



Environmental Candidate's Night

Moderated by STEVE MILLER,
Founding Director, Livable Streets Alliance
October 3rd 2007

Agenda:

- 6:35 Welcome: Susan Butler, Green Decade/Cambridge
- 6:40 Introductory Comments: Steve Miller, Moderator
- 6:45 Session 1
Marjorie Decker; Kevin Moore; Kathryn Podgers;
Ken Reeves; Larry Ward
- 7:30 Session 2
Henrietta Davis; David Maher; Sam Seidel;
Denise Simmons
- 8:15 Session 3
Jonathan Janik; Craig Kelley; Brian Murphy;
Tim Toomey; Edward Sullivan
- 8:55 Closing Comments: Steve Miller, Moderator

Candidates:

Fifteen candidates are up for election on November 6th. You can find their bios on the on the Internet at <http://vote.rwinters.com/>

Questions:

Review the questions in this handout which will be presented to the candidates this evening. If there is a topic that you feel is not addressed, fill out the card on your seat and pass it on to the two audience coordinators.

Cosponsors:

Green Decade / Cambridge would like to thank the following cosponsors of this event :
Co-sponsors: Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Alewife Reservation, Green Streets Initiative, Harvest Co-op, Harvard Green Campus Initiative, Mass. Sierra Club, Mystic River Watershed Association, Clean Water Action and ZipCar.

Questions

- 1) **Air Quality:** The Boston Metro area is in the 97th percentile for health risks due to diesel pollution, and the average lifetime diesel soot cancer risk for a resident of the Boston-Cambridge area is 563 times EPA's acceptable risk level. Acute and chronic air pollution cause increased asthma, bronchitis, and cardiovascular disease, especially in children and the elderly.
 - (1) Vehicle emissions are a major source of Cambridge's poor air quality. What specific actions will you initiate to significantly decrease vehicle emissions?
 - (2) Would you support a policy to require all Cambridge taxis to meet high fuel efficiency and low carbon emissions standards by 2010?
 - (3) Jointly with MIT, Cambridge received a grant to retrofit some of its older school buses to reduce diesel pollution, but not with the best available technology. Parents have been unable to find out how many school buses have received diesel retrofits, and what type, including buses used by outside companies. What would you do to make this information publicly available and to pursue funding to implement the best retrofits as soon as possible?
- 2) **Public Transportation:** A good public transit system is essential for the elderly, low-income residents, and to reduce air pollution. The public transit system requires working with other communities, the MBTA, local businesses and different levels of government. What have you done/would you do to improve public transportation and encourage residents to use it?
- 3) **Climate Action Plan:** In December 2002, the City Council adopted the Climate Protection Plan which sets a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent below 1990 levels by 2010. Over 100 actions are proposed to achieve the goal. In 2005 the City Council resolved: "...by the year 2010, the town's municipal facilities will purchase 20% of energy needs from clean energy sources". Time is running out on meeting these goals.
 - (1) What are the top two actions you would take to implement this resolution?
 - (2) Would you support a policy of holding each City department accountable for achieving greenhouse gas reduction goals, including publishing energy audits and annual goals, and measuring progress annually at the department level?
- 4) **Green Buildings:** Cambridge has led the way in green construction and renovation of its municipal buildings.
 - (1) Would you support a policy of making all new and renovated *public school* facilities LEED certified green buildings (silver level), as in Boston and Arlington?
 - (2) Would you support energy-efficiency retrofits on existing municipal buildings whether or not they are needing repair?
 - (3) Should the city require LEED certification for all new buildings or major renovations city-wide done under special permits?
- 5) **Energy Efficiency:** The Cambridge Energy Alliance is an exciting new opportunity to harness private investment to implement cost-effective energy efficiency measures in Cambridge. Cambridge businesses and residents have been told that there will be a significant waiting time before the projects get started. What will you do to help get this project off the ground?
- 6) **Energy Manager.** Many cities, companies and institutions, including Boston, New York, DuPont, and MIT, are hiring energy managers. Energy managers are responsible for reducing energy costs, analyzing trade-offs, measuring savings, and looking at the long-term and life cycle costs and benefits of energy-related decisions and policies. At the 2005 Candidates Night, all Candidates supported hiring an energy manager but there is still no one in place.
 - (1) What have you done/will you do to hire a city-wide energy manager or department-level energy managers?
- 7) **Environmental Justice and Jobs:** This year the city sponsored a presentation in Boston by Van Jones, a community leader in Oakland, California, to learn about that city's innovative "Green Jobs" project, an alliance between labor unions, the Chamber of Commerce, schools and environmental groups to train unskilled workers

in local sustainable jobs. Would you support a similar project in Cambridge, and if so, which organizations and city departments do you see best positioned to implement it?

