

WLT Green Forum - At-large Candidates

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SPEAKERS

Stephen Duffy, Tom Stanley, Colleen Bradley-MacArthur, Tim King, George Darcy, Emma Tzioumis, Dan Berlin, Emily Saperia

Dan Berlin 00:19

Hi, everyone and thank you for joining us tonight for the Waltham Land Trust Green Possibilities Forum for city council candidates. As you may know, the Waltham Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that serves to protect and maintain Waltham green spaces, and to advocate for conservation concerns in the city. We have over 350 members, and 250 stewards who help with trail maintenance and invasive plant removal. We're excited to host this forum to provide candidates with an opportunity to share their views about environmental topics with the voting public. Though we tried to schedule dates that worked for all candidates, not all could make it and some will be submitting their written responses which we'll post to our website along with the forum videos. My name is Dan Berlin, and I'll be tonight's moderator. I'm the Board Chair of the Land Trust, proprietor of Watch City Research, and a PhD student at Bentley. Finally, it's important for us to mention that the Waltham Land Trust is a nonpartisan organization, which has organized these forums to provide Waltham voters with an opportunity to hear from candidates about green issues. The Waltham Land Trust does not and will not endorse candidates for political office. Membership in the in the Land Trust or participation in this forum or any other events hosted by the Land Trust is not an endorsement of any candidate. And tonight's participants, we have Colleen Bradley-MacArthur, George Darcy, Stephen Duffy, Tim King, Emily Saperia, and Emma Tzioumis. And Tom Stanley may be joining us a little bit. And with that, we'll do introductions. This will be the order for our introductions and for our first question. And with that, I will turn it over to Tim to introduce... and if the rest of the candidates can turn their cameras off and stay on mute while the other candidates are speaking please. Tim, to you.

Tim King 02:56

Thank you. Yeah. My name is Tim King, and I am running for Counselor At-large. I want to thank the Waltham Land Trust Green Possibilities Forum for inviting me and for the opportunity to answer questions that may help you understand my candidacy. I am from Waltham, attended Waltham public schools. I worked a 31 year public safety career for the city and have been involved in many community and sports programs throughout my lifetime here. I am an

attorney who practices primarily in the labor field, and who has done pro bono work for community members. Throughout my life, we have enjoyed the offerings of this city. We have had summer camps at Forest Grove and Prospect Hill, we played baseball at Nipper Maher Park. As I get older, we lived right behind Prospect Hill Park where we would go walking through the trails. I have ridden my bike on the trails behind Kennedy Middle School and use the Riverwalk to commute to Boston. Now with the soon to be opening new rail trail, there'll be even more options for those who want to be outdoors. I want to make sure we maintain our inventory of open space and our places to recreate. Recreation is a key element to the success of any community as this conservation and doing our part to help our environment.

Dan Berlin 04:10

Great. Thank you, Tim. Turn it over to Colleen Bradley-MacArthur.

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 04:16

Thank you so much, Dan. I'm Colleen Bradley-MacArthur and I'm currently your At-large city councilor here in Waltham, and I have had the privilege of serving you for the last year and a half. And one of the things that I am most proud of, aside from being a city councilor is being a Hardy Pond land steward. Hardy Pond is just down the road from my house and during the pandemic that was our spot to spend time, my family and I. We happened to come upon some folks who were Waltham Land Trust stewards and it opened up a whole new world for me volunteering with the Land Trust. I want to take a moment of my time to say thank you to all of the stewards at the Waltham Land Trust. I know they work tirelessly, and on a volunteer basis, to provide work to remove invasives and their expertise. Again, I'm Colleen Bradley-MacArthur and I'm running for re-election to be your next At-large city councilor and I thank the Land Trust for hosting this very important forum.

Dan Berlin 05:38

Thank you, Colleen. Next, Steven Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 05:44

Thank you, Dan. Great to meet you a few weeks ago and I want to say thank you to you for hosting this and for everyone participating here. It's very kind of everyone to take their time in the evening and I know everyone's busy to participate in this. For everyone, my name is Steven Duffy and I'm a candidate for Counselor At-large. I was raised in Waltham, and I've lived in Waltham for the last 50 years. I grew up in the Bleachery, ran around Lowell Field, a newly renovated Lowell Field, The Gore Estate, back when they used to grow corn on the Gore Estate, and up and down the Charles River down by what at the time was Zayre's, which is now Shaw's. Along with my wife of 28 years, we purchased our first house in South Side, and we spent a lot of time in the South Side, walking the river, walking the Charles River in the South Side. I'm a recently retired educator and Principal in the Waltham public schools, dedicated the

last 32 years of my life to the city. And I look forward to continuing this lifelong service for Waltham in the city council. I feel as though I have strong knowledge, strong passion for the city, and hope to continue my service for the city in the City Council. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 07:36

Next up, Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 07:39

All right. So hi, everybody. My name is Emma Tzioumis. And I'll just echo my thanks to the Waltham Land Trust for giving me and other candidates the opportunity to share our vision for environmental and conservation issues with residents of Waltham. My background is in public health, and planetary health is public health. I'm committed to prioritizing ways to make our community climate resilient so that my kids and their generation can continue to have a safe and healthy place to live. Some ways I think we can do that are by encouraging transportation mode shifts away from personal motor vehicles, protecting our open spaces, including our urban farms, increasing our urban tree canopy, incorporating native plants in our cityscape, and updating our building codes to higher efficiency standards. I applied for and earn the endorsement of the Sierra Club of Massachusetts, and in full transparency I applied for and did not get the Environmental League of Massachusetts endorsement. I'm not an expert in environmental issues and as a public health professional, I know the value of our content experts. So I welcome the opportunity to learn from and work with the Waltham Land Trust moving forward. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 08:47

Thank you very much. And actually, Mr. Stanley has joined us so actually, I'll turn it to you for introductions.

Tom Stanley 08:57

Sure. Can you hear me?

Dan Berlin 08:59

Yes, sir.

Tom Stanley 09:00

Can you hear my dog?

Dan Berlin 09:00

Dan Berlin 09:02

Yes.

Tom Stanley 09:03

Sorry. Well, thank you all very much for having the forum tonight. I greatly appreciate all the work of the Waltham Land Trust and can share your commitment to protect and preserve open space in our city. I'm most proud of the work that we've done together to purchase the Fernald and UMass properties and protect those properties from overdevelopment. I welcome this opportunity to discuss ways to expand open space and safeguard our wetlands and wildlife. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 09:43

Great, thank you. And if you can just turn your video off while other people are speaking please. And next up, Emily Saperia.

