



SORE is requesting responses to seven questions from the candidates in the Niagara-on-the-Lake election. SORE intends to post all responses on their website and possibly to refer to them in our ongoing communications with NOTL residents.

Response to S.O.R.E. Questions

Question 1

The new Council should pass a new Official Plan within six months of the new term. There likely will be appeals and this may take some time to work through. For this to happen within six months, the new Town Council must be like-minded, share a vision for our community and be willing to work together and compromise without, at the same time, compromising their individual principals. Much will depend on who voters choose in the upcoming election.

Like any Official Plan, it will reflect our Town's present wishes and, as soon as it is passed, amendments will be required; for example, those arising from the Traffic Master Plan. The Official Plan is really a moving target to be amended as we respond the future needs of our community.

There are elements of the new Official Plan that I believe should differ from the existing Plan.

I believe that the concept of "streetscapes" should be included in the Plan. Infill projects should be required to consider and be sympathetic to surrounding homes, and other buildings in an urban area.

I would include a very clear statement on our status with the Provincial government with respect to their density and intensification targets. I believe that we have already exceeded our minimum requirement for 2035.

There needs to be some mention that any application must consider other developments underway or anticipated in the area of the application.

Also, if allowed, I would provide a very clear definition of "minor variance" for use by the Committee of Adjustment, so that anyone reviewing a plan, would understand our expectations.

Question 2

As I state on my website, when asked what do I want our community to look like in 10 to 15 years, my answer is 'I hope it looks pretty much like it does today'. Keeping our communities the same doesn't mean doing nothing. Doing nothing doesn't work. We have to work hard to keep things the same. Change is both inevitable and needed. It's how we manage change that counts.

To achieve my vision, we must have a comprehensive approach to dealing with development and developers. We must balance ever increasing tourism, with the needs of our residents. And, we must support our agriculture community and agri-businesses. More details are included on my website.

We must also acknowledge the unique needs and visions of our communities in Glendale, the Old Town, Queenstown, St Davids, Virgil and our rural community.

Question 3

The current Randwood proposal is still not acceptable. From all the comments at all of the meetings, it is clear that residents are not yet satisfied. I strongly believe that the Lord Mayor, and not the staff, should meet with Mr. Marotta to outline the expectations of our community. All the various studies, such as traffic studies, must consider all of his properties and plans, both stated and unstated. We should not deal with them as one-offs.

Question 4

Had I been on Council, I would have voted against OPA51. However, it was passed by Council and we need to move on. It establishes the rules for the Randwood property and they should be adhered to. If the developer paid too much, takes too long or even has a new vision, the rules are the rules. It's only been seven years, they must not be ignored.

Question 5

Sarah and I personally designated our home at 187 Queen St., when we lived there. I prefer to convince property owners to designate, rather than the Town going through a forced designation, as was done for the Marotta properties. The Town needs to promote preservation of all heritage buildings and lands within all of our communities. Currently, there are no financial incentives for these properties to designate or to upgrade. There are programs in other communities that do support their heritage and their upkeep. Previous Councils have rejected the idea. It should be re-considered by the new Council.

Question 6

My priorities as outlined on my website include improving processes and transparency in dealings between Town Council, town staff and residents as well as improving communication with residents.

Adequate notice must be provided for any change in meeting venue. In fact, meetings on significant and contentious issues, should always be held at the Community Centre.

There must be a proper sound and video system at the Community Centre so that large groups can participate in public meetings.

The Chair of the meeting needs to establish and maintain control over the meeting for everyone's benefit – the Chair, the Council, the Developer, and most of all the concerned residents in attendance

Question 7

My priorities, again as outlined on my website, state that we need to preserve the Green Belt and existing urban boundaries.

I believe that we are fortunate to have the Greenbelt Legislation and to have survived last year's "10 Year Review" unscathed, thus preventing the expansion of urban boundaries into the Greenspace, as defined, for Niagara-on-the lake.

The Region and the Town tried to introduce the concept of "land-truthing", not a term I was familiar with, to move the Greenbelt to line up with the various property boundaries in our Town. Fortunately, this was rejected, and so as long as the new Provincial government doesn't cancel the program, nothing should change. However, even at committee on September 10, a Councillor asked if the residential property on the west side of Creek Road in St Davids was in the Greenbelt. Nobody seemed to know, so the project continues. I believe that it is in the Greenbelt, and staff need to be much more aware of this program.