

Dorchester Reporter

“The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

2021 CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Section 1: BACKGROUND

1. What is your name, age, place of birth and present address?

Name: Angelina “Angie” Camacho

Age: 45

Born: Boston - South End/Roxbury - Born in SE but my parents bought their first home before I was 1 year old in Roxbury

I currently am a cooperative homeowner in Roxbury.

2. What is your present occupation? Also, please note any past employment that may be relevant to your candidacy.

I’m a public servant who works in public health with a focus on workforce development. Previously I worked on many issues related to addressing barriers with agencies like ABCD and the Multicultural AIDS Coalition. I also was a former consultant for HUD on an affordable housing model program.

3. Please detail your personal educational background and achievements.

I’m a lifelong learner. I represent many of the working adults who seek the non-traditional path of seeking higher education later in life. That said, the depth of my experiences have allowed me to lead, and even train others, in workforce development, economic advancement, youth development and organizing for progress.

4. Please list some of your affiliations with non-profits, civic associations and political groups.

- MA Women of Color Coalition - Platform Leader, Economic Power & Sustainability (Eastern Region)
- Amplify Latinx - Annual Conference Steering Committee
- Boston School Committee - Citizens Nominating Panel (Representing the Boston Parent Organizing Network - BPON)
- Boston School Committee - English Language Learners Taskforce
- The Trustees of Reservations - Member (to support environmental conservancy)
- Museum of Science - Member (to support youth and STEM)

- The New England Aquarium - Member (to support aquatic environmental advocacy)
- The Franklin Park Zoo - Member (to support wildlife conservation)
- Boston Ward 9 Democratic Committee - Chair

5. What in your experience to date will most help you to be an effective leader?

I learned early on that you have to listen to the people in order to be able to respond effectively as a leader of the people. As we have contacted thousands of voters this election, listening to their stories, aspirations and even frustrations gives us more than data, we learn the depth of their needs from us who endeavor to lead. We get their priorities beyond talking points that glisten on glossy postcards. Open ears connect us to the heartbeat of what really drives our City.

6. What are the three accomplishments you're most proud of?

1. My son. Hands down. I love him.
2. Becoming a cooperative homeowner. There is a story of resilience and strength that fuels my advocacy for others trying to beat back the challenges of gentrification and inaccessible housing.
3. Recovering from a traumatic, disabling accident about 12 years ago. It took three years of recovery to relearn how to walk again without crippling pain. The experience allowed me to understand the strength of the disability community more deeply in doing everyday things differently each day.

7. Are you a member of a union?

No. However, I have stood, and continue to stand, with unions on a range of matters that impact not only working conditions for their members, but also advocating for extended support for their families as well -- in Boston and across Massachusetts. Many of the things that we fight for benefit non-union workers as well.

8. Please list any endorsements to date.

- Greater Boston Labor Council
- Boston Teachers Union
- IBEW 2222
- North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters
- Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus
- Massachusetts Chapter of the National Organization for Women
- Mass Voters for Animals

Section 2: POLITICS & ELECTIONS

1. What is your party affiliation and how would you characterize your political ideology?

I am a proud and civically engaged Democrat. I currently serve as the Chair of the Boston Ward 9 Democratic Committee. I view my ideology as being community service-oriented and people-centered.

2. Please name up to three (and at least one) of your political role models? Please feel free to explain your choices.

Barbara Jordan. Many young people look up to this Civil Rights leader of color. She took a stand in the Nixon impeachment trial and inspired so many to sharpen their points when voicing their stand on issues that are important to them. At a time when many adults do not advocate for youth but use them as a mouthpiece, we can look to her as an agent of advocacy that many of us need more than ever.

3. Are you in favor of term limits for the seat you are seeking? If so, how many terms?

Yes, I am open to the concept of three to four terms. Ten-twelve years is a good amount of time to represent the people's agenda, create stability and cultivate the next generation of leadership.

4. What would you do to increase voter turnout in the city of Boston? Do you favor same-day voter registration or lowering the voting age to 16? Do you favor mail-in voting?

Election Day should be a national holiday. Voter registration applications and ballots should be language accessible to reflect local demographics. Over the course of this election season, my team and I not only continue to meet voters where they are, but have expanded our outreach so that city government is defined by as many voices as possible if we are blessed to win and be elected.

Yes, I support lowering the voting to 16 -- our youth are already leading so we should give them the framework and opportunity to do it constructively. Our schools should provide civics education as part of this process so that our youth understand the importance of voting and the depth of what they are taking on by the act.

Yes, I support mail-in voting conceptually. That said, we need to do it in a way that makes sure that there are safeguards in place that uphold the level of sanctity as in-person voting.

5. Do you think that Boston should adopt a rank-choice voting system in upcoming election cycles?

Yes

Section 3: ISSUES & PRIORITIES

1. What is your top priority if elected?

If I have to choose one, it is that I would like to revive the faith that everyday residents should have in knowing that their government is working for them. I can provide fancy talking points on multiple issues, not just one, but this one priority covers them all. In anything that we endeavor to do, the people should hear their collective voice.

