**Cambridge Citizens Coalition**

**2023 Questionnaire for City Council Candidates**

**PAUL TONER**

I How strongly do you support these issues before the city? #1 is high (for); #2 is moderate; #3 is low (against)

1. **More Accountable City Government:** Your support for greater transparency/accountability in the city.
   1. 1. 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved in addressing this? Explain.

**I can’t really point to a policy order or vote on an issues specifically about transparency/accountability but I have sought to be transparent and accountable in my voting and the positions I have taken since getting on the council.**

1. **Housing:** Your support for new AH0 (Affordable Housing Overlay) up-zoning amendment
   1. 1. 2. **3** \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

**I have consistently stated that I opposed and voted against the new AHO proposal with increased heights across the board in Squares and or main corridors. I do support discussion of increased heights, especially in the squares, but I believe we should have a more nuanced and targeted approach that ties any new heights to the heights allowed in the surrounding area based on current market rate zoning.**

1. **Transportation:** Your support for re-evaluating city’s bike lane/traffic/parking infrastructure and plans.
   1. **1**. 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

**I have personally been involved in putting forward numerous policy orders to rethink aspects of the CSO and have sought to slow down or mitigate the harm they are causing to residents and small businesses in the impacted areas. I have been rallying residents to get involved in the discussion. I have passed policy orders calling for new rules of the road and better traffic enforcement, conducting an economic impact study and to to gather more data on the other goals of the CSO to see if it is having its intended effects. I also got the fire department to restore 10 parking spots in the bus lane on Mass Ave. All of this while fighting against a 7 member majority of the council who voted for the CSO.**

1. **Environment:** Your support for keeping our mature trees (in schools, housing, parks, & other contexts)?
   1. **1**. 2. 3 \_Circle the number that most represents your views.
   2. How have you personally been involved to address this? Explain.

**I have supported several policy orders protecting tress and asking the city to do more including rapidly repairing the irrigation system at Danehy field and anywhere else needed I have also supported policy orders asking the city to conduct an audit o the improvements needed for Danehy after 30 years to make upgrades.**

II. We are interested in how knowledgeable and active candidates are in city issues. (Short answer – 1-2 sentences)

1. What is the one key problem/issue you want to achieve in City Council next term? Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

**I would like to work with fellow councillors to get them focused on the core services of our city and improvements to our neighborhoods and business districts. I believe the council has spent to much energy on broader global concerns and not enough addressing the needs of our residents and businesses.**

**As chair of the Economic Development and University Relations Committee I have worked closely with our businesses to address a number of their concerns and sought changes in policy and increased support from the city.**

1. What City Council decision over the last term are you most supportive of? Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

**Honestly, I am not supportive of much that the City Council has done in this last term. I think they have simply added more and more requirements on residents and businesses making it more expensive and difficult to remain in Cambridge. I feel I have spent my Council term trying to mitigate the most damaging aspects of policy proposals where I can. I spent an entire 18 months pushing back against overly aggressive BEUDO and climate policies that would have been a hardship not only for large companies and institutions but for condo and large apartment buildings. My fellow councillors insist that Cambridge should be number one in every area of social policy but do not do the deep thinking required to consider the longterm implications.**

1. What City Council decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term? Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

**I would have to say the AHO.2 proposal currently being shepherded through the council with increased heights. I feel that the proposal is not well thought out and unnecessary. I have consistently voted against it and will vote against the final version unless there are major changes to the proposal.**

1. What City Staff decision over the last Council term are you most supportive of? Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

**I am happy that the City Manager elevated Commisisoner Elow to the position of Commissioner, Owen Oriordan as Deputy City Manager and Kathy Watkins as the new Commissioner of DPW. I also support some of the new positions that have been added to the City Managers leadership team and Human Resources. I did not play any role in these decisions other than encouraging the City Manager to consider some staffing changes in these areas and to add a Chief of Staff and some more HR capacity. I am also supportive of the council taking on an annual review of the City Manager and requiring that he create a robust evaluation system for city staff. I am currently chairng the City manager review committee.**

1. What City Staff decision were you most disappointed in the last Council term? Explain any role you have had as Councillor or resident in related actions.

**I was not happy with the creation of the Commissioner of Traffic and Parking position. I also am unclear about the need for all of the positions added to the city managers office and the pay scales that were advertised. These decisions were made without the input of the council so we had no role in these decisions.**

III. What Issues Help Define You? Highlight those core interests/goals for the 2024-6 Council and explain why.

**I could say I support them all, but I will just highlight the ones I have been most focused on and will continue to focus on. I have made it very clear in my campaign and in my first term that I believe we need to maintain a strong financial base and economic growth to support all the services and amenitites that Cambridge residents have come to expect while maintaining a reasonable to low tax rate. Cambridge is at the center of the innovation economy, and I want to continue to support our business and institutions in the innovation sector. I also know as a resident that what makes Cambridge so appealing are its different neighborhoods and the restuarants, retail and cultural centers. In my first term, I have been surprised by the lack of engagement with residents. I have seen repeated proposals from members of the council that appear to be their own personal agenda that they then go out and rally a core group of supporters to advocate for and claim it is a citizen’s petition/movement. I do not believe that the council should be setting major, citywide policy based on personal agendas but should do so based on conversations and engagement with a broad spectrum of residents.**

\_\_\_\_More balance in commercial and residential needs

\_\_\_\_More budget accountability

\_\_\_\_More engagement by residents

\_\_\_\_More equity in healthcare, environment, schooling, housing, and related issues

\_\_\_\_More transparency in Council and City decision-making

\_\_\_\_More prioritization of historic building reuse

\_\_\_\_More support for local businesses

\_\_\_\_A more multi-dimensional and resident-engaged city planning

\_\_\_\_A more inclusive environmental policy

\_\_\_\_A more comprehensive transportation policy

\_\_\_\_Other (explain in 1-2 sentences)

IV. What incident or set of concerns got you interested in running for City Council?

**I have been involved in local political campaigns since I was 15 years old. I first ran for Council in 2017 when David Maher left the council but lots by 90 votes. I then ran again in 2021 when Tim Toomey stepped down and was successful. What motivates me is wanting to support residents and be of public service. I have built my career as a teacher, lawyer, union leader on being of service to others and that is what motivates me a s City Councillor. I feel the current Council has lost their bearings and is focused too much on global policy and not enough on resident issues and concerns.**