

CAMBRIDGE ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS (CAN)

Questions for Cambridge City Council Special Election Candidates – May 2023

1. Two senior members of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) recently resigned to protest inadequate enforcement by the City of HPC determinations and Unified Development Code (UDC) requirements. What is your position on actions the City should take to enforce HPC determinations and UDC requirements?

~ Enforcement of Code needs to be equitable and consistent throughout the city and all Wards. Code enforcement should not be used as a means of targeting and punishing property owners, but as a solid method for ensuring that our city's neighborhoods are attractive, safe and healthy. We hold new property owners and their renovation projects to extremely high standards, those standards should be the same for all property owners including the City. Expecting private properties to be maintained at a higher standard than city properties is not the way to improve the image and reputation of Cambridge, nor is favoritism or cronyism when applying enforcement.

2. If elected, do you intend to live in the Ward you will represent for the remainder of your term?

~ I just celebrated 3 years in my apartment on historic High Street and I hope to remain here for many years. The location is beautiful, clean, safe, properly maintained and centrally located for all the projects and responsibilities that I have in my life. My bedroom looks out over both Cambridge Creek and the Choptank River, my front balcony has the most amazing view of the lighthouse and I love falling asleep to the sound of the lines ringing on the masts in the marina. I am extremely dedicated to this Ward and my home within it.

3. The Shoreline Resiliency Committee has proposed constructing a seven-foot berm at the shoreline from Long Wharf to Great Marsh Park. Do you support this proposal?

~ I strongly support proactive efforts to protect and preserve our shoreline and our property from erosion and flooding. This will be a tough project to get underway because it is going to change the view for so many property owners and the landscape that we have become accustomed to. However, a compromise with the inevitable is likely our best defense. We know that the storms and sea rise will continue, we have observed the increasing severity and regularity of high tide and weather events, we must find ways to work with these changes if we cannot work against them. In addition to the protection of the shoreline we need to make changes within our infrastructure to manage stormwater and runoff. Our landscaping and wide use of impermeable paving should be examined and redesigned to address problems from multiple angles.

4. Currently the Hearn building is slated to house 44 moderate income apartments. Do you agree with this? If not, how do you think the Hearn Building should be repurposed?

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~ My concern with a solid block of subsidized housing is the long-term effect it has on the city and the neighborhood it exists in. That block of Race Street is pivotal in the expansion of our downtown area. We need to ensure that what happens on that spot, and the 2 beside it will improve and activate that neighborhood in a positive manner. There should be mixed use buildings that offer retail and commercial opportunities along with mixed levels of housing above. New housing should be accompanied by new employment opportunities for real economic growth to occur. We cannot see economic growth in our citizens if the only housing available to them has a low income cap that could force them out of the home. We need to present opportunities for personal and financial growth and home ownership.

5. Currently, single family homes that have been converted to multifamily units must revert to single family use after being vacant for 90 days. Enforcement of this provision has been inconsistent. Are you in favor of consistent enforcement of this requirement?

~ I am in favor of consistent enforcement in all areas. We have pockets of neglected buildings in most neighborhoods throughout the city and it is holding us back. We have seen positive changes in areas where units have been reverted to their original state and families have moved in again, we should continue to put pressure on property owners to keep their buildings up to code and occupied. If they do not care to maintain or improve the property perhaps, they will relinquish it to someone that will when it becomes a financial drain to let it stagnate.

6. What should be done about development of the Mill Street School property?

~ We have been entertaining the whims of the developers for too many tries, when the city is asked over and over again to amend or change the codes to make a project feasible for their profit and not our city we are clearly talking to the wrong people. This development opportunity can elevate or wreck that lot and the homes surrounding it. Perhaps it will take a community, grass-roots effort for the project to evolve with the support of the neighborhood and a vision to truly enhance it. It is unfortunate that what makes the most profit for a developer rarely profits the community it is developing in. We want to preserve the history and charm of the school while making the property functional and beautiful again, taking care not to overburden our infrastructure. We need to research developers that have addressed similar issues and look at different and creative options.