Emily Saperia 09:59

Hello, my name is Emily Saperia and I'm running for city council at-large. I'm a gardener, micro-business owner, and proud Waltham renter. I earned my Master of Science in Food and Nutrition from Framingham State University and have worked both in clinical nutrition and agriculture since graduating. I'm proud to have earned the Sierra Club's endorsement. One of the things that drew me to Waltham when I moved here almost 10 years ago was our impressive green space, trails, community organizations including Waltham Fields Community Farm, where I volunteer on Fridays at the farm stand and have previously worked in the fields. I'm asking for one of your six votes, because we need more representatives on city council that see Waltham green gems and our wildlife as part of our Waltham family. I know that includes a lot of us here. So that's you, that's me, and, let's grow. Thank you so much to the Waltham Land Trust for facilitating this forum.

Dan Berlin 10:55

Thank you very much. Next up, George Darcy.

George Darcy 11:05

Great, thank you very much, Dan. My name is George Darcy and I'm running for Councilor At-large this year. I attended the Waltham public school system, and later Boston University where I received a degree in Computer Engineering. I do software consulting right now. I have been elected city councilor from 2004 to present representing Ward three in North Waltham. I was the co-founder of the Waltham Land Trust, but for full disclosure, I am no longer on the Board of Directors. I have served also in Healthy Waltham, and I was the former chair of the Waltham Conservation Commission. Due to the five hospitals in North Waltham, that are now closed, Waltham was in the enviable position to preserve these very large undeveloped parcels. I'm

very proud to say that during my tenure on the council, I've been the primary sponsor for nine land acquisitions in Waltham, representing 278 acres. And I also have been the primary sponsor for six rezonings from residential to conservation slash recreation totaling 114 acres. These actions have protected these beautiful parcels for our children and our grandchildren to enjoy in perpetuity. I thank you for the holding this forum. And I look forward to questions tonight.

Dan Berlin 12:30

Great, thank you. Okay, we will have the same order for question one, which I will only read each question once for each each of the five questions. But here's question one. In the coming years, the MWRA will be digging a new tunnel through Waltham, and building infrastructure at Lawrence meadow, the property owned by the University of Massachusetts on Beaver Street. What are the opportunities to use the \$2 million set aside for the cleanup of Lawrence Meadow, and to ensure this important wetlands area is protected, cleaned up, and made useful to the public in the future? And we will start with Mr. King.

Tim King 13:16

Dan, thank you for this question. This is one that I've spent some time researching and I've discovered very little in the public domain. In reading MWRA minutes regarding the redundancy tunnel I did learn that the project manager is a former colleague of mine from the Mass Department of Transportation, Miss Kathy Murtagh. Which this truly gave me a renewed sense of confidence in the project as I know Miss Murtagh's dedication and capabilities in this realm. As far as the \$2 million set aside, since it is a set aside, I'm unsure that the city would actually be controlling these funds. Since UMass still owns the property at Lawrence Meadow and potentially controls those set aside funds, it seems like there's an opportunity for the city to engage all stakeholders in discussions as to the proper use of those funds in cleaning up that parcel. Hopefully working towards a goal of issuing a clean bill of health. The city should be an active participant in the future of that land as it abuts the Fernald property and it's also an active wetlands in our community. Once clean, there could be a future possibility of adding it to the city's inventory of open space. An inventory that is unlike many cities of our size and population. I have been a strong supporter of our open space initiatives, not only for the positive environmental impacts, but for the aesthetic and less congested feel from which the city benefits. Much of this of course depends on environmental studies that would have had to be done and an estimate of expected costs with the cleanup to determine best uses for the set aside funds.

Dan Berlin 14:48

Great, thank you very much. Next up, Colleen Bradley-MacArthur

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 14:59

Thank you so much for this question, Dan. Today I had the occasion to speak with Carmine de Maria, he's the Community Relations Coordinator for the MWRA, just to get a better understanding of some recent survey results that were put out by the MWRA to the citizens of

understanding of some recent survey results that were put out by the MWRA to the citizens of Waltham, and this survey went through the end of September. So we are awaiting the results of that. And that's critical, because that's citizen input. That's our citizens here in Waltham putting their comments and concerns about a project like this. From reading the slide deck and presentation in May of this year from the MWRA, I was encouraged to see that the site right now that they're looking at for Lawrence Meadow is now the preferred space, there was an opportunity to move this project somewhere else that would have had a larger impact. And from what I understand from the Land Trust, everyone seems to understand that this is a preferred space, the Lawrence Meadow area. This tunnel is critical to our MWRA infrastructure, so we have to do this project, and I am glad that we're doing this project. However, I also believe that once this project is done, the \$2 million should be set aside for cleanup, and it should be protected. We need to rebuild some trust over the years, some broken trust, where the city has not always been relied upon to truly protect these areas and this critical, critical wetland area to wildlife crossings and continue to our beloved farm space across the street. So I support setting that money aside and also to protect that area. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 17:15

Great, thank you. Same question. Steven Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 17:23

Thank you for the question. And, you know, someone had mentioned that during the pandemic they had done some walking and developed a greater appreciation for certain areas, open spaces within the city and that was certainly the case with me and my family because we live near Lawrence Meadow, and the great space that is Waltham Fields, Lawrence Meadow, Cedar Hill. It absolutely 100% needs to be preserved. If the project is essential to the MWRA, I think it's important for the city to work with the MWRA to ensure that the cleanup of Lawrence Meadow is done in a manner that still protects that wetland because it is so important and to be very honest with you we saw a ton of wildlife there during the pandemic running through the Beaver Street, Waverley Oaks Road area. So I do support the Lawrence Meadow and in the effective management and cleanup of the space. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 18:36

Thank you. Next up Tom Stanley. Mr. Stanley, if you could unmute yourself and turn on your video.

Tom Stanley 18:56

Thank you very much. Well, oversight and accountability are the key. The MWRA met with the city council back in 2021 presented a detailed plan for this tunnel project in the various stages, which spans over many, many years into 2037. It's incumbent upon the city to be very vigilant in its oversight and in each stage and to hold the MWRA accountable for its stated objective to leave each site cleaned up and available for future use. I will say that, you know, the whole purpose of the MWRA is to, you know, clean our environment and waterways. So I don't have too many concerns that the MWRA will not be a cooperative partner on this regard. And I have

to say the city of Waltham has done tremendous amount of work, you know, in my, I don't know, 22 years or so I've been being involved in city and state government. I've been involved in every single land preservation and protection of open space. And Waltham has been very aggressive in this regard. And I would certainly put our city up compared up to any other community in the greater Boston area. And that's never done alone by elected officials. But, you know, our mayor and city council and advocacy groups like the Waltham Land Trust, have worked together through the years, to ensure that whenever we have the opportunity that we safeguard these lands and these treasured open spaces. Like everyone else, I gained a new awareness when the pandemic started, and I was out in the, in the Western Greenway pretty much every single day with a pandemic puppy, and I haven't stopped since. I love it and it's a very important part of the City of Waltham. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 21:16

