

City Councilor Khrystian King announces run for mayor



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WORCESTER — Four-term Councilor-at-Large Khrystian E. King formally announced his candidacy for mayor at Crompton Park Thursday morning.

King, who has worked as a social worker for the state Department of Children and Families for 23 years, enters a race against incumbent Mayor Joseph Petty and Guillermo Creamer.

At the news conference, King criticized Petty, saying the city has not consistently supported vulnerable residents such as the homeless and people with disabilities and youths.

"The same old leadership is failing. Housing prices are skyrocketing, crime and mental health are major problems, and there is too much focus on downtown and not enough on the local economic hubs in our neighborhoods," King said in a statement.

In addition, said he has been a leader in fighting for safe schools, for bringing sports to Worcester middle schools at Worcester Public Schools, for government transparency and fought to keep residential property rates and taxes lower.

King: Petty not a forefront

King also took questions from reporters.

When asked about what sort of "intentional leadership" he believed was lacking in the mayor's office, King said Petty has not been on the forefront on issues like police body cameras, inclusionary zoning and making homeownership affordable.

"The very No. 1 leader in the City of Worcester is the mayor, he has not been on the forefront," King said.

King said Worcester also needed to invest into communities like those who live near Crompton Park, Vernon Hill, the Burncoat neighborhood and Grafton Hill who struggle financially. He referenced bringing more afterschool programs to these communities and keeping working-age residents in the city.

As a potential chairman of the School Committee, King said the work he has done with schools in his role as a social worker for nearly 30 years would give him a unique perspective.

Father of 3

"I understand the school system, I understand the challenges," King said. "I have three daughters, two of which who have been in Worcester Public schools."

As a city councilor, King has not infrequently found himself on the losing side of votes. King said issues that have initially met resistance have eventually come to bear. He pointed to increased efforts to create affordable housing and the path to body cameras.

"It's a matter of putting them on the table and then building coalitions," King said.

2023 will be King's first time running for mayor. He was first elected to the City Council in 2015. In 2013, he ran as a Democrat for state representative, 16th Worcester District.

King attended Holy Name Central Catholic Junior Senior High School and St. Peter-Marian High School.

He studied social psychology at Wheaton College, received a master's degree in social work from Simmons College and a master's degree of public administration certification in public management and leadership from Suffolk University's Moakley Center for Public Management, according to the candidate.

King, the son of parents who emigrated to Massachusetts from Bermuda, was the first Black man elected to the City Council since the 1930s.

In addition to his roles as a city councilor and a social worker, King is regional vice president of SEIU Local 509's DCF chapter and has coached basketball at Quinsigamond Community College, St. Peter-Marian and the former Becker College.

King's fundraising this year has contributed to speculation that he would enter the mayoral race. King ended 2022 with \$4,694.90 in his political committee

after raising over \$3,000 in December, according to records with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance.

Campaign funds

As of the end of May, his political campaign has raised \$17,778.60.

Candidates for at-large council seats are automatically entered into the pool of candidates for mayor. Council candidates must opt out of running for mayor in order to not appear on the mayoral ballot section.

Two other current councilor-at-large candidates have run for mayor in recent years, Councilor-at-Large Donna Colorio and William Coleman.