

Mike Balsom 0:22

So we will begin with Andrea Kaiser and your three minutes.

Andrea Kaiser 0:27

Before we begin, I just want to make sure before we begin that it was working. Thank you very much. Can everyone hear me? Okay, super. Good evening, and thank you to the Niagara in the Lake Residents Association for hosting this forum, and to everyone here tonight for taking the time to learn more about your candidates for Lord Mayor. There is always a lot of information circulating during an election, and sometimes it can be difficult to know what is accurate. That is why I am genuinely grateful that you are in attendance tonight to hear directly from me. First, let me share with you that despite what you may have heard, as Lord Mayor, nothing will be more important to me than serving the people of Niagara in the Lake. It will be my primary focus and priority, and I say this with a full understanding of what that means, as I have spent 15 years serving Nag in the Lake, first as a municipal councilor, and now as a regional councilor. I am ready to assume all of the responsibilities of being Lord Mayor, and that is not something that I will need to figure out on the job. I am prepared and ready to serve on day one, and I have a proven track record. I have done the work, am doing the work and will always do the work. This is simply the person that I am. I really know no other way. I also know municipal politics is very different from running a business. I know this because I have done both. I understand how government works, and with the changes to regional councilor, this will be especially important as the Lord Mayor will be Niagara in the Lakes' only elected representative at the region, but let me be very clear: my experience does not mean that I represent the status quo. In fact, I am running because I believe we need change. After personally knocking 1000s of doors, I have heard that directly from residents that they also want change. They have said they want more transparency, more collaboration, and most importantly, they want their elected officials to listen to them and to each other. I believe listening is the key to good leadership, and by listening, we can find common ground. I have also heard clearly residents want to protect what makes our community so special, and we can do this with a strong economy and protect the natural environment and village character. And I know this because when I served on municipal council from 2003 to 2014, we found this balance. I am here as a candidate, to offer an alternative to the past, a future with mutual respect, more collaboration, and communication, and less divisiveness, and I also happen to have all the experience needed for the job. I humbly ask that you would consider me as your candidate, and I welcome the conversation tonight. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 3:22

Thank you, Erwin.

Erwin Wiens 3:28

Thank you, and good evening. My name is Erwin Weens. I'm running to be your Lord Mayor. Can everybody hear that? But before I jump into what I want to do as Lord Mayor, let me explain to you why I'm running. I love our town, our town of Niagara on the Lake. I love the land. I love our farms. I love our vineyards, orchards, fields. I love the villages. I love our heritage. I

love our river, and I love our lake, Lake Ontario. But most of all, I love the people who call Niagara Lake home. This is not simply where I live; it is where I've raised my family, where I work, where I have served, where I have volunteered and built a life. It is the community that has given my family so much, and I believe deeply that we have a responsibility to leave it stronger for the next generation. My faith teaches me that we're not owners of the things that have been entrusted us, but we are stewards, and that is how I see the role of Lord Mayor. I am running because I believe Niagara Lake deserves leadership that will protect what matters, while having the courage to make thoughtful decisions about the future. I will deliver that leadership. Protection isn't about a political point. Protection is personal. I spent years as a police officer. I served as a volunteer firefighter here in Niagara on the Lake, and I, and I spent my entire life as a goalie in the Virgil Arena over there blocking shots. A police officer. Protects the community. A firefighter runs towards the problem as others run away, but a goaltender, well, a goalie learns pretty quickly that you don't get to choose which shot is coming at you. You prepare, you stay focused, and when that moment comes, you stand your ground. These experiences shape who I am. When I talk about protecting Iron Lake, I mean protecting our families, our farms, our heritage, our local decision making, and the quality of life that makes our community special. And I know we can do this and still be confident about our future. My priorities are straightforward. We must be disciplined with our tax dollars and reduce wasteful spending. We need development that is balanced, development that respects our heritage, our infrastructure, and our community. After three decades, we now have an official plan to further guide development and ensure all parties understand the rules. Now is not the time for change. Rather, now is the time to take that plan forward. We must protect agriculture because our farms are not simply part of our economy; they're part of who we are. We need a strong, resilient local economy that creates opportunities for families, young people, and local businesses. And we need to stand firmly for local decision making. Niagara Lake should not lose its voice or its identity through amalgamation. I have five priorities and one simple belief: that we can move forward without losing sight of where we came from. Every decision will not be easy. I won't promise what I can't deliver, but I promise you this: I will work hard, full time, overtime. I will listen.

Speaker 1 6:49

Erwin, we we have to cut you off. Time is up. Thanks, Bon.

Andrea Kaiser 6:54

Oh, I'm so sorry. Yes, sir. Thank you.

Vaughan Goettler 7:03

Thank you. It's a great privilege that I sit here tonight running for Lord Mayor of Niagara Lake. My wife lent me these glasses, so I forgot mine. So this is kind of tricky for me. I want to thank everybody for coming out here tonight to invest your time in hearing from all of us up here. I would also like to thank all of the candidates, my my fellow competitors for Lord Mayor, and I know there's, if not all, there's a number of the councilors and people running for council here tonight. I'd like to thank you all for your investment in the community. I also really have to say

that it's time for a change. Niagara Lake needs a change. We need openness, honesty, and transparency in our council, in our staff, in the way we run our town. We need to rebuild trust in our council, we've lost it, and we need to rebuild it. In my previous life, I was a successful businessman. Some people have said that I shouldn't talk about that, almost as though I should apologize for it. I'm not apologizing for it. I had I worked hard, and I had good fortune to be able to be very successful. You know the town needs to be run like a business. I absolutely believe it. It's money in, money out. Yes, there's all the social things, all the villages, all the people, everything that must be done. Our ag community, but it must be run like a business. Otherwise, it doesn't run well. I can do that. I've done that all my life. In this business scenario, you, the people of Virgil, Saint David's, Queenston, Chautauqua, Glendale, Old Old Town, you're the CEO. All of our agricultural community, you're the CEO. The pyramid right now is the wrong way around. We've got the provincial leaders at the top. We've got the region. We've got council. We've got staff, and then we've got all the residents at the bottom. We need to flip that. It's time we put the power back in the hands of the residents. We really need to do that. We need to listen to you, and as your Lord Mayor, the council that I lead, we will be listening to you first. This is going to be a residents-first government. Thank you to

Speaker 1 9:33

all three of the candidates. We begin with our first question. The 2026 municipal election is unique. It's our first since Niagara on the Lake was designated by the province as a municipality. Oh, I thought you finished.

Vaughan Goettler 9:48

I wasn't.

Speaker 1 9:50

Oh, sorry.

Vaughan Goettler 9:50

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. No, I was. I when people clapped, I just wanted to give them the opportunity to clap. So, okay, I'll I'll be. Quick, I won't mess it up. Okay, thank thank you. Okay, I'll be real quick. I'm

Speaker 1 10:05

very sorry, Von.

Vaughan Goettler 10:06

No, it's okay. So, to that point, and to demonstrate my commitment, and because I have had the good fortune to be successful in my life, I am prepared to do the job of the Lord Mayor of Niagara on the lake full time, for \$1, I will donate the rest of my salary to local charities throughout all the villages. Whatever works, and I can do that, and I will do that to demonstrate my commitment. The other thing that I have to tell you is, the other thing I have to tell you is, on strong mayor powers, I will not use them. They have been time three seconds. Thank you all

very much. Thank you. Now, one of the

Speaker 1 11:07

reasons why they asked me to do this is because I've done this about like 80 times, and there you go. Even that experience, I can make some mistakes once in a while. So feeding into, I guess, with what Mr. Getler just said, this first question is about strong mayor powers. The 2026 municipal election is unique. It's our first since Niagara on the Lake was designated by the province as a municipality with strong mayor powers. Moreover, we are now electing two fewer council members. Our new Lord Mayor will have strong mayor powers, which allow him or her to override council decisions in some circumstances, hire and dismiss senior staff, and control the development of the municipal budget, which has a direct bearing on municipal taxation rates. Are there instances where you would consider using strong mayor powers? If so, when, and why? We begin with you, Erwin. Three minutes.

Erwin Wiens 12:05

Thank you. So strong mayors is a tool in a toolbox, and it's been designated to us by the province, and we can't give it back. We can agree not to use it, but in certain situations, it does work. The municipal budget this year worked, and it saved the community \$200,000 plus plus the the staff time that went in it. Because what happened was is the budget was prepared and then sent over to the council to debate it for the 30 days. So there was all the input that was needed. There was all the information that was there. And the and what happened out of that is because we were able to get out early, we were able to get all of our infrastructure money put out and get the early bids and early tenders. That's a victory for strong mayors. The other thing that I will do that we did this term is we handed that authority back over to to the the CAO to continue. So I will continue to do that because the CAO, who's responsible for staffing, should continue to be responsible staffing, and staff should understand that they have the confidence and comfortable environment that they have to do their jobs. So, but I also have to look back over the last eight years, and there's been many, many decisions that were made, and I don't know if there was any that I would have even thought about using the strong mayor's power. Democracy is is what's the backbone of of what we're doing here. Democracy. So the one time it did come up, I chose not to use it because I didn't feel it fit and I didn't support it. I still won't support them, but at the same time, I think what's important to remember as we go forward, we're going to have six councilors moving forward, and a seventh with a seventh vote there. That's going to have to be dealt with communication. It's going to have to deal with being able to to get the work done through reading reports and making sure that we get a consensus, and that I believe in consensus. I believe in being able to to get things done, and I have eight years of doing that, of working with consensus and working with the majorities. And if it doesn't work your way, it doesn't work your way. But at the end of the day, what you always do is you support council decisions and you move forward because we're all on Team Niagara on the Lake. We all want the same thing all the time. What we're trying to do is make this place better. It's an amazing place to live, and when it comes down to democracy and listening and wanting to get what's best, that doesn't need to be done through strong mayors. And I'm going to commit to being on Team Niagara Lake, just like the other 19,500 people of the town of Niagara Lake.

