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Years in Teaneck: 9+

Party Affiliation (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green, Unaffiliated, etc.) Democrat

**1. How does Zero-Tax increase work now and what would you propose if elected?**

One way that the Township has been able to maintain a zero-tax increase is by issuing debt to cover expenses. As a best practice, the township should only use debt to cover capital expenses and not operating expenses. That said, the township may use short-term debt such as Tax Anticipation Notes to cover gaps in cashflows. If elected, I would propose maintaining a fine balance of debt and reserves to cover expenses. The use of reserves can be a helpful tool to cover the cost of large, anticipated one-time expenses. In addition, I would recommend a scrub of existing expenses to see where there is potential to strategically reallocate or lower expenses.

**2. What is your vision for development in Teaneck? Please address the following in your response: role of land use boards, Master Plan, areas in need of re-development, open space and recreation plan.**

The purpose of the master plan is to guide the future growth and development of Teaneck. It sets explicit goals and objectives that should inform how our governing bodies (including land use boards) make recommendations or decisions about land development. Our most recent master plan was developed in 2007 and it has since been reexamined three times in 2011, 2014 and 2017. Given the substantial changes in our town over the last 15 years, I would strongly advocate for the development of a new master plan to ensure that we make decisions based on the most up-to-date assessment of our town's dynamic needs. I would advocate that we continue to preserve the low-density residential character of the town but also consider the addition of mixed-use buildings to revitalize our downtown areas.

Throughout the development process I would insist on the inclusion of community leaders and residents to ensure buy-in from all stakeholders with a particular focus on those most impacted by potential development changes. In addition, we must consider the impact of development on the current town infrastructure including school district capacity, circulation, local traffic, transportation, and all other shared services. Finally, to ensure that Teaneck is a place where all residents can thrive, I will advocate for more affordable housing and development to accommodate our aging residents. Regarding AINR, I believe that this designation should be used according to the criteria outlined by the statute. AINR should not be used strategically to maneuver around land use regulations. Finally, as it relates to Open Space and Recreation, I would recommend that at least half of the Municipal Open Space Trust budget be dedicated to acquiring open space or preserving historic areas. The remainder can be used to potentially cover existing recreation upgrades.

**3. What services would you provide or increase to help Teaneck seniors age in place (example: Transportation, affordable senior housing, Rodda Center improvements)?**

I would advocate for increased services for Teaneck seniors, including transportation, affordable housing and activities at the Rodda Center. First, I would work with the Senior Citizens Advisory Board to assess and better understand the gaps in transportation services for seniors. I would also reach out to residents at senior residences to garner their input as well. Based on this feedback, I would then advocate for innovative solutions to address transportation needs. Some ideas for exploration would include: a transportation buddy system, discounted ride shares for seniors, or the use of Uber Health which can request, manage, and pay for rides without requiring seniors to sign up for an account.

Regarding affordable housing, Teaneck is currently far from its affordable housing goal of 538 units, as determined by COAH. One way the town increases affordable housing is by requiring new developments to allocate a certain percentage of affordable units. At the current rate of development, this will take a very long time to achieve. In the interim, the town should work with seniors to help them navigate lottery systems to access current affordable housing inventory.

Finally, I would certainly advocate for the continuation of services at the Rodda center as well as an increase in the variety of classes and services offered. Teaneck has a wealth of potential volunteer talent across various fields and backgrounds. I would propose that the town leverage that expertise to expand services at the Rodda center.

#### **4. How would you meet the demand for more affordable housing for Teaneck residents?**

This is addressed in question 3.

#### **5. How would you increase transparency in government and how will you handle any conflicts of interest (real or the appearance of)?**

In order to improve transparency, I would encourage the Council to provide the public with more insight into their decision-making processes and also the rationale for how final decisions are made, barring instances where legally, confidentiality is mandated. When residents believe that the decision-making process is fair and understand the reason why decisions are made, even when they might disagree with the final decision, they are more likely to accept or understand it. Strong two-way communication is also key to improving transparency. I would advocate for a new communication channel, perhaps entitled "Council Office Hours", where the public would have the opportunity to meet with 3 or fewer Council members for open dialogue on a monthly basis.

If council members have a conflict of interest they should abstain or recuse themselves from the conflicted issue. Legal counsel should advise council members when there is confusion or disagreement about the existence of a conflict.

#### **6. What is your plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion in Teaneck?**

There are many ways to address diversity equity and inclusion in Teaneck but one significant way the Council can impact DEI is by ensuring that all of its statutory and advisory boards reflect the diverse makeup of the community. The Council should educate residents on how to apply for positions on these boards. If there are gaps in representation, the Council should conduct targeted outreach to ensure diversity. In addition, it would be beneficial to host broader educational programs on local civic engagement, building a pipeline of potential leaders who represent the diverse makeup of the township.

Over time this should lead to equitable representation not only as general members on the boards but in leadership positions as well.

**7. Should cannabis retail establishments be allowed outside of Alfred Ave in Teaneck? If yes, where?**

In November of 2020 voters overwhelmingly passed the referendum to legalize recreational cannabis in the State of NJ. Teaneck has since formed a subcommittee to explore and opt in to the sale of cannabis locally. The Council identified Alfred Ave, located in an industrial zone, as one location for potential cannabis distribution. Before this decision was made, community members should have been brought along in the decision making-process to facilitate buy-in. With any new development, stakeholders should be consulted as a best practice. In terms of location, I believe cannabis should be treated no differently than a local liquor store. Local licenses should be limited, and there should be restrictions on where it can be sold (i.e. school zones). Business districts in Teaneck are best suited to host cannabis retail establishments.

**8. As our population increases so does the need for adequate parking and traffic concerns. How do you plan to address these needs for our residents and merchants?**

Parking and traffic concerns should absolutely be addressed in the next iteration of Teaneck's Master Plan (question 2). We should engage the appropriate expert to conduct an analysis on the existing infrastructure (including parking and traffic) and the stress that new development or population increases may have on our town. In addition, real estate developers should be required to include a certain number of parking spaces for new buildings. Any proposed development should include a plan to ensure that there is low impact on existing infrastructure. Finally, we should explore opportunities to reduce local car traffic such as like local bike-sharing services, additional bike lanes and increasing the walkability of our neighborhoods.