



THREE PARKS INDEPENDENT DEMOCRATS

Candidate Questionnaire

1 – Housing

- As Chair of Community Board 7, orchestrated negotiations resulting in 600,000 square feet of *permanent* affordable housing
- Passed CB7 Core Principles focused on mix of affordable housing. Developed data requirements to effectively track loss of affordable housing on Upper West Side. Advocated preservation of Mitchell-Lama, Rent Stabilized, Rent Controlled housing stock.
- Established SRO working group to preserve affordable housing. Fought and defeated conversion of SRO's to homeless shelters on 94th Street.

What is your plan for preserving and adding additional units of affordable housing in New York City?

Affordable housing is essential to the economic diversity, long-term viability, and unique character of our community, yet because of the uncoordinated patchwork of housing programs and policies, housing advocacy happens in "whack-a-mole" fashion. We need to develop a comprehensive view of community needs, an accurate inventory of existing housing stock, and a clear plan going forward.

A few legislative initiatives would support housing preservation.

- Affordable housing should be an absolute requirement of all new developments (including high density "as of right" buildings), and should be incorporated into the land use review procedure.
- Landlords should be required to pursue a "cure" of alleged violations before eviction proceeding can begin.
- The City should maintain a publically accessible database of landlords and their eviction rates.

Do you support or oppose 421 tax abatements for development in buildings in already highly desirable neighborhoods?

New York's real estate market is one of the most profitable in the world. Doling out of 421 tax abatements to developers who would be building—and turning a profit—without them is wasteful, and in the context of budget cuts to much needed and relied-upon city services, unacceptable. Our affordable housing stock is in dire need of the revenue we are giving away, and we should correct that.

As a public official, what actions would you take to promote the continuation and improvement of rent stabilization in NYC?

There are fewer things more contrary to my understanding of effective government than the current state of affordable housing jurisdiction. The makeup and diversity of a community is a decision that its members should be able to decide, not Republican lawmakers from upstate. Vacancy and luxury decontrol regulations, rent pricing, and other aspects of our affordable housing makeup should be the purview of city government, in partnership with the relevant community board. As a public official, I would lead the charge for a comprehensive review and realignment of rent stabilization laws that reflect the need for a continuum of affordability in our districts.

How would you provide housing and mental health services to the homeless?

My approach to homelessness is three-fold. First, our social safety net is not adequate for keeping people on the brink of homelessness in their homes. We should study the most common causes of homelessness in our city, and reinstall programs such as Advantage that work with this exact goal in mind. Second, we must expand the affordable housing stock in the city. If someone is no longer able to afford the home they currently live in, there should always exist a cheaper option for them. And third, we must strengthen our mental health services citywide to better support people who are having a difficult time keeping their lives together. Only by addressing the immediate, long-term, and systemic causes of homelessness can we put an end to it.

What is your position on the selling off of NYCHA property and to private developers? What is your position on the leasing of open space that is currently occupied by public schools to private developers?

Reallocating public space to the private sector is a permanent and irreversible decision, and carries serious long-term implications for the demographics, quality of life, and values of our community. It is every community's right and responsibility to forge a vision for itself, and to determine the best use of its common assets. Selling off schools, parks, libraries, affordable housing stock, or any other public land without the explicit request and approval of the community—at *all* stages of the process—is dismissive, arrogant behavior that is doomed to failure.

2 – Education

- Negotiated 100,000 square feet of new public school space (K-8) at Riverside Center.
- Initiated and championed 50% need-blind seats for community residents at the School at Columbia
- Built capacity for early child programs at West Side Y, Grovesnor Neighborhood House, and community centers throughout the district
- Served as PTA Chair of Ethical Culture Fieldston School with focus on diversity, affordability, and inclusive community.

Indicate whether you support or oppose the following education proposals:

Continuation of mayoral control of schools

Yes No

Having the mayor appoint a majority of the members on the Public Education Panel (PEP)

Yes No

Would you support or oppose the reappointment of Dennis Walcott as Chancellor

Yes No

Ending tenure protection for teachers

Yes No

A moratorium on school closings

Yes No

A moratorium on co-location of charter schools in public school buildings

Yes No

A moratorium on creation of new charter schools

Yes No

Giving local Community Education Councils greater power in determining use of school space

