

Michael Pagan
Cell 201-543-7671

1. Why are you running for Teaneck council?

Being on the town council is all about being the voice of our community. I've been on the council since 2020 and became Mayor last year, and I've seen firsthand how important it is to make sure everyone in Teaneck feels heard. That's why I'm running again -- I want to keep working on making our town a place where everyone can thrive. "Teaneck is Stronger Together," really sums up what I'm all about. I'm here to be Teaneck's voice and help shape our future.

2. How will you represent all the diverse groups in Teaneck?

Teaneck's diversity is what makes us special, no doubt about it. As Mayor, I've made it a point to listen to everyone, no matter their background. To keep our town united, I'm big on open dialogue. That means more town halls, community events -- anything that brings people together. I firmly believe that when we understand each other better, we can work together more effectively.

3. Tell us about a time you worked through a challenge with people who disagreed.

There have been plenty of those moments on the council! Budget discussions can get pretty heated, with everyone having different priorities. What I've learned is that it's crucial to create a space where everyone feels heard. I remember one particular budget meeting where we were really divided. But by focusing on what we all wanted for Teaneck and encouraging compromise, we managed to find a solution that balanced our finances with the needs of our residents.

4. Should the council get involved in international issues?

Our main job is to take care of Teaneck, plain and simple. But we can't ignore the fact that some international issues do affect us here at home. Things like immigration or global economic changes can impact our residents directly. So while we're not going to be debating foreign policy, we do need to stay informed and consider these issues when they're relevant to our town.

5. How can we better engage Teaneck residents?

I don't think just having more council meetings is the answer. What we need is to make it easier for people to be involved. I'm pushing for better online access to our meetings, more town halls, and using social media and other digital platforms to reach out. We want to hear from our residents, and we need to make it as convenient as possible for them to participate.

6. How can we raise revenue without increasing property taxes?

We need to be creative. I'm a big believer in smart development -- bringing in new businesses that fit well with our town. We should also be more aggressive in going after state and federal

grants. It's about growing our economy without changing the character of Teaneck or putting more burden on our residents.

7. What are your thoughts on the new Master Plan and development tools?

The Master Plan is all about smart growth. We want to expand housing and retail, but in a way that makes sense for Teaneck. Tools like AINRs and PILOTs can be useful to encourage development, but we have to use them carefully. The bottom line is always: does this benefit our community more than it costs us?

8. How can we ensure affordable housing in Teaneck?

This is a big priority for me. We need to get creative -- maybe offer incentives to developers to include affordable units in their projects. We should also look at our zoning laws and see if we can make changes that would allow for more affordable housing. And let's not forget about partnering with nonprofits -- they can be great allies in creating long-term housing solutions.

9. What improvements would you like to see in our parks and recreational facilities?

Our parks are the heart of our community. I'd love to see more investment in maintaining and improving them. We should make sure they're accessible to everyone and offer programs for all ages -- from kids to seniors. Great parks and recreational facilities bring people together, and that's what Teaneck is all about.

10. What's your take on cannabis in Teaneck?

Cannabis is a tricky issue. It could bring in some revenue, but we need to be smart about it. If we decide to allow cannabis businesses, we need strong regulations to keep our community safe. And we absolutely need to hear from our residents on this -- where these businesses should be, how they should operate, all of that.

11. How can Teaneck better serve its senior citizens?

Our seniors have given so much to Teaneck -- we owe it to them to make sure they're taken care of. I want to see better transportation options, more affordable senior housing, and more programs to keep them active and engaged. It's about making sure they can stay in the community they helped build.

12. What should the relationship be like between council members and the town manager?

It needs to be a partnership, plain and simple. The town manager handles the day-to-day stuff, while we on the council provide the big-picture direction. But for it to work, we need clear communication and a shared commitment to what's best for Teaneck.

13. What qualities would you look for in a new police chief?

We need someone who understands community policing, values transparency, and can build trust with all parts of our diverse community. They should have a track record of promoting diversity within the force too. And the council should definitely have a say in choosing the new chief -- it's too important a decision to leave solely to the administration.

14. How do you feel about term limits?

It's a balancing act, really. Term limits can bring in fresh ideas, which is great. But there's also value in experience. I think we need to find a middle ground -- bring in new voices while still benefiting from the wisdom of those who have been serving our community for a while.

15. What do you value most about Teaneck?

Our diversity and our sense of community. It's what makes Teaneck special. We've got people from all walks of life here, and when we come together, we're unstoppable. That's why I truly believe Teaneck is stronger together. It's not just a slogan for me -- it's what I see every day in our town.