

Newton Conservators

2025 Newton Candidate Questionnaire

Respondent: Albert Cecchinelli

Office Sought: Mayor

Question 1:

What are your top 2 or 3 goals and/or objectives from the Newton Open Space Plan:2020-2027 (see pages 147-150 for the Plan's Goals and Objectives) and what do you plan to do to promote them? (FYI, a priority of Newton Conservators, relating to Objective 6C on page 150, is to complete overdue and future Conservation Restrictions in a timely manner.) Are there items that you believe are missing from either the open space plan or conservation discussions in our community, and how would you address that? (400 words or less)

Response:

From my time on the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee assisting with the Open Space and Recreation Plan I always considered Goal 5, Connectivity, the first objective of this plan. Being able to safely and conveniently get from one of our parks or recreation area will get more citizens out into these spaces.

In addition to getting people into our parks and recreation areas, a bike route connecting our parks and recreation areas would give bike access to a large part of the city.

I believe that the connectivity could also be used to address Goal 3, Accessibility. While working on connectivity, everything that we do with access, would be designed to accommodate people of all abilities.

I think that Goal 4, Minimized Gaps in the Availability of Open Space Resources is something that we should be working on. We are the Garden City, so we should be looking at pocket parks. With the 2,300 housing units currently being built and the possibility of 8,330 more under the MBTA Communities Act, open space is going to be a harder to come by. So we need to start thinking about saving and utilizing smaller footprints for our parks. We also need to think about more community gardens like the one at Washington Street and Jackson Road.

I would also like to work on Goal 6, Protection and Expanded Open Space Resources especially with objective 6D. The idea of the developers covering up our green spaces helping us increase our green space is interesting to me.

Question 2:

The climate crisis is one of the biggest detrimental impacts on our open spaces. How would you accelerate or add to the actions recommended in both the Newton Climate Action Plan: A Living Plan for 2020-2025 (focused on reducing greenhouse gases) and the Newton Climate Vulnerability Assessment and Action Plan (focused on changes to protect natural resources and reduce effects of extreme weather events)? (400 words or less)

Response:

I think that the city should be waiting before spending on technology for renewable energy. As we are mandating all electric homes and putting up solar panels, the technology is getting better and more efficient. In 3 years, the technology we have today will be obsolete.

While we are waiting for renewable energy to be more efficient and reliable, we should be entering into an exploratory group with Waltham, Watertown, Wellsley and Brookline to purchase, license and run a Small Modular Reactor.

Question 3:

Do you believe current funding levels in the City budget are sufficient to maintain high quality open space and address growing climate mitigation needs? If not, what would you do about it? (400 words or less)

Response:

No, I think the CPA money is a good start, but we need to require developers of large projects, whether commercial or residential, to maintain portions of their projects as open space.