Yes No

3 – Environment and Energy

- As Chair of first Green Committee (initiated by CB7 Chair Sheldon Fine), shaped Community Board priorities, including building energy audits and retrofits, expanding mass transit and transportation alternatives, reducing of automobile traffic, building infrastructure for solar, wind, geothermal, and anaerobic digestion, promoting off-grid heating/cooling, protecting of open spaces and parks, promoting zero waste programs, and developing storm management and natural shoreline protections.
- As Chair of Community Board 7, initiated long-range sustainable urban planning, environmentally sound transportation systems (slow zones, bump outs, pedestrian islands, sidewalk plantings), local food production/access, and land use negotiations that ensure energy efficiency/co-generation, open space, clean transportation, public school capacity, affordable housing, and park expansion.
- As Chair of Community Board 7, championed and collaborated with businesses, residents, and elected officials to ensure successful implementation of first protected bike lane (and street redesign) on

the Upper West Side. Also advocated first sustainable streetscape design, including "bioswail" in the district initiated by Columbus Avenue BID.

- Co-Founded the Carbon Squeeze, an organization that educates and inspires specific actions and policies that reduce carbon footprint.
- As Chair of Ethical Culture Fieldston School, promoted construction of rooftop green house, farm-to-table education and meal service, and the first "Green" committee of the parents association.
- Vigorously opposed Fracking in New York State (and the Spectra Pipeline) and the use of natural gas for boiler conversions. Collaborated with NY'ers Against Fracking, United for Action, Sane Energy, Sierra Club and other environmental groups to stave off this horrendous threat to New York's water supply.

How can you use your office to encourage use of renewable energy?

Land use regulations are our first opportunity to ensure that new construction includes sources of renewable energy, including solar and wind power, geothermal heat exchange, and co-generation.

City-owned facilities (schools, parks, libraries) can also take advantage of renewable energy sources, both on and off the grid. Given returns within 2-5 years, investments in renewables make both environmental and financial sense.

Are you in favor of the closing of Indian Point? If so how will you use your office to support IP's closing?

Indian Point is dangerous and regressive. It has suffered over 10 safety incidents since its inception, and may be vulnerable to terrorist attack. It is uncomfortably proximate to NYC, but was grandfathered in. And, astoundingly, it sits along an earthquake fault line. Furthermore, nuclear energy is non-renewable. Relying on it will only delay what is urgently necessary—increased funding for renewable energy research, and implementation.

What would you do, if anything, to require or encourage the use of solar energy in NYC?

Solar panels should be incorporated into every new development in New York City. The cost would be minimal to developers given the scale of most new projects, and they would quickly pay for themselves.

I have also worked with community groups to implement sustainable features (solar trash compactors, solar lighting, composting, gray water management, greenhouse gardens, and recycling) in Riverside Park, Verdi Square, Roosevelt Park, along Columbus Avenue, and various schools.

Under what conditions, if any, would you support hydraulic fracturing in New York State?

There are no conditions under which I would support the dangerous, fossil fuel-perpetuating, environmentally destructive, inefficient practice of hydrofracking in New York State or anywhere else. Even the most ardent supporters of hydrofracking acknowledge it to be, at best, a stopgap measure, and I am focused on following long-term strategies for sustainability, not bending over backwards to accommodate temporary energy sources that will inflict permanent damage to our state.

4 – Land Use & Zoning

- Orchestrated community response to proposed 3 Million SF mixed use development. Materially shifted design from private enclave to integrated with neighborhood. Won new 100K SF public school (K-8), 600K SF permanent affordable housing, \$20M for parks.
- Championed new storefront zoning to protect more than 500 of our local businesses along Amsterdam and Columbus Avenues.
- Promoted designation of historic district along West End Avenue. Collaborated with experts to develop tools for community planning and advocacy.
- Vociferously oppose lease/sell public housing, parks, libraries, and schools.

Do you favor or oppose commercial rent control?

Small businesses are being priced out by landlords that rent to the highest bidder (usually banks and big-chain retailers). I am eager to explore a broad range of policy options and incentives that favor start-ups and locally owned businesses.

Do you support zoning regulations that discourage the use of commercial properties to rent to large banks and chain stores?

As Chair of Community Board 7, I was proud to work with the Department of City Planning and Council Member Gale Brewer to pass the first

storefront zoning legislation in NYC that protected more than 500 local businesses from 72nd to 110th Street along Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. I was also the first Chair to facilitate an on-going connection with local business owners and to set up a small business task force.

Do you support or oppose the leasing of public parks to raise revenue such as private tennis courts in Central Park or private development of the Hudson River Park?

