

**Newtonville Area Council (NAC)  
 Village Center Rezoning Proposal  
 Ward 2 City Council Candidate Responses**

Three candidates have successfully reached the requirements to appear on the ballot for the September 12, 2023 primary election. We encourage every voter in Ward 2 to visit the website for each candidate and to view debates. Information regarding the debate including specific time for the Ward 2 debate will be available on the [NAC Website](#) and the [NAC LinkTree](#).

In alphabetical order the candidates are:

- [Dan Gaynor](#), a 20+ Year Resident of Newton. Mr. Gaynor lives in the Newtonville catchment.
- [David Micley](#), a 20+ Year Resident of Newton. Mr. Micley does not live in the Newtonville catchment. (His road of residence is one of the roads ‘split’ by the catchment zone)

Each of the City Council Candidates has been given the opportunity to provide their answers to the Newtonville Area Council Village Center Rezoning Survey. The following are their responses to the questions that are most salient to the issue of Village Center Rezoning and the Survey itself. The questions as well as the candidate responses are outlined below.

**Transit & Parking Questions:**

(Q. 7 & 8) Candidates were asked: *What is the single PRIMARY mode of transit they use and all SECONDARY modes of transit they use when visiting the Newtonville Village center, meaning the Walnut/Washington/Austin Street retail, office locations and dining establishments.*

(Q. 9) They were also asked that if they drive, to identify what parking areas they use

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Primary Mode</b>	<b>Secondary Modes</b>	<b>Parking Location(s)</b>
Dan Gaynor	Walk	Drive Bike	Metered parking on Austin Street Metered spots on the street Non-metered spots on the street
David Micley	Bike	Drive	Metered parking on Austin Street Metered spots on the street Non-metered spots on the street Retail parking lots

(Q. 15) Candidates were asked: *What minimum amount of parking should be required for new multi-unit housing? Select One.*

Candidate	Response
Dan Gaynor	The amount of parking required depends on the type of building where it is situated, the density of neighboring units, and the roads surrounding it. In reality when developers sell or rent units to residents - and the vast majority will own cars - it is only sensible that the developers will offer parking. I support the new VCOD plan, which requires screening for parking and dumpsters as well as prohibits parking in front of buildings. At the same time, nearly 50% of Newton's current parking inventory remains vacant. While minimum parking requirements are sensible for our largest developments, to facilitate a flexible approach to development that matches our community's priorities, our City does not need to require a minimum amount of parking for all multi-unit housing.
David Micley	1 Space/Unit

**Village Center Rezoning Specific Questions:**

(Q. 10) To the question "On a scale of 1-5, how informed are you about the ZAP Village Center Rezoning proposal?" question, **every candidate scored themselves at a 5 - Highly Informed.**

(Q. 11) Candidates were asked: *Should Newton allow new developments to be built By Right (i.e. without obtaining Special Permit) up to a 30,000 sq. foot lot per the proposed new zoning? Presently a permit is required on multi-families beyond 2 units.*

Candidate	Response
Dan Gaynor	Yes
David Micley	No

Candidates were asked about building height maximums for residences that do not and those that do include Inclusionary (affordable) Units.

(Q. 12) Candidates were asked: *For buildings that do not include the Affordable Housing "Bonus" floor provision, what building height do you think the maximum allowed in Newtonville's Village Center*

Q. 12 No Bonus Heights	Peter Bruce+	Dan Gaynor*	David Micley
Walnut Street	3 (aka "2.5 stories")		3 (aka "2.5 stories")
Washington Street	4 (aka "2.5 stories")		4 (aka "2.5 stories")
Austin Street	3 (aka "2.5 stories")		3 (aka "2.5 stories")

\*Candidate Gaynor provided the following narrative response to Q. 12: *The proposed overlay district restricts heights by the proximity of a building to the center of the zoning “circle”. As such, a more accurate phrasing of this question would be “What building height do you think should be the maximum allowed in this specific section of Newtonville’s Village Center?”*

*As an example the proposed zoning redesign for Newtonville states that the intersection of Walnut St. and Washington Park is VC2 (3.5 stories max) whereas the next intersection of Walnut Street and Madison Avenue is VC3 (4.5 stories Max). I support the proposed zoning plan for Newtonville that stratifies the maximum height of buildings depending on its proximity to the center of the “circle” - the Commuter Rail station. This means that the maximum By-Right height is 4.5 stories in the VCOD plan, which I support.*

(Q. 13) Candidates were asked: *Currently Newton Inclusionary Zoning Generally requires a range of 15 to 20% of housing units to be Affordable (\$91,150/annual household income for a family of 4 at 65% AMI). **There is a proposal that permits a “Bonus” floor increase in building height and footprint while stipulating an increase in the percentage of Affordable units.** Which combination of height and Affordability do you prefer?*

<b>Q 13 Affordable/Bonus Heights</b>	<b>Peter Bruce++</b>	<b>Dan Gaynor**</b>	<b>David Micley</b>
Walnut Street	3 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable		3 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable
Washington Street	4 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable		4 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable
Austin Street	3 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable		3 (aka “2.5 stories”) 15-20% Affordable

\*\* Candidate Gaynor provided the following narrative response to Q. 13: *As Newton needs to expand its array of housing options for residents at all stages of life - from young families to senior citizens - it is important to consider additional context that is not included in this question. In the proposed VCOD, any residential development larger than 6 units would be required to provide from 15% to 20% of the units for permanently affordable housing.*

*This is important in a city where the average price for newly-constructed units is \$1.6 million, as increasing access to lower-priced housing options will ensure families can both grow in Newton and age in place.*

*However the question below is written in a misleading way. The right way to phrase would be, “Which combination of height and affordability do you prefer in which location of the following street?”*

*In other words, under the proposed VCOD, different parts of the same street would have different height restrictions. Put simply, not all parts of, say, Walnut Street will allow for a 6.5 story building. I support the maximum height of 5.5 stories with affordability incentives that would require 25% of the units to be offered at affordable rents.*

(Q. 16): Candidates were asked: *Please use this space to provide us with your thoughts on the ZAP Village Center Rezoning proposals and potential changes.*

**Dan Gaynor:** *As City Councilor, I will hold developers accountable for protecting our priorities and ensure our villages are more walkable, affordable, and accessible - at any age or income.*

*Sustainability is a core component of that effort. I'll work to embrace a greener future for Newton by widening sidewalks, protecting historic trees, enhancing energy efficiency, reducing the use of fossil fuels, and ensuring new buildings incorporate clean tech. That also includes maintaining our critical infrastructure - starting by accelerating repairs to pot-holed roads that clog traffic, slow commutes, and enganger commuters.*

**David Micley:** *The ZAP Village Center Rezoning proposal should be designed in a way that meets but does not materially exceed the baseline requirements of the MBTA Communities Act. Zoning for an additional 8,330 units as required by the MBTA Communities Act is a meaningful change that we need to do to be in compliance with state law and also has the potential to do good for Newton in terms of increasing our housing supply in a way that serves diverse people at different life stages and of different socio-economic backgrounds. However, it is important to take steps forward in moderation and going meaningfully beyond what's required (as currently proposed) has potential risks and downsides we need to more carefully consider and analyze before pursuing. In addition, I think we are giving up too much power and leverage to developers by allowing them to build without a Special permit up to 30,000 sq. feet.*

The Newtonville Area Council thanks the Candidates for taking the time to complete the survey and provide their thoughts. Once again, we encourage every voter in Ward 2 to visit the website for each candidate and to view debates. Information regarding the debate including specific time for the Ward 2 debate will be available on the [NAC Website](#) and the [NAC LinkTree](#).