

# 2020 Newport RI City Council Candidates Questionnaire

TO: 2020 CANDIDATES FOR NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL  
FROM: ALLIANCE FOR A LIVABLE NEWPORT  
SUBJECT: ONLINE COUNCIL CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE  
DATE: July 29, 2020

As ALN has done for every local election since 2008, a City Council candidates' questionnaire has been created as a means of assisting Newport voters in making their election choices. The accompanying Word document contains questions for this year's City Council candidates selected from submissions ALN has received.

At Large candidates are asked to respond to six (6) questions and Ward candidates to the same six (6) plus a seventh (7) Ward-specific question. Candidates are urged to limit their response to each question to no more than five hundred (500) words (unless otherwise specified) and to enter those responses online via Google Forms. Candidates can either enter their responses directly on Google Forms or formulate responses first using the Word document and then transferring those to Google Forms.

Responses must be received no later than the end of the day on August 8, 2020. As soon as possible after that date, all responses will be uploaded at the same time to the ALN website ([www.newportalliance.org](http://www.newportalliance.org)) and made available for public viewing with accompanying notifications to the public through ALN's email subscriber list (approximately 600 subscribers) and through advertising and promotion on local radio, print, and online media.

This year ALN is delighted to be joined with our 2020 Election partners, Newport This Week, The League of Women Voters, The Newport Chamber of Commerce, WADK Radio, Newport Buzz, and Channel 18 Community Television. This collaborative will be conducting live "Zoom" public forums to which you have already been invited.

If you have any questions about the questionnaire or the Google Forms procedures, please send an email to [info@newportalliance.org](mailto:info@newportalliance.org) and you will receive a quick response by email or phone, depending on the nature of the question. Do you still need help with the form or process? Contact Chip Leakas ALN board advisor (401)339-0777 mobile generally 9am-9pm

ALN commends each of you for choosing to run and serve for the Newport City Council and looks forward to hearing from you as to the pressing issues and challenges Newport faces today.

2020 CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES QUESTIONNAIRE  
Questions For All Council Candidates (At Large and Wards)

Email address \*

kimes.william@gmail.com

First Name, Last Name \*

William Kimes

Elected Council Office you are seeking: \*

Council "At Large" ▼

1.) Do you support the November ballot question for Newport to issue more than \$100million of bonds to be used to expand The Pell School and replace Rogers High School? If no, explain your reasons. If yes, what do you say to Newport residents and business owners concerned about the impact on their property taxes? If yes or no, what action(s) would you promote if the ballot question is defeated? \*

I wholeheartedly support the November schools bond question. Without the bond question before our community, I would not be a candidate in the coming Primary. Everyone knows The 100 Million ask is a big one. We all know this. We also should recognize that with fiscal, come related socioeconomic realities. We should set public priorities and make public our determinations when planning for our future for all Newport. No one is able to say with 100% certainty right now what the fiscal health of this community, its tax base, will be even in the near future. Further, since candidates are not all looking at similar data charts for analysis of bond impact to tax structure, the question is even more difficult to answer at this point.

My research, my beliefs on the bond question:

I believe we invest in our future, first, by voting yes to the bond question. Yes to bringing workers, trucks, equipment, jobs all into town. They will in turn support local businesses. This will support the local tax payer.

We should vote yes to invest in the local RI Green/Blue infrastructures. Not only because Brookings says so, but, because this will bring Scientists here to gather and expand our viewpoints. They will engage with and make their proposals for next steps as we recommend the Greenest school, campus design as possible. All this work, of course, expands expertise and experience, marking return on investment for the taxpayer.

A yes vote funds final completion of the Schools infrastructure, PK-Adult ed. The investment rounds out and elevates the modernity of our dated, stressed infrastructure and technical systems. These upgrades modernize and benefit all of Newport.