Thank you. Next up, Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 21:22

All right, so as Mr. King mentioned, this topic was quite challenging to research. You all started us off on a good question here. And it really actually highlights one of my priorities regarding transparency and communication from the city. It shouldn't be this hard to learn about a major project in our city, but I'll leave that topic for a different time. So for others who may not have spent hours over the past few days trying to learn about this project, the MWRA is planning the Metropolitan Water Tunnel Program, which is going to provide water supply redundancy to MWRA communities across eastern Massachusetts including Waltham. This tunnel program is going to involve extensive pipe work and repair to ensure again, this water supply redundancy with a completion date for the whole project of 2040. It's currently in the preliminary design and review phase. And so this particular parcel of land at 225 Beaver Street, also known as Lawrence Meadow, is going to be the endpoint for the North tunnel. And this land is currently owned by UMass, not the city. So I clearly have a lot more to learn about this particular topic. And I commit to building relationships across city departments and community partners like Waltham Land Trust and residents to work to protect this land after the MWRA work is completed. This \$2 million mentioned should be used obviously to prioritize the environmental cleanup of these important wetlands and then further protect this land as open space moving forward. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 22:56

Thank you. Next up, Emily's Saperia.

Emily Saperia 23:05

I'd like to look back just a little bit for context. I'd like to note that this \$2 million was set aside as part of the agreement of the city's purchase of 240 beaver street from UMass, the city didn't want to purchase that land north of Beaver Street due to what they referred to as environmental issues. I understand those issues to be fly ash contamination remaining from

agricultural experiments conducted by UMass. I'm not sure we did the right thing by saying "Hey, we didn't do the dumping, so not our fault, but throw us some money and we'll do what we can." But we need to do the right thing now and put that \$2 million towards remediation and restoration. We can learn a great deal about remediating agriculture adjacent and open space including the meadows from neighboring municipalities as seemingly as different as Weston. Bear with me, the town of Weston bought a 61 and a half acre parcel of land from Harvard University in 2015. The Case Estates. The land sits just across from the entrance to the Land's Sake Farm, a farm similar in mission and model to Waltham Fields Community Farm. That municipality has done the work of remediating the soil and now it's safe, open, and lovely for all to enjoy. They also effectively communicated that process to the town's people throughout. We've been ignoring the fly ash problem at Lawrence Meadow for too long. Though we chose not to purchase that land as part of the 240 Beaver Street sale, we need to now put the resources we did gain from the sale towards research, remediation, and restoration. And while we're at it, we need to continually communicate the process to the public. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 24:38

Thank you. And next up George Darcy.

George Darcy 24:47

Great, thank you very much, Dan. Yes, concerning the redundant tunnel, it's going to be 400 feet deep running from Weston town line to Beaver Street. There'll be 6 years of removal of material with 60 trucks per day. I want to state that we have to thank the estate of Cornelia Warren who donated the 58 acres of land in 1922 to the Massachusetts College of Agriculture. 28 acres resides on the South Side, which the city of Waltham purchased, and the remainder, the 30 acres on the north side is still owned by the University of Massachusetts. Lawrence Meadow was a pond 100 years ago, which accumulated stormwater from Owl Hill at Fernald, from Clematis Brook, a perennial stream, which drains from Pigeon Hill and Eastview Park. And it provides a very important drainage base and to help prevent the flooding that we all know about at the intersection of Linden Street and Waverly Oaks Road. The contamination includes fly ash to the east of the driveway, physical trash and glass to the east of the house, hydrocarbons from many Fernald power plant spills, and more detailed site evaluations will have to be done. As to the public use and amenities, probably the most important is to have a pathway and a natural pathway through the parcel in order to connect the 7.2 mile Western Greenway on the north side of Trapelo to the Central Mass Rail Trail, through Fernald, through the Lawrence Meadow and through the UMass Field Station. That is the ultimate thing that I think that we should be pushing forward. Thank you very much.

Dan Berlin 26:32

Thank you. Okay, thank you to our candidates for the first question. We are going to move onto question two now. Very few of the open spaces in Waltham are protected from future development. What is your plan for ensuring that land designated as open public open space, such as land purchased with CPA funds, is permanently protected from future development, such as with a conservation restriction. And we will first turn to George Darcy.

George Darcy 27:10

Great, thank you, Dan. So just to preface, I'm not going to be speaking about any specific conservation restrictions that are currently before the city council. That being said, under state law, all parcels purchased with CPA funds must have conservation restrictions applied. Open Space parcels not purchased with CPA funds that have high ecological value could also have conservation restrictions applied. And three, there are several parcels of open space recently acquired by the city of Waltham that are not zoned conservation, slash recreation. I'll give two in particular, the five acre parcel of land adjacent to Prospect Hill and behind Willard Street and Prospect Hill Road that the city recently acquired, that is zoned residents A2-RA2, and that parcel should be zoned Conservation Recreation to go along with the Prospect Hill Park. The second parcel is the 28, sorry, the 20 acre, Berry Park, to the south of Prospect Hill, and to the west of Lunda St. Containing most notably a very, very large vernal pool, which serves as a nursery to the many obligate species that exist at the Prospect Hill Park. That parcel should also be rezoned from residence A2 to conservation, slash recreation. So those are three examples that I'd like to provide tonight. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 28:43

Great, thank you. I'll turn now to Emily Saperia.

Emily Saperia 28:53

So again, for context, I'd like to provide a little background on issuance of conservation restrictions over the past few years, as I understand it. In a memorandum to city council in April 2020 regarding 240 Beaver Street, the mayor announced that the city and UMass had reached an agreement for the purchase of the land, but the Mayor did not request a conservation restriction for 240 Beaver Street until April of this year. Request to file multiple conservation restrictions, including for 240 Beaver Street did appear on last night's docket so they have come through. Over the course of the Summer, curiosity got the better of me, so I started doing a little digging and wanted to find out if there was a timeframe during which conservation restrictions needed to be issued, etc. What I learned and I would love to be corrected if I'm wrong, is that it seems that there's no timeframe during which conservation restrictions must be issued. And I was pressed to find information on whether conserved land must be conservation restricted. So that's something that I would like to see formalized as a city councilor. I'd resolve to work with the Mayor, City Council on the Conservation Commission, to require that the conservation restrictions are issued on all conserved lands if that's not already the case, and facilitate those conservation restrictions much more efficiently. We've got a great Conservation Commission here in Waltham, and we need to better utilize their experience and expertise to manage Waltham's conservation land. They can do that if they have care, custody, and control of conservation land via the conservation restrictions. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 30:33

