

NOTLRA Candidate Forum October 2 2026

Candidate statements and question response analysis

This document presents each candidate's opening statement, answers to the nine forum questions, and closing statement. The summaries are organized by candidate in opening-statement order. Questions are lightly edited for readability while retaining their requested elements. Timestamps identify the start of the relevant remarks in the transcript.

Assessment method

Yes means the response addressed the substantive elements requested. Partially means it addressed the topic but omitted a requested element or left the requested position unclear. No means it did not answer the central question. Assessments concern responsiveness, not agreement, policy merit, legal correctness or verification of factual claims. A detailed implementation plan is not required unless the question asks for one; the youth question does expressly request two or three specific actions.

The bullet points summarize candidates' statements rather than establish their claims as facts. The analysis is independent and does not necessarily represent the views of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Residents Association. The automated transcript contains spelling and transcription errors; uncertain incidental details have not been expanded into factual claims.

Gary Burroughs

Three minute opening statement

Transcript start 1:09

- Outlined experience as Lord Mayor, regional councillor, regional chair and town councillor, together with 30 years owning and operating the Oban Inn.
- Identified responsible growth, infrastructure and stormwater, and accountable government as his principal priorities.
- Called for growth that respects the official plan, zoning, agricultural lands, the Greenbelt, heritage streetscapes and the character of the five communities.
- Favoured contextual design and questioned proposals requiring numerous variances.
- Said his opposition to Parliament Oak included concerns about scale, height, location and infrastructure capacity; wanted answers before approvals.
- Called for a funded infrastructure plan, shovel-ready projects, restored resident committees and electronic recorded voting.

Question 1 Reasons for seeking office

- Whether you are an incumbent seeking re-election or seeking office for the first time, why do you want to be a town councillor?

Answer summary Transcript start 23:05

- Said the focus should be the town's future and its changed relationship with the Region.
- Cited regional taxation as an important challenge, saying \$52 million of \$82 million in property taxes went to the Region in the previous year.
- Wanted resident committees restored to draw on local expertise; said the preceding term had 90 residents serving on committees.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained his reasons for seeking another term, particularly regional challenges and restoring resident participation.

Question 2 Budget priorities

- At budget time, rank these three priorities from highest to lowest and explain why: investing in programs and services for youth and seniors; investing in water and wastewater infrastructure to mitigate future climate disasters; keeping the budget increase no higher than the annual rate of inflation.

Answer summary Transcript start 31:38

- Placed infrastructure first.
- Called for improved provincial and federal relationships to address unfunded downloading and a review of payments in lieu of taxes.
- Wanted cooperation with Niagara Falls and the conservation authority on upstream stormwater affecting local creeks.
- Raised the lack of local services and accommodation for seniors.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Ranked infrastructure first and explained that choice, but did not rank youth and senior services against the inflation limit. The requested complete first-to-third ranking was missing.

Question 3 Future of Glendale

- What is your vision for the future of Glendale?

Answer summary Transcript start 40:47

- Raised airport height restrictions as a constraint on Glendale development and questioned approvals dependent on resolving height issues.
- Wanted developers to provide needed shops and transportation connections now rather than wait through lengthy housing build-outs.
- Identified a missing transportation centre and connections between Glendale, the college and Old Town.
- Called for council engagement with school boards to pursue a Glendale high school.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Described a future community with shops, transport and a school, while identifying development constraints and the need for coordinated action.

Question 4 Recorded council votes

- Do you support recording all votes at council meetings so residents can see how their representatives voted? Why or why not?

Answer summary Transcript start 49:25

- Supported recorded votes and electronic voting; cited introducing electronic voting at the Region in 2011.
- Said electronic voting allows members to vote simultaneously rather than respond to colleagues' votes.
- Criticized the information available in current minutes when votes are not recorded.
- Said the electronic voting service was leased and council had not renewed it; wanted it restored.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Clearly supported recording votes and explained the accountability and simultaneous-voting benefits.

Question 5 Youth and family services

- What gaps do you see in youth programming and services? If elected, what two or three specific actions would you take to improve the lives of youth and families in our town?