We vote yes and expand, enhance high quality job training, build out the community center, provide more complete service for the growing ELL population, and make upgrades to digital tech structures while continuing our pivot in the models of education delivery. Support of the bond addresses much for this community, PK-12, beyond 'just RHS and PES.' Money budgeted for building bandaids and upkeep of use beyond design purpose goes toward future investment, instead.

Finally, a vote in support of the bond question is one for the future of our. whole. community. Municipal level, zero funding initiatives impact neediest portions of the community the most. I believe it is time we acknowledge the social impact of these level funding initiatives alongside lauding the financial. The full view, bottom-line decision is this: we choose to invest in infrastructure that supports whole community opportunity or we can cling to structures of the past. There is nothing more indelible than a good learning experience and we will provide that with support of this bond.

However the community decides to move forward on the bond question, I am the most prepared candidate to offer perspective and guidance on matters related to the Newport Public Schools. On council, I will continue to advocate for local parental input and control over school matters.

2.) Traffic and parking problems in Newport persist and seem to be getting worse despite being the subject of countless studies and ad hoc committees. What specific measures (other than forming more committees and conducting more studies) would you promote to alleviate the problems? \*

The first thing we need to do is identify the problem. As the question leads, we have had the studies, reviews and recommendations already largely made. The City seems underway with planning, analysis. Much could be gleaned even from a recent presentation has made to Keep Newport Moving. This transportation master planning and portal work next steps recommendations should be considered primarily in my work on council. The reach of Bike Newport and their experience, beliefs systems are naturally aligned with solutions to traffic and congestion concerns. Feedback from them would impact my decision process.

I have advocated previously in Newport about expanding our local public transportation options. In the feedback and recommendations cycles grew some specific ideas we might explore as a community: two public transport lines, a North-South line and a Beach Loop route both designed for Newporters but open to public. The Gateway space in the basin area projects possibly as the new central transport hub, and hot spot for development considerations, under this concept. I will continue to explore options, partnerships for improvement to the public transport system in this community in council.

This question, too, impacted by waterfront development and the Covid-era uncertainty about our community needs, moving forward.

3.) Newport's economy is closely tied to tourism. The risk of that dependence has been made abundantly clear by the COVID pandemic. What, if any, alternatives do you see to the reliance on tourism? Based on your answer, what specific actions should be taken to further promote tourism and/or what specific actions should be taken to expand the economy beyond tourism? \*

Newport has a history of single sector economic reliances. Diversification is going to be an initial look for in many recommendations. It'd be fair guidance. With all the questions remaining out there about where we head as a country...which path any recommend would be no better than speculation.

As the future unfolds, we can continue to maintain and consider The Newport Brand and image. These are broadly tied to tourism sectors of the local economic structure. When the wharfs and waterfronts are full you can also see the lift in Washington Square, out on Broadway. Council should act in support of the sector and its impact locally with an invisible hand. There does seem a growing number of residents frustrated with the buildup of the waterfront and council should be wary the recent discontent does not make for hasty long term planning error.

The Navy has a long history in the community. It is likely the first place I'd look to shore up and expand partnerships tailored for the City's future. We have shared interest in much property between us. Resolution to working out this shared interest might provide guidance for future planning. Also, prominent in Narragansett Bay, Newport regionally links some of the best and brightest in the Education sector. URI Salve PC RIC et al are all worthy of further civic investment opportunity and partnership development.

Right now, in the historic times of Covid and racial awakenings, the Arts need also be considered. Art has history of connecting people together across boundaries. Artists, their work advances understanding though disparate, historically unequal groups. Art supports the agency, activity of underrepresented communities. Artist groups are the needed resource in building stronger connections among communities, within a community. As a member of council, I'd seek advice as to how we can expand on engagement with our Arts community.

Very specific, next step recommendations, should grow out of community members recommendation, advice from experts, and panels of experts. My interest is always favored to deliberate, public discourse. I tend in my thinking generally toward community, family benefit. My environmentalist leanings will push for clean waterways, plastic free beaches and happy clams.