Thank you.

Vaughan Goettler 14:52

Okay, thank you. Well, I guess I kind of started into the strong mayor powers earlier. The reason why. Did that is I actually believe that it is a fundamental disconnect with democracy, grassroots democracy especially. In saying that, I'm not criticizing the fact that they're there or that the government of Ontario brought them in for municipalities. I'm just saying that I don't need them. I'm going to tell you a quick story about somebody I consider a hero in Canadian history, Lester Pearson. For those of you who remember him, passed more legislation, health care. He even brought in student loans, of which I used one. I didn't have the means to go on my own. I paid it back, just so everybody knows. But he also brought in the auto pact. He brought. He helped us get a new flag. All those things. He did all of that, and passed more legislation than any prime minister before or since. Never had anything other than a minority government. The way you do that is by building consensus, working with people, at all levels, residents or constituents, other parties. I have run businesses most of my life. Some of them pretty large. I mean, well over 1000 employees in the company that we most recently had. And you don't run it by being a dictator. You run it by building consensus. And when you build consensus, you're almost unstoppable. You don't need to be-I don't want to say a bully, but I mean, let's face it: strong mayor powers are pretty extreme, and you don't need to use them. So that's how I feel about that.

Andrea Kaiser 16:38

Thank you, thank you very, thank you very much. Oh, there we go. Thank you very much. I put a lot of thought into this question and done quite a bit of research to understand why these powers came to be. It was something that during my experience we had never had, and specifically the powers were set out in terms of trying to build new homes and maintaining infrastructure to support housing, including transit, roads, utilities, and services. I have seen them working in the sense I think of the budget process. Having sit on the Niger Regional Council for the last four years, I can share that our budgeting processes there last about nine months, and by the time we get to the end of the budget, we are already starting a new budget. So I do see some value where a preliminary draft budget could be brought to council for consideration and collaboration. And I would just say to you that if you look at my track record, my leadership style, the way I have always acted and led in the community has been by collaboration, and there would be no time that I would not use those, or no time I would use those powers without collaboration on the council itself and working with them.

Speaker 1 18:09

Thank you to all three again. On to question number two, and Vaughn, you'll be the first to answer this, followed by Andrea, and then Erwin. Transparency and open decision making are priorities of residents. Do you have any business, financial, or family relationships with developers who may submit proposals to Niagara on the Lakes Council? If so, can you state those relationships and whether you will declare a conflict of interest when a proposal proceeds to Council?

Vaughan Goettler 18:38

Well,

Speaker 1 18:38

Vaughn, you're first.

Vaughan Goettler 18:39

Okay, thank you. This may help you meet your 9 o'clock deadline on time. The answer is no. I have the again the good fortune from my business life. I don't even I'm not even beholden to the bank, so I am totally clear from anything that would be conflicting for my role as Lord Mayor of Niagara Lake. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 19:08

I'm next. Thank you. Could you just repeat the last part of the question?

Speaker 1 19:13

Can you state any relationships that you might have with developers who may submit proposals to the Niagara on the lakes, council, and whether or not you will declare a conflict of interest if a proposal proceeds to council,

Andrea Kaiser 19:27

I would and have always declared conflict as needed. I've been serving in the community for, as I mentioned, 15 years, and have a business that I have been working for locally. I wouldn't identify them as a developer, but certainly a business in in the in the community that has been here for over 30 years. And there was an instance when I served municipally that I did declare a conflict regarding that particular business. And moving forward, I would continue to do that and to abide by. The Act, the obligations of the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act, and the Towns Code of Conduct-absolutely no question. You can again see from my track record that I will be very open and transparent about any relationships, and I think that you know other candidates may need to sort of review sort of the the overall act, direct versus indirect, and it is really on a case by case basis to look at each particular application. And I would absolutely do that that transparently and share any conflict of interest that I may or may not have.

Erwin Wiens 20:45

Thank you. The conflict of interest is set out in the Municipal Act, and it has clear guidelines, and it is overseen by the Integrity Commissioner, which is an arms-length advisor to the to the council. So, over the past eight years, I have followed all the rules that are set out by the legislation, and I will continue to follow all that legislation. So, so,

Speaker 1 21:14

thank you. Okay, on to question number three. Municipal taxes have increased some 22% over the past four years, or more than 5% per year. Do you believe that these tax increases were fair

and reasonable? And what would your quantifiable goal be for tax increases or decreases over the next four years, Andrea? Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 21:42

I think what many residents might be surprised to hear is and to know that Niagara in the Lake actually has the lowest mill rates in Niagara. Of course, much different when compared to Toronto, for example, when we look at density and commercial, and so it's hard to compare apples to apples in terms of the commercial tax revenues that large cities see, unlike ourselves. However, Niagara in the Lake is in a very sort of different position from many other municipalities in Niagara region, and the significant portion of the taxes that you are seeing that are shall we say out of balance are largely related to the regional tax base to the levies at the tax of the region because of our high assessments as compared to other municipalities. A great example of that is the recent work that I've been doing on policing. We as residents are paying north of \$700 per household. The next municipality below us, because of our high assessment, is seeing you know 400 and below. So it is a significant issue that I believe. Not while I'm I'm always willing to look at efficiencies as a previous business owner, but the real work needs to be done at a regional level to make sure that we are not paying more than our fair share based on our assessed value of our homes as compared to the other municipalities in Niagara. A great example as well. We also have to work with the province to get a lot of the downloads at the region, where we, of course, pay our the larger share. For example, last year we had a 14% increase at the region, but 11% of that was attributed to policing download costs from the province, and only 3% was our actual increase. We're also dealing with community services being underfunded at the region, and we've been delivering the same core services for program delivery, for social assistance, things like services, community service that have been frozen since 2018, and so those are the kinds of things we need to tackle. That's not to say that I wouldn't be ultra and laser focused on efficiencies at the municipal level, but there is a bigger picture here as our municipality, very specifically, has higher regional rates due to our high assessments compared to our neighbors.

Erwin Wiens 24:27

Thanks for the question, Mike. Taxes should be discussed in dollars and not just percentages. Niagara Lakes has the lowest property mill rate of any tax of any municipality in the region. But while taxes have increased 25% in the last four years on the same assessment basis, that amounts to \$350, about \$1 a day for the average resident in Niagara on the Lake. While taxes percentage increases also need to be taken in context. Lincoln, for instance, had a 2.7 percent increase, but their increase was four times what Naga Lakes was due to our lower mill rate. Can we do better? Absolutely. We need to look at what we have to what we have to look at is where the impact is. 65 percent of your taxes go to the region. 65 percent. That's the lion's share. 25 percent go to the police service. That's more than you pay to the town, more than you pay to the town. The plan is to keep taxes stable and spending accountable while maintaining essential services. I'm not going to ask you to spend one more dollar until we can find efficiencies back at the Naga Lake. But the reality is, is once we get to the region, there's going to be 12 mayors. Those mayors have to be able to understand what's how to read these budgets, how to go

through these budgets, and I can tell you, a municipal budget and a regional budget is is very different than a corporate budget. And there's different baskets. There's different envelopes, and we have to find those efficiency. We have to find those services, and we have to work together, and we have to get those taxes in order, and that and that is something that I'm going to be committed to, and I've been committed to it for for the last eight years. I will continue that. Thank you.

Vaughan Goettler 26:25

Thank you. Well, as a as the saying goes, there's two things that are certain in life, and taxes is one, and the other one we don't like to talk about that often. The truth of the matter is, our neighbors to the south fought an entire war over no taxation without representation? We have lost control of our ability to be represented properly at the region. The region works for us. It works for all of you. It's our. I'm. I'm just a citizen too. I'm a resident too. I'm not in office. I pay taxes. I don't have the policing or the services that I should for the dollars that I spend, and it's time that we stand up and be counted. So you know we need to take the control back. So in terms of taxes, I think there's a couple other things. We've had very large settlements to developers in our town, million-dollar settlements. Those things impact taxes, as you know. Sometimes the tax increases have been blamed on the previous administration. It's fine to say that we won't stand up and fight when developers when we have to, but if we have smart development and we have our bylaws enforced and our official plan enforced, then we don't need to fight nearly as much as we have. So it's time again that we put the bylaws that we have in place into action, and we will have fewer fights, fewer dollars going out in legal battles, and we won't have to blame other administrations. So I think the taxes are too high. My goal would be to hold taxes to not more than inflation. I don't know if I can do that yet. I'm not in the seat, but I'll work to do that.

Speaker 1 28:20

Thank you. Thanks again to all of you. Question number four: Recent surveys undertaken by the Niagara on the Lake Residents Association suggest that taxpayers are concerned by a lack of openness in council and town staff decision making. How would you address this concern, Erwin. You'll be first on this one.

Erwin Wiens 28:50

Thank you. In regards to municipalities, a municipality in all governments has has the most obligation under the legislation to be transparent, more than any other government, and certainly more than any private sector business. So the first question we have to ask is when when that feeling arises, because it's a legitimate feeling, when they when residents feel they're not getting the proper information, we have to drill down more as to what is the information that they're looking for and why and how are they not getting that, because we have in regards to our budget, it is it is online. In regards to our ongoing process, ongoing construction that's happening, we have a program that's called Open Books. It lays all that out. All of our meetings are properly addressed in the proper time frames. Everything is online. It's all mandated. All the information is there. Then everything is posted. So, although I say that, that feeling is still there

that people aren't being able to get the information. So, what we have to do in the next administration is actually drill down to why do people feel that they're not getting the information? How do we direct them how to get it? Because it is available, it is there, and it is your information.

