

## TOWN OF BARNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL ELECTION 2023

### BarnstableWatchCANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for stepping forward to serve the Barnstable community by seeking a seat on our Town Council in the fall 2023 election.

#### *About BarnstableWatch*

BarnstableWatch is a community organization initially founded to protect our housing stock for use as homes for locals rather than use by non-resident investors as more profitable short-term rentals. BarnstableWatch supports Cape rental traditions, not the 'Anythinggoes-Anywhere-All the time Airbnbapproach.' Since its foundation, BarnstableWatchfollowers have asked for information about planning and zoning more broadly. BarnstableWatchtherefore follows local public bodies and shares information.

#### *About This Questionnaire*

BarnstableWatch providesthis opportunity to each candidate running for a Town Council seat in the fall 2023 election to provide 250-word responses to fourplanning and zoning-related questions below. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide information that residents interested in planning and zoning may assess for themselves.

Please use this word document to respond to each of the four questions on the following pages. Please include your name and precinct number on each page. Please respond in 250 words or less, and via typewritten text (not handwritten). Please send your responses by 5:00 p.m. on Friday October 6, 2023 to [BarnstableWatch@gmail.com](mailto:BarnstableWatch@gmail.com).

BarnstableWatch will print all responses (up to 250 words), unedited, and without commentary, or endorsement, at [www.BarnstableWatch.com](http://www.BarnstableWatch.com). If you choose not to respond, BarnstableWatch will simply note that fact on its website.

BarnstableWatch will send all responses (up to 250 words) to its email list of many hundreds of residents across the Town of Barnstable. BarnstabeWatch will not characterize responses or encourage its followers to vote for or against any candidate. If you choose not to respond, BarnstableWatch will simply note that fact in its mailing.

Thank you for responding to help voters make informed decisions.

CANDIDATE NAME  Kristin Terkelsen

PRECINCT NUMBER  2

**Question No. 1**

*Thank you for being direct and concise in 250 words per question.*

1. *Context:*The Town Council recently changed zoning in Downtown Hyannis to enable dense building development and increased building height by right.<sup>1</sup> It did this in the name of housing.<sup>2</sup> Despite housing needs, and the Town’s consultant statement<sup>3</sup> that the Town could regulate short-term rental use of new housing units in this zoning framework, the Town Council chose not to do so.

*Question:*To increase year-round housing supply for locals, do you support regulating incremental housing units, made possible by zoning changes to increase building density and height, to be used as year-round housing, i.e., restrict use as short-term rentals? Why or why not?

*Answer:*

I support accountability and consequences, at the town level, based on what the Town Council has stated their purpose was to approve changes to zoning. These changes made by the Town in the name of housing, allowing regulation of short-term rental use, should have some teeth behind it or else it is empty words. The goal was to achieve a greater density of jobs and housing within the GIZ as the foundation of the community’s vision of a vibrant, livable, mixed-use, walkable regional center. Has this been accomplished? Town council and supporting committees and departments involved should work within the stated guidelines it produced to find means and methods to fulfill their commitments. Also involve the community with public hearings so that their concerns are voiced and heard and all parties of interest are represented with no hidden agreements. If the Town Council wants to move the needle forward it needs a means to do this and not just state it in words, but in actions that are defined, measurable and accountable.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.townofbarnstable.us/departments/planninganddevelopment/Projects/Downtown-Hyannis-Zoning-Revision.asp>

<sup>2</sup> “The focus of the rezoning was to create a predictable regulatory framework that would encourage compact residential development, compatible with traditional development patterns, meeting a range of housing needs.”

<https://www.townofbarnstable.us/departments/planninganddevelopment/Projects/Downtown-Hyannis-Zoning-Revision.asp>

<sup>3</sup>Town Consultant at Hyannis Zoning Workshop, March 2020: “I mean Airbnb can be regulated of course...”

CANDIDATE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Kristin Terkelsen \_\_\_\_\_

PRECINCT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Question No. 2**

*Thank you for being direct and concise in 250 words per question.*

2. *Context:* When the Town of Barnstable asked people what kind of housing they want more of, the number one answer people gave was more single-family homes.<sup>4</sup>On the other hand, a housing advocacy organization states that “[s]ingle-family zoning is the ‘heart of the housing crisis’” in its call for zoning changes.<sup>5</sup>The Town Planning Director calls single-family zoning a “burden” on the community, and said the Accessory Dwelling Unit zoning change was a “babystep” to “pushing back” on the “legacy” of single-family residential zoning.<sup>6</sup>

*Question:* Do you support keeping single-family zoning in those areas of town now zoned for single-family use? Why or why not?

*Answer:*

A simple yes or no answer is part of what makes zoning changes challenging on top of an already challenging problem (how housing and regulation interact). Change can be incremental. ADUs may be a good opportunity to alleviate part of the housing problem. In my neighborhood, a small rental unit on a property has been added. I feel grateful, on more than one level, knowing this new structure has the owner on property and not living in another location. Also, it is a win win for the family. They now live in a well cared for home and on a street that is neighborhood. What existing structures potentially come under this category or is constructing new housing or convert/remodeling existing structures needed to expand housing in areas with single-family zoning? If there were changes to single-family use zoning, defined terms, limits, expectations, and regulations are needed to make this a success to protect current single family home owners while making room for housing that works to alleviate and solve the housing problem.

