

CANDIDATES ROUNDTABLE - SELECTMAN

The following interviews are short excerpts from the question-and-answer sessions with candidates for contested positions that Andover Cable TV Channel 8 videotaped. Thanks to Charlie McCrave for conducting the roundtables.

Selectman Candidates Roundtable

Sunday, February 15, 1 PM

Charlie McCrave: Why are you a candidate for selectperson and what qualifications do you have for the position?

Don Gross: It's typical of me to not just talk about what goes on but to participate. I'm currently active in town as chair of the Zoning Board of Adjustment and as the Building Inspector. I also helped start the Andover Food Pantry for the Andover Lions.

I left Andover in 1972 and went to Nashua where I worked in the Police Department, where I got plenty of experience in politics and administration, among many other things. I've also had 30 years on the board of a credit union, which has enhanced my knowledge of budgets. In Nashua I also started and participated in many youth programs.

I graduated from New London High School and New Hampshire VoTech, and have taken business classes at Penn State, University of Virginia, and Babson College.

Mary Anne Levesque: I've been a resident of Andover since 1999. Andover has given me a lot. By running I'm just trying to find a way to give something back to the town. My way is to help out in town government. I am very frugal in my finances, which is something I can bring to the town.

I have some college education. I graduated high school in Taunton, Massachusetts and graduated from the New England Institute of Technology. I have also taken several college courses at the University of Hawaii.

Howard Wilson: I'm a former selectman and a former town employee. I bring to the position time in grade and

a belief that changes should be made. I'm a high school dropout, but I took the GED cold and passed with flying colors.

Jacob Johnson: I feel it's time for my generation to step in and help with the town. I went to AE/MS and MVHS. I'm currently employed at Proctor and have the rank of captain in the East Andover Fire Department, where I've served since high school. I served in the Police Department from 1999 through 2004 and have served on town committees.

Jim Delaney: I have lived in Andover most of my life and have worked with 90% of the road agents in town. I think it's time people stood up and took responsibility for things they do. An example is the Highland Lake Dam, where they put the entire fault on the Road Agent.

Charlie McCrave: Andover is a part of a regional waste disposal facility where rates are about half of normal rates in the area. Soon the rates we pay will be close to double what they are now. How can we best attack this problem?

ML: The biggest thing in order to reduce waste is recycling, which starts at home. It involves education at all levels. Several things have been tried; some have worked, some have not. A lot of people don't care or don't understand. The best place to get rid of garbage that you can't recycle is at home: compost it.

One way is if the community as a whole purchases composters and sell them to residents at cost. It may give residents an incentive to compost, and that reduces poundage to Penacook.

Can we do more education on Channel 8? In the *Beacon*? Maybe a flyer in every issue? Teach the children in school at every grade level how to recycle everything. But the biggest thing is it has to start at home.

HW: Current Transfer Station employees don't even attempt to convince people to recycle. They're not marketers of recycling. I tried while I was up

there, and sometimes it worked, and sometimes it didn't.

People want convenience. If the Concord single stream recycling plant goes online, most of this problem will be solved. We'll still have a large component that will have to be tipped.

JJ: We need to support recycling 100%. We need to get the stuff you can get money for out of the trash stream. We need to be able to house these items until we can get them to market.

JD: In Massachusetts they pay \$1 per bag and \$250 per month for garbage pickup. The co-op is going to single stream recycling. Recycling is going to help control our costs, but you're going to have to pay a certain amount of money. Grit your teeth and grin and bear it.

DG: I think it is a big issue, and we're very lucky in Andover that we don't pay the way they do in Massachusetts. We have to do a better job of recycling, because we do pay by the ton. It sounds like single stream recycling will make it easier. It will at least keep us a little closer to where we are now when tipping fees double. It sounds like single stream recycling is the only way to go.

Charlie McCrave: As you know Andover is a bedroom town. We are doing a Master Plan update, and there may be zoning amendments that follow. How would you like to see the town grow?

HW: As a planned program, I don't think we'll have any choices. Individuals go where they will. Some say, "Yeah, I'll stay here," and some keep going. We can plan where housing goes, but we can't solve the problem of who will live in town and where they will live except as the soils and slopes will or won't permit. There's no solution to the problem. The Master Plan will slow down the process, nothing more.

JJ: I'd like to see the town grow slowly and in a controlled way. I think zoning is great to keep businesses from popping up where they shouldn't, but we also have to keep people coming in.

There are so many things to weigh. You really have to allow the boards to

make those decisions. It think it's great that the Master Plan is going forward.

JD: I think the *Beacon* did a great job with the questionnaire it distributed, but I wish the Master Plan committee had listened to what the people said. We have to realize we're growing and the tax rate is going up. We have to find a way to offset the tax rate. If we brought in a controlled amount of commercial, that would help.

DG: I think we need some changes in zoning. We need to use a lot of caution, especially as we're regulating people and what they can do with their properties.

I'm very concerned about kids finding affordable housing and good jobs locally. I think we need to encourage the right businesses to come in. It's a balance, and it's difficult.

The Master Plan definitely needs to be updated and revised, but keeping in mind the people who have always lived here. And we need to support our neighbors who run businesses in town or they're going to leave.

ML: Andover is a great town and a fantastic place to live. Many would love to move here. What we should be bringing in is green businesses and light industrial, but in a very controlled mix. This would take some of the burden off the taxpayer.

Charlie McCrave: With these economic times, it's going to be hard. A lot of this should have been done a long time ago. If we hadn't been business-unfriendly in the past, businesses we're looking for would have come to town.

How strongly should the town emphasize the acquisition of conservation land and who should pay for it?

JJ: If the town weren't paying for it, that's fine. Should the town be purchasing land? I don't see any good in it. In this financial time, I don't see the town giving money to conservation land.

JD: Most of the time when you buy land, the tax rate drops and the town loses money on it. The town shouldn't pay for it. I don't think all the land people

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