



Questions for 2022 Municipal Council Candidates



Angela Grogan

Mayor

The Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce is the recognized voice of business in the Municipality of Port Hope. We support all businesses, not just our close to 200 members, and play a key role in advocating on their behalf regarding decisions made by levels of government that may impact them.

These questions are being asked as background research to form individual question(s) for our meet the candidate events and to keep the business community informed of your outlooks with regard to the future of the Municipality of Port Hope. Please be advised that your responses will be shared in full or in part with the community through our membership, community publications and Social Media networks.

1. What is your plan for the Municipality over the next 4 years?

As Mayor of Port Hope, my plan will bring consensus to issues through conscientious and thoughtful collaboration between council, municipal staff, community stakeholders and residents (shareholders). For me, key areas that will have a positive effect on the business community are:

- A functional and robust Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan
- A fluid transit system
- Review of and changes to the current bylaws, and look at opportunities to streamline the process for building
- Create better and more affordable housing to keep and attract talent in our community
- A solid communication strategy that will use a multiple communication channels

2. What do you believe is the biggest issue facing the business sector in the Municipality and how do you plan to address it?

Talent and expansion. I have heard on the campaign trail that many businesses are finding growth difficult because of the lack of resources for talent in the community. It's important that we develop a strategy to not only attract people to these jobs but also help business expand, which may include stronger infrastructure and a streamlined process

3. Explain your understanding of economic development and describe the significance to our community.

I see economic development as an element in any social group where wealth is created, secured and shared. Within Port Hope we have had limited robust economic expansion. Barriers that were implemented to protect Port Hope and its small town culture have now become dated, and have passed down greater fiscal responsibility to our tax payers. It is important that we review obstacles that turn away industry and create a friendly environment that would attract business and assist in taking some of the tax burden away from private residents.

4. The downtown core is an integral part of the business community, however there are businesses throughout the municipality including, but not limited to, home based and agri-businesses. What do you believe the municipality can do to support the businesses throughout the entire community and not just in the downtown core?

5. The municipality has been restructuring and reconsidering their approach to economic development, building and planning. What do you think the best thing the municipality can do in the short, mid and long term to better support growth and development in a fair, timely and financially sound way ?

6. Agriculture and rural businesses are a key piece of the economic viability of this community. What do you think the Municipality should be doing to better support this sector?

Questions 4, 5 and 6 have similar strategies and solutions. I have chosen to answer those questions together.

Inclusion and equity has been a strong theme in my campaign for diversity in the areas of the population of Port Hope, the landscape (rural and urban), and business that make up the core of our economic establishments.

It's important that we look at the needs of all businesses and sectors through a shared lens of understanding. We have historically focused on the differences of businesses in Port Hope instead of ensuring that their shared needs are all met equitably. All commerce must be given access to the same opportunities from the municipality that can include but are not limited to:

- Information on grants, funding
- Technology services that are functional
- Simplified process for expansion

“Economic development” is not clearly defined and neither is the vision for the Municipality of Port Hope. Actions have lead many, including myself, to view this as an afterthought. Over recent years, this file has been assigned to different people and moved into different parts of the administration. This area needs strong and clear leadership. The HBIA and council are at odds: witness the August presentation to council. Even the Chamber of Commerce seems to be limping around in search of a clear mandate and link to both Council and the HBIA. Now we see yet another review, but one which seems to be looking at this file through tunnel vision.

For example recently, banners put up in downtown seem to promote, the Port Hope brand as a small town. Consequently, it seemed that any economic plan would link to that plan, yet

residents complain of high property taxes due to a lack of other tax streams. How would building more industry fit that scenario?

Certainly a regrouping is needed, but with staff charged with a better and more clearly-defined mandate. That would include the role of the Chamber, HBIA, PIA stakeholders, and the public.