



TEANECK DEMOCRATIC MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE
TEANECKDMC@GMAIL.COM

2024 Teaneck Council Questionnaire

Thank you for accepting the invitation to TDMC Forum. To provide voters with additional information, we are asking candidates to complete and return this questionnaire by September 25th. Please submit responses to TeaneckDMC@gmail.com. You will receive a separate invitation for the TDMC Forum on October 1st from 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm. We look forward to meeting you. Thanks.

Name:Mark Schwartz**Address:**

Please provide a copy of your bio with an emphasis on experiences that qualify you to represent residents on the town council.

1. What is the role of a town council member? Why are you running for Teaneck council? The town council sets the goals and objectives of the town. That's the simple answer. The hard task, and what separates good council members from great members is the actual implementation of these goals and objectives. Not just showing up to a meeting and commenting and voting like a board of directors, but working day in and day out to get it done. I have been doing that as a council member for thirteen years and hope to continue for four more. Get . It. Done. Responsiveness. Execution of tasks.
2. How will you represent constituents from all of the diverse groups who live here? As a council member what would you do to promote harmony and unity in the town? I only represent one group in teaneck, that of the teaneck resident. Not any particular racial or religious group, but just one group of 41,000 teaneck residents. I with and for all of them and show up to any event and push for execution of tasks for all, regardless of whatever sub group they belong to.
3. Tell us about a time where you worked through a challenge with a team of people who did not agree on the best solution. How did you navigate conflicting views? How did you resolve the challenge? This question is the actual definition of politics. You can rarely get four votes needed without compromising. But more importantly its not the council votes that you get that you need to worry about, but you need to work with those who voted against you to see what, why and how you can work together for the betterment of teaneck, the ultimate goal, in the future. Specific examples happen all the time, whether it be voting to approve a building with higher or lower floors, more of less tax benefits, or simply to fund another park bathroom this year but at a higher debt expense. These happen virtually every meeting. Negotiate and compromise but getting something done. Don't just talk.
4. Should the council engage in international issues? No. Over the last few years we saw several instances in which we did get involved much to the detriment of the Teaneck. Did I get involved last October, YES. Did I regret it, YES. If you go back to March and watch all the council meetings you'll notice my refusal to engage on any mater other than Teaneck.

5. Should the council meet more often? What ideas do you have to best engage Teaneck residents? Are there problems with good and welfare and how should the council address them? No, we do not need to meet more than every three weeks. I spend all day, all night, all weekend, communicating with residents. Sitting on a dais takes valuable time for our staff to prepare when they can be better off working for the public. Good and welfare is a perfect time to make comments but not a good way to engage back and forth. Call us, meet with us for coffee, go for a walk with us or email us. I do this all the time. And most importantly remove international issues from good and welfare
6. How do you propose raising additional revenue for the town without increasing property taxes? Build, build and build. That is most definitely the answer you do not want to hear but I'm an incumbent running on facts, not smoke and mirrors. There is NOTHING else significant that will add up to offset new taxes. Anybody running saying something different is just doing that to get your endorsement.
7. What is "responsible development"? What are your thoughts about the new Master Plan, particularly regarding new housing and retail, as well as the use of AINRs and PILOTS as a development tool? I think everyone knows my answers to this as I have lived and worked this for over a decade. AINR and PILOTS are great tools to design what the council and residents can compromise on. It takes no less than 14 open public meetings per site. It also allows the town to get money for beneficial projects from a developer. These two words became "bad" terms in teaneck for no reason other than politics and will hurt your pocket with future tax increases as a result of the delays in future developments. "Responsible" is one that is thought out, discussed, and voted on by elected officials who report to the residents in an election.
8. What do you think needs to be done to assure sufficient affordable housing in Teaneck? Build, build and build. You cannot be against AINR and PILOTS and any other project I've worked on and then complain when there is no affordable housing. Each project has a substantial affordable component and when we sell town land to develop we have focused on making it 100% affordable, as I pledged, such as in 1425 Teaneck Road which just opened last month, and yes, with opposition!
9. What improvements would you like to see in our green spaces, parks, and recreational facilities? We began and need to continue to revamp parks every year and are working on a roller or skate board rink. We have added bathrooms and splash pads and must continue doing this every single year
10. What is your position on cannabis in Teaneck? The goal was to put this on Alfred as an experiment to see how it goes before rolling it (or not rolling it out) town wide. We just don't know the answers. Thankfully Alfred Avenues cannabis is on the Planning Board agenda for approval to open this month. The space is already leased.
11. How can Teaneck best serve the needs of its senior citizens? What changes, if any, would you propose? Teaneck does a remarkable job, better than virtually every other town, working with its seniors. We must continue to make sure funding for these programs remain. Any additional wish and dreams are not financially realistic and would be pandering. And of course, senior affordable housing like 1425 Teaneck Road.
12. What is the ideal relationship between the council members and the town manager? The one we currently have to execute an "GSD"- get stuff done.
13. It is our understanding that the current police chief may soon retire. What are the qualities of a police chief you would look for in a future candidate for the position of chief of police? What input would the council have in hiring the new police chief? This answer would be entirely inappropriate for a sitting council member to reply to. Further, the manager picks the police chief, and the council has no LEGAL say.

14. How do you feel about term limits on council and committees? Every four years my term is up. You chose if that's my limit or not. And four council members then choose if a committee members' term is up. We have opted not to renew many of them.
15. What aspects of Teaneck do you value most and why? The fact that its not one of anything and frankly not the best of everything, but rather, across the board, the highest total cumulative score. Best housing prices, nah, but lots of choices, good location, great work staff, great neighbor, great ethnic foods, houses of worship. It checks so many boxes yet never perfect. Always a work in progress

Thank you for reading my answers and I hope to win your endorsement. Please keep in mind that I do not say what you want to hear, but what you NEED to hear. I am not the popular candidate for many TDMC members for sure, but I am the one, in my belief, you NEED up there. Your biggest investment is under the control of the Council. Don't pick popular, pick hard working, knowledgeable and not afraid to GET, STUFF, DONE.