Thank you. Next up, Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 30:45

Hi, sorry, I couldn't find the unmute button. So I think we can all agree that we need to protect our open space to be climate resilient, right. And with the housing crisis and strategies like the MBTA Communities Act, which is going to push us to rezone areas of Waltham, it's even more important that we ensure that our open space is protected from future development. As a few others have mentioned. There is already a state law on the books that requires cities and towns to place this conservation restriction on land purchased with CPA funds. However, as Emily was saying, current CPA legislation doesn't mandate a specific time requirement for completing this conservation restriction. So if I understand correctly, the issue really deals with the speed and efficiency with which we as a city are enacting the conservation restrictions. I wasn't able to watch last night's recording it but I did see on last night's city council agenda that the Mayor did introduce conservation restrictions for nine parcels. I skimmed through them and the oldest parcel that was listed last night was purchased in 2009, and six were purchased before 2020. So clearly, we need to shorten the timeframe between the purchase and placing of the conservation restriction. Given that two of the parcels from last night that had conservation restrictions introduced were purchased within the past year, two years seems like a more than sufficient timeframe to be mandating that we place these conservation restrictions on our purchases. Since the law governing conservation restrictions is a state law, I have more work to do to learn how municipalities can help regulate this process, perhaps through work through our conservation commission or through city council passing an ordinance. But it is clear that we need to prioritize shortening the timeframe of our conservation restrictions. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 32:47

Next up, Tom Stanley. And Mr. Stanley, are you available? Mr. Stanley, if you could unmute yourself and turn on your video to respond.

Tom Stanley 33:22

Okay.

Dan Berlin 33:24

Yep, we can hear you.

Tom Stanley 33:25

All right. Yeah. It wasn't me on my end. But now I can't turn the video on it says that the host is disabled or something, whatever. Okay, sorry. Thank you very much. Sorry for the delay. No, again, I've already said it, but protecting open spaces is very important in the City of Waltham. And, you know, it's important to have a balance between housing, business development, and open space preservation. Obviously, Waltham is an older city, and there's been lots of business development. We need more housing, that's a different subject. But wherever we can, we need to protect open space. Obviously, you have to look at each case individually because there are other needs for a municipality. But if you look at my record, during the time I've been on the

council and in the state legislature, I've worked hard to protect open space as much as possible. Going back as the old to the line along the border of Lexington and Waltham. Fought, fought hard to get that land moved from DCAM to DCR. And for the city of Waltham to be able to purchase it. So, there are a number of, as has been mentioned, items before the city council that I can't opine just yet, legally or whether it'd be in support or not supportive. But once we have those meetings, I am able to do so. And I anticipate very near future that Waltham will be restricting use on the open space, in the very near future. We have 10 or 12 dozen parcels that are before the council right now. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 35:45

Thank you and to Steven Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 35:53

Great, thank you. You know, I've made it clear within my campaign that I support preserving open spaces here in Waltham. And I think that any opportunity that the city has to purchase open space in the city should be done. The city has the funds to do so and it should happen. I do think that though, on individual basis, as far as protecting all open space from for future development, having conservation restriction should be on an individual basis. Now the land, that's abutting the Prospect Hill, I do think should have conservation restrictions. So I fully support the purchase of open space, I fully support the city looking at each parcel of land that is purchased individually, and deciding whether or not those which is best for the city, what would be best with implementing a conservation restriction. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 36:58

Thank you. Next, I'll turn it to Colleen Bradley-MacArthur.

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 37:12

Thank you, Dan. And as was mentioned, by some other folks on this, at last night's city council we did receive a number of conservation restriction requests from the Mayor. And I won't be talking about any of the specifics. But I will say I've been looking into the process of putting the legalities together. And as much as I'm interested in the process, I'm interested more in trust, and planning, which are two things that have not happened within this process. And I'd also like to echo Emily and Emma's comments about efficiency and expediency of getting these requests on paper and solidified. So, you know, when we look at the website, currently, our city website, we have all the conservation restrictions, they're there for anyone to read, anyone can go on to the website and read these. And that should not be the bare minimum of transparency. So to give you some context, you know, we need to act on these sooner. Because right now, and since these have been issued, it's been a mystery. And I think leaving us vulnerable to any kind of aggressive development and leaving people in a lurch as to what's going to happen with these specific properties and these specific areas that all of them are

jewels in our city. So I don't think we should be leaving this process hanging for so long. And I think that's been the history of it. And I will definitely be working to make this process. Go faster and be more transparent. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 39:18

Thank you. Next up, Tim King.

Tim King 39:26

Thank you again. Waltham is lucky to have a robust inventory of open space. Many cities our size are not as fortunate as us. I can certainly understand the want for making all open space restricted as to its future use. On its face, it seems like a reasonable ask. My only hesitation comes from the very nature of the conservation restriction itself, its permanency. I think about the call for using certain lands for veterans housing, or affordable housing. I think about how over time, and I'm talking generations, how things change. We can't predict the distant future needs of the City of Waltham. For example, the the MBTA Communities Act. We don't know how that's gonna play out in the future. I am aware that there's a number of parcels that are currently being considered for conservation restrictions, and Mass General law chapter 44B section 12A is the law that already requires any land purchase with CPA funds to be subject to conservation restrictions. For the remainder of the inventory currently without restrictions, I think we need to engage in debate, study, and examination to determine if a conservation restriction is appropriate for those parcels. I'm in full support of maintaining and preserving all of our open space. But I also want to hear all sides as it relates to a permanent decision that we will be making for our community. That being said, I want to make sure that Waltham continues to be a leader in creating and maintaining open space in comparison to other communities of life size and population. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 41:01

Thank you. Okay. Thank you for everyone's answers to the first two questions. We'll move on to question three now. We are lucky to have many green spaces here in Waltham. But there's a particular lack of it in the densely populated South Side area of Waltham. How could the city bring green space to this area? And we will start with Steven Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 41:30

Great, I think what would be incredibly helpful in this side of the city down on the South Side is to enhance the space that we already have down along the river and the Riverwalk on both sides of the river moving down from Moody Street to Prospect Street. And then certainly from Prospect Street and the Watch Factory and that area moving down towards and into Watertown. You know, obviously, the South Side suffers from being an historic area of density of being densely populated. And as many of the other candidates have talked about, we do have some housing issues to deal with, in particular the MBTA Communities Act. So for me, I think it's more along the lines of enhancing what we have already along the Riverwalk. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 42:27

Thank you. Next, I'll turn it to Colleen Bradley-MacArthur.