2. How will you approach the issue of gun violence in our communities?

As someone who lives in a community that is heavily impacted by gun violence, I approach this issue holistically with an intentional focus and the respect it deserves. It's a didactic issue that requires forward-thinking accountability for adult offenders, sensible youth intervention, prevention of illegal gun accessibility while respecting the rights of those who want to take proper steps towards legal possession and safeguarding. Of course, any trauma response related to gun violence should be done in a community-informed, accessible manner.

3. Is there a specific city agency you see as in need of urgent reform? If so, please explain.

The Boston Planning & Development Agency (also known as the Boston Redevelopment Authority). Given the barriers around access to affordable housing and the diminishing of voices after community processes breed new waves of gentrification, this agency needs a complete reorganization. Two key areas internally are greater transparency related to hiring practices and building true reflective diversity. Ultimately, we need a comprehensive, executable plan because what happened in the West End cannot happen again.

4. What is your position on residency, i.e. requiring people hired by the municipal government to live in the city of Boston?

It's important to maintain our residency requirements, but it's also equally important that we have wages that allow our city workers to live here. Further, any company that the City of Boston contracts with should employ city residents with a living wage and benefits.

5. The city of Boston presently owns and manages the historic Strand Theater in Uphams Corner. How would you seek to program, market and utilize this asset?

I know the Strand well. I was part of the Mavis Neal showcases, a well known production venue for many of Boston's upcoming hip hop and other performance artists.

The Strand needs to be brought up to meet the contemporary standards of performance and conference venues. We need to provide incentives, such as affordable rates that are accessible to all, to competitive artists and/or corporate entities who can make use of the space to bring their business to that part of the city. I would even go as far as to call for an extended partnership with schools who have a focus on performing arts so that they have an out-of-school venue for their productions.

6. What is your position on vaccinations? Should students be required to be vaccinated for Covid-19 to attend school in Boston?

I believe that we need to do a better job in building community confidence in the vaccine. That said, I also believe in training young people in body autonomy so that they understand what happens with their body. For instance, while it was hard for me to go through this process, I patiently waited for my son to understand the benefits of taking the vaccine instead of just forcing him to take it. As a result, he felt more confident about making the decision and we used the experience as an example of what he should do when considering other medical services either with me or on his own in the future. It's extremely important for pre-teens and teens to be able to do that.

7. Do you favor a return to an elected School Committee? Please explain.

No. As a member of the Citizens Nominating Panel that selects candidates for the Boston School Committee, I see firsthand how the appointed process can serve as an example of the access that many residents demand for everyday people to have a strong voice in leadership. Many Bostonians think that the Mayor picks a nominee out of a personal phone book, but that is not the case. Each October, or

whenever a seat opens mid-term, a panel of regular people like me, represent different stakeholders to convene the process of selecting a pool of candidates that the Mayor must choose from. We get that pool from everyday applicants just like many of our readers who have good ideas and display a passion for, or expertise in areas, that will make public education better.

While I understand that the current appointment process is not perfect, we cannot forget the challenges that the election process presented in the past as well. I would argue that the appointed process is better because it is free for everyone to participate. Our panelists will even make themselves available to clarify questions from applicants and/or conduct outreach to get a robust pool of candidates. An elected process with fundraising mandates, compliance rules that require training and preparation costs for campaigns would prevent many great applicants from participating in the process as it is set now.

8. Do you support the recent decision of the BPS and School Committee to alter the admission plan for the city's three exam schools?

While I agree with the final decision by the school committee regarding the exam schools admissions process, I do find that the set-aside option has merit and would have preferred that this option was presented to the community earlier. I believe that it's fair to say that none of the options are perfect and it was a shame that we didn't have a chance to increase equity for all the students who will be impacted by many of the calculation methods that were on the table.

9. Do you support the citywide ballot question that would hand new budgetary powers to the City Council?

Yes.

10. The city of Boston is presently without a permanent police commissioner. What should the next mayor do to fill the position and what type of person should be selected to lead the BPD?

The talent is already here for our next police commissioner. Dare I say her name? Hire Nora Baston already. Seriously though, a leader like Nora exemplifies many of the characteristics that we need -- someone who is passionate, knowledgeable and deeply rooted in community engagement. That said, the next mayor needs to connect with community groups across the city to better understand the needs and the constructive criticism regarding the gaps between Boston's residents and the police department.

A thorough and detailed assessment will allow for that information to find a reflective commissioner, who is probably already within our ranks.

11. Do you support the redevelopment of City Hall and City Hall Plaza?

Yes. I agree it is a generally good idea in concept. I support efforts to increase accessibility of the city's residents to the building that serves the city's people. However, \$70 million could go a long way to address disparities, especially those that have significantly increased over the course of this pandemic. I'm not exactly sure what the cost is in delaying some of the gains we could make in order to beautify a building so that gives me pause in lending my voice in full support of this initiative.

