

Responses of Tim Fryer

SOS Collingwood Questions for Candidates for Collingwood Town Council

1.) In order of priority how would you rank the top five (5) priorities for the Town of Collingwood over the next 4 years?

In placing these high priority items into the order I have come up with I want to note that they are similarly equal in priority. Additionally many of them are multi-faceted due to the complexity of the issue.

(a) Strategic Financial Planning: With a major influx of funds that will result from the sale of two key assets, that were deemed necessary after a risk assessment/maximizing value exercise, Collingwood must carefully consider and establish its' long-term financial plan. It should be a priority to develop, at minimum a 5 year STF that will encompass the updated asset management information expected to be ready early in 2019. We already have one key asset management piece of data with the provision of the Engineer's Assessment report on the Collingwood Terminals. A goal of an accurate financial outlook would be to more closely tie annual municipal tax requirements and user fees to the 5 year SFP and multi-year budget requirements. Over the past 4 years the revenue requirement calculations have been based on a need to improve Collingwood's poor financial condition. The health has been improved but further work needs to be done to ensure financial sustainability.

The 2014 Water and Wastewater Rate Study and their associated 5 year Financial Plans will also be updated in 2019. A new 5 year Development Charge Plan will be undertaken as well. Since these were 5 year plans approved by previous council, this term's Council has not had the opportunity to review these user charges.

It is essential the reviews of these in-depth financial plans are completed early in the next term because the availability of financial resources for each initiative contemplated for on how to best move the Community Based Strategic Plan and the Waterfront Master Plan forward, must be fully understood. Importantly the SFP will identify more accurately as to how tax and user fees are being utilized to achieve the objectives of our initiatives. Equally important the SFP will be conveyed to the taxpayer and ratepayer.

(b) Dealing with all of related issues that come to the surface due to the tremendous impact of unprecedented growth in our community is another priority. Growth pressure can accelerate the normal course of decision making. Therefore it is imperative that it doesn't lead to any of the steps

in the process being circumvented or loosely adhered to. Environmental protection and minimizing the impact of change on current residents are key factors that must be adhered to in the strongest way during all associated processes.

(c) It is readily apparent that Communication is a major challenge facing the municipality. Timely information must be provided using the various media and other avenues of contact that current technology provides. Although I believe proper process has been followed for all Council initiatives there have been some instances of not taking advantage of utilizing public engagement to the fullest. This shouldn't happen especially in major expenditure cases because Council has to be open to receive public input. Improvements must be made in communication to ensure as best possible that the public is aware of any issue from the beginning through to its completion. Also that the public always has opportunity to communicate and interact with Council and staff.

(d) Employment opportunities for our younger demographic must be enhanced. Opportunities for career types of employment are essential because a diverse community is best in the long-term for Collingwood. In order for our younger demographic to be able to work, live and play here, attainable housing opportunities must be enhanced. Also a strong transit system to ensure these workers have a means to get back and forth to their jobs on a timely and economical basis. As well citizens can utilize the service to more easily move around town which has the additional benefit of reducing vehicular traffic and greenhouse gases.

(e) Governance is a broad area that I would prioritize as requiring review and enhancement over the next 4 years. Early in the next term of Council consideration of the current committee process is required. All council members should be as involved as possible in the stages leading up to final discussion/voting on an issue at a Council meeting. Advisory committee structuring should also be reviewed for enhancement too. Additional Advisory committee(s) might be warranted in order to fully tap into the multitude of expertise that is available within our municipal boundaries. Later in the term as steps are undertaken to prepare for next election, consideration should be given to moving to a 5 or 7 councillor ward system and as to whether weighted balloting should be implemented.

PS: I want to add comment on a Council specific item that has to be taken on as a major priority early in the new term. Establishing the best steps to take with regards to the legalization of cannabis. It can't be elaborated on in

detail at this point in time as Council is awaiting more disclosure by the upper tier levels of government of their exact rules and regulations. As well the Town's senior staff are working collectively on a report to Council that will outline their determinations and recommendations. Public consultation will then need to be undertaken as Council moves through the process of establishing policy and guidelines. Perhaps a community stakeholder task force (regional?) may be warranted on this issue. With the legalization date fast approaching this will need to be one of Council's top priorities.