Answer summary Transcript start 55:19

- Identified gaps in schools, school-board consultation, school-bus arrangements and a local high school.
- Wanted earlier engagement with school boards rather than reacting after school changes.
- Raised possible town assistance with transporting pupils to Cornerstone programming, while reporting that the suggestion had not been welcomed.
- Supported local schooling and opportunities for children to walk to school; connected future discussion to the hospital site.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Identified gaps and proposed identifiable actions: earlier school-board engagement, pursuing a high school and exploring transport to youth programming. These were directions for action rather than detailed delivery plans, which the question did not require.

Question 6 Tourism promotion

- Should Niagara-on-the-Lake be doing more to promote tourism?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:12:42

- Acknowledged tourism's contribution to restaurants, wineries and theatre, while describing the longstanding need to balance residents and visitors.
- Questioned broad tourism advertising and the amount of accommodation-tax revenue going to tourism promotion.
- Wanted the next council to review its agreement with Tourism NOTL, including discretion over spending.
- Argued that tourism-related road and infrastructure pressures should receive tourism funding.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Explained why promotion funding and tourism impacts should be reconsidered, but did not expressly answer whether the town should do more promotion. His position favoured reviewing spending and balance rather than clearly resolving the question.

Question 7 Conflicts of interest

- Outline your understanding of a conflict of interest at the council table. Give an example of a real conflict where you would declare a conflict, and an example of a perceived conflict and how you would address it.

Answer summary Transcript start 1:21:48

- Distinguished pecuniary interests involving money from non-pecuniary or apparent conflicts.
- Argued that advice finding no pecuniary conflict may not resolve concerns about family relationships or appearances.
- Described receiving an envelope in 2023, declaring a conflict, contacting police and staying away from council while the matter was dealt with.
- Urged new councillors to take both perceived and financial conflicts seriously.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Explained financial and apparent conflicts and described a personal response, but did not clearly identify one real financial conflict and a separate perceived-conflict scenario with its handling. The nature of the envelope incident was not sufficiently described to supply both requested examples.

Question 8 Reviewing development proposals

- For incumbents: have you read each development proposal from top to bottom, or relied on town staff and their recommendations? For newcomers: how would you approach reviewing development proposals?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:29:48

- Said councillors sometimes receive extremely long reports only days before a decision; cited an 870-page report without an adequate executive summary.
- Wanted controversial applications delayed when necessary to allow council and residents to understand them.
- Questioned narrow votes on controversial development and said he typically opposed proposals with many variances.
- Wanted resident committees to contribute expertise alongside council and staff.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Explained obstacles to thorough review and proposed improvements, but did not directly establish whether he had read each proposal from top to bottom or how much he relied on staff recommendations.

Question 9 Strong mayor powers

- In circumstances where the Lord Mayor plus two councillors can override the will of the council majority through strong mayor powers, what is your position on their use?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:41:08

- Opposed appointed regional chairs and questioned a regional council consisting only of municipal mayors.
- Feared Niagara-on-the-Lake would struggle to protect heritage and Greenbelt interests under the regional structure.
- Called for a strong, cooperative town council and better engagement with upper levels of government.

Did the candidate answer the question? No. Discussed regional representation and appointed chairs but did not state a position on using strong mayor powers to override the town council majority. Opposition to an appointed chair does not answer the specific question.

Three minute closing statement

Transcript start 1:55:14

- Warned that party politics and regional changes create serious challenges for a small municipality.
- Called for the new seven-member council to work as an informed team and actively represent the town with school boards, the Region and the Province.
- Described the town as an underdog in the Region but emphasized its community strengths and international reputation.
- Encouraged councillor participation in AMO and Federation of Canadian Municipalities meetings as opportunities to learn and represent residents better.
- Invited residents to contact him by telephone or email about the election or life in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Adriana Vizzari

Three minute opening statement

Transcript start 4:32

- Said she first ran to represent families, especially families with young children in St. David's and across the town.
- Highlighted business and property-management experience and four years learning council processes, implementation and relationships with staff.
- Listed work on flooding, pedestrian safety, active transportation, pools, recreation, school-board relationships, libraries and family opportunities.
- Emphasized listening, collaboration, persistence and practical progress.
- Wanted infrastructure, drainage, roads, sidewalks, parks and amenities to keep pace with growth while recognizing each village's needs.
- Sought re-election to build on her experience and continue working with residents, council and staff.

