

## Massachusetts Sierra Club Endorsement Municipal Questionnaire 2007

*Our endorsements are based on your record, accomplishments, and answers to this questionnaire. While many of these issues are complex, please feel free to be as brief as possible – 2 or 3 sentences would be ideal. We understand that you may not have a position or sufficient knowledge on some of the more technical questions. You may answer those as "undecided" or "unfamiliar with the issue." There are no litmus test questions, and some of these represent subjects where the Massachusetts Sierra Club has not yet taken a position. If you are an incumbent, please mention your voting record on these as well as other environmental issues.*

### *1. What do you drive? What is your primary method of transportation?*

My primary method of transportation is public transportation followed by walking. When I do drive, I drive a Prius.

### *2. Air Quality: What should be done by your city/town to improve air quality?*

Somerville has just purchased renewable energy credits and four hybrid vehicles to reduce carbon emissions and reduce Somerville's environmental footprint. We need to take more actions like this. In addition, we need to work harder than ever to ensure that the green line extends through Somerville. The Governor has announced in his capital plan that Massachusetts will apply for federal funds to help fund the expansion. However, that process delays the green line two more years until 2016. The extension of the green line through Somerville will improve air quality by opening up a new way for people to travel in and out of Somerville. Currently, people are more likely to drive, adding to the air pollution that results from Interstate 93 running through Somerville.

*3. Recycling: City/town purchasing policies that promote the use of materials characterized as "environmentally friendly" not only serve as models for individuals and businesses, they also help to create markets for these materials. Examples include purchasing products with a high recycled content; supplies and materials containing non-toxic ingredients; sustainably harvested wood products and wood alternatives; power from sources that promote investment in fossil fuel alternatives; converting automobile fleets to more efficient models; retrofitting government buildings with high efficiency water, heating/cooling and energy systems. In what ways will you work to have your city/town apply its economic purchasing power to further reduce pollution and resource use?*

Somerville has taken a necessary step to reducing the City's impact on the environment by establishing the Mayor's Office of Sustainability & Environment. I support all of the steps laid out in the Environmental Strategic Plan of April, 2007. The goals include reducing energy demand at city owned buildings by 20% by 2009, modifying purchasing habits of the City departments to prioritize environmentally responsible products, and considering Alternative Fuel Vehicles and hybrid vehicles when purchasing vehicles for the City. These are all important steps. I would work with the Mayor and the Purchasing Department to set goals within each of the City departments to shift Somerville's purchases to the safest and cleanest products made. This includes paper products, inks, paint, furniture, computers, and vehicles.

*4. Municipal Passenger Vehicles: Should the city/town require that all municipally-funded departments and agencies purchase/lease passenger vehicles that achieve a minimum MPG threshold (eg. -all vehicles must average 35 mpg or better)? Should this be expanded to allow only the purchase of Hybrids and/or ZEVs?*

Somerville does need to aim for averaging 35 miles per gallon for City vehicles. I would like to work with the City to set a time line and benchmarks for achieving an average of 35 miles per gallon or better for the city's fleet of vehicles! While the City should favor buying Hybrids and ZEVs, I do not think we should require that all vehicles purchased must be Hybrids and/or ZEVs.

*5. Parks and Open Space: There are many different funding techniques that can be used to raise money for parks and open space, such as bonding, real estate transfer taxes and user fees. In what ways would you support the acquisition and preservation of open space? Would you support*

*raising additional funds for land acquisition? If so, what amount and by what funding mechanism (i.e., bonding, taxation, contributions)?*

Somerville is more dense than any other city in New England. There are nearly 80,000 people living on 4.1 square miles. While we are fortunate enough to have some wonderful parks and open spaces, we need more. The City should look at all possible ways to raise revenue to acquire land. Because residents need property tax relief, property taxes would not be a likely source of funding for parks. However, we do need to examine other forms of taxation that would be permissible upon passage of Governor Patrick's Municipal Partnership Act, bonding, and grants. In addition, Somerville has properties that are not being used. Whether or not the City sells these properties, we should examine the possibility of creating more open space and parks in these areas.

*6. Cleaning up Lakes, Rivers, Streams, and Coastal Areas: What steps should your city/town take to help clean up lakes, rivers, streams, and coastal areas, i.e. decrease its use of exemptions in EPA-mandated Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) conversion.*

Somerville's state legislators have joined with other legislators whose districts are a part of the Mystic River Watershed to propose legislation to create a Mystic River Water Quality Commission. The commission will identify ways to improve water quality and to make the river safe for fishing and swimming. I support this legislation and will work with the Mystic River Watershed Association to identify steps for Somerville to take in order to clean up the Mystic River. In addition to cleaning up the river, I will look for way to reduce stormwater runoff, including Low Impact Development.

*7. Green Buildings (LEED): To what efficiency standard should your city/town require for all municipal construction/renovation (e.g. libraries, schools)? Should the city require LEED compliance for all new non-municipal construction and major renovations?*

I support the City's goal to reduce energy demand in city owned buildings by at least 20% between fiscal year 2006 and fiscal year 2009. We also need to encourage non-municipal construction to be LEED compliant. However, we need to study the possibility of requiring LEED compliance for all non-municipal construction and major renovations. We will need to work with developers to determine the possibilities and timetable.

*8. Pesticide Use: There is a large body of evidence linking pesticide exposure to a variety of health concerns, including cancer, learning disabilities, Parkinson's Disease, reproductive disorders, and spontaneous abortion. What steps should your city/town take to decrease the use of pesticides to protect children, families, pets, city workers, and wildlife?*

Reducing Somerville's use of pesticides goes along with the purchasing decisions made by Somerville. One of the charges of the Mayor's Office of Sustainability & Environment must include examining our use of pesticides and to propose alternatives. State law restricts pesticide use at schools and requires notice to parents so that children can avoid exposure to chemicals. Somerville can look at applying these principles on a city level by restricting the use of pesticides throughout the City and notifying residents when and where pesticides are used.

*9. Record: Please describe in greater detail your public service record in environmental issues. In particular, we are interested in membership and leadership in environmental organizations, work on environmental campaigns, public positions you have taken, and environmental activities you have initiated or actively supported.*

I have been an environmentalist since I was a child when I became a vegetarian at age twelve. In college, I volunteered and joined the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Public Interest Research Group where I worked on federal legislation to reduce the use of toxic chemicals and on state and local Buy Recycled campaigns. As a college student, I also canvassed for Sierra Club. While in college, I worked with the Bristol Resource Recovery Facility and created a household guide to reducing the use of and properly disposing of hazardous materials. I also worked with the City of New Britain and the Chamber of Commerce to create an office paper recycling cooperative.

Upon graduation, I worked for NJ Student Public Interest Research Group, ecopledge.com, Earthday Resources for Living Green, and Green Century Capital Management. These organizations gave me the opportunity to work on changing consumer habits to reduce our impact on the environment, defend and strengthen governmental policies to reduce pollution and protect our national forests, and reduce the environmental footprint of companies like Dell Computers and Coca Cola. As a shareholder advocate for Green Century Capital Management, I worked with a coalition of environmentally responsible investors to convince Dell to take back their computer waste from consumers.

*10. Please add any additional thoughts and/or reasons the Sierra Club should support your candidacy.*

I am an environmentalist who will take every step possible to reduce the impact on the environment of Somerville residents and businesses. While changes will not happen overnight, I will identify opportunities to make Somerville greener. I will also make Somerville government more open, accessible, and accountable to all concerned residents. This will give people the opportunity to help shape Somerville policy regarding all issues, including our environment.