

Protect Newton Trees

2025 Candidate Questionnaire



Candidate: Lisa Gordon

Office Running for: At-Large Councilor, Ward 6

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: My mother, a long-time Newton resident, raised us to be passionate about trees. When her neighbor's trees became riddled with the Hemlock woolly adelgid – an invasive insect that kills indigenous Hemlock trees – my mother paid to treat her trees and her neighbor's trees. Her investment in her tree canopy is significant and adds to the beauty of her neighborhood.

Since moving back to Newton, I've noticed how quickly we are losing trees with no replacement plan. Growing up, there were two hemlock trees on either side of every bench at Crystal Lake's Cronin's Cove. When they became infected from

the Hemlock woolly adelgid, they were not treated. Now there are no trees in that area and no natural shade.

As we face the onslaught of climate change, we must find a way to preserve our trees. Too often, decisions are made to sacrifice old-growth trees. We must find a way to preserve this old-growth canopy, treat the trees we do have, and work to replace the ones we have lost.

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

Response:

<https://www.lisagordonfornewton.com/issues/conservation-open-space-and-protecting-our-tree-canopies>