Strongly oppose. Public resources like Central Park and Riverside Park are crucial to our quality of life, and to leveling the playing field to all New Yorkers. I have a long history of opposing over-commercialization of our parks.

When the Parks Department proposed high-cost “tennis bubbles” in Central Park, I organized multiple community boards to defeat the proposal. I also vigorously opposed the construction of an expensive horse riding stable in Central Park. I am committed to keeping our public resources *truly* public.

Do you think the power of eminent domain has been abused within the city? If so, what examples would you cite?

I believe the City’s handling of land use under the Bloomberg administration has tilted very heavily toward new development at the expense of local communities. Recent proposals to develop Douglass Houses and PS199/PS191, while not explicitly eminent domain, belie a lack of respect for our community. As a council member I will push to require deeper and earlier community involvement at all stages of government land or air rights sales, whether involving eminent domain or not.

5 – Labor

- Advocated for both paid sick leave and living wage resolutions at CB7
- Developed and advocated job training and internship programs for teens at West Side Y and as Chair of CB7 Youth Committee.

How do you define a living wage?

A living wage is an hourly wage that allows a worker to pay for rent, food, and clothing for them and their dependents on 40 hours of work per week without going into debt. The city’s minimum wage falls well below this definition.

Should it apply only to NYC contracts or should there be a city minimum wage – living wage pegged to cost of living in New York City?

City contracts should definitely require a living wage. I would advocate for a citywide minimum that ensures a robust economy for both local businesses and their employees.

Would you support the establishment of a city department of labor for complaints of violation of fair labor standards?

Our city needs to do a better job protecting vulnerable working families, who, by virtue of their dependence on their employers, are easy targets for exploitation. I would support a dedicated organization to investigate and act on labor complaints.

Do you believe there should be mandatory paid sick leave in New York City?

I fully support the Earned Sick Time Act as both a victory for fairness and a smart public health policy, and am pleased that it passed the City Council with easily enough votes to overturn Mayor Bloomberg's likely veto.

Because of the shortage of OSHA staff would you favor giving some of these regulatory functions to city agencies?

OSHA's job is crucial to the fairness of working conditions. If the federal government is unable to perform its duties adequately, then we should be ready to work with them to ensure they are covered—or to act unilaterally if we must.

6 – Police – Criminal Justice and Civil Liberties

- Actively opposed discriminatory stop-and-frisk practices
- Promoted comprehensive K-12 civil rights curriculum in both public and independent schools.

Under what circumstances short of probable cause should a police officer be able to stop and frisk someone?

Terry v. Ohio establishes that the legal requirement for an officer to stop an individual is “reasonable suspicion.” Matching a physical description and being near the scene of the crime shortly after it happens, for example, would be reasonable suspicion. Further, to frisk someone, an officer must have a reasonable suspicion that the person poses a threat to the safety of the officer or the public. Suspicion of drug possession, for instance, is not legal grounds for frisking a citizen.

The NYPD claims that the stop and frisk policy adheres to this legal requirement, but I cannot see how that is possible. Searching people just because they happen to be somewhere, without any crime actually having been reported, much less any description of a suspect given, must be in clear violation of the US Constitution and should be ended immediately.

Would you continue or change the stop and frisk policy of the police department?

I would end the policy, hands-down. An assumption of guilt is completely contrary to who we are as a city, state, and country, and there is no sense in the police stopping and frisking *anyone* unless they are investigating a specific instance of violent criminal activity.

Is there something you can do to keep young people from getting an arrest record after being searched for having small amounts of marijuana that would not have been a crime if the marijuana were not in public view?

The City Council does not have control over state law, but it does have a loud voice. As a council member, I would work with my colleagues in the New York State Assembly and Senate to advocate for decriminalizing marijuana use outright. Until then, we can help by ensuring that younger New Yorkers are taught the difference between a citation and misdemeanor, and the circumstances in which each applies.

Who would you appoint or support as police commissioner?

I would have to see the applicant pool.

7 – Health

- Founded 20-year old meal program to serve SRO tenants with limited access to food. Established visiting nurse services for SRO tenants in need.

- Consistently advocated for Aging in Place initiatives throughout our community.

What would you do improve city mental health services?

Mental health services are most effective when administered on-site, in schools, community centers, and residences where people have immediate and consistent access to expert care. I would work to increase funding of programs that facilitate safe spaces and stable relationships with mental health care providers in the context of everyday life.

