

Candidate's Name: Amy Mah Sangiolo

1. What are the three most important issues for the city to address in the next Term?

Education, Housing, and Climate Change

2. What do you see as the key elements of a vibrant village center?

Our villages need easy access to public transportation, enough parking, and other methods of safe transportation to get residents and customers to village centers. Our downtown areas cannot sustain their businesses with just those who live nearby. We must support our village centers so they become destinations for those who live both within Newton and in the greater Boston area. A vibrant village center must have all the amenities that our surrounding neighborhoods need: retail (convenience/drug stores/grocery stores), restaurants and coffee shops, service providers (such as dry cleaning services, banks, and salons), and most importantly, a community gathering space -- like a neighborhood school, community library, community center, or city green/park -- for people to come together. A vibrant village center will also have strong partnerships with local artists, musicians, and cultural organizations to make our village centers welcoming, interesting, and accessible destination spaces for all.

3. What are the barriers to getting/keeping vibrant village centers and how would you overcome them?

Key barriers to thriving/vibrant village centers include two things lacking from the City: funding and structured support. The City needs to provide financial assistance, in the form of rental and mortgage assistance to help alleviate the high rents and mortgage obligations and structured support. By structured support, I mean that the City should create a Small Business/Village Business Liaison to consistently outreach to existing businesses, landlords, and neighborhood groups in each of our village centers to understand the dynamics of the existing conditions and what is needed for success. The City needs to:

- Streamline processes for permitting and licensing,
- Create a robust marketing program,
- Work with City departments and arts and cultural organizations to create festivals, fairs, and programs to attract visitors and patrons,
- Create easy transit options and/or parking options to encourage more people to visit our village centers and create a synergy among the businesses

4. Have you been a consistent supporter or opponent of mixed-use developments that have been previously approved, including Northland, Austin Street, Trio,

Dunstan East, Riverdale and Riverside, and if so, what have you done to support or oppose these projects? Please detail your thinking and your actions for each project.

My support for mixed-use developments is determined case-by-case by whether each project best meets Newton's needs. Specifically:

Supported:

- Chestnut Hill Square (100+ units of promised housing yet to be built)
- Austin Street, after I pushed the developer to provide additional affordable housing units
- Turtle Lane (special permit creating home-ownership units and restoration of the theater)
- Riverside v1, 2, and 3 (but as an abutter, recused myself from voting)

Opposed:

- Northland: Not transit-oriented and too few affordable units, with only the minimum 17% inclusionary housing required by zoning. Needed more affordable units and direct shuttles to Boston and/or shuttle service to the Needham Commuter Rail.
- Trio: Provided only the minimum affordable housing units required by ordinance, with no reduction in project size (daytime rail service was cut after the project was built, making it less transit-oriented.)

No position:

- 40B projects: Chapter 40B is a sham because all units in a 40B are included in the SHI, whether affordable or not.

5. What steps would you take to encourage more diverse and locally owned businesses in our City?

As Mayor, I intend to create a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion position to promote and support DEI initiatives. I will work with this newly hired director to create a DEI strategy to increase diversity throughout Newton. The position will help establish a robust outreach and marketing strategy to encourage businesses to locate in our village centers. I will also create a rental and mortgage assistance program for small businesses to help recover from COVID and expand and grow, and work with new businesses to introduce and market their products. These programs will assist both diverse and locally owned businesses to attract unique shops and restaurants that add to Newton's character.

6. How would you use housing tools to further economic and racial equity in Newton, specifically for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) For example, would you change the percentage of local preference in affordable housing lotteries?

The local preference percentage needs to be adjusted. The Barrett Group, consultants to the Fair Housing Committee, made it clear that local preference impacts racial minority groups by reducing their chances of lottery pool selection. But from my work experience as a housing advocate with the Attorney General's office, I am very aware that other barriers (e.g., credit reports) exist in the selection process at these affordable housing development projects. We need to understand whether changing local preference hurts our ability to hire a more diverse workforce for public safety and schools. We need to review the selection criteria for applicants, look at more robust marketing of units, create more family-sized units and home-ownership opportunities, and target income levels at 50% or below AMI. Additionally, we need more robust rental and mortgage assistance programs and must partner with legal assistance programs to help residents facing evictions and foreclosures.

7. What actions or measures beyond increasing affordable housing would you take to advance racial equity and promote an inclusive Newton?

We need to provide wrap-around services related to healthcare, childcare, job opportunities, educational opportunities, and legal assistance. Where we cannot provide direct resources, we need to provide assistance to access resources in these areas, by establishing relationships with for-profit and nonprofit organizations that work in these fields.

In addition, we need to hire a DEI Director to collect data and create strategies to promote a more inclusive community. We can start by reviewing municipal and school hiring practices, ensuring robust and regular outreach to community groups, including greater representation in city-wide planning and decision making, publicizing and responding to hate incidents, celebrating our cultural heritages, and creating safe spaces for more to share our stories.

8. What actions/changes would you support to implement the recommendations of the Climate Action Plan?

I would support the following:

- Establish yearly goals and publish monthly targets and progress on the City's website, along with the status of the City's sustainability projects.
- Reactivate the Green Leadership Collaborative -- identifying who is on it and who are the City's top 20 utility users.
- Increase roof-top solar installations.
- Require all large new development projects to electrify, build to passive-house standards, and install EV charging stations,
- Increase tree maintenance.
- Install affordable EV charging stations throughout the city.
- Increase Newton Power Choice percentage of renewable power to 100%.
- Reduce waste, increase recycling, and include composting in our trash collection system.

- Create a robust educational campaign to engage residents, businesses, and institutions regarding reduction of fossil fuel reliance and adoption of zero waste practices.
- Incentivize heating and cooling upgrades, and provide resources about contractors who adopt green construction practices and suppliers of green technology and products including EV and hybrid vehicles.

9. What steps would you take over the course of the next four years to ensure Newton's fiscal health both in the short and long term?

The current long-range forecast projects a revenue gap of over \$12 million by 2026. I will review every program and service using data and metrics to assess whether our programs are effectively serving the needs of our residents. I will evaluate our assets and assess what has been neglected to create a sustainable maintenance program. I will use ARPA funds strategically to ensure that we do not use these funds to create new ongoing operational expenses. I will be transparent about the state of our city's finances and needs, so Newton residents can make informed choices about funding decisions.

I will revisit our funding plan for Pension and OPEB liabilities; conduct an annual audit of the Inspectional Services Department, Parks and Recreation Department, and all other revenue generating departments to ensure the appropriateness of fees; and guarantee that all City finances are transparent.

10. Use this space to add anything you have not mentioned and that you would like us to know about your experience, vision for Newton, etc. (150 words or fewer)

I have dedicated my life to serving the public interest:

- Fighting to protect the environment through my work at the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, the Container Recycling Institute, and the National Wildlife Federation;
- Fighting for immigrant rights and citizenship, working to expose living conditions of children held in detention centers at the border and ensuring that disabled legal permanent residents have a fair and just hearing before USCIS;
- Fighting to help residents facing eviction and foreclosures with my work at the Attorney General's Office; and
- Fighting to ensure that Newton residents, seniors, parents and children of all ethnicities, religions, genders, and abilities have their voices and concerns heard and responded to during my 20 years of service on the City Council.

I believe I have the skills, experience, and passion to lead Newton forward, and I hope to earn your support and vote on November 2nd.