

Q&A with the Board of Public Works Candidates

WaylandeNews has submitted the following set of questions to each of the candidates. Candidates were given 11 days to respond, and a word-limit of 100 words per response. Longer responses would be truncated, but if more words were needed, we would post a separate document with full responses.

1. What do you bring to the table that makes you a better candidate than your opponent?



BROWN: I believe that any of the candidates would be excellent Board members and would serve the interests of the Town well. My guiding principles that I would bring to the Board would be balancing fiscal responsibility with economic and recreational development.



FENNELLY: First off, I think all three of us are very well qualified and the town will be well served with any of us. What differentiates me from the other candidates is I have 3+ years of previous experience on the BoRC. I believe my engineering background enables me to understand complex situations and make well informed decisions than most.



MISHARA: As a practicing attorney for 22 years, I bring both public and private sector experience to the Board of Public Works. While an Assistant Attorney General under Scott Harshbarger, I worked with government agencies in enforcing the state's conflict of interest laws and led prosecutions against public officials for fraud and embezzlement. I am currently counsel for a company that works with large companies and governmental entities in promoting engineering and insurance solutions to protect property. I will bring hands-on management skills and an innovative approach with new ideas to the challenges facing the newly formed DPW.

2. Do you have an opinion about the need for the new highway garage and how it should be prioritized with other Town needs?



BROWN: Without more detailed information, I can't comment directly on the new highway garage; however, in general I feel that with any spending project, we have to consider what the concrete benefits are and who will benefit. The greatest benefits for the most people are items that should receive priority funding.



FENNELLY: Yes, we need a new HW garage. The current garage is well past its prime and does not meet a lot of the minimum requirements for safety. I believe it should be the next priority in the towns near term developments.



MISHARA: The proposed DPW garage is a capital item that we need to take a hard look at. I am interested in learning the need for this project and whether there are less costly options available. If elected to the Board, I would call for immediate review of the viability of the proposed highway garage and thoroughly study the pros and cons along with the other Board members and the DPW director, taking into account other competing capital priorities.

3. Do you favor the proposal to install a fixed network for water meter readings, and why/why not?



BROWN: It's a simple return on investment (ROI) calculation. How much will we have to spend, how much savings will generate, and how long will it take for the savings to overcome the initial investment? From the figures that I have seen, there does appear to be a sufficient ROI that will result in actual savings to the Town. If we can save money, and also provide better service to our residents – in the form of instant feedback for potential leaks in watering systems – then it's a proposal we should approve, and one in which I am in favor.



FENNELLY: Yes, having the ability to notice broken/erroneous meters that save residents and town money is needed.



MISHARA: I support the installation of a fixed network system for water meter readings. The existing water meters were last installed in Wayland between 1996 - 1997 with a life expectancy of 12 to 15 years. These meters need to be replaced and the newer technology which is proposed will result in cost savings over time. With the new system, readings can be performed daily to identify aberrations, unusual usage patterns and identify leaks. Fixed network systems have been adopted in other Massachusetts communities and Wayland will see a reduction in time spent by personnel in manually checking meters.

4. Do you have any opinions about how to improve traffic and/or pedestrian safety at any particular locations?



BROWN: Ensuring good traffic flow upon completion of Town Center is essential. I was reminded of this during the recent flooding. I live south of Route 20 – down by the high school – and we completely avoided the whole 20/27 area because of the traffic. If Town Center clogs up our roads, I would consider the project a failure. We need to follow the traffic consultant's recommendations of road widening, turning lanes, traffic lights, etc., to keep everyone moving. Otherwise we'll have a situation of, to quote Yogi Berra, "nobody goes there anymore, it's too crowded."



FENNELLY: Yes, on the BoRC, one of our final tasks were to complete a design for the 20/27/126 intersections in town for the MOUD. Whether the MUOD goes forward or not, in the future, this intersection area has the highest concentration of traffic and pedestrian interaction and I hope we move forward with the design some day as the result will make that area (including the library intersection of 126/27) much safer and more passable.



MISHARA: I am strong proponent of the proposed Rte. 30/27 intersection project. This intersection currently presents a risk to motorists and pedestrians and should be widened with dedicated left hand turn lanes, walk signals, improved sidewalks and new bike lanes. The five-way intersection where Plain Road and Claypit Hill Road meet also needs to be reviewed for pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Potential solutions include added stop signs, better approach signage and caution lights. Another intersection that should be studied for traffic mitigation and pedestrian safety is where Old Tavern Road, Commonwealth Road and Loker Street meet.

5. Do you have any opinions about how to make Wayland a more walkable community?



BROWN: I think Wayland has a very good system of sidewalks on its roads. On any given day, you can see people running/walking along our main roads on generally well-maintained sidewalks. Could we do better and have more sidewalks? Sure. However, I'm not sure that would be the best use of our limited economic resources.



FENNELLY: Yes, the easiest solutions is to install sidewalks for pedestrian access and speed humps/tables in those area's we can't use sidewalks to control speed.



MISHARA: To make Wayland a more walkable community, I have several proposals. One is to consider installing more speed bumps on heavily travelled roads to slow down speeding cars and make walking a more attractive option. Another proposal is constructing sidewalks on selected roads so that walkers have more options. Lastly, placing walk signals at key intersections that would be a blinking yellow that would turn to red when activated (similar to the walk signal installed on Rte. 126 by the high school) so that walkers can safely navigate busy intersections.

6. **Do you have any thoughts about how to improve the commute into Boston for Wayland residents, or to encourage the use of public transportation options?**



BROWN: While I would love to see the old commuter rail that used to run through town brought back into service, that just isn't going to happen. I think that Boston commuters just have to be realistic: There's no quick way to get there from here. Travel off-hours, take the T, or just be prepared for a long commute.



