

Janneke House – 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: 15% of Cambridge residents have low/moderate income. 15% of the housing units in Cambridge are affordable for low and moderate income. Yet, as in all of the housing sectors, there is still a great demand for low/moderate affordable units. Cambridge does a superior job compared to any other municipality in providing these affordable units. I will support any policy which maintains this segment of our diversity. We have to bring our success for low and moderate income households to bear on middle income families. I support the development of “neighborhood incubator spaces”, small scale start up office space which is specifically designed to help young neighborhood residents get introduced to the latest and greatest jobs which permeate the hi-rise innovation district.

- 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: If elected, I would like to see an improved transportation center in Central Square at the intersection of Massachusetts Ave. and Prospect Street. I see a greater mix of tall and short buildings instead of uniform tall buildings. I see more open space like Jill Brown Rhone Park. I see continued vibrant and diverse retail and more “work”(offices) in the live-work-play mix. I will support any zoning which accomplishes these goals.

- 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: Yes, I support appropriate increased density to meet any need, but keep in mind that Cambridge is already the second densest City in Massachusetts in terms of residents per square mile. See my answer to Question 1. We achieved this success with a mix of zoning incentives and financial support. We need to continue to use these tools, but add new tools like limited-equity deeds. We also need to address affordability for middle class families.

- 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: The traits I find most distinctive are accessibility to public transit, cultural diversity, mixed-use development, vibrant local businesses, tree-lined streets, and pocket parks. I support comprehensive city-wide planning for development and making sure the city’s Master Plan is kept current, more transparent, and community-centric. We should welcome people who want to invest in Cambridge but the city needs to be in a position to shape development, not be controlled by it. We need a comprehensive, city-wide strategy to make sure Cambridge grows in a positive way that doesn’t impact open space, price out local businesses, or destroy a neighborhood. New development should improve our quality of life, not risk what we love about Cambridge.

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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: I think it's important that any economic development, zoning, business or neighborhood impacts should have all stake holders brought to the table. We should always be asking the question, "Have you talked to the affected community?", whether it is businesses or residents. My work with the Kendall Square Association as the community liaison did just that.

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: I am disappointed that the Council has still not adopted the work of these two committees. The K2C2 study and guidelines are 71 pages long with almost 150 specific recommendations. 150 words is not enough, but:

I particularly like two common themes:

- 1) Create and activate public open space in Central Square, Kendall Square and adjoining neighborhoods such as enriching neighborhood walkability and livability with safe, green streets and improved access choices. This will create the Squares as a place that invites community interaction at many levels.
- 2) Focus on improved public transit to benefit Kendall Square and improve transit hub in Central Square as well.