

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.

Ernie Margetson Ward 7 Hillier

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

For workforce development, promote and facilitate opportunities for education and skills training to existing and new employment sectors, assist existing businesses with expansion plans, attract and welcome new business by providing serviced land or other amenities. Labour shortage may be reduced by promoting development of, and protecting existing, affordable and diverse housing types and promoting quality of life to relocate.

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?

Potential actions include support of the Affordable Housing Corporation, limiting the percentage or density of short term accommodation, enable efficient approvals of development of residential subdivisions in full serviced areas, review and reduce maximum area requirements for residential units, and provide incentives and/or requirements for affordable housing in development applications.

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 agree with the direction the County is presently taking. I believe licencing and maximum densities can provide balance and reduce conflict between the proliferation of short term accommodation and permanent residential requirements.

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?

Review the process with a view of streamlining, review staff hierarchy, replace staff that left their employment, and although the Planning Department has lost multiple staff recently, development process issues may extend beyond the Planning Department. A planning committee including members of Council and appropriate volunteers working cooperatively with staff may assist.

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

Yes, but it would depend on the terms of the development and the ability to ensure that the housing remains affordable for a reasonable term of time.

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 Municipality should focus on maintaining public infrastructure within the urban areas without more studies and focus groups. A vital 'downtown' is in my opinion is more of an organic process rather than one that can be scripted.

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 future requirements for infrastructure upkeep, including roads, is beyond the means of the tax base. A more robust priority system needs to be in place to scrutinize where limited funds should be allocated for road reconstruction and maintenance. Also, provincial funding transfers for roads could be reviewed in light of the length and condition of former provincial highways that were downloaded in the late 1990s and an extremely popular Provincial Park with limited access via provincial roads within the Municipality. Existing watermain, sanitary sewer and storm sewer networks should be utilized wherever possible by enabling and supporting development infills in lieu of urban sprawl and major extensions to the existing infrastructure network.

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 review the farm tax ratio to determine the best approach, but I would need to undertake a review and understand the implications prior to committing.

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, in consultation with the farm sector, certain roads could be exempt from load restrictions to enable efficient transportation of goods.

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?

Emily project has been supported by Council, and to the best of my knowledge you can request a sign, pick it up and place it at no fee -- could not confirm as no one answered the telephone.

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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