

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.

Terry Shortt - Ameliasburgh

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

The economic development department as well as the committee which exists under its control are the tools in place to address these issues

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?

This is a complicated issue with no easy answer. The municipality has no control over the real estate market. I feel non-resident ownership for strictly investment purposes (for example air b&b's) needs to be addressed.

As far as attracting young families, schools and good paying year round employment is the key. Unfortunately one of the key attractions to young couples looking for a place to live is the availability of good schools. The school closures we are experiencing due to our declining youth population are not sending a positive message in this regard.

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 feel the need for licensing and registration is absolutely necessary as well as restriction to B&B's being allowed to operate in owner occupied dwellings only.

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?

Re-establish the Planning Commission

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

Yes

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

Downtown revitalization is an ongoing project which is showing benefits to these areas and parking can only be resolved by more municipally owned lots

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?

If by "means" the question suggests funds, the answer is not without an increase in taxation or going into debt. Approximately 800,000 visitors come to the County each year, most attending the Sandbanks Provincial Park, a major provincial attraction, putting stress on an infrastructure whose cost of maintenance less than 26,000 residents are responsible for. The allotment of tax in lieu the County receives from the province is not sufficient to cover the wear and tear from this volume of traffic.

For the first time in 8 years the County has a MPP who belongs to the elected Provincial government. Hopefully this will mean a cooperative look between the County and the Province to address these short comings in respect to adequate funding for the linking roads to the park.

This would free up County tax revenue to address our other roads which are also seeing an increase in traffic due to the wineries, breweries and distilleries which have flourished over the last few years.

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 feel farms need to be assessed on the value of the farming operation and not on the value of the residential properties that neighbour it and so yes I would support this proposal

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

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?

It is my understanding that the current council voted to participate in the Emily project which will address this important issue

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 believe in a level playing field for business and so yes I would support a position which reflects the majority of neighbouring communities

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!



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