

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.

Steve Ferguson, South Marysburgh and running for Mayor

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

The skilled trades offer the best opportunity for creation of new full-time jobs in the pec economy. Pec council 2019 must work with partners to develop skills training and job opportunities. Pec county properties can be used for training and start-ups in cooperation with local business, and apprenticeship programs can be developed with the education board, eotb, h.e.a.t. and pela-cfdc. Pec council will need to pursue hi-speed internet & technology hubs in association with other organizations.

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?

Young families and employees need affordable homes near jobs, schools, healthcare facilities and parks. It will be necessary to consider new methods of financing, building and servicing such homes. The County will need to adjust planning and building procedures in order to adapt to this requirement, and it will be necessary to ensure that this housing does not change use to short term rental. The recent formation of a not for profit housing corporation will enable a more targeted approach to create attainable housing.

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?

Yes. Public safety, the deterioration of settlement areas and communities are only a few of the issues that regulation will address. That said, any legislation must address all facets and situations of this new phenomena: whole homes, occasional, owner-occupied to ensure it is fair and reasonable to all.

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?

A review of systems, operations and procedures involving current staff, developers, planners and other stakeholders. The report from the developers roundtable may provide guidance as to approaches that would remove impediments.

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

I would consider this if provided with the information to allow for a decision appropriate for PEC based on financial implications and project plans.

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

I'm in favour of what has been undertaken so far including the Picton HCD. The parking issue needs to be addressed but I'm infavour of charges (meters) in Bloomfield and Wellington; more accessible parking; and more rigid enforcement of parking laws.

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?

Without more funding from other levels of government, PEC will be forced to make do as best it can with public funds. That said, other revenue sources must be identified and implemented – a 4% accommodation tax, a gate charge at Sandbanks etc. – that will give the County a little more wiggle room to undertake projects. The municipality will be placing great faith in its ability to identify, apply for and receive grant money.

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?

This is a matter to be dealt with during budget deliberations in January 2019. I initiated discussion – later implemented - of a grant program for those farmers who needed some financial relief from MPAC's assessments. The program will have to be adjusted, possibly, for 2019.

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 agree the restrictions should be lifted for the shipment of commodities as outlined in the question.

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?

The Emily project was introduced last year and the cost was to cover the 911 civic address metal flag (\$10?)

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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