

School Committee Candidates,

Congratulations on submitting your signatures. Apologies for the long note here, purpose is to ensure all candidates are receiving together our full thinking.

With the ballot deadline behind us, we're initiating candidate interviews for Fig City News, Newton's community newspaper. The interviews should be value-add to the community, and yourselves, beyond simply repackaging - in interview format - information that is already available on your websites and in public statements. Alongside this, we've considered both your and our bandwidth to prepare for, conduct, edit, and publish so many interviews; being fair and consistent across 10 candidates in competitive elections (and 13 total); and publishing well in advance of voting starting.

Scheduling and Format

We'd like to conduct 30-minute (approximate) Zoom interviews with each of the the 10 competitive candidates between Aug 11th and Aug 25th, and request we finalize individual time slots prior to Aug 11. Shortly thereafter, the interviews will be published on rolling basis in late Aug/early Sept, with priority to early interviews to avoid overly long gaps. After Aug 27th, we will send interview requests to the remaining 3 unopposed candidates.

The interview will be voice-recorded (candidates are welcome to record on their device as well). Fig City will download the transcript, and make the following edits:

- clean up for stray words/verbal tics, deleting "like", "you know", "umm", etc out of the dialog

- deletion of any:

- (i) hate speech directed at a minority (as generally defined by discrimination laws),

- (ii) unverifiable statements about other people's actions (i.e. "I'm aware of a secret meeting the Mayor had about the NPS budget"),

- (iii) anything that entails guessing at what's inside someone else's brain or their intentions (i.e. we would not print "The Mayor is pro-development"...but rather "Based on her support of Northland, I believe the Mayor has taken pro-development positions")

- (iv) direct personal attacks ("Person X is a terrible human")

- (v) foul language

Fig City News retains final editorial discretion over any deletions, including some that may not exactly conform to above. There are too many what-if's with next-to-zero likelihoods of happening to list here. A candidate discussing confidential information about a minor, etc. However, our goal is to publish as close to a pure version of the transcript as we can. A 30-minute interview implies roughly 3,000 words after clean-up, which takes 15-20 minutes to read on average.

We recognize your participation here is voluntary, but suggest it's a good opportunity to reach a wide audience - including many not active on social media - with a more thorough understanding of your candidacies than possible on a flyer or sound byte.

Please reply to this email with a few schedule options in the dates above, weekends are fine, that work for you, and we'll reply to confirm.

Interview Content

Please see recent interviews with [Chris Brezski](#) and [Barry Greenstein](#) for examples of how the Q&A generally flows. A topic is introduced, an ask is made for specificity on something said, and then a challenge - i.e. what would you tell someone who disagrees with what you just said? - might be added.

We'll generally seek more specifics about your public platforms. As examples, if you're in favor of "excellence", what does that mean? MCAS scores need to go up? If you "support educators", what does that mean? Are there specific items in the current collective bargaining agreement you will suggest changing? And so on. The goal is for readers to come away with depth and nuance of understanding, of both SC issues and your candidacies, that they may not have previously had.

In addition to questions tailored to each candidate, we will ask everyone questions about NPS budgeting, the 2024 Newton teachers strike, and the role of DEI in NPS. These may overlap with issues you've already raised in your campaigns. Our readers expect to us to ask about NPS' most impactful topics. The purpose of previewing these is so each candidate can prepare and - hopefully - refine your views on these subjects from multiple angles, which adds to the quality of the articles. We will also allow a few minutes at the end to ask "Is there anything else we didn't cover you would like to convey?"

Thank you all,