

John Connolly / Fenway News Questionnaire

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?

Boston needs a planning process that advances thoughtful, complete development plans that will contribute to the City's economic growth, job creation, and aesthetic appeal, thereby preserving the highest quality of life in our neighborhoods and making Boston more livable. Community-based planning is a transparent bottom-up process that encourages broad civic participation. It is designed around the reality that Boston residents are close to neighborhood issues, and are the best equipped to clearly identify community needs and to advocate passionately for local concerns. Community-based planning is neighborhood based and consensus driven and recognizes that Boston's development plans should benefit from the insights, knowledge, and support of local residents. Usually these models focus on ensuring that certain goals are met in the planning process, such as providing a livable design, community cooperation, good public education options, and sustainable economic development strategies. This community-based planning approach can be seen in Fenway CDC's resident-created Urban Village Plan, a smart growth vision for making the neighborhood more diverse and sustainable.

Not all community based planning models utilize an elected council for each neighborhood, although that is an option to be considered. For example, New York City, which uses a community-based planning model, has fifty nine community boards whose members are appointed by the Borough President with input from the City Council. These boards have up to fifty members who reside in, have a business, professional, or other significant interest in that community and represent all segments of the community.

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?

Although the Fenway has active neighborhood and civic associations, including Fenway CDC and Mission Hill/Fenway Neighborhood Trust, the area lacks the most basic community facilities. Every neighborhood should have a community center to support the needs of residents and families. These centers are an important resource as they provide essential services to supplement a neighborhood's schools, health centers, senior organizations, and non profits. Community centers bring neighbors together by inviting those from varied socio-economic and cultural backgrounds to participate in an array of essential programming. They also provide much needed space where members of community organizations and non profits can gather and hold meetings.

I support Fenway's efforts to fund and build a community center. As City Councillor I will advocate for any comprehensive proposals and will look for ways to support innovative funding ideas that would appropriate capital for the project.

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?

My vision for One Boston is a livable city with safe, affordable, and sustainable neighborhoods defined by a world class public school system and known as the greenest city in the world. This requires a commitment to true affordable housing that provides options for people from all walks of life, including lower income brackets. In the Fenway, we must preserve affordable housing by protecting existing affordable units that are scheduled to revert to market-rate under expiring contracts and work with developers and neighborhood associations to ensure the creation of additional affordable opportunities. I will work with the city and state agencies, community development corporations, and financial institutions to preserve these units. If we do not protect our existing affordable housing stock, our efforts to add new units will be rendered moot.

I also believe that we should prioritize mixed-use/mixed-income development that combines retail and residential uses linked to public transportation. This smart growth model of development is one way to ensure vibrant, diverse and accessible communities. Our communities should reflect the socio-economic diversity of our city, which is the best way to create stable and sustainable neighborhoods. All development, no matter what type, should have a minimal impact on the environment and be as energy efficient as possible.