12. What is your assessment of the Climate Ready Boston initiative conceived and executed to date by the Walsh administration? Is this initiative a sufficient response to prepare for the anticipated climate change in coming years and decades? What else might you do to build climate resiliency in the city of Boston?

The Climate Ready Boston report provides a good starting point on what we need to take action on so that Boston is truly "climate ready". Locally, District 7 - a geographically diverse community - is not immune as it's central to many of the environmental justice issues that residents in Boston continue to face. Roxbury, a neighborhood with a visible wealth gap that is located in the center of the city, is vulnerable to significant climate dangers. While there is a clear urgency that community-led organizations continue to act on in the battle for climate justice, we need to continue that same energy in the Boston City Council and City Hall.

Other approaches to build climate resiliency should include holding construction and development accountable so that our communities are not being harmed, implementing an environmental justice curriculum in Boston Public Schools that connects students to workforce readiness, and expand on food recovery programs to reduce the amount of food waste and boost the advantages of local food production that could allow for economic growth.

13. A millionaires tax is expected to be on the statewide ballot in 2022. How do you plan to vote?

I am in support of Raise Up Massachusetts Coalition's efforts to pass the Fair Share Amendment ballot measure. The revenue that will be generated will have a lasting impact as we continue to recover from this

struggling economic crisis. That said, we also need to be ready for the fight ahead on collectibility of those taxes, an area that I am uniquely aware of as a leader in tax preparation programming for the City for over 15 years.

14. Should gig workers be considered company employees, rather than independent contractors?

It depends on whether or not the gig work meets the actual classification of the IRS and the goals of the gig worker. On one hand, some individuals do recognize gig work as their sole proprietorship and do the work with the full flexibility that an independent contractor should be able to enjoy. On the other hand, like so many abuses in the employment industry, some employers market what should be full-time employment with benefits as gig work. We need to have an eagle eye on finding those positions to protect our workers by enforcing a full-time employment status where required.

15. A report commissioned by the Walsh administration found that just 1.2 percent of city contracts awarded between 2014-2018 were awarded to Black or Latino-owned businesses. What would you do to change that?

As a starting point, there needs to be better outreach to the Black and Latino-owned business community so that an educational component takes place regarding procurement. While City Hall steps up its efforts on procurement and contract equity for MWBEs, I would call for increased funding for small business technical assistance. Additionally, I would encourage the Commonwealth to mirror this effort as well. This is an opportunity to show that big government can positively support small business, particularly at a time when we have seen many of our local businesses downsize and even shut down due to COVID-19. Finally, we need to look at the criteria that is marginalizing sole proprietorships in particular.

16. In 2018, the Walsh administration set a goal of creating 69,000 new units of housing in Boston by 2030. What is your assessment of this target — and what would your office do to balance growth with the concerns that many have about displacement in neighborhoods like Dorchester?

We have an opportunity to leverage this goal towards true affordability through creative housing development. What's key is the mix of units and not just the sheer number of them. We need to build units that are competitive to the middle-income market to free up housing stock that may be more conducive to meet the needs of larger families. There are other

nuanced needs that would have to be enacted to make the development work as intended but that would required a larger forum than this questionnaire.

17. What is your assessment of the Walsh administration's overall performance? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

Pass.

18. What is your assessment of the acting Mayor Kim Janey's performance since taking office in March 2021? Please offer a letter grade or pass/fail as part of your answer.

It's always tough to start in the middle. I am not one to shy away from taking a stand but in this case, I don't think it's fair to give an assessment. That said, not being able to give an assessment does not infer an endorsement of more time needed to be satisfactory. The role of interim City management is clear. Residents should assess the temporary performance of duties within the context intended and separately assess each candidate's readiness for a full term.

19. Will you seek to expand or change the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals? If so, how?

I support the efforts underway to modernize the composition of the Zoning Board of Appeals. For far too long have community voices felt unheard and unrepresented in the zoning approval process, and residents of Boston should be relieved that there is a process underway that calls for more transparency and accountability.

20. When not on the campaign trail, how do you unwind?

My family and friends would probably tell you that I don't unwind because I absolutely love being helpful to my neighbors. I frequently encourage them to attend and take part in one action or another. However, when I do "unwind", I enjoy watching Asian series with English subtitles (I recently finished the South Korean show *Because This is My First Life*).

21. If you were not a candidate, who would you support in this election for either Mayor or City Council?

I can't imagine doing anything else but stepping up to serve my community as the next City Councilor for District 7. Honestly, the top Mayoral contenders have merit in their own right.

Thank you for participating in the Dorchester Reporter questionnaire.

Please send the completed document as a PDF or WordDoc to newseditor@dotnews.com by Fri. Aug. 8, 2021.