Question 1 Reasons for seeking office

- Whether you are an incumbent seeking re-election or seeking office for the first time, why do you want to be a town councillor?

Answer summary Transcript start 15:43

- Said the role has a steep learning curve and four years of experience now enables her to build on progress.
- Wanted to continue representing families in decisions about recreation, parks and school-board relationships.
- Said being a mother of four brings an important perspective to council.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Directly explained why she sought re-election and the representation she wanted to continue providing.

Question 2 Budget priorities

- At budget time, rank these three priorities from highest to lowest and explain why: investing in programs and services for youth and seniors; investing in water and wastewater infrastructure to mitigate future climate disasters; keeping the budget increase no higher than the annual rate of inflation.

Answer summary Transcript start 34:54

- Framed budgeting as balancing desired services with taxpayers' ability to pay.
- Described St. David's growth without corresponding amenities and referred to the asset-management plan and infrastructure maintenance needs.
- Argued that services help residents thrive and that the town has several revenue streams.
- Favoured partnerships with clubs and the library, saying all three priorities could be addressed through appropriate budgeting.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Discussed the three competing priorities and possible funding approaches, but did not rank them from highest to lowest. Saying all can be accommodated leaves the central ranking request unanswered.

Question 3 Future of Glendale

- What is your vision for the future of Glendale?

Answer summary Transcript start 43:29

- Supported a Glendale high school and described efforts to rebuild school-board relationships.
- Envisioned a complete community with employment, businesses and appropriate industrial activity.
- Wanted community facilities and library services as population grows.
- Mentioned an arena, walking track and an indoor soccer dome, potentially supported through partnerships.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Provided a substantive vision covering education, employment and recreation within a growing community.

Question 4 Recorded council votes

- Do you support recording all votes at council meetings so residents can see how their representatives voted? Why or why not?

Answer summary Transcript start 51:20

- Supported electronic voting if residents want it and the technology is available.
- Said a voting record is one part of transparency and that residents also need information beyond a yes-or-no vote.
- Questioned why electronic voting would not be used if the technology already exists.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Affirmed support and connected it to residents' access to information. Her support was qualified by resident wishes and technology availability, but those qualifications do not make the answer incomplete.

Question 5 Youth and family services

- What gaps do you see in youth programming and services? If elected, what two or three specific actions would you take to improve the lives of youth and families in our town?

Answer summary Transcript start 57:59

- Identified a missing high school and uneven access to amenities across the villages.
- Identified three areas for further work: buildings and spaces for youth programming, partnerships, and childcare and summer care.
- Wanted continuing partnerships with the library, clubs and schools, including support through youth discretionary grants.
- Described existing early-years programming and the successful relocation of summer camp to Virgil, with access to the splash pad and park amenities.
- Highlighted demand for daycare, summer childcare and before- and after-school care.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Clearly identified gaps and committed to continuing partnerships. However, much of the response described existing progress or areas of need; it did not clearly set out two or three specific future actions to secure facilities or expand childcare and programming.

Question 6 Tourism promotion

- Should Niagara-on-the-Lake be doing more to promote tourism?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:07:16

- Clarified that she understood the question to concern the municipality itself.
- Said Tourism NOTL promotes tourism and the municipality should not take on that promotion.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Gave a direct negative answer on the municipality doing more promotion and explained the distinction between the town and Tourism NOTL.

Question 7 Conflicts of interest

- Outline your understanding of a conflict of interest at the council table. Give an example of a real conflict where you would declare a conflict, and an example of a perceived conflict and how you would address it.

Answer summary Transcript start 1:24:18

- Said legislation defines conflicts of interest and referred to Gary Burroughs' explanation.
- Said she had not declared a conflict in four years.
- Said she could not foresee a future conflict and ended her answer there.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Referred to another candidate's explanation rather than setting out her own understanding in detail. She supplied neither a real-conflict example nor a perceived-conflict example and did not explain how she would handle either.

