



Progressive Framingham/MetroWest 2023 Municipal Candidate Questionnaire

Name: Sean Silk

Office Sought: Framingham District 2 City Councilor

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What would be your top three priorities if elected to serve?

My only priority is to represent all the people of District Two in Framingham as they see fit.

The top three ways I will accomplish this are:

- 1) Advocate to update the city's strategic plan and require it as part of the yearly budget process. This provides visibility on how the city is allocating resources and allows the citizens to match the spending to the goals in the plan. It also provides a measuring stick for the progress toward the city's goals.
- 2) Continue to create a welcoming atmosphere for all voices and ensure everyone is heard. This includes providing feedback on citizen's concerns when they raise issues, so they know the people in government, working for them, care.
- 3) Continue to strengthen the connections between the residents, the government and the business community.

What is the one policy you've seen pioneered in another city that you'd most like to see adopted in Framingham?

In keeping with the importance of planning, Singapore provides a model for success. The Singapore Green Plan 203, for example, was enacted with the feedback of multiple stakeholders across a large population. The plan is viewed as a success and the population is satisfied with the results.

1. Same Day Registration is one of the best-proven methods of increasing voter participation in elections. Do you support allowing voters to newly register or re-register at the polls on Election Day and during the Early Voting period? (Y/N)

YES. The burden is on the government to ensure the process is smooth and the voters are registered correctly.

2. What steps would you propose to reduce income and wealth inequality in Framingham?

The United States has pathways to create wealth for individuals. These pathways need to be clear of the blockades created for political reasons and unjust causes. Framingham can provide educational opportunities across the wide spectrum, including a basic household finance class available to all residents. More city level grants (with training) can be created to encourage small businesses and entrepreneurship. Framingham can also provide current information on cost of living and what would constitute a living wage for residents so employees know their worth and can find employers who agree.

3. Do you support local government investment in the fight against climate change including solar panel programs, purchasing electric or hybrid vehicles, and encouraging composting? (Y/N)

YES. But it would depend on the details of the plan and the effective use of taxpayer dollars.

4. Do you support Metrowest communities including Framingham adopting the opt-in stretch energy code that would increase sustainability in construction? (Y/N)

Housing affordability (especially with the current shortage) is an important consideration for adopting any changes to Framingham's code. The city must work with developers to determine the best way to accomplish the goals of the stretch code and formally adopt those.

5. Do you support or oppose the expansion of charter schools in Massachusetts? (Y/N)

Not all charter schools are created equally, so it would again depend on the quality of the education provided. But I could see the benefit of a charter school on the south side of Framingham where the population is underserved.

6. Do you believe that Black Lives Matter and support police accountability measures and policies that will protect black lives? (Y/N)

Having many family members that were, and are still, police officers, I know that the police share the same goal as the Black Lives Matter movement. Everyone wants to return home at the end of the day alive. I would support measures that build the trust between police and the citizens they serve.

7. Do you support a careful examination of the role of school resource officers (SRO) in Metrowest schools in the context of potential psychological harm done to students of color? (Y/N)

I support school resource officers and have witnessed many positive interactions. I don't assume there is a uniform reaction from certain groups of students. Each resource officer should be carefully chosen and trained to respect the concerns of each child they interact with. It is important that the schools and police regularly review the interactions to ensure a positive experience for the children.

8. How would you expand affordable housing in Framingham?

Our zoning needs to be carefully reviewed and opportunity for ownership of smaller homes (condos, tiny houses) needs to be designed into the city. There also needs to be outreach to developers who want to build these types of homes. The city should also consider increasing the required work force housing percentage for larger developments.

9. Do you support local measures to address misinformation coming from crisis pregnancy centers? (Y/N)

Any consumer should be protected from unfair or misleading actions, no matter what the business.

10. The Supreme Court's Dobbs decision has threatened abortion access throughout our country. Do you agree that Massachusetts should take the lead on protecting the right to reproductive health for all residents? (Y/N)

The government should not interfere with the personal decisions made by an individual.

11. The Supreme Court recently sided with a web designer who argued she had the right to refuse service for a same-sex marriage. Do you support legal mandates that mandate businesses to provide good and services without regard to a person's background including sexual orientation, race, and gender? (Y/N)

YES.

12. What impact do you feel social media has on participation in local elections? How can we encourage greater participation in local elections?

Social media is a pathway for information like newspapers or meetings in the town square. Not everyone has the same threshold for what is considered civil discourse. Learning people's boundaries and respecting them is important for inclusion.

Any other comments or questions?

Thank you for your time and consideration.