



www.greenneedham.org

19 November 2021

Dear Kevin,

On behalf of Green Needham Collaborative, thank you for stepping forward as a candidate for the Needham Select Board.

Green Needham is a volunteer organization that for 15 years has worked with the Town, as well as with businesses, community groups, and houses of worship, to ensure a sustainable future for Needham. We are submitting questions to both candidates to ask for your thoughts and ideas about sustainability and also to highlight the crucial environmental issues that will be coming up in the near future.

Given the climate crisis, the next 10 years may turn out to be the most important decade of the 21st century. In an effort to avoid the worst effects of climate change, Massachusetts is setting ambitious goals to drastically cut carbon emissions by 2030, on the way to zero net emissions by 2050. For cities and towns, this undertaking will bring not only challenges but also tremendous opportunities as they strive to transition away from fossil fuels in a just and fair way that benefits **all** residents.

I've attached a custom Word document with the questions. **We would appreciate receiving your answers by November 28th.** I invite you to provide your answers between each question, adding as much space as you need. If you prefer, you may send numbered answers back in a separate document or an e-mail. We want this to be as easy as possible for you at a busy time. We will publish the answers – as provided by the candidates – on our website.

For more background, please browse our website -- www.greenneedham.org -- and certainly feel free to use us as an informational resource. And if you have any questions about the questions themselves, don't hesitate to contact me! You can reach me by e-mail at mgreis@comcast.net or by phone at **781 559-4623**.

We look forward to receiving your answers by November 28th.

With our thanks,

Michael Greis
Chair, Green Needham Collaborative



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Sustainability Questions for the December 2021 Needham Select Board Candidates

1 - Although climate change is a global issue, it has very real local impacts (e.g.: severe weather, air quality, and health). Where does our climate crisis rank for you on our Town's priorities? Please share your personal and and/or professional experiences working in this area, if any.

Climate change is at the top of my priorities! We need to do everything in our power to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which are the direct cause of climate change. In my personal life I have advocated for "green lawns" where we use no chemicals. The powerful single-stroke leaf blowers are a problem not just for their high, deafening decibels, but they are major polluters. The two-stroke engine doing a half hour of yard work creates the same amount of hydrocarbons as a Ford F150 driving 3900 miles. These tools are also doing a deep clean of a property which removes important nutrients that otherwise would be going back into the lawn, creating the need for those dangerous chemicals. I am a beekeeper and work to be sure we have the wildflowers and other vegetation needed for bees to pollinate our world, which includes our food supply. I am also a huge supporter of increasing and protecting green spaces in the Town as well as planting trees.

2 - The Commonwealth has adopted aggressive plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In March 2021, the [NEXT-GENERATION ROADMAP FOR MASSACHUSETTS CLIMATE POLICY](#) codified a roadmap for the Commonwealth to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, with 2030 and 2040 targets along the way. In June, Green Needham requested that **the Select Board commission the creation of a Climate Action Plan for the Town**. Over the summer, the creation of a Climate Action plan was added to the Board's goals for this coming year. As a new Select Board member, how will you prioritize and support this work?

I am thrilled that the Commonwealth has taken this very important and critical step to set an example for towns/cities to move to net zero emissions. Needham has to do its part to reach this goal, and the Climate Action Plan being developed will do just that. The plan will look at energy use in town by sector (heat/cooling, transportation, etc.) and find creative ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions here in Town. I would love to be a part of the team working on developing this plan, which I believe will include powering, heating and cooling any new municipal buildings using only electricity, and powering that electric power with solar and other renewable sources of energy where possible. My hope is that the plan will include a path forward for all Town vehicles to be all-electric. I realize that developing and implementing an effective Climate Action Plan will still be a challenge in Needham. The challenge will be both in allocating Town resources which will face the hurdle of a very fiscally conservative approach to resource allocation, but also in the need to overcome the inherent conflict between private interest and the greater good. That means that the Select Board must be a vocal and responsive advocate for the plan and the allocation of resources necessary to make it effective,

3 - Needham has an impressive capital plan for both renovating existing buildings and constructing new ones. Although the new Sunita Williams School has solar photovoltaic panels, those were added due to favorable construction costs - they were not incorporated into the initial design. Likewise, energy efficiency is part of the design for the new Public Safety buildings, but they are not designed to be "green buildings."



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A: Would you support requiring that solar PV be incorporated into the design for, and be installed on, all new municipal buildings where technically feasible?

Absolutely! From the outset of any new project, the goal and plan should be to build a net-zero energy building, or even net positive energy building if possible. This means that design plans need to start with that premise and with architects that are familiar with designing buildings that are net zero energy buildings. We should also push to update code for residential buildings.

The Select Board and PPBC must collaborate to assure that climate imperatives in all Town building projects are designed at the onset.

B: Would you support a net zero energy use target for new municipal buildings?

Again, absolutely! As I stated above, the goal for any new upcoming project should be for it to be built as a net zero energy building, and the initial design plans must reflect that. This is also possible when renovating buildings, with some changes to plans, and could become relevant for the Emery Grover project. The Town already has experience with geothermal heating and cooling, and we should replicate its success.

4 - As the Town works to cut carbon emissions and help Needham residents adapt to the damaging effects of climate change, what can the Select Board do to ensure that the process is fair and benefits all residents regardless of income, race, or ethnicity?

As with all public policy, we need to raise the questions of effect and equity whenever we design and implement requirements and public action. These questions need explicitly to be discussed in advance. We need to always be aware of the potential of unintended consequences, and that early adoption should benefit those that can benefit the most.

5 - Please address anything else you'd like to include or let voters know how your service as a Select Board member would further sustainable practices in the Town of Needham.

Select Board members lead relatively visible lives. The public soon learns where you live and what your visible actions and values are. I live my values, and I believe sustainability has to be at the top of everyone's list.

Please return your answers to the questions to Michael Greis (mgreis@comcast.net) by **November 28th, 2021**. You may type your answers in this document, create your own document, or provide the (numbered) answers in the body of an e-mail. If you have any questions, please reach out to Michael by e-mail at mgreis@comcast.net or by phone at **781 559-4623**.