



Somerville Dog Owners Group  
Questionnaire for Candidates  
2007 Municipal Elections

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Office for which you are seeking election: alderman at large

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?

Foss Park and Draw Seven. The frequency is variable, depending on the weather and my calendar. I also participate in the volunteer clean ups for Foss Park and in the annual spring clean-up sponsored by the City.

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.

Because of the City's tight fiscal situation and the cost of land and buildings, as a practical matter, the City is not in a position where it can purchase property, demolish it, and create parkland. The City, instead, must find creative ways to increase open space. One method that I have participated in is requiring developers seeking a special permit to provide additional open space as a condition for the special permit. As an example, I supported the efforts of a variety of citizen groups involved in the planning of the Maxpak site to obtain agreement from the developer to provide open space and also provide access to the community path. I have also supported efforts to make our open space more useable by approving funding to renovate existing parks and working with neighborhood groups in public meetings discussing those renovations.

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?

Since my first election almost 10 years ago, I have supported the creation of parks for use by people with dogs. I believe that we should have an open process whenever space becomes

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

available to solicit input from all groups who would like to benefit from the use of such open space. As an example, when the City decided to sell land in East Somerville, as Chair of the Finance Committee at the time, I pushed for an open process. As a result, a compromise was reached where a portion of the parcel was sold, and the remainder kept by the City for use as open space. Part of that open space is dedicated for use as a dog park and the remainder for a sitting area to be used by residents, especially seniors, who use the adjoining Ralph and Jenny Senior Center.

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 have supported efforts to fund an additional animal control officer. I would also support means for better dissemination of Somerville's animal regulations. Also, I would like to see the utilization of community police officers to visit known chronic offenders of these animal regulations, alert them to the regulations and their failure to obey them, and then fine them if appropriate.

5. Do you own a dog/dogs? Yes

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 have owned a Golden Retriever, Buzzie, for almost 8 years. Before Buzzie, I had owned another Golden Retriever, Angus, for almost 13 years. With over 20 years of experience with dogs, I have come to appreciate their distinct nature. I shake my head when people (who I am sure have never owned a dog) claim that dogs cannot think or do not have emotions. The funniest thing about Buzzie is that he becomes jealous when I pay attention to other dogs. For example, during a dog walk, when we run into other people walking their dogs, we stop and chat, as my dog is very social. However, when I spend too much time petting or playing with another dog, my dog will bark, give me a typical Golden Retriever smile, and hit me with his paw. It is not at all an aggressive bark, but a clear communication from him that he thinks I've spent enough time with the other dog.

Return to:  
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