FENNELLY: Since Wayland is a cut through town for most other towns, by improving our intersections to reduce the queue length on Rt. 20 & Rt. 30 will marginally improve the commute but since Wayland can't control the rate of growth outside our town, marginal improvement is really all we can expect. Public transportation is very desirable and I would encourage all who find it reasonable to use local commuter rail options in Natick & Weston.



MISHARA: As a proponent of public transportation, I would like to see the expansion of the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority (MWRTA) bus routes to include more stops in Wayland with connections to MBTA stations. The MWRTA is funded primarily through state funding and Wayland is a member community. I think we can do better with public transit options for Wayland residents and create more inter-community transit services, including connections to other transit hubs.

7. **Do you support the development of playing fields on the Paine Estate, and why/why not?**



BROWN: I think we should take any chance we can to develop more recreation areas, and thus recreation opportunities for our children and adults alike. Wayland's recreation facilities and fields are good, but not plentiful enough. Ask the Kindergarten soccer players who play on frosty fields at 8am, or the adult soccer leagues playing under the lights at 8pm – we need more fields. I think we should do everything we can to encourage people to get outside, exercise, and get or remain physically fit.



FENNELLY: Yes. We are in dire need of more fields and facilities as there seems to be more and more recreation leagues starting up every year at the youth, adult, and senior adult levels. Unless we are going to start limiting these teams, which I'm not in favor of, we need access to more fields and facilities. With regards to the Paine Estate, the issue is access and it is unreasonable to expect the residents of Greenway to handle and deal with increased traffic on their street for access. I'm in favor of looking at alternative access roads (like one that is off of Rt. 126 (Old Conn Path) , which is a paper road at this time.

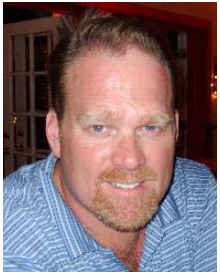


MISHARA: Utilizing town-owned land at the Paine Estates for playing fields is an attractive option, however, an initial step is to determine the source of funding to create and maintain the fields, whether it be from Community Preservation Act funds or some other source. Increased participation in sports in town has created the need for more multi-use fields to accommodate school and town sports teams.

8. Do you support the 30 Rec proposal, and why/why not?



BROWN: I do support the recreational concept of the 30 Rec proposal; however, the location does bring some other factors into play. Where the site once contained hazardous materials, I would want to see a thorough environmental review. What I would not want to see is another long drawn-out process like we just saw for the Town Center. Let's get the facts, and if it's safe to build there, let's build



FENNELLY: Yes. Per my reasoning in the last question, we need more fields and facilities. The 30 Rec project would bring more fields and facilities to the town at zero cost to the town.



MISHARA: I am in favor of a recreation center on this unused parcel if it would generate \$50,000 to \$100,000 of annual revenue to Wayland through lease payments to the town with no taxes or added recreation expenses. As a resident who lives in the immediate vicinity of this conservation area off Route 30 and who supported the town purchasing the land in 2004, I am in favor of seeing this land put to a productive and responsible use for the town's residents.

9. Do you support the Wayside Rail Trail proposal, and why/why not?



BROWN: Again, any proposal providing encouragement to get people exercising has my vote. My family has enjoyed the Minuteman rail trail through Bedford and Lexington and I think bringing something similar to Wayland is an excellent idea.



FENNELLY: Yes. It's a great community building project the encourages physical fitness and family activities.



MISHARA: The Rail trail would be a real asset to Wayland, promoting biking and walking while preserving open space. As importantly, Wayland's rail trail would become part of the larger Massachusetts Central Rail Trail connecting Wayland residents to miles of biking and walking trails in other communities. There are a number of hurdles to overcome including environmental and engineering issues, transfer of land ownership from the MBTA to the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and funding sources at the state and federal levels. Rail trails in other communities have promoted land conservation and green transportation.

10. Are there any other issues or proposals in the Town Meeting warrant or elsewhere that you would like to address?



BROWN: While I have opinions on other Town Meeting warrant issues, they are my personal opinions and not relevant to my candidacy for Board of Public Works.



FENNELLY: Not at this time.



MISHARA: I am interested in exploring agreements with surrounding communities to develop a regional flood preparedness plan to respond to the next crisis. This would also encompass better coordination with state and federal emergency management personnel by operating as a regional body with more clout as opposed to at the town level. In the non-emergency context, inter-municipal agreements can also involve sharing of equipment and resources to better allocate resources across town lines. The net benefit to residents will be better services at less cost.

11. If you can, then please name anyone of prominence that you admire in Wayland, either inside or outside of town or school government, and state why.



BROWN: . I want to publicly thank all the members of the Wayland Police, Fire, Public Works department and other Town officials for their tireless efforts during our recent flooding situation. I, like many of you, had basement issues, as I'm sure these people did in their homes. However, they worked tirelessly to assist the citizens of our town to keep people safe and informed. Are there lessons to be learned? Sure. But these were circumstances that we have never seen before. Everyone simply did what they had to do, and they should be congratulated for a job well done.



FENNELLY: I very much admire Joe Nolan. As long as I have been in town, Joe has always been involved in our local government as either Road Commissioner or Selectman. He has three young children still in school and a very supportive wife and along with a full time job, still makes the time to make our town better by being involved in our local government. Joe also offers what other free time he has being a scout leader, baseball coach, football coach, and mentor to many. Joe sets a great example of volunteerism and public service.



MISHARA: I admire the men and women in town who serve as teachers, police officers, firefighters, public works employees and all of the other workers who are committed to improving the lives of Wayland residents. Their level of commitment and professionalism demonstrated every day makes me proud to live in this community.