

# **Newton Conservators**

## **2025 Newton Candidate Questionnaire**

**Respondent:** Josh Krintzman

**Office Sought:** Ward 4 City Councilor At-Large

### **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:**

One of my top priorities during my time as a City Councilor, but also as I campaign around the city, is support for our recreational fields. I strongly believe that support for maintenance of our fields as well as conservation efforts are vital investments in the health, well-being, and resilience of our community.

Recreational fields provide safe, community spaces where residents of all ages can gather for sports, exercise, and other community events. They encourage physical activity, support youth development, while fostering teamwork and social connection. Well-maintained fields also enhance neighborhood vibrancy, making Newton a more attractive place to live and raise a family.

At the same time, conservation of these spaces ensures they remain sustainable and beneficial for future generations. Fields that are thoughtfully managed with ecological principles, such as proper drainage, native plant buffers, and environmentally responsible maintenance, can protect natural resources, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve air and water quality. By appropriately balancing recreation with conservation, Newton can create and preserve green spaces that serve both people and the environment.

For the above reasons and, as demonstrated by my service on the Council, Goal 2B reflects one of my top priorities.

In addition – I have pushed the city to develop a comprehensive assessment of our fields and parks. I have repeatedly pushed for an assessment of our needs as a city, which may then be measured against our actual resources and facilities in order to determine where Newton is deficient. This desire is closely mirrored in Goal 2A.

**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:**

Climate change is one of the most pressing and consequential challenges of our time. We have already begun to see the impacts of climate change across the globe and must not close our eyes to the reality. Rising global temperatures are intensifying extreme weather events such as heatwaves, storms, and floods, while sea level rise threatens coastal communities and infrastructure. Shifts in ecosystems and biodiversity loss further destabilize natural systems that people depend on for food, clean water, and air quality. For cities, the threat is particularly acute due to the more concentrated populations, infrastructure, and economic activity. Such density makes cities especially vulnerable to flooding, extreme heat, and disruptions to energy and transportation systems. Without action, the costs to human health, safety, and local economies will only escalate.

At the same time, and for many of the same reasons, cities are uniquely positioned to lead on climate action. Because population centers generate a significant share of greenhouse gas emissions, urban policies and investments can have outsized impacts. Cities can reduce emissions by promoting energy efficiency in buildings, investing in renewable energy, and reduce reliance on fossil fuels by expanding public transportation and bike networks. Updated zoning and development practices should encourage compact, mixed-use neighborhoods in and around transportation hubs, helps reduce sprawl and minimize transportation emissions. Additionally, cities can invest in green infrastructure, such as tree planting, permeable surfaces, and restored wetlands, to both sequester carbon and improve resilience to flooding and heat. Importantly, cities can also set strong examples through climate action plans, community engagement, and partnerships with businesses and institutions. By integrating sustainability into our policies and plans, Newton not only helps counteract climate change but also improves quality of life, reduces inequities, and enables the move towards a healthier, more resilient community for the future.

Lastly, the passage of our BERDO ordinance represents an excellent step in these efforts. We, as a city, must remain vigilant and data-based as we track our emissions and develop strategies to reduce harmful emissions whenever possible.

**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:**

In my time as chair of the Programs and Services Committee, I have prioritized the maintenance and resilience of our parks and recreational fields. I take great pride in having led the city to increase the budget for maintenance, within the Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture by 400%. This increase is wonderful and has enabled a stronger, more resilient system of fields from which our residents greatly benefit. But we must do more.

I am keenly aware of the inability of our city to maintain all of our open spaces in world-class manner. I am fully supportive of increasing our budget and allocating resources to the point where Newton is recognized for its parks and open spaces. I continue to support a public model which invests in a fully-informed assessment of resources and needs, prioritizes needed improvements and realistically lays out a timeframe for full completion, while regularly evaluating whether the original (or updated) goals and plan remain accurate.

Some actions we can immediately pursue include advocating with our partners at the state to fully fund the Community Preservation Act so that communities, like Newton, which made the responsible and early decision to increase local taxes on a promise of matching funds from the state will have that commitment fully realized. Receiving less than 16 cents on the dollar has limited our capacity for improvements and inappropriately forced us to prioritize some projects over others, when many unfunded projects were meritorious.

In addition, some of our greatest projects have come from public-private partnerships that improved spaces in our villages. All local residents and businesses have a responsibility to actively seek and pursue projects that improve our environment and our community and public officials should regularly promote and remind residents and local businesses of that responsibility.

Lastly, one of the most wonderful things about Newton is the dedication of our residents to improving this city. We should fully capitalize on the willingness of local parents, teens, charitable groups and organizations to make improvements. Days and events like Newton Serves set a wonderful example and should be replicated even more frequently.