

2018 Amherst Election Guides

Election Guides for the State and Town Elections, November 6, 2018



AT-LARGE CANDIDATES	What should Town Council do to develop a diverse and representative pool of qualified candidates for the Planning Committee, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and other committees that it will appoint?	How would you prioritize and fund Amherst's capital project needs? In particular, would you support an override?	Specify one or more initiatives that you will support to increase affordable housing in Amherst.	How would you address the effects of declining school-age populations and charter schools on the Amherst school systems?	How can Amherst become a municipal leader for local efforts to mitigate climate change?
Alisa V. Brewer 5 Fairfield St Select Board member, membership administration alisaforamherst.com	Work together with an adequately resourced Community Participation Officer to actively engage our residents where they are, in order to connect various communities of interest to the discussions and decisions they care about. Residents don't know why they should serve.	It's become very clear that we haven't yet engaged our entire community in a successful conversation, even though the Select Board and Finance Committee have known for some time how the numbers add up. Schools and Fire come first.	Initiatives to meet needs of very low income individuals (e.g., SRO with wrap around services), young workers at the start of their careers, young families, and families that are downsizing but cannot find the right size and cost unit.	The decline will continue if we don't ensure families with children have access to housing. We have to admit that the days of two neighborhood schools each serving over 600 elementary students are long gone, and serve today's children.	As our voters learn about a solid long-term financial plan to address our several major building initiatives, it will not be that difficult to convince people that short-term costs may be a bit higher but that long-term savings are real.
Robert E. Greeney 76 McClellan St single family house, owner occupied bobgreeney.wixsite.com/ mysite	Town Council must ensure that the pool of candidates for these positions is representative of all major constituencies. In cases where the diversity of the board or committee does not reflect the diversity of the town recruitment should be done.	Elementary schools, public works, fire station, libraries prioritized in that order. Fire station and public works may be switched. Roads, sidewalks and general infrastructure are also important. Willing to consider tax override but reasons and town support must be strong	Strong sustained support of public efforts such as the Amherst Affordable Housing Trust Fund, and grassroots non-profit groups such as the Amherst Community Land Trust (ACLT). Additional private, public-private partnerships, and creative solutions from other communities need ongoing investigation.	Charter school funding formula must be fixed to be fair and reasonable. Schools should continue current efforts to address the diversity of student needs. New schools building design or renovations must include ability to adjust to changing enrollment.	Amherst is a leader already. We need to sustain and forward current initiatives, such as, Community Choice Energy and the Zero Energy Municipal Buildings bylaw. We benefit from the work of strong advocacy groups, such as, Mothers Out Front.
Mandi Jo Hanneke 26 Foxglove Ln Mother votehanneke.org	Councilors should actively recruit residents who represent a diverse cross-section of Amherst and a variety of perspectives and opinions to apply for committees. They should directly ask qualified residents to apply and use their networks to do the same.	Amherst's neglect of its major capital infrastructure over the past decades means that several capital projects (schools, library, public works, and fire station) are equally necessary. None of them should be delayed further just to avoid an override.	I support (1) increasing the housing supply across many types of housing, including studio apartments for low-income residents; (2) renovating the East Street School for affordable housing; and (3) developing a 40R district (permits denser development than bylaws allow).	(1) Increase Amherst's housing supply and diversify the tax base to make family housing more affordable; (2) Support the School Committee's elementary language immersion program plan; and (3) Oppose charter school expansions until the state funding formula is fixed.	We need an energy policy that looks at the end-goal, shrinking Amherst's carbon footprint, and establishes a comprehensive plan. To start, this includes the Zero Energy bylaw (recently improved), electric car charging stations, electric Town vehicles, and solar arrays.
Robert B. Kusner 29 Van Meter Dr Professor of mathematics at UMass	Select a broad advisory group, a majority from among the "losing" Council candidates, that: 1) reaches out to politically diverse, under-represented communities; 2) helps mentor possible candidates & assess their qualifications; then 3) recommends them to the Council for appointment....	Renew/rebuild our neighborhood schools; construct a 3rd fire station serving S.Amherst, co-located with a DPW facility for flexibility in equipment maintenance & storage; improve our branch libraries while preserving the Jones; override thoughtfully, provided added value justifies added expense.	Use public (CPA, ...) & private funds to acquire affordability easements on existing neighborhood housing, and to proportionately build new affordable units, especially in transit-servable areas; increase affordability for our existing housing stock through more progressive real-estate taxation.	Adapt & compete: a decade ago we forfeited an English-Mandarin dual-language program; an Español-Ingles program at Fort River offers us a second chance; more broadly, invest in excellent teachers, and improve cooperation with nearby colleges & UMass.	Transportation & electricity production generate our largest greenhouse gas fractions: improve & integrate our bike-pedestrian-public transit systems with regional rail (to Boston, to NYC, ...); increase our buildings' heating & lighting efficiency...; deploy solar on more rooftops & parking lots....
James Pistrang 51 High Point Dr Software developer jimforamherst.org	The Council in conjunction with the Community Outreach Officer must reach out to our diverse and traditionally underserved communities. Actively seeking feedback and listening respectfully is the first step towards developing a diverse pool of qualified candidates.	My priorities are to rebuild or replace our two aging elementary schools and build a South Amherst fire station. Projects can be funded through borrowing and a capital stabilization fund. I support a debt exclusion override to help fund projects.	I support an affordable housing development on the East Street School site, the development of a 40R district within Amherst, and revisions to our Inclusionary Zoning bylaws to ensure that new projects include set-asides for affordable housing.	I support new initiatives such as a dual-language program at an Amherst elementary school. I would also like the Council to work with our state representatives to change the current funding formula for Charter Schools.	Amherst is already a municipal leader with its plastic bag, styrofoam, and zero-energy bylaws and its ongoing acquisitions of watershed, conservation, and agricultural preservation. I support a future expansion of our zero-energy bylaw to include private commercial and residential developments.
Andrew J. Steinberg 17 Hitching Post Rd Retired, former Executive Director of Western Mass. Legal Services andyforamherst.org	The Council can review relevant committee charges to define the purpose, required skills and knowledge, and expectations. The charge should be widely circulated and presented at District and other meetings. New committee members should be provided with training and support.	Consider priority where significant state or other funding is available. Other considerations are public and employee health and safety, and provision of quality cost effective town services. The need for overrides can be reduced with sequencing and careful management.	Pursue the AAHT effort to use the East St. School building and land if feasible. Use the tax incentive program that made North Square possible. Use Community Preservation Act funds to help to build new affordable housing.	Decline of school-age population is partly due to cost of housing for young families. Address housing affordability. Charter schools reduce the student numbers required to provide a variety of course choices and take money from traditional public schools. No expansion.	Work with other municipalities to implement Community Choice Energy; more electric car charging stations and expand town-owned fleet; more solar fields; help home owners install solar and make homes energy efficient; implement zero energy building bylaw; increase recycling and compost.

Information compiled by the League of Women Voters of Amherst. We sincerely regret any errors.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Sample ballots:
amherstma.gov/650/Upcoming-and-Past-Election-Information

Links to Council candidates' web sites and videos:
lwwamherst.org/content/town-council-candidates-links

More links and voter information:
lwwamherst.org/content/november-6-state-and-town-elections



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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