**Cambridge Citizens Coalition**

**2023 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates**

**JOAN PICKETT**

I How strongly do you support these issues before the city? #1 is high (for); #2 is moderate; #3 is low (against)

1. **More Accountable City Government:** Your support for greater transparency/accountability in the city.
   1. **1x**. 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_How have you personally been involved in addressing this? Explain.

Increased transparency and accountability are needed and I will promote both on the council. Attempts to understand the cost of separated bike lane installations is one example of trying to establish accountability. The most recent example is an attempt to understand the $50 Million Mass Ave price tag which prompted DPW to send out a summary of the expenses. Tax payers should know how their money is being spent to ensure it is on those programs that are effective. This will be a new approach to looking at the city’s finances.

While I was chair of Cambridge Streets for All, we sent out emails on topics urging our members to email on various topics including the $50m Mass Ave project.

1. **Housing:** Your support for new AH0 (Affordable Housing Overlay) up-zoning amendment
   1. 1. 2. **3 X** \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

I do not support the proposal to amend to the AHO. By significantly increasing building height to twelve to fifteen stories, allowing for increased density, removing setbacks and removing review by neighborhoods, the character of our squares and neighborhoods could radically change. The proposed amendments appear reactive without sufficient thought or planning. No analysis or data supporting these amendments has been produced to show how many more affordable units will be developed. Yes we need more housing stock to accommodate persons and families at different income levels so those who have lived in the city can continue to live in the city. And we need a thoughtful plan how to accomplish the goal and ensure housing is in context with neighborhoods.

1. **Transportation:** Your support for re-evaluating city’s bike lane/traffic/parking infrastructure and plans.
   1. **1.x** 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

Please refer to the Opinion Letter published in Cambridge Day. This is an issue I have been involved with for almost two years.

1. **Environment:** Your support for keeping our mature trees (in schools, housing, parks, & other contexts)?
   1. **1.x** 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

Mature trees are one of the best carbon recapture options and their shade provides natural cooling. As Board Chair of the Charles River Conservancy, we advocated for protecting trees along the Charles and planting more. CRC’s water truck was used at Magazine Beach to help keep their trees alive when the contractor hired by DCR did not fulfill its obligations. It is hard to believe the city is cutting down trees for some projects like Linear Park and River St. Planting new trees are not a one-to-one replacement as it takes years for trees to mature. If the city is truly committed to climate change actions, why are they cutting down mature trees or not appropriately caring for them?

II. We are interested in how knowledgeable and active candidates are in city issues. (Short answer – 1-2 sentences)

1. What is the one key problem/issue you want to achieve in City Council next term?

Improve civic engagement and discourse with residents. Having been an active participant in city council meetings, it is frustrating to have reasonable comments not taken into account. It is disappointing when public meetings to offer suggestions are pre-packaged based on what CDD or TPT’s wants to happen. Public comment has become a perfunctory part of the CC agenda. And engaging residents in bottom-up planning should be the goal.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

I participate in CSO related meetings, City Council committee meetings and council meetings and have observed that some councillors appear totally uninterested in comments provided.

1. What City Council decision over the last term are you most supportive of?

The city managed the implications of COVID very well with the guidance of the City Council who made it a priority to focus on it at every Council meeting

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

1. What City Council decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term?

If AHO2 passes it will be the most disappointing action by the council. We need more housing and a plan to support it.. Even the sponsors of the amendments say only 3-5 buildings are expected to be built of the next decade! This amendment is clearly not about solving the housing shortage.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

Participated in public comment and letters to City Council

1. What City Staff decision over the last Council term are you most supportive of?

The Alewife Quad planning effort seems to be a successful model for engaging resident’s and other stakeholders in city planning. We should consider it the planning model for other efforts such as AHO.

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

Listened to presentation at CC meeting

1. What City Staff decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term?

Affordable Housing. Did not see anything coming from CDD on the new AHO amendments as to potential locations and number of units to be built. No data, no analysis

Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

III. What Issues Help Define You? Highlight those core interests/goals for the 2024-6 Council and explain why.

**Please see my website for my positions on the issues I checked below.www.electpickett.org**

\_\_\_\_More balance in commercial and residential needs

\_x\_\_\_More engagement by residents

\_\_\_\_More equity in healthcare, environment, schooling, housing, and related issues

\_x\_\_\_More transparency in Council and City decision-making

\_\_\_\_More prioritization of historic building reuse

\_\_\_\_More support for local businesses

\_\_x\_\_A more multi-dimensional and resident-engaged city planning

\_\_\_\_A more inclusive environmental policy

\_x\_\_\_A more comprehensive transportation policy

\_\_x\_\_Other (explain in 1-2 sentences)

Neighborhood integrity and character. At the moment, the character of our neighborhoods is under assault from new and proposed policies. Change is inevitable and I will support efforts that are balanced proposals for development with an eye towards how they will change a neighborhood's character. My aim is to find the `sweet spot' where development is consistent with neighborhood context and keeps it strong, vibrant and livable. Policies that impact neighborhoods must have a robust and authentic public process so the residents and businesses can help shape the decisions that will directly impact them.

IV. What incident or set of concerns got you interested in running for City Council?

I am truly disappointed in the disregard the Council has for listening to residents and businesses concerns and want to change the dynamics. I am running to make a difference in the way the city engages with its residents and businesses and to bring fiscal discipline to our spending.