



Progressive Newton 2023 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Dan Gaynor

Office Sought: Ward 2 Councilor

Website: <https://www.gaynorforma.com/>

Facebook: [Dan Gaynor](#)

Twitter: n/a

Instagram: n/a

1. Did you support the three override votes on the ballot this past spring? If not, why?

Yes. I supported the three override votes, which, in particular, would have increased the NPS budget by an extra \$4.5 million.

2. Following the Override votes, what concrete actions will you take to ensure that NPS students have the greatest opportunities to succeed? Additionally, how do you define “academic excellence”?

Academic excellence means ensuring that every student has the opportunity to maximize their potential—not just on the report card or standardized tests, but also as an engaged member of our civic society who can contribute to a healthier community discourse. Newton’s schools are our Crown Jewel, and we must support our incredible educators. While the City Council has limited authority on NPS as compared to the School Committee, I will fight for improvements that include:

For students:

- Maintaining access to extracurricular (arts, sports, and drama) activities

- Ensuring accessibility for students with handicaps and learning disabilities
- Sustain a robust educational syllabus and an extensive range of activities
- Strategize for essential upgrades to school structures through deliberate renovations to
 - enhance space
- Establish a welcoming, psychologically safe school atmosphere for every student
- Assess and execute tactics to narrow the ongoing disparity in academic performance
- Retain manageable classroom sizes

For teachers:

- Access to ongoing professional development
- Protecting Newton staff's benefit to bring their own children to school in NPS
- Enhancing parental leave benefits
- Expanding the use of sick days for care of a family member or dear friend
- Limiting the rising cost of healthcare premiums
- Ensuring a diverse array of housing options so more educators can live in Newton

3. On March 29th, the School Committee voted against the creation of a “NPS Academic Principles Advisory Committee.” What is your stance on this vote and the proposed committee?

While community engagement should always be welcomed and considered, the proposed APAC would have created a somewhat duplicative function to that of the existing School Committee. I concur with the School Committee's rejection of the proposed APAC, and as several neighbors noted in the hearing, any Newton resident can still make recommendations to the School Committee on any topic at any time.

4. What does “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion” mean to you, and how will you ensure and protect the wellbeing of all students?

As a former presidential appointee in the Obama Administration, I've seen that embracing DE&I isn't just a nice-to-have – it's the essential expression of our country's and community's core values. Embracing diverse perspectives

across economic, ethnic, and educational levels is critical to our evolution of becoming a more welcoming Newton. Indeed, it's part of my day job: I founded a company that helps many corporations see the value in accelerating DE&I initiatives, ranging from promoting diverse executives, to recruiting from underserved communities, to contributing charitable efforts to assist vulnerable populations.

5. What does “Black Lives Matter” mean to you?

The essential, ongoing, and ambitious effort to ensure that Black communities across our country are able to access the same opportunities as every American – while eliminating systemic racism and inequities across society. But it is far more than a catch phrase; it's a call to arms for all of us, regardless of background. As Barack Obama said, this movement is focused on bringing about “practical solutions and laws that could be implemented and we can monitor and make sure we're following up on.” Those include:

- Treating affordable housing as a human right
- Investing in public transit as a public good
- Taking a public health approach to public safety
- ...and many more steps to ensure a commitment to equity is at the core of our way of governing.

6. How would you improve access to affordable transportation in Newton?

We need to ensure getting around – and to – Newton is cheaper, greener and easier. Emphasizing walkability as a core principle of urban design is critical. I believe in increasing train and bus frequency, supporting NewMo, and extending bike lanes, as well as facilitating density, so that Newton residents can access more schools, services and businesses. As such, and to encourage that, I support:

- Increased residential options in proximity to our daily destinations like nearby stores, workplaces, educational institutions, eateries, parks, etc.
- Enhanced connectivity to employment, amenities, and various sites by promoting easier movement in Village Centers and usage of communal transportation.
- Less dependence on individual vehicle use, contributing to our broader endeavor of addressing the climate emergency.

7. What concrete steps will you take to combat global climate change, increase renewable energy, and decrease energy consumption in Newton?

As a member of Green Newton and Friends of Edmands Park, as well as a sustainability advocate, I feel strongly that we must do more to fight climate change. In addition, at Nike, I led innovation initiatives related to sustainability, green manufacturing, and the use of recycled materials.

In Newton, we must embrace a greener future by:

- Enhancing energy efficiency in older buildings
- Expanding use of renewable energy
- Striving to reach 100% renewable energy for all of Newton
- Installing more EV chargers
- Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels
- Ensuring new buildings incorporate clean technology
- Protecting our historic trees
- Connecting bike lanes
- Modernizing waste management and expanding our composting services

8. What value do you place on increasing affordable housing in Newton, and what concrete steps will you take to expand affordable housing?

With the new MBTA Communities Act requiring Newton to zone for more housing, we need to hold developers accountable and protect our priorities. We must preserve the green space in “the Garden City”, while also offering a greater diversity of options for families at every phase of life. That means fighting for smoother roads, wider sidewalks, and ground floor retail space for small, independent businesses.

With a median home price of \$1.6 million in Newton, we also must do more to facilitate affordable housing. In the three latest large Newton developments, there were over 15 times as many applicants for affordable housing units than units. I support the new affordable development at the Armory, as well as support the incentives included in the proposed VCOD redesign, which would provide a square footage bonus for projects providing 25%-30% of the units as affordable.

9. What is your definition of public safety? What actions will you take to further this definition in Newton?

As a former Obama Administration appointee in National Security and a Truman Security Fellow, public safety has been at the core of my career. In Newton, that means regaining our

status as the Safest City in America. That requires investing in public safety, including:

- From rapid road repairs to reduce accidents
- Supporting our police and fire departments
- Increased police professional training support and officer recruitment

10. What do you believe is the role of local elected leaders in promoting progressive policies at the state and national level?

It is critical. Lawmakers must implement progressive policies, not just advocate for them. I know that fight firsthand: I worked at the highest levels of government and on the hardest issues: containing the Ebola epidemic, protecting democracy from corruption, and racing to save lives from disasters, disease, and war.

In an era where ‘bipartisan’ sounds old-fashioned, I carved out common ground between Democrats and Republicans to fund investments in early childhood education, humanitarian aid, and economic opportunity for vulnerable women and girls. I then served Maryland Governor Martin O’Malley as Director of Policy Development. We pioneered a model for technology-powered governing—one where politicians use objective data and facts, not ideology, as the foundation for making smarter decisions.

11. Use this space to add anything you have not mentioned and that you would like us to know about your experience, vision for Newton, etc.

I’m raising a fourth-generation Newton resident and future Cabot School student. I’m born and raised here in Newton, and I grew up watching my own parents’ commitment to service. Now that I’m a father, I’m running to ensure our community continues to be the best place to raise a family.

YES/NO (Massachusetts state legislature bill numbers follow in parentheses, where applicable)

1. Do you support lowering the municipal voting age to 16?

YES.

2. If the MBTA is unable to expand service, would you be in favor of having the MWRTA (MetroWest Regional Transit Authority) expand service instead?

YES.

3. Do you support the “Real Estate Transfer Fee”? (S.1771/H.2747)

YES.

4. Do you support the “HERO bill”? (S.1799/ H.2894)

YES.

5. Do you support “An Act to Promote Yes in My Backyard”? (S.858/ H.1379)

YES.

6. Do you support raising the minimum wage to \$20? (S.1200/ H.1925)

YES.

**7. Do you support “Preventing Fair Share Amendment Tax Avoidance”?
(S.1866/H.2909)**

YES.

[Read about the aforementioned bills here](#)