

Responses of Yvonne Hamlin

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?

Top 5 priorities for Collingwood over the next four years:

One – Implement the recommendations from the Judicial Inquiry. It is expected that these will deal with rules affecting ethical conduct of Council members and the sale and purchase of public assets.

Two- Hire to replace the 3 senior staff whom we have been told are retiring imminently (the treasurer, the head of public works and the head of planning). The hiring process for the public works and planning positions would include a robust search of candidates throughout Canada who have experience with growth municipalities, the development community and waterfront redevelopment.

Our senior staff must be able to offer guidance from a place of experience and success throughout the development years that lie ahead.

Three – Have staff prepare a complete list of all pending developments in our Town and have these posted on the Town website. Each pending development would be listed with electronic versions of all relevant information which would include all associated applications made, all consultants' reports filed by the applicant in support, all staff reports, all comments from relevant agencies such as the conservation authority, minutes of public meetings and all decision made by Council and committees of Council relevant to the applications/development. Everyone should be able to determine the status of all pending developments and read all that has been written in support or otherwise.

Four – make financial decisions on how best to invest the millions of dollars (as much as \$15M) that will be flowing to the Town within the year from the sale of the airport and the remaining 50% share of Collus. This will include a review of the Town's financial position and seeking input from our residents. Consideration of a new community rec facility would form part of this discussion.

Five- Begin the process of reviewing and revising of the planning documentation that governs development in our Town. This would include updating our Official Plan and zoning bylaws, an in depth look at our infrastructure, as well as our waterfront master plan. The waterfront master plan has significant “holes” in it and has still to be implemented in our planning documents.

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?

How to improve transparency? I believe that the biggest impact would come from a change of mindset, which I would be pleased to spearhead. We need open and robust discussion of the issues Council deals with, at every Council meeting. And we must structure our processes so that staff does not provide its reports on matters in advance of hearing and understanding the public’s views and experiences.

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 a huge believer in cooperation among our neighbouring municipalities. We together comprise a relatively small land area, and none of us can go it alone and expect the best outcomes. For example, we would all benefit from a joint approach to the planning of our roads, our transit, our affordable housing, our workforce issues, our health care and so on.

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?

To handle the development pressures, we need more robust planning and public works departments. These departments are our front line. For example,

- a) Both of these departments are understaffed. Our public works department relies heavily on engineering consultants who never come before Council and never meet or hear the public.

b) I believe that we need staff that is experienced in dealing with all of the myriad of issues that arise when there are development pressures, and in waterfront redevelopment.

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?

We need to increase public consultation at the front end of the planning process. We need more opportunity for the public to understand the applications that have been made. As such, first steps would include:

- a) having all of the relevant material available on the Town website (see paragraph 1 – Three, above) so that all residents have access to all of the information.
- b) A public information session should be considered mandatory for all significant proposals. These sessions would be led by the applicant and its consultants. No decisions would be made at such sessions. Just information made available and questions answered.
- c) The public meeting before Council would next follow, which would be a forum for the public to make their views and concerns known. No staff reports would be prepared for these meetings.
- d) Following the public meeting, staff reports then be prepared and presented to Council. If further changes were required to development proposals or further input required, a second public meeting could be held.

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?

The Waterfront Masterplan has yet to be implemented into our planning documents. Before this happens, we need to review the provisions as relates to privately owned properties along our waterfront, and at a minimum, the Plan needs to have its boundaries expanded.

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?

We are a waterfront community, yet we do very little to protect this natural feature. I would like to see an expert in wetland and shoreline protection hired by the Town to advise us on best practices we should be adopting. And then we need to implement those best practices.

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?

Our wetland and shorelines are the best features of our Town. We must protect and enhance them as they relate to all of the matters you mention – our social, cultural and economic future.

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?

With respect to the Bear Estate and several other large waterfront parcels in private ownership, the Town needs to press the "pause" button and take a fresh look at what development is appropriate and what controls need to be in place to protect our shoreline and make sure our waterfront remains accessible to the public. There are mechanisms available in the Planning Act that allow Council to take such a "pause" and I would ask Council to take this step.