

Every City election year, the Fenway News asks the final 8 At-Large City Council candidates a set of questions regarding concerns of voters in the Fenway. We print them in a special spread a month before the election, along with photos provided by the candidates. This year for the first time we can also offer candidates more space on Fenway News Online to answer other questions or make other arguments for their election. Here are this year's questions:

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

Several of the candidates talk about a community based planning process. What does this mean? Will each neighborhood create an elected council?

I am a strong supporter of a community-based planning process. As an elected member for five years of the Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Council, I was able to successfully advocate with and on behalf of my neighbors for new development that is appropriate for our community. Through that experience, I've seen that only when communities are a part of the planning process can we ensure that development is beneficial to our neighborhoods, creates jobs, supports local businesses, preserves open space and eliminates blight. As a City Councilor, I will fully support and continue to advocate for the elimination of the Boston Redevelopment Authority. Instead, Boston deserves an independent City Planning Department and elected City Planning Board with representatives from the Fenway and neighborhoods across Boston. The planning and development structure in Boston hasn't been revisited in more than 40 years, and the city has changed. As your new City Councilor At Large, my staff and I will work diligently over the next year to foster an open, inclusive process that educates the public, engages citizens in informed decision-making and returns neighborhood planning to the people of Boston.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Establishing a Fenway community center has been a priority for many Fenway citizens who have participated in planning exercises and meetings; What would you do to help the Fenway get such a facility?

Certainly, the Fenway community deserves a new community center and I will support Fenway's citizens in furthering the creation of a community center at every opportunity. Especially for the area's senior population, a safe place is needed that provides activities and meeting spaces for the residential community. Generally, I will work to support the "urban village" approach and the Fenway CDC's vision for the Fenway neighborhood's growth into the 21st century. As a City Councilor, I will work with Councilor Ross and the neighborhood's state legislative representatives to support carefully planned development of the Fenway that helps foster "smart-growth" to foster a transit-oriented residential neighborhood in the heart of the City of Boston that is welcoming to the broadest spectrum of residents. As detailed above, as a City Councilor At Large, I will seize every opportunity to support community planning efforts and to promote development that is consistent with the neighborhood's vision. It is crucial that our neighborhoods and their residents play the leading role in deciding the future development of Boston.

HOUSING

Under Mayor Menno's inclusionary zoning policy developers of housing must provide some middle income affordable units in their new building (or pay into a fund). Developers of recently built housing in the Fenway have complied, offering one-bedroom units at over \$1,400 a month. Do you believe this is affordable? Lower income brackets should also be supplied with affordable housing? If so, how would you change the laws and regulations to insure that "affordable housing" is actually affordable to lower income Boston residents?

\$1,400 a month is not "affordable" to lower income Boston residents and will not provide the opportunity we should be ensuring for working families to live in our City. First, we have to ensure that whenever housing is being built that we also build affordable housing so that everyone in our city has the opportunity to live here. In Boston, more than 20,000 households are on a waiting list for affordable rental housing and there is an obvious and clear need to create rental options for those priced out of Boston's expensive housing market. We should also not ignore opportunities to create affordable home ownership, since that will help. Ultimately, rather than address "affordability" on a case-by-case basis and in individual battles with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, I believe an independent City Planning Department is needed. Only with this important reform can Boston finally integrate planning for jobs, housing, environmental protection, transportation and business development. A planning department and elected City Planning Board could take on these issues in a way that is accountable to the City Council and responsive to our constituents through oversight processes.

Candidates should use no more than 750 words to answer all three questions. We will trim for space if necessary. In the event that a candidate doesn't manage to get answers to us, we run a blank space in that candidate's slot. Candidate's answers are due on Tuesday, September 29, at 5 p.m. The October issue of the Fenway News will be published on Friday, October 2.