



Meryl Kessler

2021 Candidate for Councilor at Large, Ward 3



Campaign Website:

<https://www.meryl4newton.org/>

Biographical statement

During my 26 years in Newton, I've led on schools, arts/culture, and sustainability. I'm now a director of Newton Community Pride and sit on the Sustainable Materials Management Commission. An attorney and non-profit executive, I was Executive Director of the League of Women Voters of MA (2013-19).

Questions and Answers

Question 1: What in your background prepares you to be effective in the political office you are seeking?

Both my long history of community leadership and professional background have prepared me for this role.

1. Through my 26 years of involvement in our community, I know Newton well—both its challenges and opportunities—and will use this knowledge to build a stronger community.
2. My background as an attorney and non-profit leader has trained me to be analytical, collaborative, and creative—vital skills on the Council.
3. As the executive director of a statewide membership organization, I prioritized frequent, clear communication with those I represented, and I will make communication with constituents a priority as a councilor.

Question 2: If you're elected, what will be your first priority? Why? How will you address your priority?

My first priority is recovery and rebuilding from the pandemic, including:

- Revitalizing village centers: To reach their full potential as commercial, residential, cultural, and civic hubs, I favor reviewing/updating zoning, permitting, licensing, and parking policies.
- Infrastructure improvements: I support accelerating overdue upgrades to roads, schools, and parks to improve quality of life, advance climate goals, and create a city that is walkable, bike-able, and accessible.
- Supporting seniors and most vulnerable: I support policies to create an age-friendly city, increase affordable housing, and support our most vulnerable residents.

Question 3: Please explain what diversity, equity, and inclusion mean to you. Why these are important to Newton?

DEI in Newton means creating a community that is open and welcoming to people from different backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability status, socioeconomic status, national origin) and that actively and affirmatively works to remove obstacles to their full and equal participation in civic life (including bias, discrimination, harassment, racism, and other structural impediments). DEI is important because it will advance the goals of creating a safe, fair, just, supportive environment for individuals as well as a vibrant, rich community for us all.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging the informed and active participation of citizens in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.