8 – Transportation

- Championed street redesigns along Columbus Avenue, including protected bike lane and other safety measures like pedestrian islands, count-down timers, bump outs, slow zones, and daylighting.
- Co-Founded Citizens for an Accessible West Side to ensure the mobility and quality of life of disabled residents.
- Promoted expansion of transit and transportation alternatives, like electric car infrastructure, bike share, rapid bus lines.

Would you encourage Bloomberg's policy of increasing the number of bike lanes?

The protected bike lane along 20 blocks of Columbus Avenue, which I brought from committee to the full board as Chair of Community Board 7, was a big win for the Upper West Side. In its first year of use, cycling on the avenue increased while sidewalk biking virtually disappeared, and pedestrian injuries dropped 41 percent. The bike lane brought with it benefits like pedestrian refuge islands, dedicated loading zones and left-turn lanes that make the street safer for all users and calm traffic while improving traffic flow. When some merchants on the avenue raised concerns about delivery access to their stores, I formed a task force that worked with DOT to address the problems. I look forward to the expansion of the Columbus redesign this summer, and believe the next candidate for such treatment should be Amsterdam Avenue, which is one of the five most dangerous streets in Manhattan.

How would you protect transit fares?

Our transit system is the lifeblood of New York City, but chronic underfunding (in part caused by repeated looting of MTA revenue) has led

to fare hikes and service reductions. If we are serious about creating a more sustainable city, the MTA needs dedicated, secure funding that will prevent more fare hikes, restore past service cuts and add new service so that transit is an option for more commuters. Unfortunately, NYC's control over its own mass transit system is limited. Still, the city is not powerless. Our contribution to the MTA has not increased since 1995, and we need to pay our fair share.

Do you support congestion pricing?

To protect transit fares, the city should be prepared to take a larger role in MTA funding by approving a more rational tolling plan, including congestion pricing, which would both support the transit system and reduce traffic and pollution.

9 – Campaign Finance

What changes, if any, do you think should be made to New York City's campaign finance law?

I am in full agreement with those who believe that, even in our system, large donors hold disproportionate sway in elections, and that candidates must spend too much of their time fundraising at the expense of community work and engagement. My approach to alleviating the problem would be to lower contribution caps and hold candidates to the same caps as their donors; ensure a reasonable threshold to receive public matching funds, based on the number of donors rather than the total raised; and make participation in the public financing system a requirement for running for office in New York City.

10 – Taxes and Revenue

Do you favor an increase on income taxes for city residents making more than \$250,000 per year?

Progressive taxation is the fairest and most equitable way to fund the city services we all rely on. Our focus must always be on quality of life, first and foremost, and the impact of flat taxes on a middle-class or poor family's quality of life is much greater than the same on a high-income family. Governor Cuomo's marginal tax rate on high incomes is a step in the right direction, but we still have more to go in making our tax code more progressive. I support a tax increase on high-income city residents, including those making more than \$250,000 per year.

Do you favor or oppose an increase in the city sales tax?

Sales tax is a regressive form of taxation—a blunt instrument that must be comprehensively analyzed to determine who is most affected by any increases. Because of the fact that we do not have home rule with respect to other forms of taxation, we tend to rely too heavily on sales and property tax out of necessity. We should push for a return to home rule for city taxation, so we can implement our own progressive income taxes into the tax mix. It is also important for us to identify and eliminate loopholes in our property taxation system that may be exploited for profit.

Would you support a transaction tax on Wall Street?

I fully support a federal financial transaction tax, both to raise revenue and to help curb disruptive high-frequency trading systems.

Do think non-profits, including religious institutions, should be taxed when such institutions make a profit from selling their property or air rights?

Non-profits should be just that; and when undertaking market transactions, especially to corporations and other for-profit entities, should be governed by the same rules—and subject to the same taxes—as the rest of us. We cannot afford to subsidize business while our libraries, schools, parks, and transportation systems remain chronically underfunded.

What kind of a commuter tax if any would you support?

I am in favor of collecting taxes from everyone who works in New York City. Everyone who benefits from the services the city provides should participate in funding those services. However, I would not want the burden of a commuter tax to fall most heavily on middle-income commuters that serve city residents (teachers, postal workers, city employees). The commuter tax would need to provide some discount for middle- and low-income commuters.

And, of course, I support all efforts to collect taxes from those who use their wealth to avoid them by claiming second properties to be their primary places of residence, despite living and working in New York City.