Question 8 Reviewing development proposals

- For incumbents: have you read each development proposal from top to bottom, or relied on town staff and their recommendations? For newcomers: how would you approach reviewing development proposals?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:32:50

- Emphasized the substantial reading required of councillors and said she had read a lot of the material.
- Said reading applications, speaking with residents and participating in community life inform her decisions.
- Explained that applications requiring council decisions include amendments and rezoning, while other applications also come through the town.
- Said decisions must consider community fit and additional community needs.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Described reading and community input, but "read a lot" did not answer whether she read every proposal from top to bottom. She also did not clearly explain the extent of reliance on staff recommendations.

Question 9 Strong mayor powers

- In circumstances where the Lord Mayor plus two councillors can override the will of the council majority through strong mayor powers, what is your position on their use?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:42:55

- Said she opposed the undemocratic use of strong mayor powers and concluded that she was against them.

- Favoured council and staff working together, with council reaching decisions through agreement or a vote.
- Discussed powers potentially coming into play if council fails to reach a decision and said an effective council would reduce the threat.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Stated opposition and explained her preference for council decision-making. The discussion leaves ambiguity about whether any exceptional use would be acceptable, but the question asked for her position rather than an exhaustive statement of exceptions.

Three minute closing statement

Transcript start 1:52:57

- Thanked residents for the opportunity to serve and bring families' perspectives to council.
- Emphasized the links among growth, infrastructure, recreation, roads, active transportation and protection of the town's character.
- Identified further work on responsible growth, infrastructure, community spaces, recreation and resident participation.
- Said her experience enables informed questions, collaboration and practical solutions.
- Wanted a community where people can live, work, raise families, operate businesses and enjoy every stage of life.
- Asked for support to continue serving residents across Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Nicholas Colaneri

Three minute opening statement

Transcript start 7:12

- Said he began advocating about 18 months earlier to protect specialty-crop agricultural land from industrial and commercial uses.
- Described repeated delegations and residents' requests that he run for office despite his initial reluctance.
- Criticized closed-door decisions, inadequate listening and inappropriate development affecting agriculture and heritage.
- Said his 15 years as a builder and developer would help him question proposals and seek answers.
- Wanted developers held to planning policies and residents' interests placed first.

Question 1 Reasons for seeking office

- Whether you are an incumbent seeking re-election or seeking office for the first time, why do you want to be a town councillor?

Answer summary Transcript start 17:00

- Said he was running for residents and the community rather than himself.
- Wanted to protect heritage, agriculture and the qualities that attract residents to the town.
- Presented persistence and willingness to challenge inappropriate development as strengths.
- Wanted a strong council team to defend local interests.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Directly identified his motivation and the contribution he hoped to make.

Question 2 Budget priorities

- At budget time, rank these three priorities from highest to lowest and explain why: investing in programs and services for youth and seniors; investing in water and wastewater infrastructure to mitigate future climate disasters; keeping the budget increase no higher than the annual rate of inflation.

Answer summary Transcript start 26:11

- Ranked infrastructure first, youth and senior services second, and the inflation limit third.
- Said the town needs to catch up on infrastructure after flooding and other deficiencies.
- Argued that people's needs should drive the budget and that grants and other funding should be pursued.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Provided the complete requested ranking and reasons for placing urgent infrastructure and service needs above the inflation cap.

Question 3 Future of Glendale

- What is your vision for the future of Glendale?

Answer summary Transcript start 45:41

- Said Glendale's future should reflect its residents' vision rather than leave them isolated.
- Wanted essential amenities, including schools and grocery stores, alongside housing.

- Argued that the area must evolve beyond its longstanding industrial and commercial identity.
- Said existing residents need services now rather than housing alone.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Set out a resident-led vision of a complete community with essential services and amenities.

Question 4 Recorded council votes

- Do you support recording all votes at council meetings so residents can see how their representatives voted? Why or why not?

Answer summary Transcript start 52:23

- Strongly supported both recorded votes and electronic voting.
- Said transparency and accountability require residents to know who voted and what was done.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Gave an unequivocal answer and an explicit rationale.

