



Questions for 2022 Municipal Council Candidates



Will Lambert Councillor Ward 1

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?

It is my plan to listen to the people of Port Hope and lobby for full public consultation on all major issues. Then I plan to work collaboratively and constructively with Staff and members of Council to come up with practical solutions to the challenges we all face. I don't pretend to have simple answers for all of our complex problems, but I do have a few ideas to bring to the table for further discussion and refinement. Very broadly I would say that I want to protect and enhance the things that we all love about this place.

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

I would think the biggest problem faced by our business community would have to be the constant disruptions to their normal practices. We have just come through 2 years of Covid restrictions which took a very serious bite out of many businesses. We have rotating excavations throughout Town as part of the PHAI cleanup with all of the attendant road restrictions and truck traffic.

The Walton Street reconstruction project has now begun with its road and sidewalk closures, detours, noise, dust and dirt.

Finally we have recurring filming taking place in our downtown core that also brings road closures and detours. I will support the proposed increase in arsenic levels

requested by CNL as a way to limit the destruction created by the PHAI cleanup and get the project back on schedule. I will also ask Council and Staff to refer to and seriously consider all of the proposals put forward by the Port Hope Merchants Group in their excellent and thoughtful presentation to Council Aug ? 2022 re. The Walton Street project. While filming can benefit some businesses, I will ask that plans be shared well in advance with all businesses, road closures and disruptions to normal business be kept to an absolute minimum and effective signage be posted for the public explaining what is open and what is closed. Automatic compensation for local business disruption should also be built into any and all future filming agreements.

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

For me, Economic Development is not only about attracting new businesses to our community but also supporting our existing businesses so that they may continue to grow and thrive. I also would not limit the concept of economic development to thinking about traditional “businesses”, but would expand it to include arts and cultural organizations and events that can have big spin-off benefits for our traditional business community. Economic Development is vitally important to Port Hope because it provides jobs, local shopping, dining, and entertainment options and perhaps most importantly the commercial portion of our tax base that pays for everything else.

4 – What do you believe the Municipality can do to support the businesses throughout the entire community and not just the ones in the downtown core?

Advertising and promotional support could be vitally important to home based and agri-businesses. Whether on-line or hard copy a comprehensive directory with good descriptions of the products and/or services offered by each business could be a very valuable asset. Such a directory must include good maps of how to find these businesses and of course their days and hours of operation, and full contact information. In order for customers to support these businesses they must first know that they exist and then know how to contact and find them.

5 – What do you think is 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?

Port Hope has an Official Plan that is supposed to guide the communities future development. That plan needs to be periodically reviewed and updated and that will be one of the tasks required of this new Council. However, it is my belief that we have not done a good job of consulting and following our existing Official Plan and we have been weak in dealing with developers. Planning in this community has focused on process and meeting various requirements and regulations, but it has not done a great job of keeping its eye on the big picture. This is how we wind up with residential developments that harken back to 1970 style urban sprawl, without any affordable housing component or retail and commercial spaces. I believe we need to bring in some visionaries that can address the excellent recommendations already contained in our Official Plan. That is why I support the creation of a Planning Advisory Committee which could take advantage of the wealth of talented and experienced designers and architects that live in our community and have expressed a desire to help.

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?

In addition to the directory mentioned above, I think Port Hope could and should provide a centrally located, enclosed space to be used for farmers markets and similar retail operations. I could see this being located on the site of the former grocery store adjacent to Town Hall or at the base of the Centre Pier. At minimum this would have a roof for protection from the sun and rain, but I would prefer to see something at least partially enclosed so that it would lend itself to use over a longer season, if not year round.