Protect Newton Trees
2025 Candidate Questionnaire



Candidate: Julie Irish
Office Running for: Ward 5 Councilor

Questions 1–8 asked Candidates to rate their responses to the statement using the following scale:

Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Agree

1. *It is important to support the Newton Tree Preservation Ordinance because it preserves and protects existing trees and provides for planting replacement trees.*

   Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

2. *Newton needs both housing and trees. It is important to develop policies that promote low-impact development to protect our shared green infrastructure (trees, waterways, and wetlands).*

   Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

3. *Properly sited trees block winter winds and provide shade from summer sun, reducing energy use for both heating and cooling, thus saving families money and reducing carbon emissions. (For example, when the City of Worcester cut down about 30,000 trees because of the Asian Longhorned Beetle, temperatures on tree-bare streets increased nearly 10 degrees F and increased the average family's cooling costs.) Newton needs a strong ordinance to preserve trees, especially in our environmental justice neighborhoods and wherever there are heat islands from lack of trees.*

   Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

4. *Newton needs to maintain the Ordinance's existing protections for trees on an entire property and resist efforts to limit tree protections to setback areas (the strips around the border of a property).*

   Response: 5 = Strongly Agree

5. *Newton needs to apply the Ordinance's tree protection requirements in the same way to all properties, including 1- and 2-family residences, which are 80% of Newton's residential property and 53% of all City land.*

   Response: **5 = Strongly Agree**

6. *The Tree Warden has reported that the number #1 complaint to the City's Urban Forestry Department for the past 20 years is when work on one lot causes damage to trees on neighboring lots. Newton residents have also reported that knowing in advance about a plan to cut trees on a neighboring property has allowed friendly conversations about preservation of trees. Therefore the requirement to notify neighbors of an application to cut trees should be extended to include all permits on all properties.*

   Response: **5 = Strongly Agree**

7. *The tree canopy and biodiversity are both important. All mature trees provide significant climate benefits, so the Newton Tree Preservation Ordinance should continue to avoid any blanket exemption for invasive species, but allow for weighing the harm versus benefit of removing non-native trees in a specific permit location.*

   Response: **5 = Strongly Agree**

8. *The City needs to evaluate our progress on preserving and expanding Newton's tree canopy. We need better data collection about trees preserved and cut down.*

   Response: **5 = Strongly Agree**

Questions 9–10 were open-ended:

9. *Do you have any thoughts about tree preservation or a personal tree story that you would like to share?*

   Response: We have been fortunate enough not to have experienced any tree loss on our property, other than a diseased Ash tree many years ago.
   I walk at Cutler Park in Needham 3-4 times a week and recognize and appreciate all the trees that surround me in that space. In my head, I often say a little private 'thank you' to the trees and the natural environment there, as I know they contribute to my feeling both renewed and centered after my walk.

10. *If a section of your campaign website addresses tree preservation, please provide a link here.*

Response: no response