Question 5 Youth and family services

- What gaps do you see in youth programming and services? If elected, what two or three specific actions would you take to improve the lives of youth and families in our town?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:01:09

- Identified shortages in childcare, daycare access and youth programming.
- Acknowledged limited firsthand knowledge of young families' needs.
- Wanted a restored youth committee and conversations with youth and parents to identify further needs.
- Said programming should then be expanded to address the gaps identified.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Identified gaps and one clear action: restoring a committee to consult residents. Expanding programming was a general intention, without a second or third specific service action being identified.

Question 6 Tourism promotion

- Should Niagara-on-the-Lake be doing more to promote tourism?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:07:50

- Said the town should not do more tourism promotion.
- Accepted welcoming visitors throughout the year but opposed promotion that floods local streets.
- Said promotion has already gone far enough.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Directly answered no and explained his concern about visitor pressure.

Question 7 Conflicts of interest

- Outline your understanding of a conflict of interest at the council table. Give an example of a real conflict where you would declare a conflict, and an example of a perceived conflict and how you would address it.

Answer summary Transcript start 1:16:28

- Referred to an "arm's length" concept in describing his understanding of conflict rules.

- Identified his house-building business as a potential source of a real conflict, while saying he currently builds outside Niagara-on-the-Lake.
- Described a proposed development by his first cousin on Four Mile Creek Road as a perceived conflict.
- Said he opposed that proposal but would recuse himself if elected because of the family relationship.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Provided a clear perceived-conflict example and response. His real-conflict discussion identified an occupation, rather than a specific council decision involving his financial interest and the declaration he would make. The “arm’s length” reference did not clearly define the governing conflict principle.

Question 8 Reviewing development proposals

- For incumbents: have you read each development proposal from top to bottom, or relied on town staff and their recommendations? For newcomers: how would you approach reviewing development proposals?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:35:19

- Said he already reads development plans and has challenged proposals through delegations.
- Would question staff and seek input from the Region, independent consultants and industry experts when answers are inadequate.
- Acknowledged that he cannot be expert in every field and would use a reliable team to make informed decisions.
- Wanted developments to comply with planning rules and criticized proposals with numerous amendments or non-conformities.
- Criticized the new official plan as leaving too much room for further exceptions.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained a review process involving reading, questioning and obtaining independent expertise, alongside the planning standards he would apply.

Question 9 Strong mayor powers

- In circumstances where the Lord Mayor plus two councillors can override the will of the council majority through strong mayor powers, what is your position on their use?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:43:55

- Called strong mayor powers undemocratic and said they should never be used.
- Said resorting to them signals that leadership has lost the support of council and residents.
- Committed to opposing their use.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Expressed an unequivocal position against any use and explained his reasoning.

Three minute closing statement

Transcript start 1:50:51

- Thanked the organizers, fellow candidates and residents for bringing him into the election through his advocacy.
- Said the election is crucial to restoring residents’ voices and trust.
- Asked to be part of a council team providing strength, advocacy and change.

- Wanted to protect neighbours, local history, land and community interests.
- Emphasized that Niagara-on-the-Lake belongs to its residents and should be governed for and by them.

Weston Miller

Three minute opening statement

Transcript start 9:15

- Opposed commercial jet service, amalgamation, strong mayor powers, a hospital-site parking lot, destruction of the Rand Estate and out-of-scale hotels in residential areas.
- Supported higher development charges, electronic voting records and restored resident committees.
- Described growing up in Chautauqua, studying political science and returning as a real estate agent working with existing residential and heritage homes.
- Outlined service with the Chautauqua Residents Association, Niagara Foundation for Heritage Preservation, Royal Oak Community School and the Shaw Festival.
- Committed to development within planning rules and infrastructure capacity, protecting heritage, farmland and green space.
- Promised accessible voting records, fewer closed sessions and early consultation with resident associations and committees.

Question 1 Reasons for seeking office

- Whether you are an incumbent seeking re-election or seeking office for the first time, why do you want to be a town councillor?