Blue and green tech, leveraged against the location and might of Narragansett Bay, is where I'd ask the council to focus our future as a community. I support broadly language in the Brookings report, and the recommendation to explore this Blue and Green tech area for growth opportunities. I will personally seek expansion to community STEAM access for Newporters at CCRI. The skills are individually adaptable to enhancements in a variety of careers. I hope the community and council both support that work.

4.) The closure of the Visitors Center was announced recently. What do you propose should be done with the property? \*

First we need to inquire if the space addresses any critical need for City Staff. If it is indicated so, we need to bring this need to the community for conversation. Otherwise, this space provides an opportunity for the City of Newport to model setting both community building and community space as priorities. My first step recommendation would be a public meeting in the actual space. Personally, in the work, I would lean toward teen and youth centered activity use here. Nonetheless, the overarching will of the community should guide and direct the outcome.

5.) A Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) template is being considered as part of the North End Urban Plan (NEUP). What would you like to see included in the CBA template? What measures will you promote and support to put the NEUP on a clear path to implementation?" \*

Based on current, publicly available information, I am in support of expanding the Community Benefit Agreement language concept from the NEUP to the whole community. I would at this time go as far as to say that much of my initial work with City staff will be to seek recommendation for a pathway and proper language that leads to broad adoption of the concept. In practice, my approach will consider 'whole community benefit' in my decision making process and seek out City Staff to address broad community benefits in reports to council. Separately from NEUP, I would ask that the council expand on public comment/input parameters sensibly.

There are advocates, City Staff and other planners working in space presently on the NEUP. I would seek their guidance regarding pitfalls and next steps largely from them. I want voters to know that when they select my name for council they get a personal advocate, but, also, a deliberate team player.

We have seen high levels of participation and access provided by the current council in the dawning age of Covid. Council should work to expand consistency to access and opportunity in this digital age. The City can respond nimbly to the growing interests of our engaged community, I have the experience to and will work with the teams in place to foster that development.

6.) What do you most want Newport voters to know about you? (Limit response to a maximum of 250 words.)

My name is William Kimes. I am qualified to hold seat for City Council in Newport, Rhode Island.

I am proud to call Newport home. I am a husband and hands on father to three: a Sophomore at URI, two at Pell Elementary School. I am a lifelong public education advocate and will continue in that role with your vote of support.

The Boys and Girls Clubs taught me early we can choose our own role models. Starting in High School Civics class as an observer, and following that many years of hobbyist level interest in government, I have seen both effective and ineffective people at work in government. When interest and purpose piqued, I successfully served on various committees by seeking, being guided by consensus. A parliamentarian at heart, I am guided by a firm belief in open deliberation, guided by message not messenger.

My wife and I own a DIY rebuild home, with our eye toward retirement here in 02840. We pray our children are able to afford to keep and maintain the property into their futures as well.

It could be argued more is said than done in municipal government. I'd work for our council to be focused on brilliant outcomes over brilliant debate. I ask for your vote and hope we get to speak in person, about my candidacy, Newport's future.

7a.) Question For Third Ward Council Candidates ONLY ::: Ocean Drive is the scene of traffic problems, speeding, illegal parking, and (primarily at Bretton State Park) loud noise and trash. Although these problems are at their worst during the summer months, they persist to some degree throughout the year. What specific measures would you promote to deal with these problems?

7b.) Question For Second Ward Council Candidates ONLY ::: The intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Memorial Boulevard is the scene of congestion and multiple accidents every summer. The traffic overflow from the north to Memorial is now affecting Red Cross and Gibbs as well. What measures should be adopted to handle this problem?

7c.) Question For First Ward Council Candidates ONLY :: The preferred plan for the Pell Bridge Offramp Realignment is now known. What measures should the City of Newport plan and enact to minimize disruption to the surrounding neighborhoods both during construction and, more importantly, after project completion?

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