

Dorchester Reporter

"The News and Values Around the Neighborhood"

2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?
Frank Baker, 53, Dorchester. I currently reside at 43 Grampian Way in Savin Hill.
2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.
I am currently the District 3 Boston City Councilor. Prior to being elected in 2011, I spent my career in the City of Boston's Printing Department until the department shuttered.
3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.
I graduated Don Bosco Technical High School in 1986 where I studied the printing trade and immediately jumped into the workforce. It was not until I was a City Councilor that I was back in the classroom. I am also a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School Senior Executive Fellows program for State and Local Government.
4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations, and political groups.
Past Vice President of the Columbia Savin Hill Civic Association, Past Ward 13 Democratic Committee co-chair and current member.
5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?
The work that I have done in my ten years as the District 3 City Councilor has prepared me to be the best and most effective leader I can be.
6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?
The three accomplishments that I am most proud of are my children, being elected a Boston City Councilor and the ongoing effort to revitalize the business districts throughout my district.
7. Are you a member of a union?
I remain a proud member of the CWA/Boston Typographical Union.
8. Please list any endorsements to date.
Congressman Stephen Lynch, State Senator Nick Collins, State Representatives Dan Hunt and David Biele, State Representative Liz

Miranda, State Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley, Boston Firefighters Local 718, Boston Building Trades Unions, Int'l Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 2222, Boston Police Superior Officers Federation, Boston School Police Nepba Local 150, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 103, Massachusetts Brick Layers, Pipefitters Local #537, Greater Boston Real Estate Board, MA & Northern NE Laborers' District Council, Chapter 25 Associated the Nat'l DRIVE PAC of the Int'l Brotherhood of Teamsters, Int'l Union of Operating Engineers Local 4, Local 223 Laborers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?
I would consider myself a commonsense Democrat.
2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

Two of my political role models are Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Teddy Roosevelt is one of my political role models, particularly for his stance on the national parks and know that there is a need for resources to be shared. He had the foresight to bring the national park system to our country which, in turn, allowed everyday people access to national treasures.

FDR is another one of my role models because of his stewardship with leading the country through two of the worse crises - World War II and the Great Depression. FDR had the ability to put the country back to work with programs like the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The WPA employed unemployed people, using federal funds, in public works jobs to help lift the country out of the Great Depression.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?
Yes, I am in favor of term limits; I filed a charter amendment for 3 four-year terms, allowing Councilors to focus more on the job and less than reelection every two years.
4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting?
I am not in favor of same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16; however, I am in favor of mail-in voting.

7. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?
Absolutely not.

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?
My top priority would be to ensure that the proper infrastructure improvements will be implemented to ensure that neighborhoods will be properly connected to the Columbia Point peninsula. Another priority of mine would be to bring more job training programs for the incoming life science industry to my district so our neighbors and children can gain access to these top paying jobs.
2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?
I believe that the more job training programs we can provide to our residents, the more opportunities that would be available to them. Lack of education and employment can be a barrier for some, which can ultimately lead to violence. If we can train folks and get them on a path to success, we will be able to strengthen our communities.
3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.
See zoning board answer.
4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?
I believe that city jobs should be for city residents. I previously sat on the City of Boston's Residency Compliance Commission in which we would investigate and make findings on residency complaints. We need to have more homebuyer support for these city workers, especially lower wage city workers.
5. The city of Boston presently owns and manages the historic Strand Theater in Uphams Corner. How would you seek to program, market, and utilize this asset?
I believe we need to connect the proposed Uphams Corner Library onto the Strand Theater. I believe that if we do not do this with the redevelopment of the Uphams Corner Library, it will be a missed opportunity for the community. I also believe that the library should be a mixed used library with senior housing above. With senior housing above, this will allow the library to be more integrated into the community and to evolve into a place of gathering. By connecting the library, with the senior housing above, onto the Strand Theater, we can create a hub in Uphams Corner that will ultimately be an economic driving force for the neighborhood. In addition to this, we need to

identify a convenient location for parking and new developments coming into the neighborhood should include mixed incomes.

