

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?

Brandy Brooks, 40, Hampton, South Carolina, 55 Fort Avenue, Roxbury, MA 02119

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

Bunker Hill Community College
Assistant Director, Adult Education Program
Adjunct Faculty, Department of History & Social Sciences

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Contract Manager

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

- UMass Lowell, Graduate School of Education, Lowell, MA
Doctor of Education in Leadership in Schooling, May 2019 Dissertation: I See Myself: Resilience of Homeless College Students | Advisor: Stacy Szczesiul, Ph.D.
- Northeastern University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Boston, MA
Master of Science in Law & Policy (formerly Law, Policy & Society), May 2010 Diversity Fellowship Recipient, 2007-2008 & 2008-2009 Academic Years
- Tufts University, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, Medford, MA
Master of Arts in Urban & Environmental Planning and Policy, February 2006 Thesis: The Business of Affirmative Action: from Minority Set-Asides to Strengthening and Expanding Local Business in Inner City Neighborhoods” | Advisor: James Jennings, Ph.D.
- Cornell University-College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Ithaca, NY
Bachelor of Science in Development Sociology (formerly Rural Sociology), May 2003 Graduated with Honors & Special Distinction Bartels
Undergraduate Research Fellow, September 2002 – May 2003 Thesis: ‘Who Wi Da’: Gullah-Geechee Retention of Africanisms within the Post-Development Era | Advisor: Thomas Lyson, Ph.D.

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations and political groups.

American Planning Association
DeeDee's Cry
Roxbury Unity Parade
Cornell Black Alumni Association
Cornell Alumni Admission Ambassador Network
Northeastern Alumni Association
Tufts Alumni Association
National Education Association
Massachusetts Coalition for Suicide Prevention

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?

My professional and volunteer work illustrates a combination of working internally and externally at the agency and grassroots level. By training and experience I am familiar with policy design and implementation. My experience with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health gave me knowledge of politics and policy at the municipal and state levels.

6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?
- Graduating with my Doctorate of Education in 2019 from the University of Massachusetts Lowell
 - Knowing that information shared at a suicide prevention workshops, on podcasts, radio segments or personal interventions have saved lives.
 - Being on the path of homeownership in my community

7. Are you a member of a union?

I am a member educational unions: National Education Association and Massachusetts Community College Council.

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

Endorsements pending

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

I am a registered democratic and my political ideology leans towards liberal progressivism.

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

Barbara Jordan is one of my political role models because despite being in an extremely racist political environment she became a political icon in Texas politics and nationally. She was the first African American nominated to preside over a legislative body anywhere in the country when she was nominated in 1972 as the president pro-tempore for the Texas Senate. Her dedication to public service and her eloquence made her the conscience of the nation as a Congresswoman during the 1974 Watergate hearings.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

I oppose term limits, exclusive of those imposed by the voters.

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 will work with community residents in the hope that actively engaging them in the work of government, listening to their concerns, and attending to their interests will strengthen civic culture in the neighborhoods I would like to serve.

Furthermore, I will work with existing civic institutions and local activists to increase knowledge of, and participation on behalf of, local interests and needs.

I support lowering the voting age to 16 in municipal elections.

I support mail-in voting.

5. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?

Yes

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?

My top priority is to use the office as a means of community empowerment. Specifically, City government too often ignores the needs of the District's residents. This goes beyond broad policy and includes basic constituent services. If elected I will use the powers of my office to both the lack of transparency and lack of accountability currently plaguing District Seven.

2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

I will work to engage community residents at the neighborhood level to address gun violence in the District. As a model, I will work to recreate the proactivity employed by the Boston Miracle, when neighborhood associations and local crime watches organized on their own behalf to empower their neighborhoods. The Boston Miracle was grassroots-driven, engaging residents (including those residents who worked in law enforcement) to work within their neighborhoods to limit and prevent violent crime. I will support such efforts and work to add resources, such as additional resources for public health, mental health, and addiction rehabilitation to augment the work done by and for community residents.

3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

The Boston Police Department needs to be reformed in order to be an agency responsive and accountable to the citizens it is supposed to serve. As things currently stand, the BPD's institutional culture on issues such as overtime abuse, internal integrity, community relations, etc, operates more to protect malfeasance in the ranks than to serve the public.

3. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

Those employees of the City of Boston currently exempt from the residency requirements should be able to keep their exemption. However, new hires should be subject to the residency requirement.

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 have not looked into marketing specifically for the Strand Theater. I think that there should be a comprehensive plan for all the cultural assets owned by the City of Boston, including outdoor venues, such as Franklin Park. What I stress is that programming and marketing of our cultural assets be designed to fit the cultural needs and interests of the neighborhoods in which the venues are sited.

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

I believe that students ages 12 and up should be required to be vaccinated for COVID, not just to protect themselves, but to protect others, particularly vulnerable adults, with whom students might come in contact.

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

Yes. Opponents of an elected School Committee have a tendency to conflate the old totally at-large elected Committee with the at-large and District School Committee that Boston voters approved in 1983. The latter model was much more accountable than either its predecessor or successor, and should be reinstated.

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?

Yes.

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

Yes.

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 vet a qualified, experienced public safety professional that has a history of expertise in community accountable public safety. The process should be transparent and community representatives should be an integral part of the selection process.

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

I support the ongoing renovation of City Hall and its environs.

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?

It will be necessary to move from the assessments contained in the Climate Ready Boston initiative to conceptualizing and implementing concrete plans with input from the experts in metro Boston's educational, engineering and architectural communities as well as developers and planners.

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

I will vote for the millionaires tax.

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 would immediately take steps to create a pipeline to Black and Latino businesses in order to proactively make them aware of opportunities to bid on City contracts. I would also work with relevant City agencies to create opportunities for Black and Latino businesses to gain portions of large contracts by creating opportunities for Black and Latino subcontractors.

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?

The issue here is that many of the units within this target are not in fact affordable.

Based on neighborhood quality of life analyses from *Areavibes*, the median household incomes of North Dorchester, South Dorchester, and Boston are \$56,252, \$61,578, and \$58,516, respectively. This compares to the State median household income of \$70,954. (The Roxbury median household income is \$34,616.)

Simply put, housing affordability has to take the real world economic facts on the ground. Determining the precise mix of housing will have to be a process that involves stakeholders throughout the District.

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.

B

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

I would support changing the current seven member ZBA to a nine member body, each member to reside in and represent each of the current Council Districts. This would increase accountability by more adequately reflecting neighborhood interests.

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

Netflix and Chill

Enjoying nature while walking my dog

Cooking

Reading

Listening to music

Zoom/Facetime conversations or meetups with family and friends

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

Alas, I am a candidate. My decision in this matter will be made in the privacy of the voting booth.

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.