

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING

Several of the candidates talk about a community based planning process. What does this mean? Will each neighborhood create an elected council?

In my opinion community based planning is already happening in the neighborhoods of Boston. What it means, in my opinion, is that the neighborhood groups have a say in the development that happens in their neighborhoods. Do we need something new added to what is already being done? I don't necessarily think so. I think it is vitally important for the community to provide input on projects in their neighborhoods and I think that is done successfully.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Establishing a Fenway community center has been a priority for many Fenway citizens who have participated in planning exercises and meetings.; What would you do to help the Fenway get such a facility?

The Fenway CDC has been working on this issue for a long time and is in the process meeting with elected officials and developers on creating a Senior Center for the Fenway neighborhood, which I support fully. I will stand with the CDC and the Fenway Civic Association, which I also understand supports a Senior Center, when a community approved project is presented to the City for zoning and licensing purposes. Prior to that I am always available to make phone calls and/or write letters of support to developers on behalf of the CDC. I would be willing to use my resource to solicit funding from private partners.

HOUSING

Under Mayor Menno's inclusionary zoning policy developers of housing must provide some middle income affordable units in their new building (or pay into a fund). Developers of recently built housing in the Fenway have complied, offering one-bedroom units at over \$1,400 a month. Do you believe this is affordable? Lower income brackets should also be supplied with affordable housing? If so, how would you change the laws and regulations to insure that "affordable housing" is actually affordable to lower income Boston residents?

I don't believe that \$1400 a month is an affordable rate. I am a strong supporter of affordable housing and believe that thirty percent of all newly built housing should be dedicated as affordable housing units. The problem now is that the developers are using the Greater Boston Median Income index to determine what the affordable rate should be. They should be using the median income for the city of Boston. This must be changed and I will work to make that change a reality.

I recognize how difficult it is for most people to make ends meet and that when it comes between paying rent and eating, most people go without food. I don't believe anyone should have to go without and I know that we can do better at providing affordable rates so those choices don't have to be made. I have always worked hard to bring affordable units to all parts of the city and will continue to do that if reelected.

Recent studies have shown that the most important indicator of success in school is the economic status of the classmates one goes to school with. Families that move from poor neighborhood to middle class neighborhoods have better scholarship in schools than do the same sorts of families who stay in poor neighborhoods. What would you do to improve education for Boston students?

I'm not an educator by vocation but my understanding is that some of it may be attributed to limited English language skills. To overcome this I believe we need more early learning centers as well as increased remedial and tutorial offerings at the earliest evidence that students need added services.

The Boston City Council doesn't have the authority to change the School Department. That's what the School Committee is charged with. That said, what I can do as a city councilor is work with Superintendent Johnson to bring added resources where available. I can also monitor the department and engage in dialogue to change personnel where

needed. As you know, the City Council can oversee the budget and make cuts, though not line items. This is a better question for the Superintendent and/or School Committee members.

What should the City be doing about groundwater depletion, a serious problem in the Fenway and Back Bay? The city is actively working on the groundwater issue and I am proud to say that I, along with Councilor Mike Ross, brought more money to the Groundwater Trust via the city budget so that they could continue monitoring wells in the city. They have done a great job doing this over the years and have expanded beyond the Fenway and Back Bay neighborhoods.

I also led the charge to bring all parties together ‘city and state agencies’ to work on this issue collaboratively. A Memo of Understanding was signed by all parties and to this day city and state agencies work together to make certain that water levels are maintained especially when new construction projects are being built. I think this agreement goes a long way to protect the neighborhoods.

Other issues

I believe we all share a lot of the same issues. Our property taxes keep going up, jobs are scarce, and basic quality of life issues are important to us. That’s why as an at-large city councilor I have been working on changing the PILOT program to offer tax relief. Recognizing my work on this important issue, the Mayor appointed me to the PILOT task force charged with adopting a new policy. Tax fairness is a prime concern for me.

I am also the leader on CORI reform on the Boston City Council and have been for almost five years. I believe we need reform immediately to help out the men and women negatively impacted by an outdated system. I look forward to changes being adopted by the state legislature.

Finally, as a full-time councilor I work with residents on basic quality of life issues day in and day out. From street lights being out to helping people with job and housing placement, I am always available to lend a hand.

In briefest outline I can cite the following as examples of the important public matters that have received my attention and that continue to positively impact the citizens of Boston:

- licensing and regulation of dangerous dogs;
- licensing and regulation of bike couriers;
- mandatory laboratory inspections;
- the living wage;
- installation and implementation of countdown crosswalks;
- fire protection and blasting laws;
- first of its kind anti-sweat shop ordinance;
- full-time advocacy on zoning and licensing issues.

In the last two year term, I have authored or spearheaded the following initiatives. They include:

- regulations requiring timely and proper cleaning of grease ducts in response to the Tai Ho Restaurant fire in West Roxbury;
- pension and retirement reforms;
- financial disclosure ordinance for city councilors;
- supporting the continuation of Park Rangers and mounted police patrols.

I also encourage residents to visit my web site www.votestevemurphy.com. Thank you.