



Questions for 2022 Municipal Council Candidates



Peter Angelo

Councillor Ward 2

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?

My vision for the next 4 years is to support our rural Port Hope community in a manner which strengthens areas of importance to them. Our rural community needs a strong, professional and experienced voice at the table to champion our collective concerns about safe roads, new development, and diversification of local small businesses. I am excited about the opportunity to lead our rural community in making positive change and to deliver on the things that matter to them.

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

Many of our rural businesses have struggled over the last 2 years through the COVID crises and we need to do more on the Municipal front to help support the things they need to get back on their feet and to become strong and prosperous once again. We need a professional voice at the table who knows how Municipalities work and to cut through the red tape that prevents diversification and which obstructs new growth opportunities. I have spend most of my professional life setting Municipalities up for success and I know how to get things done. Often times small business needs our help in navigating the complex world of zoning bylaws, official plan amendments, engineering requirements and other, and we need a culture that aims to serve our rural businesses in a manner which is helpful to them to guide them towards success. I have the professional experience to help our rural small business to become more successful.

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

The most important element of economic development is to have a culture of service which listens to the wants and needs of our rural businesses and to then action matters in a timely fashion to drive success. It is not enough to simply care about individual business circumstances - but the true measure is in the actions taken to help those businesses thrive. Economic development needs to have a strategic vision for how it can help our small rural business owners and to develop an implementation plan to put that vision into action. Through my outreach I have heard concerns about new subdivisions being planned throughout our hamlets and communities and we need a strong professional voice to find the right balance between new growth and adjacent area homes. We can have both and we can achieve and shape the community visions set out in our Official Plans, Secondary Plans and other - but we need real and meaningful engagement of our rural community which extends beyond the minimums established under regulation. I want to be that strong voice for our community and I want to help find that appropriate balance.

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?

Our Official Plan establishes the vision for how our community wants to grow, in support of Provincial policies, County OP and other. We need to have a strong voice through the municipal comprehensive review processes to either re-affirm or change our policies in a manner that aligns with growth in our rural community today. We need to have meaningful dialogue with our rural people to help shape those growth policies. The policies with respect to on-farm diversification, rural severances, planned subdivisions and other need to be re-visited to ensure that they support and strengthen prosperous agricultural businesses and that subdivision growth are both measured and proportionate within existing built up areas. I also think the Municipality should continue to explore ways and means towards outsourcing to local small business where it can and to ensure its purchasing policies and mechanisms reflect the value local small business brings to our community. Our continued encouragement of the film industry towards local sourcing such as food, talent, behind the scenes staff and other is a great avenue to supporting our local businesses. We have many trades throughout our rural community, including framers, welders and fabricators, dance studios, talent agencies, automotive repair shops and other which contribute tremendously to our community in terms of jobs and investment and we need to increase our outreach to these critical industries to ensure that they have what they need to be successful.

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?

The Municipality continues to evolve to meet the challenges of today and we need to support a culture of trust and accountability throughout the organization. We have very dedicated and caring people in our organization but we need to continue to provide the monetary and human resources necessary so that they can do the job we ask them to do. The Municipality is changing and we need to find the appropriate between new growth and status quo. New growth is very important because it not only supports current service levels, but it also enables our community to afford new services through development charges, community benefit charges and other. Much of my professional life has revolved around finding that responsible and measured approach and our rural community deserves an experienced voice to find that balance.

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.

Not only is agriculture a key to our Municipalities success, I would assert that it is one of the most fundamental elements of our community's values. People gravitate to Port Hope not just because of its beautiful and historic downtown charm, but equally because of its rural roots and because the leadership of yesterday and today continue embrace this unique mix of urban and rural cultures - it is truly something to cherish and to celebrate. As Municipal leaders, we need to acknowledge that unique blend of urban and rural and to embrace their differences - it is ok to be different. It is our diversity and inclusive nature that we are able to weather the challenges which lie ahead and we need a strong leader to put agriculture and our small rural businesses at the front of the line when it comes to supporting what they need to be sustainable and prosperous. I will do my very best to actively listen to our rural business community and to help them achieve their needs to be successful.