



THE NIAGARA
FOUNDATION

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

WHERE OUR CANDIDATES STAND

The Niagara Foundation asked candidates in the 2018 municipal election to share their views on a number of key heritage and development issues that are important to our community.

Following are candidates' full responses to our survey.

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Dennis Dick and Martin Mazza
did not respond to survey invitation

GARY BURROUGHS

1. What has motivated you to run for council/mayor? What specific impacts do you believe that you personally can have as a member of council/mayor and how would you propose ensuring your and council's effectiveness?

I am passionate about the Town of Niagara on the Lake. I have lived and worked here for most of my life. My children grew up here. My grandchildren visit regularly. I love what it is. The Town is changing and I want to ensure that it is changing for the better. I want to make a difference.

I am not your typical candidate. I have been on Town Council and was Lord Mayor for 10 years. I have been a Regional Councillor and was Regional Chair and CEO for four years. I understand how the Town works and how the Town and Region should be working together. Just last week, Council was presented with a "vision" of the new Glendale area. Because the Region paid for it, they assumed that we would be grateful. It is not what Niagara-on-the-Lake should be!!

I'm returning to politics to focus on the many challenges facing Niagara-on-the-Lake and I believe that this can best be done as a Town Councillor. I have no unstated political agenda or political ambitions.

2. The Niagara Foundation sees the balance between natural and cultural heritage preservation and development/intensification as needing critical focus from council in the next term. How would you ensure that this balance is respected by Council? What specific issues within each (heritage preservation and development) would you propose to address and progress in the next term?

My stated priorities call for a comprehensive approach to dealing with development and developers. Development cannot be solely for the benefit of developers. Developers need to listen to, and work with us and develop plans that preserve our heritage and are workable within existing, approved and planned infrastructure. We need an Official Plan and an Urban Tree by-law. We cannot deal with development, and developers as one-offs. We must consider the impact of all projects that are underway or planned. Developers who have the potential for multiple projects need to consolidate their vision for our community, and ensure that vision agrees with both politicians and our residents. To ensure that there is a balance between preservation and development 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. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed in the short term. The most pressing is the current Randwood proposal. It 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 the developer 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 his various projects as "one-offs", but what these projects will do to our Town.

3. The Niagara Foundation believes that resolution of the following initiatives are crucial to Niagara-on-the-Lake's future. Please indicate whether you agree with our characterization of the necessary initiatives and if so, why. If you do not agree, what alternative approaches do you favour:

- The Official Plan should be Council's first priority and it, including the Secondary Plans, should be fully reviewed and enacted by June, 2019.

The new Council should pass a new Official Plan within six months of the new term. There will be appeals and this may take some time to work through. Again, for this to happen the new Town Council must be like-minded, share a vision for our community and be willing to work together. As I indicated, much will depend on who voters choose in the upcoming election. I believe that if possible, our new Official Plan, in the introduction, should define our status regarding Provincial Requirements for Intensification and Density. Also, The Plan needs to provide a definition for "Minor Variance" as our Town interprets it. This will help potential applications, and committee members understand what our expectations are.

- Council should adopt a comprehensive Official Plan for the Agricultural and Urban areas in NOTL including a detailed Secondary Plan for each distinct community.

Our rural and urban areas and each distinct area within them, require and deserve a Secondary Plan to direct development, define more locally what land uses are available and wanted, and describe when and how development takes place. However, the passing of the Official Plan should not be held up waiting for these Secondary Plans. Just like every Official Plan, it is a "moving target" and Amendments (once approved) will start almost immediately.

- The Secondary Plans should include community specific design and planning guidelines (e.g, lot size/coverage/

height and design features) and include a heritage component that details preservation/maintenance targets for public heritage resources such as the Heritage Trail, Hospital Lands and the Dock Area.

The Secondary Plans should include community specific design and planning guidelines and include a heritage component that details preservation/maintenance targets for public heritage resources. In the past, the Town had a “Streetscape Plan”, which required infilling developments to consider the surrounding properties, when at the site plan stage. This was intended to ensure that any new development would be sympathetic to their neighbour’s properties “on the street”. This program appears to have been discontinued, but should be reinstated immediately.

- Council should obtain confirmation from the Region that the intensification targets set by the Region to date have been met or exceeded and this position should be made public and used to guide future planning decisions.

I understand that we have already exceeded our minimum intensity and density requirements for 2035. The Region has the document, and I have requested a copy. Once determined, our Official Plan should include a very clear statement regarding our status. Currently, the Province determines our “Growth Goals”, and passes them on to the Region, which then determines how these goals are applied to each municipality. This should be accounted for in the plan.

- Infill development such as the former Parliament Oak School should be harmonious with the immediate neighbourhood in terms of lot size and height.

I believe that the concept of “streetscapes” should be included in the Official Plan. Infill projects should be required to consider and be sympathetic to surrounding homes, and other buildings in an urban area. This would include the former Parliament School.

- Council should formally adopt support for the preservation of the Green Belt with its existing boundaries.

We must preserve the Green Belt and existing urban boundaries. The “10-year review” was completed last year, and the Greenbelt Plan should be “safe for another 9 years, depending on any changes initiated by the new Provincial government. Yes, this new Council should formally Support the Green Belt Plan.

- There should be broader inclusion of community members in key advisory committees to council and the process whereby the committees interact with council should be transparent.

My priorities include improving relations and communications with residents. We must improve processes and transparency in dealings between Town Council, town staff and residents. Council and staff exist for the sole purpose of serving our residents, the taxpayers, who must be informed, involved and, above all, treated with respect. This respect must be mutual. We have terrific expertise in our Town, and the new Council must involve this talent base on our committees (if they want to be), or develop a system whereby they can provide their expertise and experience. My concept is to form a group called RESOURCE NOTL. We have an excellent Agriculture Committee which advises Council. This model could be used more widely, and Council should assist our growers (for example: re mapping used by the Province, and dealing with phragmites).

4. How can we ensure a vibrant and prosperous agricultural sector in NOTL, where the continued highest and best use of our unique micro-climate lands is farming and other rural activities that are currently an important fabric of our community and heritage?

We must support our agriculture community and agri-businesses. We have world class tender fruit and vegetable farms, vineyards and wineries. We must support the aforementioned Agriculture Committee on issues such as mapping of agricultural lands and water sources and working with all levels of government. Again, we need to preserve the Green Belt and existing urban boundaries. Cannabis will be legal with Federal and Provincial laws governing growers, wholesalers, retailers and users. Local governments will also have a say. We need to determine our ‘say’. Our Town, and our growers have an emerging crisis, known as phragmites, and the new Council must assist in resolving it.

5. Are there other issues that you believe it is critical that council address in ensuring that the next term of council is a success?

The only one of my priorities not referred to in the above answers relates to tourism. Tourism is an integral part of our community. We must have a coordinated plan, with the Town, Region and Province all working together, to not only promote tourism, but to manage the significant impact on traffic and parking and other issues that affect all of us. It is critical that we balance ever increasing tourism with the needs of our residents.