

PEC Chamber of Commerce Candidate's Questionnaire

The PEC Chamber of Commerce's Policy and Governmental Affairs Committee recently surveyed their members, asking them what their top priorities are for the next council. From those priorities we have created the following questions. As is our tradition, we have also asked the Prince Edward Federation of Agriculture to provide questions as well. If possible, we would like these questions to be answered and submitted by noon on Tuesday, September 25th. Please be aware that these answers may become available to the public.

Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce Questions

Please fill out your name and ward.

Angie Baldwin, Hillier Ward 7

How will you tackle the Workforce Development and labour shortage issues in Prince Edward County?

I believe we need to tackle the shortage of labour by tackling the affordable housing and lack of housing for year round residents first. With the affordable housing for workers to live closer without having to pay to commute we could attract a more diverse, skilled labour force.

Affordable Housing is at a crisis point, what action will you take to address it to ensure current residents can afford to continue living here and new, young residents are enticed to move here?

I am motivated to work with Council to deal with affordable housing and come up with some innovative ideas. I do not have all the answers but I do have ideas. There are options from little houses, to underutilized property options in The County. I have 2 sons that are nearing the age to move out and it would be nice to have them live close but without a great job they will likely not be able to afford to live here.

Short Term Accommodations licensing and registration - do you agree with the direction the County is currently taking? What is your plan for dealing with Short Term Accommodations in PEC?

I believe STA's need to be regulated. I understand some people are trying to make a little extra money to help themselves to be able to afford living here but there are too many that don't live here and just buy the properties to make money without caring about The County. With the high percentage of STA's that the owner does not live here it affects the rest of the residents that do live here year round. It affects the amount of children that are enrolled in our schools which has already closed Queen Elizabeth Public School and Pine crest, a lower work force because workers would rather not commute and the economy and supplies that are available to the residents during non peak times of the STA's.

Development Charges and Process Restructure – there is a severe staff shortage in the Planning Department and the planning process is considered by many to be onerous and costly. How do you propose to address it?

I would work with Council to find where the planning process can be improved. From there we could deal with the issues. Unfortunately I have not had any interactions with the planning department or the process. I believe if the process was less onerous and costly we would be able to attract a non-profit developer to help with the affordable housing issues we are having.

Would you support the waiver or reduction of development charges and building permit fees for affordable housing development to encourage such development?

I would definitely support the wavier or reduction of charges and fees for an affordable housing development. The development would have to fall into the criteria for affordable housing for this area. Unlike the Wellington Arena developer, I do not believe \$248,000 is affordable, and the new Curtis Street development in Picton where prices are start at \$300,000 is too high.

What are your thoughts on Downtown Revitalization within Picton, Bloomfield, Wellington and Consecon as well as the parking issues faced by these towns?

Revitalization would be great to see in all of the towns but I think we need to deal with infrastructure, affordable homes and a stable work force before making the stores and streets look beautiful. Without the year round residents here to keep the stores and businesses open it would not be worth the funding, unless the funding is coming from else where.

Roads and infrastructure (state of roads, drainage, water and sewage). Does the County have the means to deal with the true quality issues for roads in the County? What is your plan for addressing these major infrastructure projects?

I am unsure of the extent of The County's means for dealing with the true quality issues. I am unsure of the ways they have tried to deal with it or the companies they have reached out to. In light of how long some of the roads have been in need, such as Hwy 49, I am thinking The County has not had the means, priorities or maybe the support needed for major infrastructure. I would be willing to work with Council to find out theses answers and seek the means we need.

Prince Edward Federation of Agriculture (PEFA) Questions

Farm land property taxes have increased by over 25% for the second year resulting in the farm tax class share of County expenses rising to 2.2% of County revenue from 1.6% in 2016. Are you willing to support reducing farm tax ratio to ensure the percentage of municipal tax revenue contributed by the farm property tax remains at the level of 2018?

I would be willing to support maintaining the property tax ratio for farmers at the 2018 level. We would need to get creative to ensure the residential tax payers do not have an increase. I know the research shows it would be an increase of approximately \$40 a year, but any increase is unwanted by anyone.

There is an urgent need to relax the current half load restrictions which are a barrier to farmers who need to market beans and corn to fill contracts where the farmers do not control the scheduled delivery dates. These deliveries should be included with other essential services such as the transport of milk, potable water and prepared animal feeds as they are required to meet the market demands for animal and human consumption. The timely sale of these commodities are essential for farm viability and maintaining worker employment in the winter. Are you in favour of removing the seasonal axle load restrictions that can impede the movement of farmers' crops to markets as required?

I would be willing to work with the farmers to alleviate some of the restrictions depending on weight of loads and the weather permitting. Farmers need to remember the restrictions are in place to help The County with infrastructure costs and replacement of the roads less frequently. This is something The County is struggling with now.

There is a need for adequate emergency services in rural areas and improved response times. A Farm 911 Sign initiative has been created in The Quinte area. How does this municipality handle civic addresses on vacant properties? Is there a program in place for farmers to request a civic address for vacant farm land and what is the fee?

I have not inquired about nor have I spoke with anyone who has tried to acquire a civic address for vacant land. Through researching The County website, which was not easy, I believe one needs to apply for an entrance permit with the fee of \$400.00 and there is no guarantee the entrance will be approved. From there you can get a civic address. I am unsure of the cost of the sign. I think this would require a visit to the municipal office or a phone call. I thought since the Emily project was trying to partnership with the different counties in the area it would have made it easier to acquire a sign. I would help promote the need for a civic address at farm properties. If this initiative was to save the life of 1 person it would be well worth the efforts. There have been too many farm accidents that could have resulted differently if there had been 911 signs.

Do you support the OFA position that all new farm buildings should be exempt from development charges as is currently the case in most Counties including Prince Edward County?

I support the OFA position in regards to exempting farm buildings from development charges. In order to support retention and growth of farming in Prince Edward County we need to help and support farmers where we can so they can maintain or expand on the strength and growth of their farms which will in turn help support the community. This will also support jobs as the buildings are being built. The small loss of revenue The County will incur is a small price to pay to support and retain the backbone of The County and it's residents.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!



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