

## **Somerville Renters Forum 2021 - Housing Questionnaire**

*All candidates were asked the same questions. Questionnaires were submitted to the Somerville Renters Committee and CAAS on 8/6/21. The Mayoral candidates forum was held 8/8/21 on Zoom.*

---

Candidate name: **William "Billy" Tauro**

Candidate email: [wmtauro@aol.com](mailto:wmtauro@aol.com)

Position running for: **Mayor of Somerville**

---

1. What do you view as the greatest challenge facing low income Somerville renters in 2021, and why?

**As I see it the greatest challenge is the cost and availability of a lower rental unit within the city.**

2. In a city where more than half of the people rent, what housing policies would you focus on to ensure that every resident has safe, stable, and affordable housing? We are particularly concerned that the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQ+, and other people with marginalized identities do not have enough access to housing in Somerville. If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**I have focused on the housing for all and do not discriminate in to classes as others have done. It doesn't matter what type of individual to assist in acquiring housing . In that being said I will be concentrating on a more available policy to access in order of necessity. There are many homeless who I have helped and so far have arranged for housing to get them off of the streets. I didn't interview their agenda and I do not discriminate! Respecting everyone, I will be applying for the many housing grants and setting policy to open any available apartments for housing. I also want to increase the developing buildings to allow a higher percentage availability for lower income housing. As far as safe and stability is addressed, I will not defund Police but allow an increase for the preservation and protection of the freedoms and safety of all citizens.**

3. Far too many residents are still struggling to pay rent due to income loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who worked in the service sector, gig economy, and undocumented immigrants who might not qualify for traditional types of rental assistance. How would you support the recovery of residents in these situations so that they remain stably housed? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**It has been a tough situation for these particular individuals and the homeowners as well, but securing government assistance assures their stability within maintaining their current renting status. My approach would be to seek additional grants, create relief , and address these particular cases on a one on one .**

4. Affordable housing funding is critical, but limited. Public subsidy often builds homes that are still too expensive for the people struggling the most, with 1-bedroom rents over \$1500. How would you use zoning and other city-controlled tools for less expensive homes so that affordable housing funding can support the lowest-income residents of Somerville (at or below 30% of Area Median Income)? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**The city services do limit the addressing of this application for assistance however I feel that an increase of requirements through zoning and development of large scale buildings with a higher percentage of lower income(affordable) in the application of apartments can be included. Individual homes that fall under the city for eminent domain can also be included into the requests of lower income availability.**

5. How would you protect Somerville residents, particularly renters, from displacement due to rising rents, gentrification, and increased development? And how would you ensure that new developments give the allocated number of units to low income residents, as the oversight seems to be currently lacking? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**I would apply the methods I have previously stated as in the creating of a higher percentage of availability for low income housing. I would work hard to ensure that these guidelines are met and applied.**

6. The housing in Somerville that is available for low income residents – including publicly owned, inclusionary and other types of subsidized, and privately owned – is often full of bad conditions, and health and safety code violations. What would you do to ensure that all renters can live in safe and dignified housing in our city? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**I would ensure that code violations be immediately addressed. I will be implementing my H.A.N.D. Program which will assist homeowners with limited income unable to fix their own problems to have some assistance through my program.**

7. Low income residents often face unresponsive or hostile landlords and property management. Some tenants who are people of color or immigrants have experienced racism and other forms of discrimination. This means that even if residents can afford to live in Somerville, they do not feel welcome or embraced here. What would you do to ensure that all residents feel like they belong in our city, are empowered to uphold their rights as renters, and are protected from retaliation? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**There are laws addressing discrimination and my open door policy will always be an access to redirect the proper services to anyone in the city in need.**

8. How would you expand homeownership opportunities for first-time and low income residents in Somerville, especially for people of color, single parents, immigrants, veterans, and people with disabilities? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done on this issue and what you intend to prioritize next.

**Obviously there are many programs that are available for new owners and as long as the requirements are met they should have no issues on the application and purchasing. If at all possible I would increase the availability of adding to these programs by getting more funding through the application of grants.**

9. As Mayor of Somerville, how would your administration collaborate with members of City Council to enact more housing justice policies? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done to collaborate between both municipal branches and what you intend to prioritize next.

**I would work with Council members to assure that the citizens best interests are represented. Changing the current development projects for inclusion of a higher percentage of lower income housing where applicable.**

10. What are the top 3 renter protections you would include in a Tenants' Bill of Rights and why? If you are running for re-election, please share what you have already done to enhance renter/tenant protections and what you intend to prioritize next.

*(This question was inspired by Our Revolution Somerville's endorsement questionnaire)*

**As this particular question derives from a discriminatory based group, I respectfully refuse to provide input.**