

## 2012 QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION COMMISSIONER

**Instructions to Candidates:** The following questionnaire will be used to evaluate candidates for the office of Democratic Election Commissioner. Please answer each question so that we can compare the answers of each candidate and so that you can give the Cambridge Democratic City Committee a full and fair picture of your qualifications and ideas for the position. Responses should be in a form suitable for reproduction, in single-spaced format.

Questionnaire responses must be received by Secretary David Lakeman by 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 1, 2020. Responses can be mailed to 84 Prescott Street Apt. 6 Cambridge, MA 02138 or e-mailed to [cambridgedems@gmail.com](mailto:cambridgedems@gmail.com).

1. State your name, residential address, business address, telephone number(s), and e-mail address.

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2. **Personal.** Give a brief biographical summary, including your occupation and past activity in the Democratic Party, community, Cambridge politics, and voter registration. Attach a resume or CV. Please include your experience, if any, with elections laws, proportional representation, and Cambridge election procedures. Is there, or do you anticipate, anything (time, other commitments) that would present a conflict of interest or otherwise make it difficult to fulfill your duties as Election Commissioner for the full four-year term? **I am the father of three young women and a Cambridge resident of 31 years. Resume attached. I have been very involved with educating and registering youth to vote for over 15 years. In addition, I have served as an inspector, election clerk at 4-1, and 6-2 polling sites for at least five elections. I have also served as a city councillor which gave me insight to the elections process as both a candidate and a city official. I foresee no reason that would prevent me from performing the duties of an Election Commissioner.**

**Please see attached resume.**

3. **Reason for Seeking Office.** Please explain why you are seeking the office of Election Commissioner.

**To continue serving the residents of Cambridge by applying eight years of election commission experience and to protect and improve voting experiences for all Cambridge residents. I strive to engage as many people as possible and ensure ongoing integrity in the voting process.**

4. Please give a brief overview of your managerial experience.

**Over the past eight years as a commissioner, I have hired, trained, and supervised hundreds of Poll Workers, Clerks and Wardens. I focus on providing workers with the knowledge of how to positively interact with the public. As a former city councillor, I use my trained listening skills to**

understand the issues and concerns of workers. For example, I have hosted informal dinners to get to know workers in order to build relationships. After elections I have participated in de-briefings in order to understand ways to help make the workers' experience better.

## 5. **Voter Participation, Protection, and Privacy.**

a. **Increasing participation.** Given the dynamic nature of the City of Cambridge, with a highly transient population, how do you propose to increase the number of people who register and vote across elections for different offices? **Educating students starting in the sixth grade will help instill the importance of voting.** Evidence suggests if parent votes, the more likely their children will vote. In addition, to accommodate the growing population of our city, we should include voting materials as part of a welcoming package for all new residents.

Do you have any specific suggestions for increasing participation? **Encouraging schools to hold mock elections just prior to the elections and students can talk about their experiences with the goal of engaging and educating people about their rights to vote.**

Do you have any specific suggestions for improving the assistance provided to voters who need it? **Making sure we connect with all agencies within Cambridge to offer written materials and on-site visits to educate those needing help.** For example, we currently go to all nursing facilities to assist patients who are unable to go the polls on election day.

b. **Information.** Do you have or support any proposals for improving the existing voter education program? **I am currently engaged in conversations with CRLS administrators to increase student involvement in the election process.**

c. **Protection and Monitoring.** How can the Commission protect the privacy of voters, ensure that all voters feel safe, and allow no kind of intimidation or electioneering, while also allowing other entities access to polling places for purposes of monitoring and evaluation? **This is accomplished inside of the polling sites by providing privacy sleeve and not calling out names of those presenting a “voter confidentiality” paper.** Outside the polling site all political signage must be 150 feet from the polling site. This is enforced by the designated police officer stationed at every polling site.

6. **Accuracy of Voter Lists.** Do you think that the existing system is adequate to minimize voter list inaccuracies (e.g., erroneously dropping voters, or carrying nonresidents on the voter lists)? **When people change their license, they should automatically be updated on our rolls.** Encourage people to complete the census. Possible email reminder that their voting experience can be enhanced and shorter if they check before going to the polls.