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<sup>4</sup><https://itlaserfiche.town.barnstable.ma.us/WebLink/DocView.aspx?id=920267&dbid=0&repo=TownOfBarnstable>Local Comprehensive Plan survey at page 5.

<sup>5</sup><https://haconapecod.org/blog/hacbeat-march-april-2023/> at page 3.

<sup>6</sup>Town Council Zoning Subcommittee meeting, June 2020. The Town has taken down the Zoning and Regulatory Subcommittee agendas, minutes, and videos from its website.They are available via a record request. BarnstableWatch volunteers’ meeting transcripts show this passage at minute 56:12from a recording of the municipal television broadcast.

CANDIDATE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Kristin Terkelsen \_\_\_\_\_

PRECINCT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Question No. 3**

*Thank you for being direct and concise in 250 words per question.*

3. *Context:* Across the country, cities and towns - including thriving tourist communities - protect existing housing stock for use as homes by locals. They adopt any one of a number of diverse ways towns can prevent or limit non-resident investors from using homes as more profitable short-term rentals.<sup>7</sup> There are lots of ways for towns to limit or end the heartbreaking stories we hear each spring about locals getting kicked out of their rentals to make way for more lucrative short-term renters. Town Housing staff said this about incenting seasonal homeowners to rent year-round rather than short-term: “We have a large housing stock. It’s just not being used to house our residents.”<sup>8</sup> The Town Council has taken no action in this respect to prioritize locals in the use of our housing stock.

*Question:* Do you support adopting some means to return some homes used as short-term rentals to year-round housing use for locals (*other than by one means a local developer has sought, which is for the town to pay property owners via tax incentives not to short-term rent their property*)? Why or why not?

*Answer:*

I would be interested in knowing more about the history of how “Town Council has taken no action in this respect to prioritize locals in the use of our housing stock” implied in the question. What proposals, issues, etc. were presented to the Council? Were the public and the council members either encouraged or discouraged to address this problem and whose interests were being protected (eg Town Council members over the residents they serve, real estate agents etc)? Were there more recommendations not considered or that were considered? There is a push pull here between different groups, be it owners who need to supplement the costs of owning more than one home, investors owning profit rental property and those in need of reliable year round housing. Communities nationwide are struggling with this exact issue with more home ownership going to investment properties over housing its residents. The conundrum lies around limiting or returning property to long term rentals and if there is an appropriate process to do so. The solution lies in the middle with innovative ways that may not always come from Town Council or the residents. I would look beyond Barnstable

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<sup>7</sup><https://barnstablewatch.com>

<sup>8</sup>Housing Committee [minutes](#) May 21, 2019

and explore solutions that have been successful in communities who have handled this problem effectively. We benefit by engaging proactive planning before the problem is too vast and unchangeable.

CANDIDATE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Kristin Terkelsen \_\_\_\_\_

PRECINCT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**Question No. 4**

Thank you for being direct and concise in 250 words per question.

4. *Context:*The Town of Barnstable regularly says it needs more affordable housing units. In the recent form-based zoning changes in downtown Hyannis (about which its consultant said “...any near-term development is going to be on the upper end of market rate...that means they are going to be expensive units”<sup>9</sup>) the Town Council did not include any affordability requirement(s). In the Accessory Dwelling Unit-by right ordinance change, the Town Council did not include any affordability requirement(s).<sup>10</sup>When developers wanted a more profitable use of land at 850 Falmouth Road in Hyannis than the zoning code required,the Town Council said yes: The Residences at 850 in Hyannis is today advertised as a *Luxury Apartment Community*. It sits on land that had been zoned to be 100% affordable housing, with a preference for Barnstable residents and Veterans.

*Question:*Please comment on whether you would leave pricing to developers and property owners, or incorporate affordability into approvals?

*Answer:*

If people want to have trust in their Town Council, then we need change and this change has to be transparent. Policy, procedure, and communication to the residents are essential. Along with

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<sup>9</sup>Hyannis Zoning Workshop March 2020.

<sup>10</sup> The Planning Department staff said the Town’s Accessory *Affordable* Apartment program was expected to stay on the books, but to have attrition into the new *market rate* ADU program. Source: Zoning and Regulatory Subcommittee December 16, 2020.

planning from the Town Council through the departments under its control and responsibility, the Town Council has had plenty of time to implement needed changes. It seems the Town Council works counter current to its words and lacks alignment between words and actions. If the Town Council has said repeatedly that we need affordable and work-force housing, and this issue remains unresolved, then a new council will ensure that our promises to achieve the goals are progressed further than what has been overlooked, perhaps by interests that are destined to counteract what "affordable housing" really means . The Town Council should be at the forefront of informing developers what the town goals are and not the other way around. The new incoming council members could consider seeking partnerships with more local developers and businesses that need and rely on workers to make business viable and thriving here in our town in particular. A new Town Council could tap into the entrepreneurship and community building spirit in order to help the town yield results to benefit us all. New and creative ways of addressing our affordable and work force housing will be the new council's responsibility, not the developers.