

John FitzGerald

Please note this transcript has been edited for purposes of clarity and length.

The Huntington News: Why are you running for the Boston City Council?

FitzGerald: I think the most important thing I say to folks when they ask me why I'm running is that I love two things: my family and this city. And I'd like to keep the two of those things together. I think there's a lot of reasons people are leaving the city, especially families. I know folks in my position, I have three young children — six, four and two — and you look at schools, public safety, cost of living and quality of life and a lot of people make the decision to take off. Being born and raised here [in Boston], I think it is the best city to grow up in and to raise a family in and I want to keep it that way. Every decision I make on that Council will be "does this help families stay in the city?"

HN: What are your goals for District 3 and what do you hope to achieve in your potential 2-year term and beyond?

FitzGerald: My goals for District 3 are to make it more family-oriented, affordable and [to have] better schools there. And to have it be a safe, comfortable, clean place to live where families and neighbors get along with one another, get to know each other better [and] strengthen the community, throughout all of District 3. And that goes for Lower Mills all the way to the Ink Block at the South End. Really, it is generally to improve the quality of life for all the folks in District 3 and bring the necessary improvements we can. There's such things as larger issues like improving the schools and making it safer and thinking about what to do with Mass. and Cass.

District 3 has the most coastline of any other district, so what are we going to do about coastal resiliency and climate change and things like that. And then there's just the constituent service piece, just going out making sure those nuts and bolts stuff are done, the urban mechanics stuff. Making sure sidewalks are fixed, stop signs are in the right place. There's big picture items and little picture nuts and bolts and folks on all of them.

HN: Would what be your top priority for your beginning time in office?

FitzGerald: It's tough to put anything at the top, but if you look at what keeps families here right now, it's the cost of living and the schools — housing and better school systems. Those are the top two. Typically when I list my priorities, it's housing, education, public safety and constituent services.

HN: What is something you'd like voters to know before general election day, whether that be about your campaign or the importance of voter participation in City Council elections?

FitzGerald: Even in District 3, which has some of the highest voter precincts in the entire city, voter turnout was still relatively low in District 3 [in the Boston preliminary election]. Even in those higher voting precincts, it was still a little lower, so really the importance of making the time to get out on Nov. 7. There are multiple ways to do it now [like voting] by mail, [going to]

early voting locations set up, [or] you can vote the day of. If you are not around, there are other ways to do it, they make it very accessible and easy to do now. Please take advantage of that, and if anything, please make sure you vote on Nov. 7.

HN: What do you think sets you apart from your opponent?

FitzGerald: What really sets me apart is that I have worked for City Hall for 17 years now. There are a lot of relationships made, things that I can hit the ground running with because I understand the processes, I understand how things work, I understand the people that are doing it and some of the hurdles that have to be overcome to accomplish things. So really that experience, that 17 years of already knowing City Hall.

It's important to understand, because that is how things get done. I am ready to use that experience to hit the ground running, and I am excited to deliver and just get to work for the folks of District 3 and deliver some great things and make this place an attractive place to live, work and play.

This Q&A was conducted by Oliva Woodard