2.) Much has been said recently about the need for greater "Transparency" in how the Town conducts its affairs. What changes do you think are necessary to improve transparency in how Council, and Town staff, make decisions?

Not just a recent need. Early in this term of Council I supported the major inroads that were made to respond to concerns of this nature generated from the previous term. Resolution 032-15 (Jan. 19/15) implemented a number of changes to help ensure governance and administrative processes were completed with honesty and integrity. Examples of steps taken were the strengthened process for the use of an Integrity Commissioner and an improved Code of Conduct. As well committee meeting processes were enhanced to ensure members of the public were provided an opportunity to present comments on any issue.

In 2016 I supported another review as to determine if any further improvements were required and to ensure adherence to the Province's Bill 68. This led to the excellent Staff report #2018-14 Accountability and Transparency – Part 2 that received approval on July 12/18. It provides a detailed outline of measures that have been completed or are underway. Two examples from the list of 16 are: live-streaming & taping of all council/committee meetings; the appointment of a Joint County Integrity Commissioner to cover any of our requirements.

As identified, in Council's direction that led to this latest report, there was a confirmation for staff to continue to advise Council as to any further enhancements. As well a new Council is about to be established which will provide some new objective perspective from successful candidates. I am confident that as the latest steps that are implemented are conformed to, a very transparent process will be evident to all. But these 2 additional areas of input will help determine if there are any steps that can be taken to further improve things. If so those will be brought forward and enacted.

3.) What is your position on inter-governmental cooperation between the Town and its neighbouring municipalities (e.g. the Town of Blue Mountains, Clearview and Wasaga Beach) and where and how do you think such cooperation would most benefit Collingwood?

I am definitely a proponent of working collectively with our sister municipalities towards furthering the benefits that can be derived for the South Georgian Bay region. The bulk of our issues do not recognize municipal boundaries and initiatives such as the SGB Tourism Labour Supply Task Force are essential to deal with them as efficiently and effectively as possible. Another example of critically important collective cooperation is the goal of achieving a new regional hospital that will meet the long-term needs of the fast growing SGB.

I plan to continue to promote regional thinking and improving relationships with the new SGB municipal councils. Consideration of a joint summit of the 32 municipal councilors early in the new term should be a priority. This is necessary to have a clear indication of the views of all 4 councils. It will lead to clearer direction for our staffs as we direct them to maximize the benefits of joint regional initiatives.

4.) Collingwood is under intense development pressure like it has never seen before in its history. What increased complexities and pressures do you think this presents, and how will you ensure the Town's planning and building departments are equipped to address them? Are there any additional skills and experience you feel are required to manage these pressures?

We know that Collingwood is one of Canada's 25 fastest growing communities. The Community Based Strategic Plan that I supported early in our term sets out the framework of how our municipality should move forward. Every effort should be made to adhere to it and any associated plans, such as the Waterfront Master Plan and the Parks, Recreational and Culture Master Plan. It is essential for Council to empower its staff in a way that allows for the successful adherence to plans and policy as growth is experienced.

One of the pressures that is occurring from the intensification requirements that the Province's Growth Plan imposes upon Collingwood is that in some cases it results in changes to familiar surroundings. Also some community services, such as ease of access, come under more strain. Council must remain cognizant of these impacts and try to ensure that any negative results are kept to a minimum.

The opportunities that growth can provide should be maximized. One of those could be in the area of reduced upward pressure on municipal taxes. This is something that will be considered carefully in the 5 year Strategic Financial Plan noted in Q#1. We also must provide enhancements in services, like further improvements in waterfront and recreational amenities (ie. Splash pad) for the members of our community.

5.) The mounting development pressure in the Town is generating a heightened level of community interest in the Town's planning and

development process and decisions. Do you think the Town has adequate public consultation processes in place to deal with these decisions or do you think changes are required, and if so, what changes?

