

## **TDMC CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. TDMC Candidate Questionnaire

**Name:** Keith Kaplan

**Address:** I live on Ramapo Road (by Lowell school)

**Years in Teaneck:** I have lived in Teaneck for over 15 years (2007 to present) My wife and I are raising our three daughters here.

**Party Affiliation (Democrat, Republican, Independent, Green, Unaffiliated, etc.):**

While I'm affiliated with the same party as the TDMC, I do not wish to have party affiliation listed for a non-partisan role.

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

All services provided by the municipality are paid for by the people. Residents expect certain functions to be handled by the Township (e.g. well-maintained roads and appropriate road resurfacing, upgraded parks and amenities including bathrooms, among many others). These services require funding through public levies. The role I have played on council has been to demand every dollar levied be stretched to its fullest extent. We have thankfully been capable of bringing in extra funding through smart development in order to keep taxes at zero percent increases (as we have done for every year I've been on council), that's terrific. If elected I make only one promise: to never tax more than is absolutely required and to maintain a zero percent increase whenever possible.

### **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.**

The role of land use boards, the Master Plan, and options such as AINR / OSRP are spelled out in State statute. I think we function best as a municipality when we respect the role that these organizations have in State law, no more and no less. The land use boards were created with the Municipal Land Use Law and have been in use in Teaneck

for over 9 decades. We have seen a lot of change during that time — but some things remain the same.

A common refrain is that a variance or an AINR is a sidestep around codes or Master Plans. But the same MLUL that created the master plan, also created the variance process and the land use board. We must not lose sight of the fact that all of these components are part of one whole — for if we do, we lose sight of what is truly the role of each.

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

For years, the Rodda Center used a program called RecPRO to handle events and registration for programming. But it was for internal use only. I worked with the manager and the superintendent of Recreation to create an outward component (now available on our website) that enables seniors to see our complete list of programming, sign up and register and with a new component coming online soon, payment can also be made. When our seniors (and others) have options that enable them to better interact with each other and government, we all win.

Before the pandemic, I was working with Congressman Gottheimer's office to implement a system in which Uber / Lyft or other similar services were able to offer reduced rates and/or free trips to seniors and others. Other towns implementing similar programs were able to free up parking spaces, expand options for travel and allow seniors and others to enjoy many of the amenities offered.

We have moved forward with upgrades to senior housing through Brightside Manor (see my posts regarding their groundbreaking on Teaneck Today) and we will soon have more senior housing on Teaneck Road.

The bottom line is this: For too many years, we have known that people could not keep affording to live in town and there was a need for housing, but for the FIRST TIME, we are working with developers to meet meet those needs, in a way that maintains the character people have come to expect.

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

There is only one way to meet the demand for more affordable housing: to build it. Anyone providing another answer is trying to win you with platitudes.

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

People want to easily locate and access the information they need when they need it. When I started 4 years ago, the Teaneck Code had not been re-codified in over 70 years. A resident would call and mention a portion of the code, only to find out it was no longer applicable because of a State preemption issue from decades prior. Or they wanted to know where they could park, or if a holiday applied to alternate-side. These are now issues of the past.

For the first time, our code is up-to-date and you can search it for whatever you need.

You can sign up for the SDL service portal and submit building document requests and see when appointments can be made. These are the issues that residents have demanded and they'll get more when I'm re-elected.

We have transparency requirements to ensure fairness and equality. I'd handle any conflicts of interest according to law, and ensure that fairness and equality standards are met — as I always have.

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

We are stronger as a people in every meaningful way and every metric when we get information and participation from a diverse group. I grew up with this ethic and I would continue to live by it, in all areas of life, including governance.

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

The people of Teaneck spoke clearly that they wanted retail cannabis to be legal. There are some very real challenges – which are being addressed. I have worked with our manager and the Teaneck Police Department and Teaneck School District's

Superintendent to ensure vaping and underage sales of vape products do not happen with our kids, for instance. We have had routine sting operations, with confiscation where appropriate and summonses issued to stores that would prey on our kids. Thankfully, we have a terrific group of employees, a Municipal Alliance Against Substance Abuse, and residents that are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of those that live here, especially our children.

**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?**

Because we should serve the public from a place of data and science, I just want to offer a note of correction:

[1970 Teaneck Census population: 42,355 \(link\)](#)

[2020 Teaneck Census population: 41,232 \(link\)](#)

As I mentioned above, prior to the pandemic, I was working with Congressmanpeopl Gottheimer's office to implement a system in which Uber / Lyft or other similar services were able to offer reduced rates and/or free trips to commuters and customers for township merchants.

Other towns implementing similar programs were able to free up parking spaces, expand options for travel and allow residents to enjoy the amenities offered. I would continue these efforts as well as others, such as our current plans to increase spots in the Plaza and Court street area.