

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.

David Harrison Ward 8 North Marysburgh

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

That is a tough question, without an easy answer. Perhaps where applicable the County make concessions for business owners to provide housing for employees. Especially in seasonal situations to assist with the tourist season.

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 very important issues driven by many causes. I would certainly have an open mind to any suggestions. One thing I would consider is the County creating an inventory of building lots for subdivisions not adjacent to one another but scattered. This would be accomplished by partnering with the developers to create these lots and the County waiving/reducing various charges, for example development fees. I would then partner with groups like Habitat for Humanity. This allows the recipient to build equity and protect their investment.

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 disagree with the haste that this is being pushed through with. It is not thought through thoroughly enough and has not given the STA owners long enough to give coordinated input. It also does not address the affordable housing issue adequately.

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?

Paul Walsh, Manager of Planning is very capable in his position. I would dedicate more resources to this department to improve service.

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?

I would solicit input from the merchants involved in each area and value their input in decision making.

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?

Yes, providing staff recommendations are provided to Council and approved by Council.

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?

Yes, all the farmers needed was a "Band Aid" until the next MPAC cycle in 2020. I believe residential rates will take a huge increase then which will probably restore the 1.6%.

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?

The Project Emily or a Farm 911 initiative is in the planning stages at the County now. Hopefully in the next few months the signs will be available.

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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