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 42:34

Thank you so much, Dan. I look at this question and I just think to myself, planning, planning, planning, planning, planning, planning, planning. We have purchased parcels of land on the South Side. Over the years, we have other opportunities, there are parcels for sale along the Charles River. And the freshest and most innovative ideas that come out of some of these land purchases on the South Side are parking. Now, there is still time to remedy these types of lack of planning decisions that seem to happen. And you know, we look at the jewel that is the Charles River and all along the Riverwalk. There are opportunities to expand and extend that space. There are opportunities to reutilize spaces that we own and have purchased to make them pocket parks to make them more tree dense. And I think it'll go a long way towards starting to form a plan to keep our green space and keep that loss, that tree loss that we're experiencing not just on the South Side, but all over the city. And I also think we should look at we have a tree Warden, we should look at strengthening our commitment to planting trees protecting trees, specifically on the South Side as well. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 44:24

Thank you. Turn it over to Tim King.

Tim King 44:31

Thank you Dan. The South Side of Waltham, it tends to be a pretty congested area as we all know. It is rich with housing density and contains our downtown business area. Despite that though, the city has actually done a pretty good job at creating and maintaining opening green space in that setting. I'll just name a few Gilmore Playground, which is a brand new park and open space area for all residents to enjoy. Chemistry Park, which was nothing more than a broken glass covered dirt parcel when I was a kid. MacDonald playground, another recently rerenovated space. Moody Street playground, McKenna playground, much of the Riverwalk, Fitch School spray park and playground, Ward Ave playground, Forest Grove, which leads to Lions Park in Newton. I think overall the city has actually done a decent job with its face in these areas. Not too far from the South Side is the Waltham Common and other playgrounds that are within a walkable distance. Is it possible to offer more? Yes, of course it is. No one thought that Chemistry Park would be what it is today. I think the city can continue to explore obtaining parcels like Chemistry Park and develop them into local green space. There is not much land on the South Side to accomplish this but continued exploration and discovery of future sites should always be on the city's radar. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 45:59

Thank you. Turn it right over to George Darcy.

George Darcy 46:08

Great, thank you. I am very much in favor in establishing additional pocket parks. Either by the city buying undeveloped lots, which there are a few on the South Side, or by purchasing existing homes or parcels that frequently come up for sale, especially as mentioned if they are along the Charles River. I also have a bold proposal, because I am in favor of relocating the existing Embassy Parking lot at Moody and Pine Street, which by the way has structural issues, and creating a new multi level municipal parking lot at the corner of Spruce, Moody, and Adams. All that land is owned by the city, thus solving the downtown parking problem for all. That's how Galway Ireland solved their parking problems many years ago. The land where the 1.5 acre embassy parking lot is located is simply an incredible misuse of ecologically valuable land. That whole area should be a natural green park next to the Charles River and I hope that will come true. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 47:24

Thank you. Next up is Emily Saperia.

Emily Saperia 47:33

Thanks, Dan. There's already been some great ideas on this topic from planting trees to pocket parks. So I'd like to put forth a sort of out of the box zoning idea that would allow more residents to engage in sustainable agricultural pursuits across the city including the South Side. I'm an ultra nerd and just for fun, I've drafted a resolution protecting the right to farm in Waltham with the idea that it will produce a related zoning ordinance. This is the rationale: a right to farm bylaw is a general bylaw that encourages the pursuit of agriculture, promotes agricultural based economic opportunities, and protects farmlands within the community by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function within minimal conflict with abutters and city agencies. Right to Farm bylaws protect and encourage the growth and development of farm related businesses by protecting farmers and farm operators against nuisance lawsuits. Much of Waltham's historic productive farmland has been converted over the last century to residential and commercial development. Many states including Massachusetts have adopted Right to Farm language in their statutes to protect active farmers from nuisance lawsuits from neighbors. Neighboring communities, such as the town of Weston, have successfully adopted Right to Farm bylaws to create public awareness relative to the needs of local farms and farmers. The Right to Farm bylaw language is based on all state statutes and regulations protecting agricultural activities such as Mass General Law chapter 40a, section three, chapter 90, section nine, chapter 111, section 125A and chapter 128, section 1a. And Right to Farm bylaws restates and republishes these agricultural rights pursuant to a municipalities authority conferred by article 89, or the Home Rule amendment of the Massachusetts Constitution. So it's definitely an out of the box idea, but I think that asserting residents' right to create productive green space at home can help create productive green space across the city. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 49:36

Thank you. I'll turn it over to Emma Tzioumis

Thank you. I'll turn it over to Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 49:41

All right, thanks. So as a South Side resident, thank you for asking about the South Side. And as a public health professional, environmental justice is a priority of mine, and a key factor in determining our health and well being. Environmental Justice neighborhoods are composed mostly of people of color or people living below the poverty line, and they experience a disproportionate burden of environmental hazards that often result in reduced quality of life. Waltham has 30 Environmental Justice neighborhoods and most are concentrated on the South Side of the city. These neighborhoods are urban heat islands. They lack street trees and have an excess of surface parking. Many of these neighborhoods also have a high density of gas station or car mechanics which produce and release environmental contaminants into the air and water. The South Side is really densely populated and pretty developed. The green space we do have is our pocket parks and our playgrounds, although some of those are more green than others. And while we should definitely get creative with pocket parks, we urgently need to increase our urban tree canopy. My street has no street trees and it is so hot. During rainstorms, the water just rushes down our street and I know other streets nearby have had flash floods during these periods of heavy rain we've had, so we need a strategic plan to evaluate, maintain and expand our urban tree canopy. This will make us more resilient to climate change, reduce the urban heat island effect, reduce stormwater runoff, and improve community wellbeing. As was mentioned, we have a tree warden and I believe there's talk about using the recently purchased Arrigo farm as a tree farm and we already have a GIS mapping inventory of all of our public trees. We should put these pieces together with some serious planning to increase our urban tree canopy. South Side is also experiencing high housing stock overturn. Right? A lot of our older homes are being demolished and new homes are being built. And the mature trees on private property are often removed in this process. I acknowledge that although it's hard to lose our trees, we also need housing. And so we need to pass a tree ordinance that requires developers to plant new trees in the circumstances when the existing trees are cut down. So between increasing our public street trees, replacing private trees loss to development, and creating pocket parks write creatively, I think this will create the green space in the south side that we need and improve the health and wellbeing for all of our residents, human and non. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 51:58

Thank you. Next up Tom Stanley.