7. **Election Commission Staff.** What is the proper balance between the commissioners and the staff? **The staff is managed by the director, as it should be. Commissioners should deal only with policy, not day to day operations.** How will you work with the Commission's staff? As I have for the past eight years, professional, respectfully and with appreciation for the work they perform.

#### **8. Election Commission Budget.**

What experience do you have administering and managing budgets? I am the Executive Director and Co-founder of Cambridge Jazz Foundation and responsible for the formation, administration and implementation of the budget. We perform a yearly jazz festival at Danahy Park attended by approximately 12,000 people. I am responsible for staffing and supervising 50 to 100 volunteers, contracting with food and merchandising vendors, and working with city departments to coordinate services including, fire, police, inspectional services, and the Department of Public Works which are all relevant to being an election commissioner. Our annual budget is slightly over \$100,000.

**9. Operation of the Election Commission.** Do you have any comments on, or changes to propose, in the day-to-day administration of the Commission? How would you evaluate the Commission's training of election workers? How important is it to you that election day workers live in the communities where they serve? I have had the pleasure of working with the election staff over the past eight years. The Executive Director is well respected by the staff which helps create a positive work environment. The staff are extremely professional and welcoming. The Executive Director and a staff person have been awarded "Employee of the Year". Along with commissioners, they spend countless hours preparing materials to assist with training election workers. As a commissioner, we train, monitor, and follow up with all election day activities. There is a culture of "how can we improve the workers' experience". For example, after the elections, we meet with wardens and clerks to discuss every aspect of their experience with the goal of trying to improve. Of course we want to hire poll workers who live within our community whenever possible. We pay the highest rate in MA. Most important is we get the best people who are knowledgeable, nice to others (workers and public) and have the stamina to work long days. Making sure polls are appropriately staffed is the most important. Sometimes it is necessary to use people from other communities to ensure full staffing of the polls.

**10. Early Voting and Election Day Procedures.** How can the Commission avoid problems at polling places on Election Day? It is impossible to know what "all" the problems will be on election day. However, by evaluating previous problems the election commission can get better and better. Also, anticipating based on the specifics of an election, the commission can address problems. What role should the Commissioners play in insuring a trouble-free Election Day? Respond to the Wardens as to what they need throughout the day. Do you favor the continued use of optical scan voting devices in Cambridge elections? Yes. How would you evaluate the way in which the proportional representation "count" was done in November 2019? It was a fair process done very professionally. In fact, it is being considered by other communities as well.

**11. Recount Procedures.** What is your evaluation of the recount procedures of the Commission? From what I have observed, I think it works well. With reference to the commission's handling of previous City Council and School Committee recounts, what changes, if any would you suggest?

**12. In the upcoming re-precincting following the 2020 Census, in what ways should public input be taken into account? How many public meetings should be held to take public input?**

**13. Please evaluate recent changes in election law and their impact on Cambridge.**

I am pleased with the Automatic Voter Registration process which became effective January 1, 2020. This will potentially add droves of younger voters to the rolls. Because there will be no political party affiliation information, those potential voters will be sought after by various parties, which will help them be more informed. Also, the state voter registration website is much better. It allows people to learn a lot before going to the polls. For example, there are sample ballots in case one wanted to learn more about a particular candidate. This is good for all, including Cambridge!

**14. Miscellaneous.** Do you have any other suggestions for carrying out the powers and duties of an Election Commissioner? I think that is an ongoing process. As situations, demographics, and other variables change, we have to constantly evaluate how we perform the powers and duties of the Election Commissioner. Is there anything else you would like the Cambridge Democratic City Committee to consider in evaluating your candidacy for the office of Election? I have built a number of relationships during my 22 years of service as the referee coordinator for Cambridge Youth Soccer and through the Jazz Festival. These activities have helped connect me to a number of communities in the city and that helps with outreach to voters and recruitment of poll workers which is an asset to being a commissioner. I will continue to listen and do my very best to represent our party.

Thank you,  
Larry Ward