Vaughan Goettler 30:16

Thank you. I think that the budget needs to be encapsulated so that everybody can understand it. You can't have 200 sub accounts and ask people to understand what's going on. If I tried to run a company that way, I wouldn't be able to do it. So I think that we need to get an income statement, a balance sheet, and we need to be able to publish that quarterly, not wait for six months after a year end before we talk about our financial results. We need to bring some disciplines in that are going to make us much more open and transparent on a regular basis. That's published in the paper, and if people don't understand it, that they can then call us, talk to us. If we don't understand it, we'll get the help to make sure you do. To me, that's transparency-no secrets, nothing, nothing under, untoward or anything. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 31:17

Thank you. I have heard this concern out in the neighborhood, knocking doors, meeting with residents, and I'm hearing, as I have heard, be hoped before, that residents want to understand how decisions are being made, and they want meaningful consultation before important decisions are taken, and they also want to know that their elected representatives are listening. When I was elected in 2003 to a municipal councilor, we actually had the very similar set of circumstances, and part of the reason that there was a sort of a desire for change, that I believe I was elected because people were looking for more transparency and for change and to know that their politicians were listening, their elected officials. So when I was elected, I got right to work, and for example, worked on adding a second public planning information meeting, which is outside of the statutory public meeting to give residents more information and time to provide feedback before the reports were written by the staff. That's an example of what we can do to open and provide more transparency and conversation. I also recall when I was first elected, I was asked, "How would I be voting at council meeting that evening? And my response was always the same: "How could I know how I am voting, as I have not heard residents' concerns at the public meeting, nor my fellow councilors' perspectives, and there also might be new information? And that is how I have always gone through the process of coming to my decisions in how I vote, and I believe that I have built trust in this way through the community. I also think it's very important that when councilors make an important decision, people should be able to understand why that decision was made, and I always took the time to explain after any vote, after the public meeting, while residents were present, to explain how I arrived at the decision. And I had many, many residents come to me after the meeting and say, you know, I, you know, the vote didn't go the way I wanted, but I really appreciated that you listened to me. You made adjustments, you took some care and time to do some compromises to help with impacts on residents, and they appreciated me being very transparent and forthcoming. And I believe that's what residents are looking for: is they are looking for trust in their elected officials.

Speaker 1 34:06

Thank you for those responses. On to our next question. Do you believe there is a problem with Niagara on the Lake stormwater, wastewater treatment, and drainage systems? If so, what specific actions would you undertake to address this issue, Vaughn? You're first on this, followed by Andrea, and then Irwin.

Vaughan Goettler 34:28

Wow. Thank you. Yes, there is a problem. The first thing that I would do as Lord Mayor would be to put a moratorium on new development until we understand where our infrastructure is at. Thank you. We we should not be building until we know where the infrastructure is at and. So therefore, I think that we are acknowledging we have a problem. I was out in St. David's this week, and I was at one lady's home who shall remain unnamed. Three times she has been flooded, not with the good kind of flooding, overland water, the bad kind, the kind that came up through her toilet and up through her sink and everything else. At one point, she was out of her house for six months. That's a problem. That's a bump in Virgil. I don't know why we don't have it fixed. And in addition, I don't know why we don't have check valves or whatever they're called. I call them chuck valves to make sure that effluent doesn't come back in. That should be a city or a town-sponsored program that should help residents to avoid this in the future. Personally, thank you. Personally, we were flooded twice at our farm, once very seriously, and once at our house in on Ricardo Street, so I do understand, and I absolutely sympathize, empathize with all those of you who were. We can do better. Our drainage ditches are not kept clean. Our culverts are undersized in many cases. We need a whole program. We had committees. We had committees, and we used to use them, agriculture irrigation committees, and we aren't using them anymore. We have the knowledge in this town to do just about anything that we want with the residents who are right here in this room. We don't need consultants. We don't need to have people telling us what to do. We already know what to do if we just tap into what we've got? So let's do it. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 36:52

Thank you. Absolutely, I believe demonstrated infrastructure capacity and readiness needs to be a prerequisite for significant development, but essentially that is something that is included in our official and guided by our official plan, which outlines our goals for housing industry and where they need and should go. It also identifies the timing and placements of essential infrastructure like roads, water mains, sewers, and parks, and those are the tools that we can use to manage development to ensure that we do not put too much stress on our existing infrastructure, and they exist within our official plan, and with the experience of how knowing how that policy works, rather than proposing a moratorium on development that would likely have us end up back in a legal battle, potentially, you know, two \$3 million. Those are the sorts of solutions that we need to have based on experience of how to use the provincial policies to get our community to where we need to be in terms of impacts on infrastructure. We've just completed our official plan. The next step will be the comprehensive zoning bylaw, and that is the part of the process where the overall vision, which I think has been submitted to the province for consideration by the past council for in May of this year, that will be when this

council will do the work to define those very specific details. And the last that that was done was in 2009 when I served on council, and it needs to be updated. And we need to look very specifically on ensuring we have the guardrails within that comprehensive zoning bylaw, so we can legally create policy that can get to the goal that we want to get to. Random moratoriums bring us back to court legal cases. We need to do this in a way that is within the policies we have in place, and we need to be focused and making sure that we can protect that from legal sort of questions. And I believe that again, my experience is where I can help to be that differentiator to build those policies and plans, whether it be secondary plans, those things are the tactical ways that we can manage this sort of impact on our our community. I would also say that absolutely, climate resilience is something we have to put at the top of our list: 100-year storms are no longer 100-year storms, and we need to make sure that we invest in capital budgets that can allow us to maintain our infrastructure, and we need to make climate resilience a priority. Sorry, I just realized that was.

Erwin Wiens 40:06

Thank you. I think what's important to understand is in 2014 and and 2015's decisions were made at that time with the irrigation committee and the agricultural committee and the operations department and the support of council that that rather than ditching the drains, it would be better better for the environment and better for the climate resiliency to brush those ditches rather than clear them out. That was based on the best information that we had at the time, or they had at the time. I wasn't part of that decision making, and that continued on, but and then what it also led to is led to purchasing the brushing machine that we now have at the town, but what it didn't take into account was the fact that we were going to get two storms with six inches of water each time, and so. But those people at that time made the best decision based on the information they have. We now know that we need to go into a different direction. So understanding how we got here is is the most important. That's why having that grassroots knowledge of what's happening to the town is important to move forward. Also, Andrea touch touched on moratoriums. That's an interim control bylaw, and we ran into a problem with that, and and and the and it did not survive litigation, so we have to be very careful. Growth is dictated by the provincial government, and we don't control that. But what we do do is we control the official plan that, after three decades, we finished. And I won't touch on the the 2008 comprehensive zoning bylaws. Andrea is 100% correct. That's what we need to do. We need to work on those to put those guardrails in place. But also, growth is going to take place under the official plan in Glendale, where they're welcoming it, and it will be welcomed. But the way we're going to do that is through character studies and secondary plans and getting things into place and getting the guardrails in place so that the next generation is there. So, when we talk about infrastructure, we have the new wastewater water wastewater in wastewater in Niagara Lake, and it has plenty of capacity, and it was and it's able to withstand it. We do have we we ran into several issues with the pumping station in Saint David's, and we were able to solve those problems on a temporary basis. And we're continually working on that, and we've made some some repairs to that in the in the very short period before that. But more importantly, what this council did is we did what we undertook was called an asset management plan. The town of Niagara Lake us owns 30,000 assets in the town, and we prioritize them. And what we did is we

found out what the what the conditions that they were in, what the cost of repair, and what the cost of maintenance is. And we found, like every municipality, a gap in the infrastructure. How do we fund it? So, coming to council tomorrow. It's been going on. It was a two-year process. Coming to council tomorrow is the asset management plan, and it's going to fund over the next 10 years our infrastructure. But I also want to thank you.

Speaker 1 43:18

Okay, so I'm going to take a little bit of license here. There was a different question six. I'm going to come back to that. I'm going to push that to question number seven. I hope that's okay for the residents' association. And the reason is, question seven, which is now going to be question six, riffs off of the official plan and the zoning bylaws. So it makes more sense for us to jump to this one now. Residents have raised serious concerns about the town's adherence to the official plan, zoning, and bylaws when considering proposals by developers. Please name the three most important criteria that you would apply when assessing the suitability of a proposed new development or building project. Andrea, we begin with you on this one, followed by Erwin, then Vaughn.

Andrea Kaiser 44:06

Thank you. And you're looking for three specific

Speaker 1 44:09

three specific three specific criteria

Andrea Kaiser 44:12

of how I would assess developments in terms of the community. Of course, at the end of the day, we do have an official plan which is adopted, and that's always going to drive decisions, but at the same time, we can work to create policies and we can create frameworks as suggested through the comprehensive zoning bylaws. Those are the ways that councilors are intended to guide the types of developments in our community. Councilors are not intended to write bylaws and to provide bylaws to the staff. It's very clear, elected officials are there to provide policy and to grade the policy that will put the guardrails on of the kind of development that we are looking for. I have heard from residents. That they are not opposed to development, but they feel that development has been too big, too fast, too much. I would concur with them, and so based on my experience, I would work to create the policies that would allow us to slow things down without getting into legal issues, and a lot of that work-sorry to repeat myself-would be done through the comprehensive zoning bylaws. And at the end of the day, for me, my priorities in terms of the types of developments we have in Niagara in the Lake, we have to have supported by infrastructure, and we have to have it planned in a way that protects our agricultural lands, natural environment, and heritage, which I think is in its own group or one group. And then, lastly, need to consider the residents' quality quality of life and how it impacts residents.

