

Ian Rintel for Council 6 Ward

1- Public Safety & Transportation What is your plan to improve auto safety and reduce vehicular incidents in Hoboken? How would you assess the effectiveness of the city's "Vision Zero" program, and what, if any, changes would you propose?

An issue I see is lack of enforcement, specifically with automobiles who go through stop signs and e-bikes, moving at speed and not obeying traffic laws. There have been improvements that I appreciate, but the buzz-word "Vision Zero" is more for marketing purposes than anything else. Reducing crossing distances, lowering the speed limit and taking measures that reduce parking on blind corners (bollards) help. I would like to see or study raised crosswalks like they have in Europe. The 'press a button to enact flashing lights' for pedestrians crossing (10th & Hudson) is at best ineffective and in reality is more dangerous than it was before we had it, so I'd like to see that removed in favor of a stop sign.

What is your comprehensive vision for transportation that addresses the needs of both commuters and residents, including solutions for parking and the flow of bike messengers and pedestrians?

Add weekend hop service, around town when it's not warm and to free or low cost nearby pools when it is warm. Complete the green circuit. Make bike lanes protected. Prevent double parking and further encourage bike lane usage by cyclists. Communicate with Hudson County and New Jersey on projects so that we don't have multiple streets or modes of transportation closed at the same time.

Please outline your philosophy on tax policy and budget management. What specific areas of the city budget do you believe are in need of improvement or could be optimized for efficiency?

Increase taxes on vacant commercial units. Eliminate new pilots in nearly all cases, do not renew pilots in most cases. End the practice of hiring 'friends' or political associates. Keep newly designed parks simple and inexpensive to maintain. Re-assess the role of the HBA and focus effort to most benefit local businesses. Use parking fees to keep parking structures maintained rather than fill budget holes.

3- Housing & Development Given the challenges of urban density, what is your plan to manage financially responsible development and the use of PILOT agreements in a way that protects existing infrastructure and justifies their fiscal impact to Hoboken's taxpayers?

Pilots need to be wound down whenever possible and used sparingly, only for projects the city desires that would not work without a PILOT. PILOTS mean every non-pilot property pays more and should be treated that way.

What is your position on Hoboken's existing rent control ordinance? What changes if any would you wish to see?

I would tweak it so that small landlords do not need an attorney to understand and follow the law. I would also make it so that landlords who choose to forgo a rent increase (because they like their tenant) can bank that increase for a future tenant. Landlord loyalty to an existing tenant should not be punished. I'd like to move away from having the tenant always paying for both the landlord's realtor and their own (if they have one) - each party, Landlord & Tenant should pay their own realtor (or go without if they do not want to pay for one).

4- Please define your position on Hoboken's status as a sanctuary city. Given a scenario where an undocumented person commits a crime, is found guilty, and prosecuted, what would your administration's policy be regarding cooperation with federal agencies such as ICE?

Immigration is rightfully a federal issue. I do not think city resources should be used to stop federal law enforcement or protect those who are here illegally. At the same time I do not think local law enforcement should be used to pursue or harass those who are here illegally. Leave it to the feds.

5- Homelessness

What is your approach to addressing homelessness in Hoboken, and what is your plan for providing services and shelter to the city's homeless population?

I am sympathetic to those in dire circumstances and would choose to help those, especially those willing to take the help. The work opportunity tax credit (WOTC) should be pursued by our city social workers to enable those looking for work to more easily be employed at local businesses. I would like to discourage panhandling by reminding residents that the money is put to better use if donated to the shelter or other organizations that help. I might further encourage local business with city provided (or HBA provided) incentives to employ those who are homeless so that they are able to find structure and housing and break the cycle of homelessness.

6- Public Education

What is your long-term vision for the future of public education? How would you make that vision a reality, and what role do you see charter schools playing in that plan?