Tom Stanley 52:10

I grew up on the South Side of Waltham. I lived there much of my life. I loved growing up on the South Side, it's great, great area of our city. And you know Waltham has done a tremendous job with their playgrounds obviously. We have various forms of open space like the Charles River, which you know, down on The Island is a great resource. And, you know, there are opportunities that come up along the way. Soon, Waltham will hopefully designate a certain area of the city for our MBTA housing zoning area. And in doing so, I believe along the Charles River is a good spot for that. And when property is being developed for housing, it's a great opportunity to work with developers and builders to create more open space. And getting into

the next question to help utilize their resources to fix up green space along the Charles River and make it more safer. There's lots of thoughts and possibilities like a walking bridge over the Charles over the railroad station to make it more accessible there for folks in Charles and Felton Street. Certainly pocket parks, a nice idea, but there has to be a lot of work done with the community in the neighborhood. Sometimes folks don't want that because of perceived crime in and so forth. So everyone has to be involved to ensure that it's what the neighborhood wants, and to allay fears and so forth. So there are other opportunities. I know Cathyann Harris has been working hard on what we called as kids the dump, the Moody Street dump. And in the future, the city is going to be investing money in that area to make for a permanent permanent park wildlife area. Sorry, I see that. The red light is on, but thank you very much.

Dan Berlin 54:36

Great, thank you. Okay, next up is question four. Thank you, everyone for your answers so far. And just to be clear, we're not taking questions here today. Question four: The Riverwalk along the Charles River is a popular trail for residents and tourists alike. But some areas of the Riverwalk are experiencing an increase in illicit activities. What is your vision for ensuring the safety of people who want to use Waltham as Riverwalk? And first we'll turn it to Stephen Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 55:11

Thank you. You know, having walked down along the river many times I have noticed that the lighting is not great along the river, I think that can be that can be improved. And the area which I'm talking about is from Babe Ruth playground, McKenna Field going down to Newton and in the North Street bridge that's in Newton that connects goes over the river in Newton. And, and I do think some of the overgrowth of weeds that are located in the area that there's some work can be done there, from my experience, and then also just a police presence in that area. You know, we've invested in police bikes, we've invested in police motorcycles. I've witnessed Waltham police, very proficient in slow moving, motorcycle riding, and they can easily do that along the Riverwalk. So I just think that those are some of the real easy, low hanging fruit options that that can happen along the Riverwalk or those three things that I've mentioned. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 56:32

Thank you. I'll turn it over to Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 56:41

Thanks. So I live about a quarter of a mile from one of the entrances to the Riverwalk and my family and I frequent it for leisure for recreation and for transportation. I have felt safe on the Riverwalk, but that doesn't mean that everybody does. And I've heard this concern for many residents in Ward five, eight, and nine as I knock on doors, especially the stretch from Moody Street to Prospect Street. And the issue of safety on the Riverwalk, as many issues, is really complex. And one of the issues is that of jurisdiction. The Riverwalk is under DCR jurisdiction, not city jurisdiction. And so we definitely need to improve the working relationships we have

with DCR to work together to improve safety and lighting on the path. And people like me use the Riverwalk for any number of different reasons. For those who use it for transportation, it's a crucial east west option that's off the streets and away from cars. And so providing safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure citywide is one of my priorities. And if we did that, that would give people an alternative route if DCR is unwilling to cooperate in monitoring the path or improving lighting. So that's, you know, one way to address this that we can tackle on our own. And we also should be creating safe shared use connections between the Riverwalk and the new Wayside Trail, because that also runs east west. Right. And that could be an alternate route as well. And then last, I've also heard from residents who are concerned about a lack of trash bins along the river. And while this might not be directly related to safety, litter contributes to feeling unsafe, right, it can make people feel like the area is neglected and nobody's paying attention or there to watch out for you. And again, this stems in part from jurisdiction issues. And so one approach is that the city should reinstall and maintain the trash bins that existed where the Riverwalk meets our city streets to reduce trash being thrown on the path. Thanks.

Dan Berlin 58:45

Thank you. Next up, Tom Stanley.

Tom Stanley 58:59

Thank you, Dan. Just to piggyback on my comments from the previous question. You know, it this is an age old problem, you know, having grown up in the South Side, it's, you know, getting the state agency used to be the MDC now DCR, involved in city policing, state policing. DCR doing a better job of taking care of the property, there's just so many needs, environmental needs, that DCR has responsibility for that makes it very difficult. The best thing we can do is to get more people down to that area using it. And so if the Charles Felton Street area along Charles River in both areas, redeveloped with more housing, it's going to bring more people down to the area and that prevents, you know, illicit behavior from taking place. And, you know, again, you know, work with builders and developers to utilize their financial resources to fix up the property down near the entrances so forth. And what I found is whenever there's a private funding sources for different problems that we have for the public, the state will kick in because the state wants to take care of all these different problems around the state, whether it's housing, traffic, what have you, but they want to get as much bang for their buck. So by bringing together private public partnerships, we can help improve the Charles River area, more lighting, obviously. And ultimately, it's hopefully the creation of a group like the Waltham Land Trust for that area that will help take care of the property. That's, that's really a key ingredient for taking care of any public space. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:01:16

Thank you. Next up, George Darcy.

George Darcy 1:01:23

Great thank you Dan. I would propose more police patrols on bicycles and motorcycles. More

Great, thank you, Dan. I would propose more police patrols on bicycles and motorcycles. More emergency phone stations that connect directly with the Waltham Police Department, better signage, better lighting, better education. And I'll throw a new idea which was just previously mentioned by council Stanley, creating a new Charles River path stewards group. And I agree with the statement from Emma, we need more trash bins. And finally, another issue is that we have a section of the walkway from the Museum of Industry to Elm Street on the northern side, that many times of the year it's not walkable, as it floods. So there needs to be a new segment from the Museum of Industry that goes directly up towards Elm Street, so that we can actually use that walkway. Thank you very much.

Dan Berlin 1:02:28

Thank you. I'll turn it over to Tim King.

Tim King 1:02:38

Thank you. As we've all discussed, the Riverwalk is a great multimodal asset for the city. There's no doubt using it for a leisurely walk or a bike ride should be an option for everybody. Unfortunately, the reason most people are drawn to it, it's peaceful and more remote nature can be inviting to some with less wholesome intents. One thing that complicates matters, as some have already mentioned, is the manner in which it is managed and maintained. That's because it's a DCR property, and therefore funding, maintenance, and security, they're all responsibilities of the state. Running through the middle of several communities it creates jurisdictional issues for the police. Formally, Massachusetts State Police are responsible for patrolling the Riverwalk and handle matters that occur on it. The Waltham police have worked cooperatively with the State Police in providing motorcycle bicycle and walking patrols. The Riverwalk is generally very safe. I've used the riverwalk fairly regularly riding my bike to commute to Boston. And in doing that, I've never seen any issues. But as a retired Waltham police officer, I am fully aware that there is some crime that has taken place down there, which is generally solved very quickly, but that doesn't help the people that are victimized. As far as future prevention. I think continued partnering with the State Police to increase patrols is a good idea. I've heard some people suggest lights and emergency call boxes. Those funds would have to be acquired from the DCR. I would advocate for the funding of better security infrastructure for the Riverwalk through a state delegation. I will offer this though. Some people are fearful and concerned about some of the homeless population that tend to congregate on our Riverwalk. Throughout my campaign. I have been advocating for the city to engage with stakeholders to provide further treatment for our homeless who have addiction or mental health problems and to help get them off the street. Treatment needs to be the priority as many of them cannot live in organized housing without proper treatment. First, the Waltham police department was the second police department in the Commonwealth to use clinicians with its officers to provide assistance with mental health and addiction. This is a good foundation to build from to increase services for this population. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:04:45