Erwin Wiens 46:00

Thank you. Development has always been an issue and will continue to be an issue. So I just

want to get some of the statistics out of the way. So between 2011 and 2014, the average year had 211 houses being built. Between 15 and 19, the average was 201 houses being built annually, between 19 to 2022, it was 151 houses being built annually. Between 22 and 26, we're at 68 houses built annually. The reason is most of our growth has taken place over the last 15 years. We've had an increase in residents by 5000 people, and that many of those people, many of you people may have come in the last 15 years and welcomed. You've been amazing people in our community, and we welcome that. But so when we look at development, there's also been some good development and great development, like like the redevelopment of the museum, the redevelopment of the Shah Festival, Red Roof Retreat, that development. These are looking after some of the the most vulnerable people in our community. So development, it's not development versus versus no development. It's it's about having everything in place. But before any development can be built, it has to have what's called a functioning service report. That means that it that it can it can go ahead and it and it meets the criteria, but what we need to do is we need to be do more lobbying with the provincial government because what what we've discovered is that some of the policies that are in place that they're not climate resilient anymore. They're not solving our issues. So we have to work through our contacts at the province and at the region to to ensure that that we get better policies. The the other issues that we have to deal with, and we just after after three decades we completed a new official plan. After 30 years, we're gonna we have our zoning comprehensive zoning bylaw has not been updated since 2008. Now that we have the official plan, we can do that. We've just went out to get the consultants for the on-farm diversified. That's going to be starting very shortly. Has not been updated since 1974. These are all policies that need to be in place. I'm not going to promise you anything I can't deliver. What I am going to deliver is that after four years, we're going to have those policies in place so that the next administrations that follow us and follow that they're going to have the guide rails in place so that we can have that. But we are going to see development slow down because we are running out of space. What what's happened is our urban boundaries, which were defined in 1972, the five villages-they're getting full, and that's terrific because we've been able to meet our contact, our numbers. But those government, provincial government numbers now that are mandated to us, we can we can move over to Glendale and we can start putting it up there. Thank you so much.

Vaughan Goettler 49:11

Thank you. For for me, the three items around development. I think that was the original part of the question. Was does it fit, and by that I mean heritage, you know, height, everything about the community in which the development is happening. Does it have infrastructure ahead of it, not behind it, so that we flood? And also, does it benefit the residents? So. Thank you. So, if if you can't meet that quick test, regardless whether you have a an official plan that took decades to develop, which I still can't understand personally, but regardless whether you. Have it or not. If you can't meet those three criteria, then you're not doing residents first. You're not putting residents first. So you ask for the three. That's my three. Thank you.

Speaker 1 50:17

Okay. Question number seven. Now this is a long one. The Lord Mayor is the leader of the town,

including its CEO. He or she will also be Nagar on the Lake sole representative on regional council. The region has standing committees such as Public Works and Planning and Economic Development. It also appoints directors to boards such as Nagar Regional Place, Niagara Transit, and Nagra Parks. Do you consider the Lord Mayor position primarily a full-time or part-time position? If part-time, how many hours a week of work do you envision to fulfill your duties? Erwin, you're up first.

Erwin Wiens 51:00

Thank you. So, going to the region, I don't want to knock it down to hours. It's about efficiencies. It's about getting the job done. It's about making sure things happen. And what happens is, is we have to set goals and parameters and get those things done. I can tell you, 4060, 80 hours a week. Dorothy and I give our give time back all the time because we don't know different than to keep working and working and working, and that. So it's about getting the job done. It's about going there and ensuring that we can do that. And we do that through building relationships. It comes down to understanding what we can and what we can't do, and then moving forward because water, wastewater, is a huge issue that's going to be coming down, and we need a new South Niagara wastewater plant because we have to deal with those issues in St. David's. We also have to have water that's affordable, like drinking water that's affordable, and we have to look at how that management goes. And so we, this council has already started through our CAO and through the Lord Mayor and through a committee to start working through efficiencies that we can find at the region and how we're going to look forward and how we're going to move forward. That's going to be through relational, and that's going to be through putting the time that's required. I don't want to tell you it's a five-hour job or a 10-hour job. It's a job that needs to get done, and when I go, I get it done. You're not going to find anybody works harder than me. I can tell you that because what we're going to do is when we go there, we're going to make sure it happens. When we're at the town, we're going to make sure it happens. But the way I want to do it is through collaboration. I also want to empower our staff and I want to empower counselors that are around us to be informed and be there because part of it is moving on to the next generation. So, what's going to happen in the next council? We have to start getting councilors ready. I had the benefit of being the deputy lord mayor, so I was involved in many of those decisions that were part that were happening. That taught me and gave me the experience to be able to move ahead and get there and and hit the ground running because the next four years are going to be huge at the region, but I also want to do when I'm elected Lord Mayor, Lord willing, what I'm going to do is I'm going to make sure that my councilors are informed, up to date, and involved, so that after four years there's going to be the next person that can step up to do the mayor job, because that's what it's that's what leadership is about-it's not about putting 100 hours in a week. It's about ensuring that your entire workforce has the ability to to compete and be able to be to give valuable input, and that's that's raw work. But my reputation and the value of work that I put before you-that's you get you see what you get, and what we've had for the last 40 years. Thank you.

Speaker 1 53:48

Thank you.

Vaughan Goettler 53:51

Thank you. Well, as I've already stated, I believe that the role is full time. That's what I have from May 1. That's what I have declared in my candidacy, and full time to me, somewhat along with what Erwin said, full time to me isn't an exact number of hours. It isn't 100 hours, it's not 10 hours. But any job that's a full time job is at least a work week, which to me is 40 hours a week at least. So in that vein, I look at making sure that I'm available to do whatever has to be done. If I have to be, if I'm sick or something, I'll come in by a Zoom. It doesn't matter. I will be there all the time. That's what full time is. So it is a full time job, and we need to have the mayor full time connected with council, and that's so important. We have to have a team. I don't mean that everybody votes the same way, but we have to have a team that you put enough time into so that you can listen to each other and respect the differences and learn from each other. Same with staff. We need to. Have a relationship with staff. The mayor needs to be involved with the CAO and walk shoulder to shoulder with him or her, and make sure that staff are being number one treated properly, number two hired properly, and number three mentored. So that, to me, is a pretty full-time job. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 55:24

Thank you very much. So I would concur that hours don't necessarily equate to outcomes, and as I have already stated, being Lord Mayor and Regional Council will be my primary focus. I can also assure you, if the definition of full time is 40 hours per week. I can tell you, I will probably and likely be working between 60 and 70 hours a week between all of the community events and so on. I am in this to be your Lord Mayor and to serve you and to be available as needed all the time. I also would like to comment or sort of follow the thread of the regional comment about how long it would take to sort of figure out the region. And with only having the Lord Mayor there, it's imperative that we have someone there who has that experience and understand how it works. We are still potentially under the threat of amalgamation. We have a lot of work to do with the region, and quite frankly, I consider myself to be a fairly intelligent person. And after 11 years in municipal council, I must tell you that it took me about 18 months at regional council to fully understand that entire budget process with agency boards, commissions, transit, policing. It is mind-boggling what is you know what we do up there and the services public health social services planning by the way is no longer there and has been downloaded, but we don't have time for someone to learn on the job, and you know I am the only candidate who has that regional experience, and we are at an inflection point where we've had the province change that it's only mayors sitting at the region, and as I said, I truly believe the threat of amalgamation is not gone, and I plan to fight with all of my experience at the region to make sure that Niagara in the Lake keeps its independence.

Speaker 1 57:47

Thank you once again. Next question. This one focuses on tourism. For generations, tourism has built and shaped the character of Niagara on the Lake, but there are increasing concerns with the volume of tourism and how we manage its impacts on local infrastructure and on our neighborhoods. When visitor volumes threaten to impede rather than add to a resident's quality

of life, proactive municipal action is required. What approach do you believe Niagara on the Lake should take to manage tourism in the future, Vaughn, you'll be up first.

Vaughan Goettler 58:28

Thank you. So I think that tourism again has to be like everything else that we do in our town. Tourism has to actually benefit the residents. When it stops doing that, we have a problem, so right now people are complaining about the numbers of tourists, the traffic, the parking, and so we have a problem. You know the old saying, Houston, we have a problem. So first of all, when we look at our parking opportunities, I refer you to Banff. Has anybody been to Banff here? Lots of people, a Canadian icon destination. Can you drive into Banff? The answer is no. You park in parking lots, and you're bused in. You have shuttle busses. You begin to do things to protect your town from the apparent onslaught of tourism that isn't well thought out. So, first of all, let's see what the residents want with tourism. Tourism is vital to our economy. It's also vital that we share this beautiful gem that we have in Niagara Lake with other people. I mean, I would not live here today were it not for tourism. So I'm not anti-tourism in any way, shape, or form. But we have to do it in a way that works for the residents. I would bring back a tourism committee that would be also overseen by each council member. I would have a portfolio, so each councilor would have infrastructure, tourism, etc. development, and we'd work. Very closely with the committee to make sure that we had full understanding of what the residents want and how to manage tourism for the residents. So that's my answer. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 1:00:17

Thank you so much. I think it's probably no surprise that I consider tourism to be an important part of Niagara Lake's economy. It provides employment, business opportunities, and in a lot of ways, a quality of life of experiences we wouldn't normally have. And there are many residents suggested that move here. They come as visitors. What I think that people presume is that I believe that it's an open door for everything, and that you know because I grew up in the tourism industry, my daughter, my father founded a winery here, and grew since the 1970s. But you can look at my track record. I am absolutely in favor of protecting agriculture, residents' quality of life, and environment first. I believe that we can do both. We can have and find solutions where we can have tourism growth, but still have a good quality of life and mitigate impacts. A great example of that was when I was on council. We had what was called Temco, and it was a tourism economic management committee, and I would plan or intend or absolutely bring that committee back as Lord Mayor. It was made up of business owners, council members, and residents to find solutions to mitigate the impacts of tourism on residents and to find solutions. A great example of that was the King Street used to be our bus drop-off point, and that particular committee worked together to come up with a solution to move the busses over to Parks Canada to Fort George. And the path was built, and the residents on King Street did not have to have loud busses with fumes. So I believe there's solutions. I also believe there's good planning, and I believe that we need to look at things in moderation, and we need to think about the sustainability in tourism, which is environment, economic viability, and also the people, our residents.

