

# Where do candidates stand on gasification plant at landfill?

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The Taunton Daily Gazette USA TODAY NETWORK

TAUNTON — With election day fast approaching, we thought we'd give voters a chance to get to know the 11 candidates vying for City Council seats a little better. Election day is Tuesday, Nov. 7, but early voting starts on Oct. 28.

For the City Council, voters have a total of 11 candidates — including all nine incumbents and two challengers — to choose from. The Gazette reached out to all 11 candidates for a Q& A. Each candidate received the same five questions.

Questions were selected in part based on readership data and the topics which garnered the most interest this year. We will be publishing the replies from all 11 candidates to each of the five questions as separate stories. This is question three of five.

## Question 3: Do you support a gasification plant at landfill?

After years of conversations and research on the proposal, are you for or against the proposed gasification plant from Aries as a safe and viable solution to the city and region's waste issues?

### Estele Borges (incumbent)



**Against.** When evaluating the proposed gasification plant from Aries as a solution to waste issues, it was important for me to consider the potential environmental and health impacts, including concerns related to forever chemicals like PFAS. I believe it will have a potential health effect and it raises significant concerns for me and the neighborhood. PFAS have raised significant concerns due to their persistence in the environment and potential health effects. The residents near the landfill and surrounding areas do not deserve this. There are other alternative waste management strategies, such as anaerobic digestion, that we should be exploring.

### Christopher Coute (incumbent)



As I have maintained from the beginning, I would only be in favor of the Aries proposal, or similar sewer sludge proposals, if they were studied extensively, and subsequently proven to be safe by the Massachusetts DEP (Department of Environmental Protection).

### Kelly Dooner (incumbent)



There is not enough information available yet to make an educated decision on this in my opinion. When making a big decision like this, I choose to look at the facts. We are still waiting on results from a plant in New Jersey and until we see the results/ implications of that plant, I am not going to make an assumption.

With that, if the results determine this is in any way harmful to the community, then I will not be in favor of it. The safety of our residents is the number one priority for me.

### **Phillip Duarte (incumbent)**



**I am opposed to the proposed Aries gasification plant.** As one of the original skeptics and eventual opponents of this project, I was able to work with the O'Connell Administration to commission an independent review of Aries' Draft Environmental Impact Report. The review resulted in the generation of its own report that details many of the public health and environmental concerns that I and many others believe have not been fully explored. Each and every point made in the report will need to be addressed by Aries before they can move forward with the state MEPA and DEP permitting processes.

### **Edna Isaac (challenger)**



The gasification plant has economic advantages, but it is also important to consider the potential long-term environmental and health impacts. It is essential to conduct a thorough environmental impact assessment and ensure that adequate emission control measures are in place to protect public health.

### **Scott Martin (challenger)**



**I will not be supporting the Aries project.** With that being said, I would love to see Taunton being the leader in the region for all kinds of trash, recycling, waste projects. I would be open to listening to any companies' ideas, but it must be proven to be safe to our residents and the environment today and for decades to come.

### **John McCaul (incumbent)**



The council and administration have worked on this proposal for over three years, I have said along with other counselors, that before we agree on this project or any project of this magnitude, we must look at the safety of our residents first. Simply put, it's been three years, and Aries has not proven that its gasification process is 100% safe for residents. There is no proof that their current plants have been deemed safe. Therefore, I will not currently support the project.

### **Jeff Postell (incumbent)**



While there has been many conversations and research, we are still far from the finish line as it relates to whether the proposed Aries plant is a safe and viable solution for our city. Although we need to be creative in our efforts to address our human waste dilemma, we need to continue to exercise caution as we review the data and reports from the subject matter experts. My decision for the support of this proposal will rely heavily on the findings and recommendations from the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and other organizations.

### **David Pottier (incumbent)**



Communities transporting municipal solid waste and water treatment sludge from their own community only to end up in some other town's landfill is neither sustainable nor beneficial to our global environment. I appreciate that we are looking at better options while understanding the challenges of disposing items containing Per- and Polyfluorinated Substances (PFAS). IF Aries' technology can be demonstratively proven to be EFFECTIVE and, more importantly, SAFE to our State and Federal regulators, I could see Taunton exploring this option further rather than to continue to make this some other community's problem. However, to me, it is always safety first.

### **Lawrence Quintal (incumbent)**



As a Municipal Councilor, I am open to safe and alternative energy solutions. The operative word being safe. After having had three years to prove that this process was safe for our community, Aries has been unable to do so. **I am against the Aries gasification proposal.** We have to move forward and look for alternative, safe solutions to our waste issues.

### **Barry Sanders (incumbent)**



The truth is that Aries has never been able to prove that their technology for destroying PFAS "forever chemicals" works in the real world. Never be the first one on or the last one off. **I am not willing to let our community be the test subjects for this failing experiment. PFAS chemicals are a real threat to the health of our community. I am one of two members of the Council who has opposed this sludge gasification plant from the early days.** We must put people before profits and move past this failed idea and towards more responsible solutions.

### **What is the last day to register to vote in the general election**

Friday, Oct. 27, at 5 p.m. is the deadline to register to vote, change party affiliation, or change your address for the general election on Nov. 7.

### **Where do I vote on Election Day?**

Registered voters can vote in person on Election Day at their designated polling places, which can be found on the city's website.

### **Early voting by mail**

All registered voters qualify for a vote-by-mail ballot for the November election. You must complete an application for a vote-by-mail ballot to be mailed to you. You can download an application on the Massachusetts secretary of state's website.

### **What is the deadline to apply for an early vote-by-mail ballot?**

The completed, signed application must be received by the Taunton Elections Department by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31. It can be returned in person, by mail or by scanning and emailing it to [elections@tauntonma.gov](mailto:elections@tauntonma.gov).

### **Early voting in person**

Early voting in person for the Nov. 7 election will take place at City Hall, 15 Summer St., on the following days and times: Saturday, Oct. 28, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Oct. 30, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31, 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 2, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3, 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

### **What is absentee voting?**

Not everyone is eligible to vote via absentee ballot. Absentee ballot voting is restricted to people who won't be in Taunton, for whatever reason, on election day, have a disability that keeps them from being able to physically get to the polls, or have a religious reason for not voting in person. An application for an absentee ballot can be found on the Massachusetts secretary of state's website.

### **What is the deadline to apply for an absentee ballot?**

The completed, signed application must be received by the Taunton Elections Department by 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31. It can be returned in person, by mail or by scanning and emailing it to [elections@tauntonma.gov](mailto:elections@tauntonma.gov).

### **How can I contact the Taunton Elections Department?**

All inquires can be directed to your Elections Department Office, located in Taunton City Hall, or by calling them at [508-821-1044](tel:508-821-1044).