- 8) **Traffic, Bicycles and Pedestrians:** Excessive traffic congestion is a problem in Cambridge. This problem includes regional commuters and the regional transportation system. This traffic creates pollution hotspots where concentrations of carbon monoxide and diesel particulates may exceed acceptable standards in areas where many people work and live. It is also hazardous and unpleasant for cyclists and pedestrians. What ideas do you have for making it easier and safer to bicycle in Cambridge?
- 9) **Smart Growth:** If families cannot find good public schools and affordable housing in a sustainable community like Cambridge, they are forced to seek it in suburbs and exurbs, encouraging sprawl and traffic congestion. The 2000 census found that over 26% of Cambridge housing had 3 or more bedrooms, but new construction of 3-bedroom units is rare. Cambridge appears to have the lowest school age population (as a percentage of total population) for any city in the country, and the school district enrollment has continually declined.
- (1) Would you support a policy, as part of the city's sustainable future plan, to maintain a stable fraction of housing appropriate for families, with 3 or more bedrooms?
 - (2) What else would you do to keep Cambridge attractive to families with children?

Cambridge Sustainable Future Policies: http://www.ci.cambridge.ma.us/~CDD/cp/zng/growthpol/grp_policylist.html

- 10) **Cleaning Up Rivers and Streams:** Alewife Reservation, the Charles River and the Mystic River are important public recreation areas as well as being important for flood control and wildlife. How will you work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to maintain, improve public enjoyment, and protect the natural ecosystems of the DCR parks and parkways in Cambridge?
- 11) **Alewife Reservation:** Adjacent to the Alewife Reservation, the largest wetland in Cambridge, is a unique silver maple forest. Alewife Reservation provides a valuable natural ecosystem used by Cambridge schools and residents and this forest is part of that ecological system. Developers plan to fully develop the site for housing, which will require permits from Cambridge. Legislators have filed a bill to purchase the forest and add it to the Alewife Reservation. What will you do to preserve this precious natural asset?

House Bill 21: <http://www.mass.gov/legis/bills/house/185/ht00pdf/ht00021.pdf>

- 12) **Parks and Open Space:** Cambridge is a very densely populated, diverse and beautiful city with limited open space. There are many different funding techniques that can be used to raise money for parks and open space, such as bonds, real estate transfer taxes, user fees and the Community Preservation Act.
- (1) What actions have you taken/would you take to support the acquisition and preservation of open space?
 - (2) How do you/would you balance the use of funds between open space and affordable housing?
- 13) **Safe Cleaning Products:** Toxic cleaning chemicals threaten the health of the workers who use them and the children and adults who live or work in the buildings where they are used. Cleaning chemicals have been linked to asthma, certain types of cancers, reproductive problems, stillbirths, and birth defects. The Safe Cleaning Products bill pending in the state legislature would reduce asthma and other health threats by requiring that only cleaning products approved by the Department of Public Health be used in public schools, hospitals, health care facilities, day care centers and public housing common spaces. Would you support implementing this policy in Cambridge immediately for buildings under municipal control, including the schools?
- 14) **Pesticides:** The City of Cambridge and its schools implemented an integrated pest management (IPM) plan so long ago that it is not available on-line. Cities like Newton have IPM stakeholder committees to assist in implementation, including members of the community. Would you see that the IPM plans for the schools and city get posted publicly on the internet, and also help create an IPM committee?

State-level school IPM: <http://www.massnrc.org/ipm/schools-daycare/ipm-tools-resources/ipm-plan-maker/make-your-ipm-online/locate-school-plan.asp>

Newton's IPM: <http://www.ci.newton.ma.us/Exec/ipmpolicy.htm>

- 15) **Leaf Blowers:** Other municipalities, like Los Angeles, have ordinances against the use of leaf blowers, which are sources of harmful air pollution and noise, but Cambridge uses them, even at public school playgrounds. What have you/would you do to protect our residents, especially our children, from these unnecessary devices?
- 16) **Recycling:** Cambridge has had considerable success with its recycling program. Would you support additional funding to increase participation of city residents and businesses in recycling?



Green Decade / Cambridge is a non-profit group working towards solving environmental and energy concerns in Cambridge.

www.greencambridge.org