Erwin Wiens 1:02:41

Thank you. Tourism is a major economic engine that that fuels the town of Niagara Lake, and it has been for the last 50 years. When we transitioned out of when we grew up, most of our parents worked at General Motors or Cyanamid or Abbott Tibby or the or the Mills, and then tourism came along, and it and it saved the town, and it saved agriculture. And but what I want to talk about it's not tourism versus resident, because many of our businesses, those are locally owned businesses, and the employees are there. They're locally owned, and we want to ensure that our quality of life is maintained. But I was out today, and my quality of life is amazing. I was on the Niagara River Parkway, and I was taking a walk, and then I drove over past the wineries, and I looked at the restaurants, and I looked at all the wonderful things we have, and that's we have that because of tourism. And I don't want to I don't want to shove that aside or put that aside because the beautiful lifestyle we have, it comes to us because of tourism. So, but we have to manage it because it shouldn't affect your your quality of life. But I want to touch on on parking, and we had a 2011 parking study that we're just updating now just to figure out what are we doing with parking, but I also want to be clear: we gross about \$4 million a year from parking. That goes right off of your taxes, so that's about 8.9 percent of your taxes. So parking is an integral part of our budgeting, and it's a revenue generator that we that we that we need. It right now it also offsets the the Niagara Lakes cost for for bussing. Our transit is covered under under that parking, so we're trying to keep your taxes down, and parking does that. But when we're going to update our parking study, what's going to happen is we're going to find out how we're going to do it. But the next thing I want to touch on is I don't want to reinvent the wheel. This past council, we completed the first ever tourism strategy, and we did that with a committee, and we put residents and businesses and wineries together, and we put them in a room, and we came up with a living document, the tourism strategy. And I want to, as your Lord Mayor, what I will do is I will continue revising. Visiting that strategy and how does that work and adding to it because the way we're going to move forward is by having guardrails. You're going to hear that over and over and over again. Policies in place so that we're looking after the residents, but at the same time we're going to build an economy. How does that look? And that looks through collaboration, through teamwork, through all those things that we do. But that is the existing tourism strategy that we have, and keep working on it. It took us a lot of work to get to that point, and it took funds. So let's not put it let's not put it on a shelf. Let's keep it out there, and let's work with the committee that's doing that. So that's the other thing. And thank you very much. Yeah, I'll take.

Speaker 1 1:05:43

All right. Next next question: Are you prepared to identify specific areas and/or sites within Niagara on the Lakes various urban boundaries where intensification, primarily residential intensification, should occur? Where are these areas and/or sites? that would be Andrea first on this one.

Andrea Kaiser 1:06:06

Thank you very thank you very much. Perfect. So there's no question when we look around Old Town, there is very little infill that's available in terms of what we can build out. You know, most

of the development or the the housing areas have been developed, and we have our urban boundaries, and those have been set for as I think mr. Deputy Mayor Weens alluded to since the early 70s, and I truly believe that those urban boundaries should never change, should never move outside of those urban boundaries is the green belt, and I know that there was some work done by a previous council. I don't think this one, but the one before, about looking to provide sort of the majority intensity of development that the province was kind of pushing onto us into Glendale, and while of course it's a new community, I do hear the residents in Glendale who express to me that they feel a little bit like the orphans of Narg on the Lake. They just have sort of everything intense development there, but a lot of them are also really excited about the development across the street, next to the mall, because it will bring the sorts of services that they're looking for, whether it's grocery stores or whether it's you know having a pharmacy, and they want to have a walkable community with services. So I would suggest that's probably one of the primary areas where we would look to developing, and you know I don't have the other two at the top of my head, but what I can say is that it's very important to me that we have appropriate development that respects the cultural landscapes of each of our villages. So development should look very different for each village within the community, but I do want appropriate development that will provide housing for younger generations. My children now work in Toronto, 30 and 28. They are so scared I will sell my home because they fear they would never be able to come back to live here, and I think when we look at appropriate development areas and identify those with the community and make sure they fit the cultural landscape of that village, I do think we have to keep in mind that we need to build some attainable housing so that we can continue to have a thriving community of youth, families, seniors, intergenerational, and have our children be able to live and work here.

Erwin Wiens 1:09:00

So, just a question again before we start.

Speaker 1 1:09:04

Okay, so again, are you prepared to identify specific areas or sites within the various urban boundaries where intensification should occur? Where would these areas be?

Erwin Wiens 1:09:16

Thank you. The the government of Ontario as the ones that they dictate to us the growth numbers that we have, and to 20 to 2059, 2051, and they have to be at 51,000 people. In 2010, they started the Glendale Secondary Plan, and that took many many years to complete. But we finally completed that this term, we took it under under our wing, and we've completed the Glendale Secondary Plan. We also completed the official plan. I've said that, so that's going to start identifying where growth is. We've said it a number of times. Growth is starting to get in in in the in the four villages. We're running out of space to do growth. We're we're. There's going to be more intensification, and like Andrea said, that we're going to go to Glendale. But with that, it's going to come a transit hub, which is part of the secondary plan up there. There's also going to be your grocery stores. We're going to be working hard to get a high school there. That's Councilor Vazari has been working like like crazy trying to get do that, but we're going to work

towards those sort of things, and that's going to be the intensification there. The other thing, what we did this term is we brought on an urban design panel, experts, so that what we could do is every development that comes in will go to a panel of experts of urban designers that are qualified to do that. And so, as we move forward, we will continue that, and we will be mindful of the growth, how it looks. We're also waiting to complete, and it's going to take about 18 months, is what's called an AZR airport zoning regulations, because that's in the flight path. Glendale is in the flight path, so that will dictate heights. We have to deal with all those issues. Those issues take time, and they take studies and they take many levels of government and sadly they move at the speed of government and so and so what we have to do is but we have to look at that and we have to look at that growth and the folks up in Glendale they've been waiting for these amenities for for many years and so I'm I'm thankful that we're getting to that point where we can do that, so that's that's the position that we're in. And again, it's about putting in the guardrails, getting the secondary plans, getting the character studies, getting the committees working on everything, so that we can design what's up there in Niagara on the Lake fashion. So it's going to be beautiful. And for the folks up in Glendale, I know exactly how they feel. What Andreas says-that's how they feel. They're not going to get left behind. It's going to be amazing up there. A transit hub is going to be something so that the kids can move around with, and families, and that we can move. We can move people. The other thing is, we're going to get some economic investment up there so that they can have jobs because we need a complete community where families can come and live and enjoy and take part in Niagara on the Lake. Because if we're going to move to the next generation, we need younger families to come in, and the folks in Glendale and other places they're going to get it. So thank you very much.

Vaughan Goettler 1:12:25

Thank you. Well, I think I won't repeat everything that the other candidates have have said because essentially I agree with them. No no incursion beyond into the Greenland. Nothing outside of our urban boundaries. Absolutely not. We need to protect our green space, our agricultural land. It's absolutely vital to our community. I think also that the Glendale Secondary Plan does provide for growth, and my concern is I just want to make sure that the folks in Glendale don't feel like, and this is sometimes the comment that I've heard, and I said this last time when I ran four years ago. Sometimes they feel like there are dumping ground from in here. Anything we don't want, we're just going to dump it in Glendale, and I think that that doesn't build a sense of cohesion in our community. I think, let's face it. Glendale is a natural place for growth, and I think that the amenities that they're looking for will come with the growth. We just need to do it tastefully, residents first, make sure that they're part of all the decisions of all the development that we put in. So, in terms of Old Town, you know Chautauqua, Queenston, Virgil, and Saint David's. I mean, there's little bits of room here and there, but there's very little room that we have to to do any infill housing. So,

Speaker 1 1:13:56

thank you. Okay, the next question: The Lord Mayor is a direct interface with the town CAO and has the authority to convey the policy direction and objectives established by council to town staff through that interface. What actions would you take as Lord Mayor if town staff choose not

to follow council's wishes, Erwin. You're first, yeah.

Erwin Wiens 1:14:30

So, so I understand the question is, what would happen if staff doesn't take direction from council?

Speaker 1 1:14:35

Exactly. Yeah.

Erwin Wiens 1:14:39

I'm hard pressed to find a time when that's happened, so so council gives direction to staff, and it's the CAO's job to to fulfill those directions. Council makes policy, they make motions, and and they give direction. That direction is to be is undertaken. So it's a very short. Answer because the CAO's job is to fulfill that obligation and and to fulfill that policy. Thank you. Over to Bob.