7. The Municipal Marina has not been properly maintained for years and now needs extensive renovation. How should these renovation needs be addressed?

~ The Municipal Marina is a treasure for our small city and is not fully recognized for its contributions to the economy. According to North America's premier online slip booking

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service Cambridge Yacht Basin rates extremely well in the boating community nationwide due to its amenities and amazing location, the transient slips and the guests that pass through them each year contribute greatly to the downtown businesses and should be a priority in city maintenance so that it can continue to draw those guests. As we look toward the CWDI development we must be sure that we do not leave established and loved elements of our city without the support that they need to remain vital. If we are lacking the funds in our budget to properly care for the marina infrastructure, we need to explore options for grants or investors to bring it up to par and perhaps rebrand it to truly maximize its potential. With that we should also look at ways of tracking the guests from the marina and including the money spent within the community by those guests.

8. How should the City address the rising rate of violent crime? What can be done to address the recent increase in dangerous traffic violations downtown and elsewhere in the City?

~ The City has seen some good results from the programs recently put in place, shot spotter and community policing have both shown to be effective within the department and the neighborhoods. Those efforts should be continued and expanded while we add more support for our communities and the families that are struggling within them. While also working to ensure the police have the support that they need in staffing, training, support programs, benefits and advancement opportunities. We must again think creatively about our traffic issues, where we have placed wide and accommodating streets folks have come to abuse the space. As part of reexamining our city landscaping and nonpermeable paving in managing flooding and runoff, we should look at options for traffic calming that can also beautify and serve the environment. Raised intersection platforms, traffic circles, gateway treatments and pavement narrowings to name a few.

9. Are you in favor of relocating the YMCA to Cambridge Harbor? If not, where should it be located? What should happen to its current location?

~ I am very critical of the waterfront as an ideal location for our YMCA, it is the outer edge of the city proper and therefore the entire county. I feel that such a facility should remain centralized to the neighborhoods that have supported it for years and have expressed great disapproval of the plan. The study that supposedly supports the move has not been made available to anyone that has requested it, there are questions that should be answered and conversations that need to be had. Any changes should be carefully studied and clearly shared with the community as the Y is a community geared facility. If the YMCA cannot find a way to improve upon or expand the property they currently hold the area should be turned into more homes to compliment the existing area.

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10. Climate change is already causing damage in Cambridge. What would you recommend to address the effects of climate change?

~ We need to be proactive and bold in our approach to preventing further shore loss and to restoring lost natural protections, like earthen berms, barrier islands and natural estuaries. We need to address our landscaping and hardscaping options and replace muddy grass lawns and aggregate pavement with rain gardens, restored swales and pervious paving options throughout the city. We know that the storms will continue along with the tides, and we need to work with it instead of against it.

11. Please describe one additional issue that you think the City needs to address.

~ While we have started the conversation and the effort to provide our youth better support, education, and opportunities but we need to start delivering on those efforts. Community centers, programs and events that can empower and motivate our youth while making them feel vital and seen must be created and promoted within the community. The city has an internship program starting this summer and I am excited to see the positive ripples that it starts. Inspiring our children to believe in themselves, their futures and their communities will have the long-term result of a stronger and healthier Cambridge.

Please include a short paragraph describing your biography, qualifications, and reasons for running.

~ I want to be a fresh voice and perspective in the City Council chambers, to represent the citizens of my Ward and the city of Cambridge with transparency and clear communication. I would like to have the opportunity to inspire citizens to be involved and informed and active in the community and the workings of their government. With my working knowledge of the downtown, my connections throughout the city and county, as well as my dedication to Cambridge, I believe that I can represent the citizens of Cambridge with integrity, empathy and intelligence. I want to help usher in thoughtful and sustainable development, city wide economic growth and renewed faith in our government. I am inspired by the history, the people and the opportunities that exist in our city and I believe that together we can bring Cambridge into a new era of success.