Answer summary Transcript start 18:24

- Wanted local government to be accessible, recalling a childhood visit by Lord Mayor Burroughs to his school.
- Said decisions should be made with residents and that resident engagement has been lacking.
- Cited his residents-association experience as preparation for listening and involving neighbours early.
- Presented himself as independent of slates and mayoral candidates, while committing to work with whoever is elected.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained why he wanted the role and how accessibility, engagement and independence would shape his service.

Question 2 Budget priorities

- At budget time, rank these three priorities from highest to lowest and explain why: investing in programs and services for youth and seniors; investing in water and wastewater infrastructure to mitigate future climate disasters; keeping the budget increase no higher than the annual rate of inflation.

Answer summary Transcript start 27:36

- Ranked essential infrastructure first, youth and senior services a close second, and the inflation limit third.
- Wanted updated development charges to recover legally permissible growth costs.
- Called for provincial, federal and regional funding and a clear long-term infrastructure plan.
- Said existing residents should benefit from growth rather than subsidize new development.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Provided all three rankings and explained infrastructure funding and growth-cost recovery as priorities.

Question 3 Future of Glendale

- What is your vision for the future of Glendale?

Answer summary Transcript start 37:00

- Considered Glendale a natural location for substantial intensification while opposing its use as a dumping ground.
- Wanted the Glendale Secondary Plan respected rather than repeatedly amended.
- Called for effective resident consultation and thoughtful growth.
- Saw an opportunity to create an attractive future community.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Answered the open-ended vision question with a planning-led, consultative approach to intensification.

Question 4 Recorded council votes

- Do you support recording all votes at council meetings so residents can see how their representatives voted? Why or why not?

Answer summary Transcript start 52:54

- Supported recorded votes on every issue and a public electronic voting-record database.
- Said transparency should be standard and residents should not need to search hours of video or minutes.
- Wanted closed sessions limited to legally required matters with plain-language reporting.
- Favoured stronger disclosure, publicized conduct rules and support for the integrity commissioner.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Clearly supported all-vote recording and explained its role in accessible accountability.

Question 5 Youth and family services

- What gaps do you see in youth programming and services? If elected, what two or three specific actions would you take to improve the lives of youth and families in our town?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:02:25

- Wanted residents and children given priority in local decisions.
- Proposed restoring the Lord Mayor's Youth Advisory Committee to learn directly what young people need.
- Cited Royal Oak School's origins after Parliament Oak closed and the value of walking or cycling to school.
- Wanted schools in all villages and cooperation with school boards while maintaining organized resident advocacy.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Identified gaps in youth input and access to local schools, and proposed two discernible actions: restoring the youth committee and advocating with school boards for village schools. The school proposal remained broad, but the question did not require a funded implementation plan.

Question 6 Tourism promotion

- Should Niagara-on-the-Lake be doing more to promote tourism?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:08:27

- Recognized tourism's importance but placed resident livability ahead of visitor volume.
- Identified traffic, parking, noise, housing loss and access to public spaces as limits on tourism policy.
- Proposed early resident consultation, learning from comparable heritage towns and defining measurable resident quality of life.
- Opposed using a parking lot in the historic area as the answer to tourism pressure.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Set out a clear approach to managing tourism and protecting residents, but did not expressly say whether more promotion was warranted. Management priorities alone leave the requested yes-or-no direction unresolved.

Question 7 Conflicts of interest

- Outline your understanding of a conflict of interest at the council table. Give an example of a real conflict where you would declare a conflict, and an example of a perceived conflict and how you would address it.

Answer summary Transcript start 1:18:14

- Addressed the perception that being a real estate agent means all new development benefits him; said he had no business relationships with town developers.
- Gave a real-conflict example of a listed property whose value could be affected by a severance application.
- Said he would recuse himself in that case.
- Said he would also step away where a genuine perceived conflict exists, as a matter of good faith.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained conflicts through personal examples, identified a financial-interest scenario and addressed both real and perceived conflicts through recusal.

Question 8 Reviewing development proposals

- For incumbents: have you read each development proposal from top to bottom, or relied on town staff and their recommendations? For newcomers: how would you approach reviewing development proposals?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:25:29

- Would generally reject proposals that fail to conform to the official plan unless there is a transparent public-interest case for an amendment.
- Would assess scale, character, infrastructure and community realities.
- Would withhold approval where sewer, stormwater or traffic capacity is uncertain until evidence is available.
- Warned that exceptions become precedents; cited 72 zoning amendments and 21 official-plan amendments under the current council.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained the criteria and evidence he would use to review proposals. Although he did not explicitly promise to read every page, the newcomer question asked for his review approach, which he supplied.