Vaughan Goettler 1:15:13

Thank you. The the the municipal act says that the Lord Mayor is the CEO of the community, and one must take that very seriously. So, in that regard, the C.A.O. technically speaking reports to the Lord Mayor. I, as I indicated earlier, my plan is to work and walk shoulder to shoulder with him or her. I know right now it's a man, Nick, who's a ruler, who's our CAO. But if it were to be anybody, we have to work, walk, work and walk shoulder to shoulder. My concern is, and from the residents, the feedback I'm getting is that they feel that we're upside down, and that staff is telling council what to do, and council is rubber stamping it, and it's a very serious concern. It's a very serious concern because that's that's out of whack. That's not the way it's intended to work. So if we go back to a residents-first approach to running this municipality of Niagara and the Lake, then I think we have to make sure that everybody understands how it works the best way for the residents. And I will make sure that we do that. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 1:16:45

Thank you. What I can say is that my goal will always be to work collaboratively, whether that's with the CAO, the staff of the town, with residents, with other councilors. But what I can also tell you that when council gives direction to staff, and that direction is not fulfilled, there needs to be mention. There needs to be push for to make whatever it was that council directed to happen. I'm not sure what the right word is, but I will give you an example. So, as you may have recently read in the paper, I've been working to try and get a review at the region of policing costs and how they're allocated, rather than by just assessment, but partly assessment, but by also service, so that we can try and remedy some of these inequities that Niagara Lake experiences. I think I chased down the one commissioner for about eight months with no luck. I then worked on the second commissioner who had left with no luck, and then finally we have a commissioner now that sat down with me to work through a motion with me to come to council to direct staff to come up with some alternatives on how we could reevaluate how policing funds are levied in Niagara, and staff came back with a report at committee corporate services that said they were recommending the status quo. Well, shall we say, I was not exactly pleased, and so I did

take it upon myself to contact the CAO, to contact the commissioner, to contact the director, to say, you know, I appreciate that you know you have expertise in this field, but the reality is that council directed the staff to come up with alternatives, and that did not happen. The report came back saying we should keep the status quo, and so I worked with other councilors on corporate service, which I don't sit on because we all sort of have various committees. I sit on two, and I worked to get that report sent back to staff, and have it be written to respond to the actual motion that I had made, which was to provide options and alternatives. And when it did finally come back to council, we had the response that we had requested, and we now have a work being done, the work being done by staff to develop a work working group, shall we say, including the police board, and to actually do the work that was requested to look at alternative methods of how we allocate policing funds. So that's an example of where, when necessary, I will push to have things done that are directed by council.

Speaker 1 1:19:55

Thank you. Next question. The Niagara District Airport has been identified as a potential economic development and transportation asset for the region. Discussions have included opportunities to expand its role in supporting tourism, business investment, aviation services, and broader regional connectivity. Do you support or oppose efforts by the municipal partners with the airport to invest in and expand the role of the Niagara District Airport as a regional economic development and transportation asset, and I believe we're starting with Vaughn on this one.

Vaughan Goettler 1:20:39

Thank you. Well, as I said earlier, I'm certainly not against development, and I like the right kind of development in the right place and the right type that benefits the residents. Same thing with tourism, the airport. I think that we should improve it. It has an opportunity to be improved. I am not at all certain from the residents with whom I've spoken, and there's quite a few, that we should be expanding the airport at this time. So I'm not saying never. I'm just saying that nobody. Well, that's not true. There are a couple people who are in favor, but literally a couple people have not wanted an expanded airport, but an improved airport. So, thank you. So, I'm as I've pledged to do. My platform is putting residents first, and I want to listen, learn, and understand how to work with the powers that be that want to have a strategy to increase tourism, etc. and development, but I also want to listen to the residents who pay the freight and have to live with the noise and the pollution and all the rest of it. Plus, the expansion of the airport does anticipate a loss of our green agricultural space, our green belt, and there's all kinds of ancillary issues like de-icing and lighting that goes, and how many jets you have to have taking off. You have to have them taking off about every landing, taking off about every five minutes for an airport to be viable. So we're going to talk about increasing the traffic dramatically. So right now, let's wait and see what the residents say, and see what is best for Niagara and the Lake.

Andrea Kaiser 1:22:37

Mike, thank you. Sorry, I would concur with the statements made by candidate Gottler. It's really

difficult to specifically support the expansion at this time because I don't believe we have enough information, and I'm not specifically opposed to improvements. But I think we definitely need to understand what expansion would, how expansion might impact residents in our environment, so I support a completely transparent process to include all of the residents' inputs and to clearly understand, and I think it's a great example. I was knocking some doors in Virgil, and one of the residents there said, "You know, obviously I'm concerned the the plane, you know, flights paths might come over my home. I really want to understand how that would affect me, and and largely opposed to it for that reason, which I completely understand. And they had a great idea, sort of a good insight, and said, you know, I wonder maybe if we're going to be increasing flights into the Niagara region, maybe we look at need to look at Hamilton more closely because it's a very underutilized airport at this time. So I think that's where the public process, the conversations, where we can hear interesting ideas and find the right solution for our community and our residents.

Erwin Wiens 1:24:12

Thank you. The Niagara District Airport is 97 years old this year, and it actually houses the oldest flight school in Canada right now, including that many of the World War II pilots were trained right here in Niagara on the Lake, and it has three runways, and currently it is about the size of Billy Bishop, taking up 325 acres, and I do support responsible growth there, and we'll see how that looks. So that's why what the airport commission undertook was a 20-year master plan to to lay this out to find out what it is. And along that master plan, there is a continual community engagement along the way. And so right now the airport is just in the pre stage of trying to get the studies in place because. The Niagara Lake taxpayer cannot afford to upkeep that airport, so the 9.8 million dollars that was that that grant that we got from the government of Ontario, what that allows us to do is to do the studies, to do the public engagement, to do the upgrades to the apron that's there, do the upgrades to the to the mechanic shop, do the upgrades to the existing terminals that we have, all that that the the residents of Nine Lake they can't pay for. We don't have the 9.8 million dollars to do that. What it also do is it's going to pay for that airport zoning regulation I spoke about earlier in regards to Glendale, because once again that's a \$300,000 investment that the residents shouldn't pay for. So, what I want to tell everybody: it's not a blank check. It's a 20-year plan. That after 20 years, what we will see right now, right now, what happens is there's about 110 movements. They call that a day. A movement is a takeoff and a landing. So, about 55 planes a day come, so just to put in context what the 20-year master plan dictates. If we get to the 20-year plan by 2045, they're looking to add another 15 flights a day. Those 15 flights would be air ambulance. They would be your flight training. They would be your private aircraft, and then there would be some commercial jets there. The airport is starting the the 20 the commuter back to Toronto this this month or next month. So, and they've started the the Air Canada landline. And what we're trying to do at the airport, what we're trying to look at is is how does this look in the future? Does it justify? There's so many steps to go ahead that what we need to do is the first things expansion is the very last. And I want to tell everybody I have a problem with it moving on to ag land. I have a huge problem with that, and and that. So we'll see how that moves forward. But what we do need to do is we need to get through the studies and get through the stage one part so that

we at least have our airport at the shape that it's in, so that we can continue. So that what it can do is at least do the day-to-day things it's doing now without affecting the taxpayer. Because, like I say, right now there is about 55 planes coming in every day, and on average, thank you.

Speaker 1 1:27:30

Okay, our next question. We've talked a little bit about infrastructure, but we haven't talked about you know what caused the floods. Theoretically, we we believe it's climate change, and we have this climate change action plan, and I think there are 27 actions that are on this action plan. I think we're at having completed somewhere around six. So the question here is, what would you do as Lord Mayor to ensure that we and we do ensure a greener future for Nagara on the Lake, and we begin this one with Andrea, I believe.

Andrea Kaiser 1:28:14

Thank you much, very much for the question. I put a lot of thought into this in terms of strategies, obviously we need to make sure our infrastructure is where it needs to be. But we need to do something in the meantime, while we find the capital funds to to improve our systems. We do have obviously services happening both municipally and regionally. But in my opinion, what we have to start to do is we have to start to stop the flows before they actually reach the system, and there are some very sort of creative new ways. I attended a session at the AMO conference about this very subject in terms of building more resilience in having, for example, rain gardens or having particular swales that that bring the water back permeable surfaces instead of impermeable when we're we're doing roads, etc. The water has to go somewhere, and we need to reduce the amount of the water that is going into our systems. So I absolutely pledge that this will be a number one priority for me: is to look at what we have in terms of the action plan on the books, what needs to be done, but quite frankly, to look around the world and see what we can do that is different, and where we can be a leading community in Canada with climate resilience. Coincidentally, my daughter, who has her master's of sustainability, did. Her thesis on climate resilience for municipalities, and I did not coach her; she depicted herself. But it is really important that we invest in this resilience. It will save us money in the long run, and it will save impacts, heartache, loss of property, loss of personal items in homes, and so I can assure you, this will be a number one priority for me as Lord Mayor.

Erwin Wiens 1:30:34

Thank you. Thank you. So I can report that that council did implement the the action plan that was adopted in 2022, and we have as of last month completed 23 out of the 27 initiatives. The four that are remaining are long term goals, so they wouldn't have been able to be completed, and they'll be completed over time. But we also we we funded a dedicated climate change coordinator to lead us to implementation of all the integrated climate issues that we have going on. We also adopted the official plan, but in that official plan, which we've talked a lot about tonight, but we incorporated climate resilience, stormwater management, green infrastructure, and environmental protection as as one of the one of the hallmarks of the official plan. So the so we've looked at for we also advanced significant stormwater drainage and flood mitigation work throughout the municipality, investing millions of dollars into that. We purchased approximately

nine acres in in Saint David's to to build a new stormwater pond to help the people there, so an issue that had been around since 2005. This council, we purchased nine acres. We're gonna, and all the studies are underway. We're hoping, and I get it, studies once again. But we move at the pace of government, sadly. But we're gonna, we've we've doubled those studies up to run them coincidentally, coincidentally, and so what's going to happen is is we're hopefully going to start in early spring when getting those ponds in place. We've advanced work on our tree canopy, natural asset management, and waterfront planning and coastal protections. We've also continued the investments in active transportation, including trails, cycling, and infrastructure, and community connectivity, and we've expanded public information and preparedness on how we're going to do this. There's still lots of work to do, but our strategic plan before 20 in 20, our strategic plan for 22 to 26 said that climate change was going to be at the top, and and everything was going to be taken. Every decision was going to be made through the lens of climate change, so that's that's very important. That's something that I'm going to continue. It's something that's going to work. The other thing that I want to implement is is a net positive in tree planting, like they do in St. Catharines, Niagara Falls, and the Niagara Parks Commission. The Niagara Parks Commission plants a net 5,000 trees every year, and it can be done through. We just recently did it with the NPCA and TD, where there was 600 trees planted down by the old NDSS. So we're going to continue that sort of things because climate is changing. The other thing is is advocating for new rules at the province, that's why relationships at the province are so important. Because we have to get funding in place, we have to get those those rules, those those policies changed. We have to get that done, and we can't do it on our own. We just simply can't do. We need their help. So I'm going to continue in that fight and that vein. Thank you.

