

Candidate for Councillor At Large

Tim King

1. Please tell us about yourself and why you are running for office.

My name is Tim King and I am running for Waltham City Councillor at Large for a number of reasons. I am a lifelong resident who grew up on Highland St near the Waltham Hospital where I was born. I attended Waltham Public Schools, played Waltham sports, acted in the Reagle Players, and have been an active participant and volunteer in this community for my entire life. I am a retired Waltham Police Officer who spent my entire adult life protecting our community. I am a labor attorney who represents working men and women across the commonwealth. I also provide pro bono legal services for those who could not afford it otherwise. I have served on a number of state and city commissions/boards and currently serve on the board of directors for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation as well as a commissioner on the Waltham Cemetery Commission. I have been involved in government for over thirty years and have a strong understanding of state and municipal budgeting, operations, and capital improvement. This short background about me demonstrates my professional experience and ability to be an effective councillor at large, but my primary reason for running for city council is my love for the City of Waltham. My wife Kim and I chose to stay in Waltham to bring up our three daughters, who like us, went to Waltham Public Schools and have been involved in so many activities across this city. I want to continue my public service by representing you. I have spent countless hours talking to residents about issues, concerns, likes and dislikes and while there are many different opinions as to how we should move forward, the overarching consensus is that Waltham is a great place to live, work, and play. I want to be a voice for those who want to see our city continue to thrive while working on the issues that are important to each and every one of you. Thank you to the League of Women Voters for giving us the opportunity to provide information about our campaigns and I respectfully ask for your vote for councillor at large on November 4th.

2. What are the two most important issues in Waltham, and how will you address those issues if you are elected to City Council?

Waltham has always been a great place to live, but it has its challenges like any city, and we are at a crossroad. We need to examine our future growth and the impacts on traffic, housing, schools, police, fire, roads, and our small business economy. One of my priority issues is to ensure we maintain an environment where commercial businesses can continue to thrive. Waltham was founded on manufacturing and with that came a large number of small supporting businesses. Times have changed and much of the manufacturing is unfortunately gone, and with that came a reduction in some of the smaller supporting businesses. We have been fortunate that many technology and biotech companies have replaced the manufacturing, but Covid brought other challenges that remain today. Work from home and other factors have emptied many commercial buildings not only in Waltham, but in the Boston area. Much of the Boston and Metro West area have been saturated with laboratory space, which has negatively impacted proposed commercial development. We must explore ways to maintain our commercial base to preserve commercial tax revenue. While there is a call for a much-needed conversation surrounding future housing needs, we must also concentrate on our commercial environment. A reduction in commercial tax revenue could have a negative impact on our residential tax rates. Waltham residents enjoy our relatively low residential tax rate compared to many surrounding communities, but we need to examine the big picture moving forward to determine what steps need to be taken to preserve those rates and the services that are provided. In addition to this consideration of large commercial business we also must recognize the importance of small business and their contribution to the city. Small businesses are a vital segment of our community, and we must foster an environment that allows them to continue to provide their goods and services. These small businesses are some of the biggest contributors to our youth sports, clubs, and community organizations. They routinely give back to the community, not only in commercial tax revenue, but in many other very tangible ways that are vital to the success of Waltham.

A second priority encompasses a number of issues that all lead to one common denominator, planning. When I speak to people around the city, I hear topics of which people have concerns: traffic, housing, schools, public safety, future uses for Fernald, needs for multi-modal transportation options, and many more. These discussions come with very varied ideas as to how the city should be addressing each one. And, while they all seem like separate issues, they are all very intertwined in one very important way and that is the need for a plan to bring them all together.

Each one effects the other. A relatively small change in one, can lead to major changes in another. We need to start looking at these issues together as a whole in a more global fashion. In creating responsible sustainable growth, we need to consider what options are available to us and encompass them in the plan. For example, the city recently adopted the Complete Streets program, which is a valuable resource for the city to examine options in roadway construction, which may improve some traFic issues. Additionally, I have presented the city with information and will continue to follow up on grant funding for last mile transportation to public transportation, which would be especially important in the North Waltham area. We need to make sure that decisions made now are going to be productive and healthy for the city and our residents going forward. I will advocate for continued efforts towards a successful ongoing Master Plan process that will address many of these topics and determine a path forward for our city. We need to engage experts across a range of fields to help envision Waltham's future and guide a planning process that addresses these issues and others. Our goal should be to create new opportunities while preserving the character and charm of the city we call home.