Every child has a right to a quality education and the bickering between the charter schools, the district schools and even private schools in Hoboken needs to stop. All need to work together so that children at all levels and from all backgrounds can receive the best education possible. The district school argument that charter schools and private schools are siphoning off children and resources from the district schools along with the most engaged parents, is a poor one: because if not for those options (charter and private schools) many of those families would simply leave Hoboken.

Do you support school choice? If you do, would you support a voucher system?

Voucher systems can work, but they can also be a problem because different children cost different amounts to educate and public schools would often need to educate a higher portion of children who need more and cost more. But at the same time it's not fair for those who send children to private schools to receive no help with the education their tax dollars pay for. Private school tuition isn't even tax deductible.

7- Governance & Trust

What specific steps would you take to establish and maintain transparency and accountability in your administration? What would be your policy on OPRA responsiveness? Exclusions?

I'm only running for the sixth ward council position, so I'm not planning to have an administration. I think OPRA responsiveness is reasonable, but I have seen and heard of a number of OPRA requests that were rejected without good reason.

As a city council member, what would your hiring process be for positions within the city?

As a council member, I would seriously scrutinize all suggested hires that have a conflict of interest even if it's only an apparent conflict. Even beyond the council, an independent board should be consulted to hire anyone related to, friendly with, or even an opponent of those in city government.

8- Recognizing the November election is a non-partisan municipal race, how would you ensure that your administration represents the interests and concerns of all residents, regardless of political affiliation?

I won't have an administration, but as I'm mostly anti-party to begin with, I'll talk and listen to everyone regardless of party.

9- City Focus

What would be the primary scope of your focus as a council member, and how would you balance addressing national issues like climate and immigration with the more immediate, localized needs of Hoboken residents?

Climate change is not a national issue, it's a worldwide, national, state level, county level and local issue. We are all affected. Immigration is more of a national issue, and I support employing legal immigrants and having a path to legal immigration, especially for talented individuals who wish to become Americans. As the sixth ward council-person, my focus would be on wasteful spending, poor city services and public safety.

Our community has a recognized need for more recreational opportunities, including the potential for a public swimming pool. What is your plan for

evaluating and addressing this need?

Immediately, we need shuttle service to area pools. Long term, I would like to see a pool facility similar to what Weehawken has, but located where Union Dry Dock is. A Mayoral Candidates 'pie in the sky' idea for a whole new pier and park would not happen for many years AND might bankrupt the city.

Addressing the persistent problem of rodents is a top concern for many residents. What is your long-term plan to tackle this issue, and what metrics will you use to measure the success of city services?

Containerization requirements for large buildings is a next step. I'm not sure if we resumed baiting sewers, but staying on top of baiting sewers and maintaining bait stations is important. Metrics are more or less how frequent we have rat sightings in town or in the sixth ward.

10- Cannabis

What are your thoughts on the city's current plan for six cannabis dispensaries? How would you characterize the rollout process to date, and what is your position on public marijuana use within city limits?

There was no reason to rush the process and because we rushed it, mistakes were made. At this point we need to accept the law of 'time of application' and allow Blue Violets to stay. As far as other dispensaries go and in fact for all dispensaries: I would like to see them remove outdoor signage that may be attractive to children, per statute. I do not support public marijuana use within city limits and would treat it similarly to public drinking.

11- Environment

The previous administration spent a significant amount of time and money on legal action against companies regarding environmental issues. Do you plan to follow in the same footsteps, and what is your overall approach to environmental policy for Hoboken?

I am not sure what this pertains to, but I'll guess it refers to when we sued the oil companies in 2020. I do think polluters should be held responsible, but that specific pursuit was mostly a headline grab. In regards to environmental policy locally, I'd like to see everyone do their best to be good citizens.

12- Commercial Revival

What is your strategy for promoting commercial revitalization and supporting local business throughout the city?

A revamped HBA that focuses on small local business would be one step. Another would be to simplify the process of starting a business in Hoboken including making building out and

permitting easier. Finally: we may need to explore penalties for commercial spaces that sit vacant for too long.

13- Additional Comments

None at this time.