Vaughan Goettler 1:33:45

Thank you. So I think the the biggest I don't know what you want to call it, but misnomer is the 100 year storm. 100 year storms, I can count about four of them in the last five years, and that's just in our area. The problem with that terminology is it lulls us into a false sense of security because we say, you know what, I flooded, and it's not going to happen next year. It won't happen for maybe the rest of my lifetime, and it's just not true. The storms come, and they come with a ferocity that leaves us the way we've seen this summer. I think that as I look at what we need to do in our community, Andrea mentioned permeable. You know, all of our new developments. Where, so I'm going to back up a step. If we're putting in a subdivision, we tend to say, well, you know, it's going to have a house. It's going to have a driveway, and there'll be a certain amount of lawn and all the rest of it that's there. But then the people decide they're going to do some hardscaping. They put in a pool, they maybe have another expansion or something on their driveway for another car. All these things change the entire dynamic. Of that house in its ability to absorb water, so not only do we have climate change issues with more rain, we have less places for the rain to go, and we have to look at how we develop. And yes, it will cost more money to say every new development has to have all permeable driveways, or something like that. But the problem is, if we don't do it, it costs a lot of money when we flood too. So those are things we have to look at. I think that we have to look towards alternative options. Our town should probably be running. I don't know if it's feasible or not yet cost-wise, but our town should

probably be running electric vehicles. You know, we should be looking at solar power, other things that encourage us to be a cleaner society. If if you look at the Shah, the Shah is a net zero development at the Royal George. We can do it. We have the ability to do it. So let's look at what people are doing, who are leading the way. Nesha is a good example. Thank you.

Speaker 1 1:36:10

Okay, I'm going to take creative license again because I just heard NDSS mentioned, and this this question's at this point is coming from me, not from the NOTL Residents Association. So NDSS used to be a hive of activity, right? We we had young people there, and you know whether enrollment was down, it was still a hive of activity. There's a school renting that building right now, and and we see very little life from that building. So I'm I'm wondering if you know finding a new use of of that vast amount of land that is just sitting there and not being used in that building is there something that as a Lord Mayor you would perhaps start working on as a future for that building? I hope I'm not overstepping myself on asking this question, but it's something I've been living here for 27 years, and I've seen the changes there. So, Erwin, I'm starting there with you.

Erwin Wiens 1:37:12

Niagara District Secondary School on Highway 55 closed, I believe, in 2014 or

Speaker 1 1:37:19

2015. I think it was. I'm going to say I think it was around 2010 because at that point I was actually working for the school board in the resource office, and they were under the they they were in process at that time.

Erwin Wiens 1:37:36

Thank you. So and I I remember at the time my wife Dorothy was part of the ARC committee. That's an acronym-and they were trying to save the high school. And at that same time, Butler School was closing and amalgamating with the old Virgil School. That's how Crossroads was, and there was and there was a plan at that point in time, and it was a remarkable plan to move the high school and the schools to the to that to that the property on Highway 55. That that did not come to fruition. The Pat Dart administration purchased that property, and then what they did was, I believe, 40 acres. They severed off nine acres, and then later on, it has been sold privately to, and it's now Vine Ridge Academy, and it's it's privately run as a as a private school. Now, I will say it this way: As Lord Mayor, I'm always open to every to to looking at is there some private-public partnerships we can have, whether it's with a swimming pool or whether it's for the youth or how how can we work with all of our stakeholders that are in the town, whether it's Central Gospel at on York Road or whether it's the the different industries that we have, the different the different communities that we have, because what we want to do is we want to get the maximum for our youth. How do we do it? But at the same time, in regards to because that's a high school, what I want to work towards is is something that's slightly out of the wheelhouse of the Lord Mayor, but that's working towards getting a high school back in Niagara on the Lake, Councilor Vazari had told me that I believe it's 200 grade eight students graduated. So over a

four-year period, that would mean 800 students that could be here in a school in Niagara on the Lake. And so, what what I want to see is I want to see us working with our school board trustees, which are we only have a couple, and we get outnumbered between Niagara Falls and St. Catharines, but we want to work together so that we can do that. We want to work with the the different school boards so that we can see. And Glendale looks like in that area as as an amazing opportunity or something in that area. I'm open to anything, but we have to work together with all of our stakeholders, and including our trustees, including possibly the other mayors, but certainly with with the minister of with the ministry in Toronto to to get that funding because we unfairly lost our high school, and that and people worked really hard and and what happened and it it really put a huge hole in our community. And now we're bussing our high school students to Niagara Falls and to St. Catherine's. So we have to have a marketable plan. And although somebody's going to say it's out of the wheelhouse of the council or the mayor, no. What we have to do is we have to work. So if we get all of our stakeholders, and I've always said, if everybody says yes, the answer is not no. And what we have to do is we have to work together. We have to work together with our minister, our MPP. We have to work for we have to work together with the other mayors. And like I say, it's something we have to work for hard. So that's a commitment that I'm going to have, and I've had for the last since since Councilor Vazari has been she's been going after that hard and ringing the bell.

Vaughan Goettler 1:40:49

Thank you. I I totally agree with the high school statements that Irwin made. I absolutely believe that we should have a high school in Niagara Lake and be working towards it. It won't happen tomorrow. It will take a while, but we should have a high school. But it brings up a much larger topic. We have we have some friends who literally today just moved out of Niagara Lake to Henley Gardens, and they are a couple who are very deep in the community and they had nowhere to go in our community to age in place. We don't have enough. Thank you. We we don't have enough daycare facilities for the young families that we do have. If you look at the school in Saint David's, where we've got five portables, and we're now bussing kids across to Crossroads, and the Crossroads doesn't have the same after-school programs that they do in St. David's. I mean, how would you feel if you're a parent in St. David's and all of a sudden your your child's getting bused somewhere, and the programs have all changed. How do you get your kids now to a high school in St. Catharines or Niagara Falls and have them in after-hours programs? Who's picking them up? So you know we need to use our institutional space more wisely than we have. Parliament Oak again. Parliament Oak again is another classic case. I mean, you know, it was institutional. Now it's commercial, and we've got a hotel. Could we have done something different? I believe we could have and should have. That ship is. Thank you. That ship has sailed, and so you know, I mean, we'll we'll live with that and we'll move on. But I mean, we have to look forward for our community and look after it from our youth to our elderly, and institutional space. We cannot give any more of it up. So thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 1:43:08

Thank you so much. Maybe this is where all three of us will largely agree. I think the one point that I don't necessarily agree would be a private-public partnership. I believe it's important that

we keep our assets wholly within our sort of realm of ownership, and certainly over the years, I have noticed, or have also participated in municipal councilors or Lord Mayors doing things out of their wheelhouse. Specifically, we fought very hard to keep our high school for-I don't know if it was two years-literally begging the school board to please, you know, have a way to keep the high school. But it's a good example of when we have weighted voting, where a larger municipality has more votes, much like the region, more weight. That it's really hard for small municipalities to be heard. That being said, in the last few years, I have been observing mayors and region getting out of the traditional wheelhouse to bring services to residents that we need, whether it's a high school, we have now a program at the region to get doctors and entice them to move to Niagara. That's not specifically a municipal or regional role, but something we need to do. We have a mayor in Fort Erie who has been very passionate about keeping the urgent care center, and one of my priorities would be to explore and pursue to have an urgent care center back here in Niagara in the Lake for our residents. I also spoke with a number of. Residents about the senior services and the new hub, the Gilmore Regional Hub of Senior Services out in Fort Erie. Again, I think that's a great example of how we can advocate for better services for seniors. Long-term care home is another aspect of a service that we require here in Niagara on the lake, so that people can age in place, and certainly supportive of options for daycare, etc. So I'm comfortable to get out of the wheelhouse to get things done that our residents need.

Speaker 1 1:45:40

Thank you, and this will probably be the last question before the closing statements. We know, as Lord Mayor, you will be the town's only representative at the region. So, if elected, what single most important action will you champion at regional council, what will be your number one priority at regional council? And I think we are beginning here with Vaughn.

Vaughan Goettler 1:46:11

Well, the single thank you. The single most important thing that I would do is I would get an immediate meeting with the mayors, particularly of the smaller communities who have similar issues and opportunities to what we have here in Niagara Lake, it's very important that we build a camaraderie and an understanding with the other smaller municipalities, so we don't get overrun by a sweeping, overarching tourism structure that may or may not fit for each of our individual municipalities. Thank you. Again, I'm not against tourism. I just want to make sure that it fits the residents here. So that would be the first thing that I would do, and the most important thing.

Andrea Kaiser 1:47:05

Yeah, thank you so much. There have been some changes at the region recently, where the province has sort of realigned the role of the region, and it is no longer in planning. So we don't have the opportunity at the region to have impact in the municipality in terms of planning for tourism or development, that is something that's been transferred over by the provincial government to the municipality at this time. And certainly, as the regional councilor, there's no doubt collaboration with fellow councilors is a priority, and we all understand that it's difficult to

have a voice there. For me, based on the work that I've done over the last four years, my number one priority would be to take my motion over the finish line, and to once and for all have policing costs allocated on a more fair basis. It's not a new issue. We have been talking about this, I think, municipally for over 30 years, but it's really hard to get those small municipalities and to figure out how to get some of the bigger ones to get on board, so we can get the change we need. And this will be extremely significant for the taxpayers of Niagara and the Lake in terms of your you know your tax bill from the region, and so that would be a priority that I would have.