I have identified in my earlier responses the importance of communication as the key to ensuring the public is properly engaged. I think that processes are in place that are being followed properly but if some members of the public feel they haven't been made aware then this has to be rectified. Therefore I would consider supporting any enhancements that are identified by the staff or members of the public to ensure all are aware.

The Save our Shoreline grassroots group of resident volunteers is an example of the heightened level of community interest. I will support an initiative of the new council to consider how to work together with groups like SOS, as we successfully have in the past with others. As noted earlier the current committee structure and process should be reviewed early in the next term. This will provide an indication on how best to proceed, which may include an advisory panel or committee like the one used this term to form the CBSP.

6.) The Town has recently approved a Waterfront Master Plan. What is your perspective on that plan? Do you think it contains the right priorities or are there changes you feel are required? Should its implementation be a priority for the new Council?

I supported the approval of the Waterfront Master Plan and from my perspective continue to believe that it provides an excellent framework for staff and Council to work from. It too was developed through an extensive public engagement process. Therefore Council must definitely keep it as a top priority when considering its 5 year Strategic Financial Plan and longer term outlooks.

7.) Both the Waterfront Master Plan and the Town's Official Plan state that the protection of Collingwood's sensitive wetlands and shoreline areas are a top priority. How would you rate Collingwood's performance in protecting these areas to date? Do you think Collingwood currently has appropriate processes and controls in place to protect these areas (especially from development), or do you think improvements are required, and if so, what improvements?

Considering more recent decisions but also looking back over the decades before to the efforts of many with initiatives like the Collingwood Harbour Remedial Action Plan and the Harbourview Park/Collingwood Arboretum I think consistently every effort has been made to protect our shoreline. For the most part in the best way possible based on the circumstances that were involved at the time. Collingwood should never rest on its' laurels though because we should always be striving to improve on any situation.

Council needs to be proactive in regards to protecting wetlands and shoreline, utilizing the expert advice of the Province's ministries and groups like the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. Staff will continue to obtain critically important input from these other agencies and use that to formulate recommendations.

8.) What role do you see Collingwood's protected wetland and shoreline areas playing in your vision of the Town's social, cultural and economic future?

One of the key initiatives of the Community Based Strategic Plan is for "public access to a revitalized waterfront". The action items for this are, developing a comprehensive WMP(done) and exploring opportunities to connect the waterfront with the downtown(ongoing). These are to be done in a way that guides future development while preserving natural and cultural heritage. All while improving public access because it is understood that there will be benefit from this to the Towns social, cultural and economic future. It is a goal to do this for the people who will use the waterfront now and for our future generations too.

On a more specific basis, decisions about the Collingwood Terminals facing a new Council must be contemplated with the objectives outlined above in mind. It also must involve public engagement for input as to the options that are under consideration.

Also I would like to see the CBSP idea of a Community Improvement Plan get further traction in the new term. It should consider private property owner participation and other opportunities that could be provided by private-public partnerships. The CIP could be coordinated into the Strategic Financial Plan framework discussed in response to Question #1.

9.) SOS Collingwood has raised specific concerns regarding the recent development proposal for the Living Waters/Bear Estate property. While the developer has asked the Town of defer consideration of the application until 2019, a decision on the matter will likely come before Council early in its next term. What are your views on that proposal and what level of public consultation and input do you feel needs to occur?

It is outlined above in #8 that whatever Council decides about this project, it must achieve the objective of guiding future development while natural and cultural heritage is preserved. The passion of SOS Collingwood is recognized by everyone including the property owner who has decided to review their application to the fullest. I appreciate being able to meet with a SOS representative recently to develop a better understanding of the group's objectives and initiatives. I know that Town staff will be working closely with the developer to providence guidance that will include consideration of the thoughtful input that SOS has already provided and that the ensuing dialogue will note.

Once the developer is ready to present the reviewed application it will of course involve a public process. It will be tabled at a committee meeting and anyone can make delegation to express their opinion of what is proposed. Council will carefully consider all of the new information before making any final decisions.