

# 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.

Phil St-Jean, Ward 1 Picton

---

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

I believe a multi pronged approach is necessary if we wish to address this issue.

1. Council needs to identify where we are currently experiencing a labour shortage, which sectors are most in need of support. Some work has been done by Community and Economic Development but not enough to stem the tide.

2. Council needs to undertake a more active role in the type of training available at our local college Loyalist to ensure they are offering the courses and turning out graduates with an education that our community finds are lacking.

3. We must encourage and promote co-operative education and workplace training programs both at the high school and post secondary levels in partnership with our existing businesses and economic stakeholders.

ie: local contractors working with the high school to take on students who may have an interest in the trades (carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HRV, etc.)

and match this at the post secondary level locally. Currently very little of this is happening. This process can also be applied to other sectors like viticulture, health & human services.

---

**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?**

Council needs and I will support a revitalization of the Queen Elizabeth School and grounds. I believe we have been given an amazing opportunity to enhance our community by keeping that area of Picton as residential. Council can only look to it's most recent success with Lovesong and the Pinecrest school partnership for a model to build on.

I believe that it should become a mixed residential (for all) affordable housing development. Not simply allow the school board to sell it off to a for profit developer who would raze the building and cram in more \$400K - \$500K homes and townhouses. We have an opportunity there turn lemons into lemonade.

---

**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 I believe currently we are on the right track. Amending the OPA and the zoning bylaw is the correct approach. STA's must be licensed and regulated but only after council has consulted with the local operators. We do not want to make any bylaws that become over burdensome or cause undue hardship to our tourism industry. However we must acknowledge that unregulated these establishments have and will continue to have a detrimental impact on our affordable housing crisis. The last piece will be taking advantage of recent changes to provincial regulations surrounding the Municipal Accommodations Tax. All STA's whether B&B's or whole home rentals should be considered an alternative revenue stream for the county. MAT will be paid by the users not the operators and will offer our county a way to raise revenue that does not affect those of us who live here year round.

---

**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?**

Yes I agree there is a shortage of staff in the planning department. Lack of foresight and poor decisions made by current and previous councils and previous senior administration have depleted what was once a very effective and efficient department. We need to staff up in order to relieve the stress on current staff. The planning process is largely determined by the province. How we deliver those services is in our hands. As someone who during my regular business has to work with the current system and staff I feel the process could use some tweaking to create a more robust and responsive department which could create efficiencies that will in turn reduce some of the costs incurred by residents and developers.

---

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

Yes, so long as it is truly affordable housing development. There currently exists a framework for developers to create blended projects and it is working. The encouragement is needed in the purely affordable sector.

---

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

Some of the stress in Picton has been relieved by the addition of the King St. parking lot but a review needs to be undertaken to see if we need more or manage what we have better. One of the concerns I hear from many residents is why does Picton have paid parking and Bloomfield & Wellington do not. I feel if we're going to tax the customers in Picton then we should be fair about it, otherwise eliminate parking fees all together. There were very little problems when meters disappeared from Picton for over a year. Meters are a tax simply put.

---

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?

We do not have the means (tax revenue or base) to address the shortfalls in our infrastructure. A huge property tax increase for many years is the only way to put a dent in it. That is NOT an acceptable solution. We MUST bring our federal and provincial partners to the table (with their cheque books in hand), without their help it is almost impossible to maintain, repair or improve our infrastructure by ourselves.

---

## 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 do not believe shifting tax burdens from one class of property owner to another is appropriate. We did not apply that process to waterfront property owners when they experienced dramatic land value increases nor should we in this case.

I get it farmers are land rich and cash poor, at least a few. Assisting new and young farmers is a good plan to start but I also recognize it's not the whole solution. Our elected officials must take an active role in demanding MPAC re-evaluate how it assess agricultural lands.

---

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 I am in favour of removing half load restrictions that affect farmers crops and essential services.

---

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 am unaware if there is a program in place but if there is an identified need that will make it easier for emergency services to assist in times of need then we should explore ways to integrate it into our 911 addressing system.

---

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 I support that position. Development charges are for residential, commercial & industrial developers not agricultural use farm buildings.

---

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire!



This content is neither created nor endorsed by Google.

Google Forms