

## **Gary Mello – Response to A Better Cambridge Candidate Questionnaire**

- 1. DIVERSITY: ABC is committed to strengthening the social, cultural, and economic diversity of our neighborhoods.**

*If elected, what policies will you support or propose to help strengthen the diversity of our community through increased affordable housing and greater economic opportunity for all residents?*

RESPONSE: I will attack the inappropriate use of funds, specifically the CPA and PILOT money, which are being misused to pay for water department expenses and employee benefits respectively.

- 2. SUSTAINABILITY: ABC wants to build a strong and sustainable community where current and future residents will be able to work, shop, and play near their homes.**

*If elected, what policies or initiatives will you support to ensure that there is adequate housing near public transportation that supports sufficient retail to meet neighborhood needs, meets the needs of current and future residents, reduces auto usage and encourages energy efficiency?*

RESPONSE: OK, kids, let's get real. The number of non-inclusionary units delivered in 2012 was, um, fourteen? Thirty months ago everybody lined up for the photo op on Temple Street- 28 new apartments!- and they haven't started to build yet.

You're being snowed by every incumbent who has grand plans for city grown affordable housing. If we are going to build affordable (subsidized) housing, we must appropriate the cash. That's political suicide, so don't hold your breath. Time to tap some of the "free cash".

Reducing traffic is really easy. Stop paying for city employees' private, off street parking and charge them for city owned spots like Harvard does. More than 1000 employee cars daily and they're completely exempt from scrutiny?

- 3. GROWTH: ABC is working to preserve and expand the diversity of our community by supporting sustainable growth and appropriate density.**

*Do you agree that in order to support diversity and meet the housing needs of sustainable growth in Cambridge, increased density may be necessary? If elected, what specific policies or initiatives will you support to achieve sustainable urban growth and to increase low and moderate income housing for all populations, including families?*

RESPONSE: Low and moderate income housing is defacto subsidized housing, period. Cambridge is not able to solve the region's affordability problem. Real estate is a real life Monopoly board.

So we can raise taxes- unfair!- with some crazy assumption that there's a gifted owners class that can and should pay for others' subsidies or go the inclusionary route with all its consequences. I don't have a magic bullet for thousands of cheap apartments. No other candidate does either. What distinguishes me from the entire field is my own personal commitment to affordable housing- I am a small landlord who has not raised a tenant's rent in thirteen years!  
Let the others talk. I deliver.

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- 4. LIVABILITY: We want to reinforce the distinctive character of our neighborhoods, ensuring that new development builds upon and enhances their defining traits.**

*What traits of Cambridge neighborhoods do you find most distinctive? If elected, what policies or initiatives will you support to help reinforce these characteristics through new development, public and open spaces and other means?*

RESPONSE: Visits to Porter Square are rare and usually involve a lock problem. What I like about my own neighborhood is the walk and bike accessibility of almost everything I do. I really like the unconventional people who aren't drunk or drugged. University grounds provide lots of entertainment and interesting activities, particularly as my kids can exploit them. Addressing Central Square's worst substance abuse issues is just the start for a more pleasant citywide experience.

- 5. DIALOGUE: We want to support open and constructive engagement between all parties to the planning process, based on mutual respect for differing views.**

*In your opinion, do public planning processes in Cambridge support open and constructive engagement between stakeholders? If elected, how will you help ensure transparent and mutually respectful planning for the future of Cambridge?*

RESPONSE: The saying for lawyers goes "no lawsuit, no lunch". For city agencies like CDD it's develop or die. You know that a project that gets pushed by councilors for payoffs is going to move forward regardless of neighbors' feelings.

Disclose the campaign money and find out why city agencies are motivated in each instance.

- 6. Earlier this year the Central Square and Kendall Square Advisory Committees (K2C2) proposed recommendations to guide the future development of these key residential and commercial districts in Cambridge.**

*Which three K2C2 recommendations do you believe should be top priorities for the City of Cambridge over the next few years? What specific policies or initiatives recommended will you support to ensure these priorities are achieved during the next City Council term? Are there policies and recommendations that you oppose?*

RESPONSE: The non-zoning issues of C2 are the most important. I mean the drunks and junkies that drive residents and business away. They'll continue to ruin things forever if we don't man up.

Kendall and Central aren't one. Kendall is unlikely to develop as modest income family/small business territory while Central still has the potential to house and serve a middle class if we address the sidewalk problems. Dream all you want- if the property owners don't want to build unprofitable development it ain't going to happen. Profitability and density/ height are one and the same. Exercise restraint and common sense on a case by case basis.