



**TEANECK DEMOCRATIC MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE**  
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**2022 Candidates for Teaneck Council Questionnaire**

To provide voters with additional information, we are asking candidates to complete this questionnaire. Upon receipt of a completed response, we will invite candidates for a zoom meeting on September 28th at 7:30pm. Therefore, please provide brief response to the following questions by September 25th.

Thanks.

**Name:** LATISHA GARCIA

**Address:** 962 FARRAGUT DR

**Years in Teaneck:** 35YR

**Party Affiliation:** Democrat

1. How does Zero-Tax increase work now and what would you propose if elected?

I think that from what information I have been given the current council has been able to secure zero tax increases with the usage of both state and federal grants that have allowed them to operate and maintain town expenditures. However, when elected to council I would like to visit the idea of imposing a small tax increase to the residents in lieu of the current state and federal aid to consume some of the town's maintenance items that have been left unattended.

2. What is your vision for development in Teaneck? Please address the following in your response: role of land use boards, Master Plan, areas in need of re-development, open space and recreation plan.

My vision for Teaneck once elected to council is to address the root of the problem in my eyes, our business district. To have a vibrant business district would mean to have an untapped source of steady business revenue not to mention a place for residents to patron. Most of our business zones are areas in need of redevelopment to attract business establishments and consumers. As a council member I would task the land use board with sourcing sustainable developments, with the help of third party educated advisors, that would adhere to the integrity of our suburban life style while still moving Teaneck forward in the right direction. I would also drive the land use boards to devise plans that would work with the parks and recreation on equipment and agricultural issues. Many of our parks are left ungroomed and unequipped with some of the basic needs to call oneself a park.

3. What services would you provide or increase to help Teaneck seniors age in place (example: Transportation, affordable senior housing, Rodda Center improvements)?

Teaneck has many resources for its seniors that I believe many are unaware of, example companion transportation via the Rodda Center. However, with the rising cost of living and many of our seniors living on fixed wages I do feel that as residents we could collectively run 501c programs to generate various items for them, example a community run continuing education class, meals program, a companion social group, walking clubs etc. Many cities also utilize state grants and donations to create so to say a bank where seniors could apply aid to offset basic cost of living expenses. While I know these types of programs are typically run on a county level as a

community, I feel this would be something we could give to our residents more promptly and run independently .

4. How would you meet the demand for more affordable housing for Teaneck residents?

Unfortunately, not one person can change something that poses such an issue with so many people seeking affordable housing. Currently the state has a third party running the program, Piazza and Associates. Teaneck has within the past 5 years alone created over 200 new dwelling units with 20% going to affordable housing but with the way the state allows assignment of these homes makes it quite difficult for anyone let alone a Teaneck resident to gain access to these "affordable homes." However there are towns , example Hoboken NJ, that legally stipulate in their build out that affordable housing goes to town residents first before being listed for any state run programs. This is something that as newly elected council woman I would look explore all the proper details and look to implement immediately.

5. How would you increase transparency in government and how will you handle any conflicts of interest (real or the appearance of)?

My goal is to have one central location on the town's website for all town related information that is accessible to all residents able and willing to utilize it. From there with respect that not all residents are computer savvy, I know historically there used to be a townhall information session held at the library or various different outlets to relay pertinent information from council meetings. During my campaign I came across many Teaneck residents who are willing to take up this mantle to facilitate information sessions like this to better educate our residents on what is happening in town.

6. What is your plan for diversity, equity, and inclusion in Teaneck?

Growing up in Teaneck I always felt that we were a town strong in diversity, equity, and inclusion. As an adult active in the community, I do see many areas for improvement. However, I also have to say that as someone who screamed equality and inclusion from the sidelines what rights did I have to do so if I wasn't willing to step up and be a part of the solutions. As a council member I would strive to bring back educational leadership programs. These programs I feel would better prepare and educate residents on how to maintain themselves in public leadership roles. Therefore, allowing people to confidently step up to more leadership roles. I also would like to change how we manage our advisory appointments. I feel that each board member should be allowed to maintain terms with respect of terms overlapping so never at one time is a complete board staffed with ALL new members. Similar to exactly how we handle our council. At no time are all members being replaced.

7. Should cannabis retail establishments be allowed outside of Alfred Ave in Teaneck? If yes, where?

I never quite understood the reason for cannabis to only be sold on Alfred Ave. We currently have two smoke shops in town that gift cannabis away with the sale of the containers that they come in....The state does have various rules that prohibit the sales of Cannabis in locations close to school districts however those same rules apply to liquor stores and those are sprinkled all throughout town. So, I personally do not understand the executive conversations that lead to the conclusion of ALL cannabis locations to only be located on Alfred Ave. As a council member I will move to have this topic revisited and advocate for retail shops to be in our general business district.

8. As our population increases so does the need for adequate parking and traffic concerns. How do you plan to address these needs for our residents and merchants.

With new residential dwellings already up I honestly cannot say that as a council member I can now control the traffic concerns because truthfully I would not be able to, the damage is done. I would like to visit the ideas of Town trolley cars, similar to what the City of Englewood had historically, with drop zones being at major transportation sites like the train stations, Rt 4 bus routes etc. Realistically the idea of getting NJ transit to have additional busing sounds grand but realistically that would take much more time and authority from higher beings. With the lack of parking, I think Teaneck should require its residents to get parking stickers, similar to commuter towns like Fort Lee. This would not only stop outside drivers from parking in our residential areas but also minimize the some of the pressures of traffic. Teaneck should also consider the ideas of park and rides and two-story garage structures in our current municipal lots to assist with the parking issues.























