

Gary Burroughs Address to the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce All Candidates Meeting Thursday, October 4th, 2018

You will have 3 minutes to speak. The 3minute time limit will include your personal introduction and response to the **question, "If elected, what will you do to support business during the next term of Council?"**

I think that many of you know me. In recent years I have represented the taxpayers of NOTL at both the Region and the Town. I'm running again because the Town is changing, and I want to ensure it changes for the better. I am a Chartered Accountant, and before I entered politics, I was a businessman. I owned and managed the Oban Inn, with 108 employees, for 30 years. I also owned other hospitality and retail businesses in Town. I can relate to your issues.

Along with the Town, our business community is changing. When I was in business, the hospitality and retail industry was primarily in the Old Town, and particularly on Queen Street. At that time, businesses were usually owner operated. Now, shops are often managed by lessees (at additional cost).

We now have a thriving and growing restaurant and retail business sector in Virgil; Glendale has new hotels (with more planned), the Outlet Mall, and plans for a new Main Street;

There are plans for a hotel, and more retail space at the Village. Wineries and related retail businesses continue to pop up. Agri-Tourism has grown significantly in the past few years, and farm operations must be allowed to respond to their new business opportunities.

Hoarding is not acceptable on Queen St, or in any other business community, and Council must work to remove it.

We need to manage these many changes. We cannot deal with development as one offs. We must have a coordinated plan; with the Town, Region and Province all working together, to promote business, with much of the focus on tourism. Businesses cannot thrive if people can't get here. We must work together to ensure that we have the infrastructure, parking facilities and alternative means of transportation to get tourists, and staff to our businesses.

My priorities include improving dealings between Town Council, Town staff, and taxpayers. Town Council and staff exist for the sole purpose of serving taxpayers.

We also need to improve communications. Businesses and residents need to be better informed. We all need to know where our tax dollars go; and that we only pay our fair share.

Taxpayers must understand HOW they can be heard, and **know that they will be.** I believe the Lord Mayor should meet monthly with stakeholders, including the Chamber, the Virgil Business Association; and ratepayer and residence groups. The Lord Mayor must listen, coordinate with Council, and respond proactively – not wait to react. All of Council should be made aware of all business events.

It is time to review the extra garbage pickup on Queen St, and ensure equity for each establishment.