

# 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.

Bob Rogers, Ward 5 Athol

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

This is a problem province wide. Our education system has let our children down by removing skilled trades training in our school systems. We need to work with the province to fix it. Locally we need to cast our nets further and pay more to bring skilled tradesmen to the County where they can help train new apprentices in their fields. A trade school in the County would be a good start.

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**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?**

We should encourage lot severances on rural lands to increase housing inventory and relieve pressure on affordable housing. We should permit different types of housing such as small, eco-friendly modular homes on smaller individual lots, repurpose abandoned school buildings, and create granny flats for our aging population.

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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?

The STA licensing plan is still in flux but appears to target the owners. I support implementing the Municipal Accommodation tax, where the tourist pays, not the tourism operator and all residents would benefit from tourism.

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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?

We need to look at appropriate staffing levels and make the necessary adjustments learning from best practices from other municipalities. We need to reduce/eliminate excessive planning fees, charges and processes that are barriers to investment.

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

Yes

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

I believe the BIAs are a valuable resource and we should work with them and other stakeholders to find sustainable solutions to keeping our downtowns viable.

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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?

The County does not have the means to deal with the true quality issues for roads and other major infrastructure projects. We need to increase our tax base significantly by building more homes, lots of them. This will also stimulate the local economy by creating jobs and assist with affordable housing. We should also work with the provincial government, through AMO and our MPP to achieve fair funding.

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## 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?

No. The problem is province wide and created by MPAC. The province needs to address this problem.

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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?

Yes, I believe all farm commodities should be exempt from half load restrictions.

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?

According to the County Planning Department farmers can request a 911 sign for vacant properties at a cost of \$400.

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?

Yes

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!