Thank you. Same question, Colleen Bradley-MacArthur

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 1:04:52

Sorry about that noise. My mouse did not want to cooperate and I am having trouble turning. Okay, there we go. Sorry about that. So thank you for the question. And as we've discussed, the Department of Conservation, Mass Department of Conservation and recreation does own portions of this Riverwalk, and I think we, at some point had some money in the pipeline to put lighting there. That is an urgent need, to get some lighting. I feel like that's step one. That's something you know, we should be able to do without a lot of red tape. Another thing that sort of surrounds this issue is, we need to be at a better partner with our state agencies. So I have not had this on top of mind. But I know when I first moved to Waltham, there was talk 14 years ago of connecting the portion that Councillor Darcy mentioned in front of the Charles River, Museum of Industry and Innovation. And there's a bike path there. And I feel free to be corrected on this, but I believe it took decades or close to a decade to get that bike path to work with MDCR to get that bike path put in place. This is infrastructure, and we cannot be you know, we have to be a willing partner, and we have to be an active partner in the safety and security of our treasured Charles River. I also want to say that the Waltham Land Trust Charles River stewards do walk that path, they do remove invasives to keep it safe, but they cannot do it alone. I think we need to look at a model such as the Downtown Crossing revitalization and Boston, where they have hired workers to clean up the area and pick up trash. I think that's an excellent point. Because we need to restore community pride in that space. Lastly, I'm really glad that Mr. King mentioned our unhoused population along the Charles, I know for a fact as a volunteer with Chaplains on the Way they do walk that path and check on residents along that path. So we need to increase our engagement with those folks. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:07:42

Thank you. Next is Emily Saperia.

Emily Saperia 1:07:49

Thanks, Dan. So I say I had trouble answering this question thoroughly without having an exact definition of what we're referring to here for illicit activities. And I make a point of that, because in healthcare, you don't treat a patient without assessing that patient and having a diagnosis. So I think when we're talking about general illicit activity, so to speak, we need to really assess what's going on on the Riverwalk. We have anecdotes, I have my own anecdotes. But before we talk about what we're going to do, we need to figure out what's going on. And you know, what it is that we're really concerned about, instead of just saying illicit activities. But more generally, I do know that we can't get anything done if the city doesn't do a better job working with all sorts of organizations, including the DCR, who has authority over the Riverwalk. Some of the Riverwalk's immediate needs as I see them, I agree with others that have commented we need more lighting for safety and more trash barrels for waste management. Those are some of the things that we work with the state and DCR on. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:09:09

Thank you. Okay, thanks for everyone's responses to the first four questions. We're on to our final question of the evening. Question Five is: How should the city deal with the ongoing rat problem in a way that won't harm Waltham's wildlife? First, we will hear from Emily Saperia.

Emily Saperia 1:09:35

Thanks, I see three main ways that the city of Waltham can effectively and safely deal with our ongoing rat problem. In the areas of waste management, direct pest control measures, and encouraging what I'd call natural pest management as far as waste management. This summer, the city announced it would tighten waste management by enforcing existing trash rules by issuing fines. I think that maybe a preventative rather than a punitive approach might be preferable in the form of issuing more secure trash bins to all residents in the way that we issue recycling bins to everybody, we also need to provide more trash barrels just around the city. It's difficult to get from one end of Moody Street to the other and find a trash bin just to throw away a coffee cup. As far as direct pest control measures, I'm glad to see the city is moving away from second generation anticoagulant rodenticides or ESGs, basically blood thinners so rats bleed out internally. And the same thing can happen when larger wildlife or even pets eat those rodents. Electric rat traps are a safer alternative overall, and I'm glad to see them being used in the city including at Waltham Fields Community farm where we have sensitive wildlife, where we have children running around. The next step is to issue a ban on all anticoagulant based rat traps in the city. And then without spending too much time on it for time sake, it's worthwhile to continue to look at some emerging data on the efficacy of rat birth control. And I'll leave it that they're encouraging natural pest management we can do by encouraging our natural predators to do their jobs. We can do that by giving the best shot or the best shot to thrive by not using those anticoagulant traps. We already lost two bald eagles and unaccounted for other numbers of hawks, owls, foxes and more. So let's let them do their jobs. Let's let our natural predators thrive and do their job. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:11:38

Thank you. Next we'll hear from Colleen Bradley-MacArthur.

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 1:11:52

Thank you. This is an issue that I hear about almost every day that I go out campaigning. And it's not just a South Side problem. This is a North Waltham problem. This is a Waltham problem. And I think that there are other cities and towns that have dealt with this effectively. I think we are moving in that direction, especially removing the anticoagulants. And I think we need to start preventative and proactive measures as opposed to just punitive measures. So this does include trash limits. I know it's something that people don't necessarily want to talk about. But it will go a long way to uniformly providing everyone in the city with a trash barrel with a fitted lid, very similar to what we already have with our recycling bins. And this is a huge step in providing a way for people to dispose of their trash, and do it in a way that will discourage our rat population. We're never going to get entirely rid of it. We're going to try but I think we also need to look at further education around composting. I submitted a resolution for municipally supported composting, they have that currently in Watertown. A constituent reached out to me and said why don't we have that here. And I think we need more education around composting. I think we need consistent measures of both trash reduction. And we also need a recycling and composting plan that will work. And if you think about it, those are the three R's right? Reduce,

reuse, recycle. So we are doing the recycling piece. We need to do reduce. And I also think that you know, we need to have some education around all of these measures, especially for our businesses along Moody Street. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:14:05

Thank you. Next up, Tim King.

