



Somerville Dog Owners Group
Questionnaire for Candidates
2007 Municipal Elections

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Office for which you are seeking election: Ward 6 Alderman

1. Tell us about your experiences as a Somerville resident at our municipal parks. What parks do you visit, how often, what do you do there when you visit?

I often visit Somerville parks. The parks I visit most frequently are Powderhouse Park, Lexington Park (both in the park and on the bike path) and Seven Hills Park in Davis Square. I have also visited Nunziato Field at the dog park several times and was there for the ribbon cutting this past year, which was a great day for Somerville dog owners. When I spend time at our parks it's usually to talk with neighbors or participate in events and happenings.

2. Somerville has just over two (2) acres of open space for every thousand residents. We are the most densely populated city in the Commonwealth. Compare that to Cambridge, the second most densely populated city in Massachusetts, where there are over eight (8) acres of open space for every thousand residents. What will you do in the upcoming term to increase the area of open space per capita in Somerville.

I agree that Somerville suffers from a shortage of open space. Over the course of my first term, I have advocated for increased open space at New Washington Street. Originally the plan was to sell the entire parcel of land but I visited the site and advocated for a partial sale to save some of the land for open space and a park. I also believe development in Somerville needs to be good for neighbors, which is a policy I ran on in my first campaign and again in this campaign. What's good for neighbors tends to benefit the community at large with more open space and greener properties. Additionally, the bike path runs through Ward 6 and I have advocated to preserve Garden Club plantings and preserve community space and indeed increase that space. I have worked closely with the city's Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator on the extension of the bike path behind Brooks Pharmacy to the head house on College Ave increasing pedestrian access. I will continue to advocate for preservation of our green space whenever possible.

promoting responsible dog ownership, safe and legal options for off-leash recreation and the equitable distribution of open space in Somerville, MA.

3. Despite recent improvements, nonetheless families with dogs remain underserved by Somerville's open spaces, particularly in East Somerville, in West Somerville and in the Davis Square, Magoun Square and Winter Hill neighborhoods. What opportunities will you create to improve access for families with dogs to open space?

I will work with Som|Dog on increased access to off leash recreation areas. In the Davis Square area this is somewhat difficult since there is a lack of open space that is available to be converted to serve this goal but I am committed to exploring possibilities with Som|Dog and continuing to advocate accordingly for dog owners.

4. The Somerville Dog Owners Group has been delighted to see improvements in recent years in the City's Animal Control Department and in the enforcement of municipal ordinances pertaining to animals, including the leash law and the "pooper-scooper" law. What initiatives would you undertake to further improve Animal Control in Somerville?

I believe signage is very important to furthering animal control in Somerville. Many people are not aware of the rules, so posting signs that indicate where dogs are allowed on a leash and requirements about picking up after dogs is very important. I advocated for signage instead of the old policy of just "no dogs allowed" in parks. This new policy allows dogs and dog owners to share these spaces in a safe and communally understood environment. I was very glad to see the signage policy take effect this year throughout the city.

5. Do you own a dog/dogs? no

6. If you are a dog owner please tell us about your dog(s); if not, please share some of your experiences with dogs in the community.

I am not a dog owner but I am definitely a "dog person". I had a dog throughout my childhood who lived to be 17 years old. He was a West Highland White Terrier named Marty. I plan on getting another dog at some point over the next couple of years and I will be very glad to have a place to bring him/her off leash. I greatly appreciate the advocacy work of Som|Dog that has provided off leash recreation for so many dog owners throughout the city and look forward to continuing my positive relationship with the group.

Return to:
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