Question 9 Strong mayor powers

- In circumstances where the Lord Mayor plus two councillors can override the will of the council majority through strong mayor powers, what is your position on their use?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:44:42

- Opposed strong mayor powers, strong regional chair powers and population-weighted regional voting.
- Committed not to join a Lord Mayor in using strong mayor powers to decide growth or budget matters unilaterally.
- Said contentious decisions call for further public consultation rather than an override.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Stated opposition, made a concrete commitment about his own participation and explained his preferred alternative.

Three minute closing statement

Transcript start 1:48:52

- Said the evening's questions reveal serious flaws in town governance.
- Criticized development that undermines heritage, tourism taking precedence over quality of life, approvals before infrastructure, planning exceptions and developer fee waivers alongside tax increases.
- Called for courage, fresh perspectives and independent representation.
- Said his campaign had visited 3,428 homes and would bring residents' concerns into council decisions.
- Acknowledged the need to weigh conflicting views, law, planning evidence, finances and long-term consequences.
- Promised to listen, remain accessible and remember that he represents town residents.

Steve McGuinness

Three minute opening statement

Transcript start 12:07

- Thanked the organizers, volunteers, candidates and audience for supporting informed voting.
- Described immigrating to Canada as a child, growing up in Hamilton, earning political-science and MBA degrees, and qualifying as a chartered accountant.
- Said he moved to Niagara-on-the-Lake after retirement in 2018 and wanted to preserve its distinctive character.
- Expressed concern about the pace and scale of development, including high-end hotels at Parliament Oak.
- Wanted to examine town spending, secure better value and negotiate a fairer contribution from developers.
- Identified rising property taxes and inadequate infrastructure as reasons to run.

Question 1 Reasons for seeking office

- Whether you are an incumbent seeking re-election or seeking office for the first time, why do you want to be a town councillor?

Answer summary Transcript start 20:38

- Wanted to restore trust between residents and council through accessibility, transparency and ethics.
- Said residents' interests should guide every decision.
- Drew on professional accounting ethics and said councillors should avoid apparent conflicts without unnecessary legal review.
- Used winery, farming and nearby-development examples to explain when he would leave decisions to colleagues.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained his motivation as restoring trust and described the ethical approach he would bring to council.

Question 2 Budget priorities

- At budget time, rank these three priorities from highest to lowest and explain why: investing in programs and services for youth and seniors; investing in water and wastewater infrastructure to mitigate future climate disasters; keeping the budget increase no higher than the annual rate of inflation.

Answer summary Transcript start 29:01

- Explicitly placed water and stormwater infrastructure first after recent flooding and sewer backups.
- Said property taxes had increased 27% over four years compared with 16% inflation.
- Wanted higher development charges and less waste to fund infrastructure and youth and senior programs.
- Argued that the priorities are interrelated and can all be achieved through better management and growth paying for growth.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Clearly ranked infrastructure first, but did not explicitly rank youth and senior services against the inflation limit. Discussing manageable taxes and funding all priorities did not complete the required ordering.

Question 3 Future of Glendale

- What is your vision for the future of Glendale?

Answer summary Transcript start 38:12

- Wanted Glendale residents included in a shared town vision while preserving village character.
- Opposed making Glendale a dumping ground for imposed growth.
- Identified walkability and essential services, including a supermarket and pharmacy, as needs.
- Raised concerns about student rentals replacing family homes and associated traffic.
- Supported controlled, appropriate growth that keeps Glendale part of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Described an integrated, livable community and identified the services and development pressures shaping that vision.

Question 4 Recorded council votes

- Do you support recording all votes at council meetings so residents can see how their representatives voted? Why or why not?

