

# 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.

Mark Rose - Ward 1 (Picton)

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

I think a good way to start is to get building. Make that building a bit easier to do. There are jobs in building and we need way more of both.

We also need to keep attracting new, sustainable businesses that will create year round, good paying jobs. That is going to mean thinking outside of the box and making the County a destination for those industries. Let's get out ahead and set some more trends in the realm of long term, sustainable job growth.

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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?**

The plan that has just been brought forth by the local Not For Profit Affordable housing group seems like a no brainer and a very good start. We should have been out in front of this issue a long time ago. Its effecting a good portion of Southern Ontario. We can't get building fast enough.

The issue is even deeper when you consider the beds and care that our seniors need and that number will skyrocket in the coming years with Baby Boomers becoming seniors. The plan with Pinecrest school is an example of opportunity arising from a negative outcome like a school closure. Perhaps we can replicate that elsewhere.

Let's get building some homes. When that happens, we can take a little pressure off the supply and demand issue and perhaps prices will lower. Then ideally, you attract new residents who bring new jobs, new trades, new innovations and, voila; some enhanced sustainability.

I'm not sure there is much the County can do, but the Landlord-Tenant Act could use some more teeth. Landlords need more incentive to rent to long term tenants and right now, its just not there for them. So even if it means being a vocal advocate for changes to that, its at least a conversation starter at some level.

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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?**

I think it is a much needed start. Regulations are coming and they are needed, but they need to make sense. It can't be regulation just for the sake of regulating.

It's important to not lump all STA owners into one category. Some are doing out of necessity, not to get rich. I think its also important to understand that AirBnB is not the Boogeyman. Tourists were coming here long before AirBnB was a thing. But like I said, regulations are coming and they are necessary at this point.

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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?

This has to be addressed. We do not always need to be stifled by process upon process upon process. Let's look into streamlining some of these things. There simply has to be a way.

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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 like the improvement of the downtown core of Picton. As long as plans make sense, and its not just change for the sake of change and something productive is achieved.

Aesthetics are great, things have to look good, but I'm much more inclined to support a plan that makes sense and the community gains from.

Right now, a part of that common sense would be to improve the parking situation. There is money in parking, and hey, we're in debt.

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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?

There are always opportunities out there to grab some provincial and federal money for these things.

The federal government is now on Phase 2 of their infrastructure spending plan that is going to pay for over \$30 billion of work, country wide. The County did receive funding from the Clean Water and Waste Water Fund (CWWF) from both the federal and provincial governments in 2017 and there is opportunity for more going forward. So let's keep those conversations going.

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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?

I am willing to continue that conversation, yes.

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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?

Removing altogether seems a bit much but yes, again I feel there is benefit to be had in continuing the conversation on this topic. Farmers are obviously an integral part of this community and I'm not sure how impeding their processes helps us.

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 need to look into the specifics of the process aspect of these questions, but I would absolutely be a supporter of The Emily Project to help bring more adequate signage.

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!



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