

Kristen von Hoffman – 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: We need to build more affordable housing, and this can be accomplished by increasing affordable housing in our inclusionary zoning requirements for new development. Requiring developers to pay more money per square foot of development that would go specifically towards the Cambridge Affordable Housing Trust would also allow us to bolster our affordable housing programs and housing units. It is equally important that new middle-income units be family-sized two or three bedroom units. It is important to me to retain our middle and lower-income classes in Cambridge, and if we continue to build only one and two-unit housing then we will not be building the infrastructure that supports an economically diverse demographic in Cambridge.

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: I believe that sustainability and economic viability go hand-in-hand. I've been the Sustainability Manager for the Cambridge Public Schools for the past three years, a job in which I founded the Office for Sustainability and saved over \$300,000 in under two years through vigorous energy-efficiency projects. Creating a detailed, long-term plan for climate change mitigation, carbon reduction, open space preservation, and sustainable transportation that takes into account the changing aspects of housing, traffic, and severe weather are important factors that I believe will continue to shape our long-term planning, and which I hope to outline and define in partnership with all of you, our City departments, and fellow City Council members. We have tremendous resources in technology and education here in Cambridge, and I want to capitalize on that strength.

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: I think increased density is necessary due to the rising population of people living here in Cambridge. Building new housing and development close to transportation nodes such as the T-stops are one way of planning for smart growth, as this encourages residents to utilize public transportation instead of driving a car. Sustainable growth is key to solving all of the problems of transportation, housing, and the effects of climate change and I would propose designing a master plan for long-term sustainability for the City of Cambridge, to be articulated in partnership with the Community Development Department, neighborhood groups, and other key stakeholders.

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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: The best thing I have discovered about Cambridge neighborhoods—from my experience living in the City for almost a decade, working in the schools, and by knocking on doors during my campaign—is that so many neighborhoods are visually and culturally distinct, but people nevertheless often care about the same issues across the City. Preserving open space while also accounting for new, denser development is going to be part of our overall mission as a City if we hope to build a sustainable community. That being said, it will be critically important to involve residents, business owners, and neighborhood groups in the conversations surrounding a master sustainability plan for Cambridge. Therefore, creating a neighborhood taskforce, consisting of representatives from each neighborhood or district, will be a key initiative I undertake as your Councilwoman as we move forward with planning.

- 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 believe it is important to keep City Hall transparent in order to foster trust in government and to keep information accessible and readily available to the public. I believe it's important to keep City Hall transparent in order to foster trust in government and to keep information accessible and readily available to the public. As Sustainability Manager for the Cambridge Public Schools, I've worked hard to make information and data about our energy use, waste consumption, and other operations available to the public and our greater community on a regular basis. I believe that transparency is very important, as well, because it allows for public engagement in government decision-making processes. I would ensure that adequate hearings and public forums were held in the decision-making process of major City planning projects.

- 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: Recommendations proposed by K2C2 which I strongly support include the goal to integrate buildings with public spaces, the goal to establish Massachusetts Avenue and Main Street as great public spaces in an improved system of streets and sidewalks, and the goal for a variation in height with diminishing height and bulk as projects approach lower residential uses in abutting areas.

Integrating buildings with public spaces. As we develop to accommodate growing populations, it will be critically important to maintain open and transparent communication with the neighborhoods that will be affected by such development..