers to go as far as financially feasible in any housing development, to include permanently deeded, moderate, low and very low-income units. I am a careful steward of our CPA funding, ensuring the money is allocated for projects that fit within the legislated guidelines, open space, historic and affordable housing. (I have voted against CPA projects that do not meet these guidelines.) I Support non- profit development projects that result in affordable units and take advantage of opportunities on the city level that present themselves as 100% affordable (recently, the Armory). Finally, I support the affordable housing trust that is currently working its way through the Council.

It is important to note that any true proponent of affordable housing would use every tool in the toolbox and not limit the work in any way. When you restrict yourself to any one mechanism to obtain affordable housing it truly calls into question one's commitment to affordable housing.

3. Do you think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change? Please explain.

Yes- I think housing policy should play a role in the City's response to climate change.

The data is overwhelming- climate change can be mitigated by housing and transportation policies. Put more directly, in order to solve the climate crisis, we have to solve the housing crisis.

Numerous climate researchers have a similar conclusion. In a recent NYT article-an assessment of the carbon footprint of 700 California cities, experts with the Renewable and Appropriate Energy Laboratory at the University of California, Berkeley, found that housing built in urban areas, near transit, jobs and services — can reduce greenhouse gas pollution more effectively than any other option. The article goes on to say; “The relationship between housing and transportation emissions is not complicated. The housing crisis in our cities and job centers is forcing more workers to “drive till they qualify,” the term used by real estate agents for what a growing number of residents have to do to find housing they can afford. As cities that are job centers make it hard or impossible to build housing — for example, through de facto bans on apartment buildings in areas zoned for single-family homes — people who are priced out move further away, resulting in sprawl that covers up farmland and open space, clogs freeways and increases greenhouse gas emissions.”

So yes- if we lived closer to where we worked, shopped and played, it would significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, having a positive impact on the environment.

4. Should the City actively promote economic and racial diversity? If so, what specific steps should the City Council take toward this goal?

Yes- I follow the basic principle of the greater good for the greater number. It's the right thing to do, economic and racial diversity makes us better people, compassionate to the human condition. Equality and diversity are core values for me. And the world is changing- and it would behoove us all to embrace the changes.

But don't take my word for it....

Researchers have found effects of income inequality include higher rates of health and social problems, and lower rates of social goods, a lower population-wide satisfaction and happiness and even a lower level of economic growth when human capital (people) are neglected for high-end consumption.

If one does not have the moral compass to comprehend and understand the need for income equality and racial diversity, the case can also be made for purely selfish reasons- wealthier people are safer in a just and equal society. Research has shown an inverse link between income inequality and social cohesion. In more equal societies, people are much more likely to trust each other, measures of social capital (the benefits of goodwill, fellowship, mutual sympathy and social connectedness among groups who make up a social units) suggest greater community involvement, and crime rates are consistently lower.

So if your moral compass is broken- see the research.

5. The Zoning and Planning Committee of the City Council is currently engaged in the process of reviewing and rewriting Newton’s zoning ordinance (Zoning Redesign). What do you want Zoning Redesign to accomplish?

I want the zoning code to reflect the changing world we live in and solve for 21st century problems- the climate crisis is bearing down on us and we are in the midst of a housing shortage that is impacting every aspect of people’s lives.

I subscribe to the “Housing First” theory that before an individual can be a productive contributor to our community- they must have stable housing. Without stable housing, securing employment, combating substance abuse, caring for children or elderly family members- are all secondary, which is why the current housing crisis is Newton’s problem. If members of our community cannot find secure housing it impacts other areas of their lives that will require additional support and social services. The housing crisis does not recognize city boundaries, there are people around us and in our community each and everyday that need housing and suffer from housing insecurity. We ignore this crisis at our own peril.

Depending on the research-we have anywhere from 10-30 years to make major changes before the climate crisis, including extreme weather, loss of habitats and the species living within them, and threats to our food and water supplies take hold. As previously mentioned, our housing policy (determined by zoning) directly impacts climate.

6. For each of the following projects, please state whether you support(ed) or oppose(d) it, and your reasons (briefly). If you’re not sure about a project, just skip it.

[28 Austin Street](#) (Newtonville, 68 housing units, special permit approved 2015) •

SUPPORTED BUT WAS NOT ON THE COUNCIL

[1521 Beacon Street](#) (Waban, 48 units, never built, ZBA invoked “safe harbor” 2016) •

SUPPORTED BUT WAS NOT ON THE COUNCIL

[Trio/Washington Place](#) (Newtonville, 140 units, special permit approved 2017) •

SUPPORTED BUT WAS NOT ON THE COUNCIL

[Northland](#) (Newton Upper Falls, 800 units, special permit approved 2019) •

SUPPORTED

[Riverdale](#) (Nonantum, 204 units, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020) SUPPORTED

- [Dunstan East](#) (West Newton, ZBA approved 40B permit 2020 [234 units], petition to amend/increase unit total [302] pending) SUPPORT
- [1149-51 Walnut Street](#) (Newton Highlands, 25 units, special permit approved 2021) SUPPORTED
- [Riverside](#) (Auburndale, 582 units, special permit approved 2020; in 2021 reduced to 550 units, approval pending) TBD (PENDNG BEFORE COUNCIL)
- [145 Warren Street](#) (Newton Centre, 4 units, special permit application withdrawn Aug. 2021)
SUPPORTED