Tim King 1:14:15

Thank you. Well, I don't think there's actually an immediate solution. I do think the city should be initiating a step by step process aimed at eradicating the rats. I do actually have a family member who had to pay 1000s of dollars due to rats eating her car wires and she does not live on the South Side. DPW director Mike Chasen had already stated at a council budget meeting that the first step is for the city to provide barrels such as they do for recycling. It seems like the most responsible thing for the city to be doing at this point. First, it provides a compliant receptacle with a cover that is required by city ordinance. I don't know if anybody's gone barrel shopping lately, but they are quite expensive. If the city got them in bulk, they would be cheaper. There may be grant programs there may be other sources of funding that we could look at to try to implement this program. A number of years ago, Chicago implemented a barrel program and reduced their rat population by 50%. Washington DC initiated a grant program for business owners to purchase rat proof containers for their refuse. And many cities are using solar barrels for their sidewalk barrels, which are rat proof and compact the trash. It is understandable that these options cost money, but the rat problem is costing the city and residents money and collateral cost. Also, when I was interviewed as a guest on WCAC a while back and the other guests that night was a rat expert. He was saying that there are ways to prevent rats from going to food sources by using peppermint and cinnamon natural oils in those flavors. So an education program along with the birth control method that the city is currently using. Along with the barrel program, it seems like we could be drastically reducing the rat population without the dangers of previous poisoning methods that have proven to be detrimental to other wildlife. The city also definitely needs to hold apartment complex cases and business owners accountable when their dumpsters are not big enough, or not emptied enough on a regular enough schedule to keep them from overflowing. But the first step is getting the barrels in place and reducing the majority of the food source immediately. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:16:25

Thank you. Next up George Darcy.

George Darcy 1:16:31

Great, thank you, Dan. So the residential rat problem increased during COVID when many restaurants were closed and the rats went looking for alternative food sources in the neighborhoods. Somerville recently deployed state of the art traps called smart boxes which humanely zap the rodent with a jolt of electricity and promptly sends an email or a text

message to the city department. Rodenticide is killing our wildlife. Our hawks, our owls, our eagles. And it's also inhumane to the rats themselves. As mentioned, there's rodent birth control and providing locked bins to all the residents of Waltham. Thank you very much.

Dan Berlin 1:17:24

Thank you. Next up Tom Stanley.

Tom Stanley 1:17:40

All right, thank you. Effective pest control requires an all community effort, which is sort of what all the candidates are saying here tonight. Each property owner must be a part of it. Residents and business owners must keep their property free from rodent breeding areas like garbage, trash, junk, broken, broken walls and debris and the like. The city of Waltham's Health Department, the Board of Health, currently have policies and programs to help decrease the rat population in residential and business properties. The city website has a lot of practical information available for folks to visit and learn about how they can prevent rat infestation in on their property or on the neighborhood. As a legislator, and the city council, I've worked with my colleagues to prevent the use of rodenticide rat poison, which is harmful to other animals and the eagles and hawks in the area. It's a big problem. It's not just Waltham, it's not just the South Side where the restaurants are. It's Greater Boston, and the only way we can eradicate the problem is by working together to continue to try new policies that humanely eradicate the rats in our area. Thank you very much.

Dan Berlin 1:19:20

Thank you. Next up will be Emma Tzioumis.

Emma Tzioumis 1:19:27

Thanks. So this comes up a lot with residents when I'm out canvassing and I could talk about this for a long time. So first, I'm grateful to the Waltham Land Trust for hosting the forum last spring on rodenticide. And that as a city, we stopped using it on city property not just because of its adverse effects on wildlife and people but also because it's not actually that effective. Public health is all about prevention. So we need a city wide and multilingual education campaign about rats, the food and water sources, shelter, how to identify our rat issue et cetera before we start talking about treating the issue. And then how do we treat it? I think we should be moving toward an integrated pest management approach where we don't just bait and trap the rats but we manage the environment. And so the first thing we need to do, as a lot of people have said is provide proper trash bins to all residents to remove food access. It's simply not acceptable for the city to fine people for not using your proper bin when we're not supporting everyone by providing that bin. We provide the recycling bins and we should be providing trash bins, we should also provide curbside composting service alongside our trash and recycling. In addition to many other benefits, this will help keep food waste out of our waste stream and thereby reduce the rats food source. And as a city, we need to set a good example on public property and public ways. We should be installing properly sealed trash bins,

like the Big Valley Solar bins that someone mentioned. And we need to increase the frequency with which the trash is collected. So this means fully staffing and funding our CPW, our Consolidated Public Works so they can fulfill this really important service. Rat management needs to be a joint effort between many of our city departments for example, getting food inspection and building inspection to address the food source and point of rat entry to a building at the same time will go a long way. And if source control isn't effective, then we explore other measures like the smart boxes, someone mentioned that are being piloted in other communities. They quickly kill the rats via electrocution, and importantly, collect data so resources can be managed efficiently in the future. And finally, Waltham is not alone. A lot of communities in the Boston area have this too. And I also don't think we should be striving to eradicate rats completely from our ecosystem. They're not a primary vector of zoonotic disease. They are a potent symbol of neglect. And so we should be taking a much more comprehensive and proactive approach to this. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:21:52

Thank you. Next up, Stephen Duffy.

Stephen Duffy 1:22:00

Thank you, I do not support anticoagulant pesticides to be used for rat control. I know the city is building a plan. One of those plans has been the the punitive measures that had existed over the summer with regards to trash disposal. And I understand that the city is also building some kind of trash, a building a trash program similar to our recycle program. And that's those are all good steps and will be positive steps for the city to take place. I know there's some citizens in the city that I wrote some reservations about the trash program. Waltham has always been one of these municipalities has been a strong municipality for trash disposal, and they had some questions regarding that and whether or not that that strength of the city would go away. So I think we need to reassure citizens that we're doing this in a very positive, proactive way for the city and to control the rodent population. I think that you know, and other candidates had mentioned this, we need to take a look at what other cities are doing and what they're doing to be successful. And I know it's come up a few times. And I don't know whether or not the city, and we have tremendous health department people that are working very hard, and I'm not sure whether or not we've looked towards professionals in this area. I'm not sure I'm sure that there's a major city, someone mentioned Chicago, major cities within the country that have more than likely a professional person on staff, working with pest control. I know in working in schools for many years that I had we had pest control in the building first thing in the morning before students were there, managing pest control, and I don't know whether or not that's an option for the city as a whole moving forward. Thank you.

Dan Berlin 1:23:58

Thank you. All right. So that's all... actually, Colleen, did we hear from you on that last one? Did we hear from everyone on Question five?

Colleen Bradley-MacArthur 1:24:22

Yes.

Dan Berlin 1:24:23

Okay. Thank you. Sorry, I had a moment there. So, thank you to everyone for attending tonight and to the candidates for participating. Waltham Land Trust is happy to put this on for you. And we hope you found this forum educational and insightful. The recordings from all forums will be posted to the Waltham Land Trust website as soon as we can. The written responses from candidates who could not make the forum will be posted alongside the videos. Remember to vote on November 7. You can also request mail in ballots on the city website by October 31, or vote early on October 28, through the 30th at 260 Grove Street. And please visit the Waltham Land Trust website at Walthamlandtrust.org to learn about our events, including the Western Greenway 5k on October 29. Thank you for joining tonight's forum everyone, and good night.