Answer summary Transcript start 47:12

- Strongly supported recording every councillor's vote on every motion.
- Said transparency is necessary for accountability and rejected treating the issue as merely a technical or training problem.
- Used Parliament Oak as an example where residents should know who supported and opposed a decision.
- Criticized the hotel approval and the loss of community use of the former school property.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Directly endorsed all-vote recording and explained why residents need that information.

Question 5 Youth and family services

- What gaps do you see in youth programming and services? If elected, what two or three specific actions would you take to improve the lives of youth and families in our town?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:04:01

- Identified school-bus arrangements, before- and after-school programs and unequal access to parks and amenities as gaps.
- Urged residents to consider school-board trustee candidates carefully.
- Wanted programming accessible to residents throughout the town, including Glendale.
- Proposed an indoor pool for swimming safety, children and seniors, suggesting accommodation-tax funding and access for tourists.

Did the candidate answer the question? Partially. Identified several gaps and one concrete project, an indoor pool. He did not clearly state two or three specific actions he would take as councillor; voting advice to residents and a general call for equitable programming did not supply the remaining actions.

Question 6 Tourism promotion

- Should Niagara-on-the-Lake be doing more to promote tourism?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:10:06

- Argued against increasing dependence on tourism, citing COVID vulnerability and questions about hospitality wages.
- Said visitor volumes already create intense seasonal pressure and compared the visitor-to-resident ratio with Venice.
- Questioned whether marketing can increase overnight visitors without increasing day trips, congestion, hotel demand and short-term rentals.
- Opposed a provincial push to double tourism volume and linked airport expansion to provincial Niagara tourism ambitions.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Clearly opposed further tourism expansion and promotion through his argument against adding dependence and increasing visitor volume. The position was evident even without an opening yes-or-no sentence.

Question 7 Conflicts of interest

- Outline your understanding of a conflict of interest at the council table. Give an example of a real conflict where you would declare a conflict, and an example of a perceived conflict and how you would address it.

Answer summary Transcript start 1:19:15

- Linked conflict rules to trust and said he owns only his home locally, with no relatives owning local property.
- Used the hypothetical example of an Oban Inn owner voting on a competing hotel as a real-conflict scenario.
- Used a parent's restaurant patio and a developer cousin as examples raising perceived-conflict concerns.
- Said councillors should leave decisions to colleagues when they appear conflicted rather than rely on narrow technical interpretations.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Explained his understanding and supplied real and perceived scenarios with the response of stepping aside. The examples were hypothetical rather than existing personal conflicts, which satisfied the request for scenarios.

Question 8 Reviewing development proposals

- For incumbents: have you read each development proposal from top to bottom, or relied on town staff and their recommendations? For newcomers: how would you approach reviewing development proposals?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:27:19

- Would assess compliance with the official plan, secondary plans and zoning; wanted numerous amendments rejected.
- Would examine whether growth pays its costs through appropriate development charges.
- Would consider neighbourhood character, density, scale, heritage and environmental protection.
- Wanted development pace kept within infrastructure capacity and provision for seniors to age locally.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Outlined a substantive review approach and the planning, financial, infrastructure and community criteria he would apply.

Question 9 Strong mayor powers

- In circumstances where the Lord Mayor plus two councillors can override the will of the council majority through strong mayor powers, what is your position on their use?

Answer summary Transcript start 1:38:24

- Totally opposed strong mayor powers and argued that municipal decisions should use majority rule.
- Said the powers are discretionary and intended to advance provincial development priorities.
- Encouraged voters to ask mayoral candidates whether they would reject the powers and what exceptions they might allow.
- Also opposed strong regional chair powers, particularly for a provincially appointed chair, and warned about possible amalgamation.

Did the candidate answer the question? Yes. Expressed unequivocal opposition and explained his democratic and local-autonomy concerns.

Three minute closing statement

Transcript start 1:45:41

- Encouraged informed voting and directed residents to policy material on his campaign website.
- Framed the election as an opportunity to judge council's performance and asked whether voters want another four years like the last four.
- Called for some new councillors and approaches while retaining experienced members who do their homework.
- Encouraged examination of incumbents' voting records.
- Wanted faster, proactive decisions and less repeated reliance on consultants and staff studies.
- Expressed optimism about restoring the town's character and asked for residents' votes.