Erwin Wiens 1:48:28

Thank you. The number one issue that's facing the town of Niagara Lake is amalgamation. Full stop. Full stop. So I can tell you this. So we do right now at the town, we have what they call the coalition of the eight. We've gotten together with eight municipalities, and we've got together, and that's what we used when the province came and they were going to do the forced amalgamation. 12 months ago, we are looking like we are going to be the city of Niagara Falls, and none of what we talked about tonight matters if we're the city of Niagara Falls. None of it, and that, and there are four municipalities that are eager to, to amalgamate. So the number one thing I'm going to be working for is to ensure that we have local government because local government matters. Because how do we listen to the residents if the residents have to go to Niagara Falls? It won't work, And so, we developed the coalition of eight, and then what we also did is we used the coalition. We used our relationships with the province of Ontario to bring before them the an economic and a political argument why we shouldn't be amalgamated. We're able to thwart at once, but we will not be able to. We are going to need to work hard to keep going because there is a coalition of four that would like to see us amalgamate, and so as we walk forward, that's the number one issue, and it's been the number one issue, and for. For the last, it's been on the table for eight years, but it came to a head when the premier made it chose the the chair, and that's why what I'm going to be watching very carefully is who is the next chair of the region, because we want to see if is that next chair at the region going to be somebody who is pro amalgamation or anti-amalgamation, and that's how we're going to have to, as as a town, we're going to have to pivot, and we're going to have to pivot hard because we need to to keep fighting for local governance. We need to fight for local decision making. I've heard many, many times that that the residents matter absolutely. This town, I started off in my in my very first statement talking about the people, the character of this community is the people in the community, and that and they need to be listened to and they need to be heard. And what has to happen is that we have to work hard. And I'm going to keep going with the relationships I've built with the other with the other mayors, all 12 of them, with the province, with those with the government of Ontario, and I'm going to continue fighting hard because we're able to thwart it once. We need to keep fighting towards that, and I don't want to overburden anybody, but I want to tell you the number one issue we're going to have is amalgamation. That's going to be before us, and we need somebody there who's going to fight hard and fight to ensure that we get to stay the town of Niagara Lake, the original capital of Canada, the largest tender fruit growing area in the in Canada, the largest tender fruit growing grape growing region in Canada. We matter. We're important.

Speaker 1 1:51:39

Thank you for those answers, and we're going to wrap things up now with the closing statements. And as I said at the beginning, we had a original order of Andrea, Erwin, and then Vaughn. And so, for the closing statements, we go in that reverse order. So it's going to be Vaughn first, then Erwin, and then Andrea. Zavan, you have three minutes.

Vaughan Goettler 1:52:05

Thank you. Three minutes. Thank you. Well, I'd like to take us back to where we started. What I, what, what I said at the beginning was we're very special here. I think all the candidates agree that we are. We need to protect this jewel that is Niagara and Lake, but we need a shift in direction. You know, it's interesting. Four years ago, when I ran, for those of you who can go back and look, I spoke about amalgamation. Everybody looked at me like I had come from another planet. We have not got ourselves ready for amalgamation battles at all. Four years later, we're right where we were. This is the most important election we have ever faced, probably since the War of 1812. I mean, you know, amalgamation is very real. We need a strong and independent Niagara and a lake. I think our current council got a little bit off course with a few things. We need a full-time mayor. We need all of you to restore a smart order to our town by voting for change. We need transparency. We need to bring back trust. We need to bring our communities together, the agricultural community, all of our villages, we need to pull ourselves together because if we don't stand together, we're not going to stand strong. I know it sounds like an old song, but I'm serious. You know, we with the pressures that we have, we can't have Glendale feeling like an orphan, or you know, a dumping ground, or anything else. We need smart growth and development. We know that, but the wrong development in the wrong place does not work. Again, I cite Parliament Oak. We need to fix our aging infrastructure. No more floods. I can show you pictures of the Harrison drainage ditch beside my farm, and it hasn't been cleaned in a decade. I'll bet you. We need a distinct focus on farmers and our agricultural communities. The unique infrastructure needs. Grape growers have a different infrastructure need than water, than tender fruit, and yet we don't seem to be looking after our ditches and our irrigation canals. We do need to keep our property taxes low, and we need to get the level of service we expect from our tax dollars. I said no taxation without representation. Well, here we go. We keep talking about the region and the province, and we're getting the short end of it. Police is a good example of that. We need to create a Niagara Lake for all-that's families, children, youth, and seniors-a community for all. Not have people move out like my friends did today. And we need to keep our costs low, and be absolutely transparent about the funds you provide for us. Thank you.

Erwin Wiens 1:55:18

Thank you. Tonight we've talked about taxes and development and agriculture, infrastructure, heritage, future of our community, and a question was always comes up: is where do we see the community in 10 years or in 15 years from now? Well, you know where I see it. Pretty much like it is now, very similar to where it is now. I don't want change. This town is beautiful. It's amazing. It has everything going for it. It has a strong economy. Remember what I start off with. I talked

about Team Niagara on the Lake. We're all on Team Niagara on Lake, and I'm hard pressed to find anybody that finds very many things wrong with this town. They love this town. They moved to this town. They grow up in this town and they love it. Now's not the time for change. Now's the time to build policies and to build structure, to build guardrails, to fight for a community, but not to change the community. Yeah, we need to. Yes, there are certainly things that we need to work on, but they don't happen overnight either. I talked about an asset management plan. That's a 10-year plan. That's going to happen after that we're gone. But that's something that's for the future. That's what we have to look at. We have to look at schools for the future. We have to look at the infrastructure for the future. We have to look at the growth for the future. But I don't want to change the town of Niagara on the Lake. I want it the same. I love this town. I grew up in this town. I watched it change. I watched the the greatness come out of it. I watched the it was idyllic growing up, and then we got this economy, and it was so great that we started bringing people in here, and people made this their home, and then we grew up by 5000 people because it's amazing. Now's not the time for change. Now's the time to stay the course and put the policies in place, put put the guardrails in place, so that when developers it's reasonable and it's that and then and it is comes down to working hard, understanding the policies. I heard many things tonight, but a lot of it is experience and coming down, I've spent eight years at the municipality. I understand how the policies work. It's easy to say I would stop this or I would say this. I can tell you this: no is not a policy. You have to have the policies in place. I've constantly heard that we're going to. I'm going to put this in place, that place. I'll tell you one thing: I will never do. I won't look any of you in the eye and tell you I can't. I'll do something that simply can't be done. And so what I'm going to do is I'm going to what I'm going to do is I'm going to put everything that comes up. It's going to survive litigation. We're not going to spend millions of dollars in that. It's going to be it's going to be reasonably moved forward. And what it's going to be is it's going to be with the involvement of our community, I encourage that. But I have to go back to this place is amazing, and it will continue to be amazing. And allow me to bring that forward. Thank you.

Andrea Kaiser 1:58:16

Thank you so much. Well, the one thing I think we can all agree on is that this election is about the future of Niagara in the Lake? I believe we can protect what makes this community so special while still embracing the changes we need to make. We can have responsible growth while protecting our agricultural lands, our heritage, and our quality of life. We can also have a strong economy and still put residents first, but doing that takes leadership. It takes someone who is willing to listen to residents, be transparent about the decisions being made, work with council, and work at the region to make Niagara in the Lake make sure that we have a strong voice and that we remain independent. It also takes experience with the changes that we know are going to be happening at the regional council. As we spoke about, the Lord Mayor will be our only elected representative at the region, and I do believe my experience at both municipal and regional levels, combined with my years as a local business owner, community volunteer, has prepared me to take on that responsibility. But I am not asking you to vote for me simply because I have experience. I am asking you to look at my track record, and to also understand that I do represent change. Look at the work I've done. Look at how I approach difficult issues.

Look at my willingness to listen, my bringing people together, and finding practical solutions. And also, most importantly, perhaps. How deeply I care about the community as you all do. Niagara in the Lake is my home. It is your home too. I grew up here. I raised a family here, as many of you have, and spent much of my life serving this community. And if you give me the opportunity to serve as your Lord Mayor, nothing will be more important to me than working for the people of Niagara in the Lake. I am ready to listen. I am ready to lead, and I am ready to work and hit the ground running on day one.

Speaker 1 2:00:36

I want to thank all three candidates for participating tonight. Can we give them all a big round of applause. Just before you go, just a couple of things, please. So first of all, we are asking. Well, I want to thank all of you for coming out. So thank you. Thanks to the volunteers and thanks to the Niagara Lake Residents Association. Big round of applause for all of them. A couple of dates to keep in mind: September 25th and October 2nd. We have two more of these events with the counselors. Many of them are here tonight. You might grab them outside to ask them a couple of questions. Feel free to talk to these three outside if you wish. And the big thing I want to ask you is, please, if you are driving out of this parking lot, only turn right, because you're going to hold people up. It's very simple. I know, you know, the word roundabout is kind of a bad word in St. David's right now, but that roundabout is going to come in handy tonight for those needing to go back to Old Town and parts of Virgil. So turn right, use the roundabout, and come back. And on your way out the door, throw a couple of coins in the donation box for this volunteer-run organization. Stuart, just ask them to pay attention to the traffic wardens. And yes, there are traffic wardens outside with the vests on. Don't run them over, please. Thank you, everybody.

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