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Progressive Newton 2017 Municipal Candidates' Questionnaire

(Please submit answers to ProgressiveNewton@gmail.com by Friday, August 18; answers will be available to the public)

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS SPECIFICALLY AS POSSIBLE:

1. How will you approach collective bargaining with public unions and how will you weigh the value of well paid, skilled union labor against potential cost savings from outsourcing? I support the collective bargaining process and I do not believe you can put a price on well paid, skilled union labor. Privatization is a false choice that only ends up harming our communities and the families that live in them. It has become the quick fix for many municipalities facing budget crises to privatize factions of their workforce and I am wholly opposed.

2. What value do you place on increasing affordable housing in Newton, and what concrete steps will you take to expand affordable housing? I place a high value on increasing affordable housing because I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live in this community. Our community is in great need of housing for our seniors who want to age in place with dignity. We also lack substantial workforce housing for middle-income folks and young professionals. As city councilor, I would pursue efforts to ensure smart growth and sustainable development. I will model civil dialogue and transparency through all steps in the process. Meaning that constituents, elected officials, and developers need to have a clear understanding of the process. Additionally, I would also ensure that constituents have a forum to provide meaningful input and contribute to the design of new developments.

3. Do you support the welcoming city ordinance? What other steps will you take to make our city welcoming to all, regardless of race, class, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or other discrete characteristics? I fully support the welcoming city ordinance. Other steps I will take to ensure that all are welcome are the following: I will make sure to do outreach to all residents - particularly, I will strive to make local government more accessible for all by meeting with constituents and creating opportunities for residents to express their concerns both

in person and online; I will oppose any policies that encourage discrimination against marginalized groups; and, I will pursue policy that ensures equity and equality for all. In particular, I would work to ensure that Fair Housing Laws are enforced, and will support our school committee, and their efforts to address Newton's achievement gap.

As an LGBTQ-identified individual, I applaud Mayor Warren's recent appointment of Holly Ryan, the city's first LGBTQ liaison who will work to ensure that Newton remains a welcoming place for families like mine.

4. What concrete steps will you take to combat global climate change, increase renewable energy, and decrease energy consumption in Newton? Decreasing our city's environmental footprint is important to me as a city councilor and Newton has taken some great steps so far to combat climate change. As a councilor, I will ensure the city upholds its commitment to the Paris Agreement, despite President Trump's withdrawal. Priorities include guaranteeing all new municipal construction is LEED-certified, finding new locations for solar panels to increase reliance on solar energy, improving the city's public transportation and bike lanes to reduce our reliance on individual vehicles, planting more trees around the city, and repairing leaky water and gas lines to increase energy and water efficiency.

5. What does Black Lives Matter mean to you?

Black Lives Matter means liberation for all. In our country, black Americans have been disproportionately marginalized, criminalized, and kept in poverty through systemic racism. To proudly say that "black lives matter" is to acknowledge how we as a society have failed through racism rooted in our Nation's history through the present, and that I will do my part to fight this racism on every front. As a progressive, I believe strongly that our policies must center on the most vulnerable. In this way, by standing up for the racial justice of our black brothers and sister we achieve equity and justice for all.

6. Would you support a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory language by city employees?

Yes, I support a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory language by city employees. I believe that everyone has the right to live and work in a space in which they feel comfortable and safe.

7. What concrete steps will you take to address income inequality in Newton?

Steps that I will take to address income inequality, fall in three buckets: schooling, housing, and engaging in state and local dialogue. In terms of schooling, there is a correlation between higher educational attainment and income. As such, I will continue to pursue efforts that keep Newton schools excellent, while also looking into research and policy that are proven to help close the achievement gap (particularly among students of color). In regards to housing, I want to ensure that living in Newton is affordable for all. As I mentioned in Question #2, I will do this by advocating for expanded affordable housing that is rooted in a transparent process that ensures residents are fully informed about the process of creating new developments. Lastly, I will engage in state and local dialogue to ensure that everyone's needs are met to offset cost burden. An example of this would be participating on a state level in regards to transportation, by advocating for things such as expanded times, which could potentially help folks to have better access to go to and from work.

8. Under what circumstances would you support an override?

I would support an override in the case of supporting schools, roads, public safety, infrastructure, and financial planning programs that help seniors, veterans, and others that may be cost-burdened.

9. What steps would you take to assist seniors, millennials, and others who might be cost-burdened? HUD defines cost-burdened as paying more than 30% of their income for housing.

I believe that everyone should have the opportunity to live in this community without being cost-burdened. As such, I would pursue efforts that allow for constituents, particularly those cost-burdened by housing to be involved in the housing development process to ensure that pricing is fair and that they will be able to live in dignity.

10. How would you improve access to transportation? What do you see as Newton's role in advocating for expanded transportation?

I would improve access to transportation by pursuing a needs assessment (formal and informal) with Newton residents. After assessing needs, I would advocate on a state level to make sure that state government is acting on improving transit for Newton.

I anticipate that one of the main issues that I would have to address would be around accessibility (referring to both physical and time challenges). I would communicate to state officials around public/private partnerships to ensure accessibility to commuter rail and Metro stops, and advocate for measures such as the Fair Share Amendment.

11. What do you believe the role is of local elected leaders in promoting progressive policies at the state and national level?

The role of local elected leaders in promoting progressive policies at the state and national level, is to zero in on progressive policies that are at the intersections of state, local, and national.

We need local progressive leaders doing this, or else the movement will not be as strong. In fact, I place a firm belief that if we have progressive leaders living their values from the local, state, to Federal level, than we will become an even more progressive country.

12. Why are people poor?

People are poor because of larger systemic/socialized norms that perpetuate marginalization of particular groups- some examples include the opportunity gap (e.g. wealthier districts having better access to things like excellent education), racism (e.g. segregated neighborhoods, environmental racism, etc.), and sexism (e.g. lack of equity policies in place, gender based discrimination, etc.) to name a few.

YES/NO (Massachusetts state legislature bill numbers follow in parentheses, where applicable):

1. Do you support or oppose a \$15/hour minimum wage? (S1004 / H2365) - SUPPORT

2. Do you support or oppose paid family medical leave? (S1048 / H2172) - SUPPORT

3. Do you support or oppose the 2018 ballot question to place a 4% increased tax rate on taxable income over a million dollars per year? - SUPPORT

4. Do you support or oppose the 2018 ballot question to roll back protections for transgender individuals in public accommodations? - OPPOSE

5. Do you support the safe communities act? (S1305 / H3269) - YES

6. Do you support the great neighborhoods bill? (S81) YES - but we are strongly opposed to shortening the public input language in the bill.

7. Do you believe Newton has met its obligation to provide affordable housing under MGL Chapter 40B? - NO