6. What is your position on vaccinations? Should students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 to attend school in Boston?

For children who are eligible, currently only available to those over the age of 12, I believe that they should receive the vaccine.

7. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

I have been advocating since I first got elected for a hybrid school committee. The school committee needs to be held accountable, not just by the mayor or the school department but also by the people of Boston, who trust them with their children. A hybrid school committee seems like a fair way to do that. At a bare minimum, City Councilors should have confirmation powers on the school committee members.

8. Do you support the recent decision of the BPS and School Committee to alter the admission plan for the city's three exam schools?

I just voted against the school budget because so much of BPS and the school committee's conversation is solely on the exam schools and we are not talking about how we are going to invest in the low performing schools across the entire district to prepare our younger children for these exam schools. I do believe that there should be a test for entry into the exam schools and I do not think it is fair that we are pitting neighborhoods against each other with the new point system.

9. Do you support the citywide ballot question that would hand new budgetary powers to the City Council?

No.

10. The city of Boston is presently without a permanent police commissioner. What should the next mayor do to fill the position and what type of person should be selected to lead the BPD?

The next mayor should hire a permanent police commissioner and it should be someone that can work collaboratively with community stakeholder groups.

11. Do you support the redevelopment of City Hall and City Hall Plaza?

Yes, City Hall Plaza is currently under construction and in the works of being transformed.

12. What is your assessment of the Climate Ready Boston initiative conceived and executed to date by the Walsh administration? Is this initiative a sufficient response to prepare for the anticipated climate change in coming years and decades? What else might you do to build climate resiliency in the city of Boston?

I think the Climate Ready Boston initiative is a good plan for along our waterfronts, taking sufficient steps at protecting our city from sea level rise and coastal flooding. There are new developments along the Dorchester waterfront that are being planned to be built to protect us from the rising sea levels. Projects like Moakley Park, McConnell Park and Dorchester Bay City are key at protecting the abutting neighbors from coastal flooding.

In addition to the Clime Ready Boston Initiative, I believe it is crucial that we plan trees where we can. Things like planting trees is one of the best ways to protect our city from climate change and mitigate some of the anticipated coastal flooding.

13. A millionaire's tax is expected to be on the statewide ballot in 2022. How do you plan to vote?

Undecided now, I need to examine it more closely.

14. Should gig workers be considered company employees, rather than independent contractors?

Yes.

15. A report commissioned by the Walsh administration found that just 1.2 percent of city contracts awarded between 2014-2018 were awarded to Black or Latino-owned businesses. What would you do to change that?

I believe that the contracts need to happen at the department level. Each department should be able to go through their inventory and see exactly where each contract is going. If it is done this way, each department should be able to ensure contracts are being awarded appropriately.

16. In 2018, the Walsh administration set a goal of creating 69,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester?

This is a good goal to start with and in Dorchester specifically, some of the larger development, where we were able to get larger density, are currently sitting vacant. Those parcels i.e.: Glover Corner, Dotblock and South Bay, just to name a few, where we are adding hundreds of units, there is not a single house on them.

17. What is your assessment of the Walsh administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

B

18. What is your assessment of the acting Mayor Kim Janey's performance since taking office in March 2021? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

N/A – there is not enough of a track record to give a real, true assessment.

19. Will you seek to expand or change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

I think we should look at the possibility of making the zoning board a full-time position. This will allow the board members more time to view and understand the content and entirety of the projects that are in front of them.

20. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

When I am trying to unwind, I like to sit in a local establishment with my wife and have a nice dinner.

21. If you were not a candidate, who would you support in this election for either Mayor or City Council?

I do not have a candidate in the mayor's race. I have had the opportunity to work with all the candidates and whoever becomes the mayor, I am prepared to work with them.

Thank you for participating in the Dorchester Reporter questionnaire. Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to newseditor@dotnews.com by Fri. Aug. 8, 2021.