

NOTLRA Residents Association Questions

For both Lord Mayor and Councillor candidates

Q1 - Can you tell me how and why your approach would be different than what the existing council members have been taking in their governing?

A1 – The difference is how a decision gets made. In the open. I do not care whose name is on an application. A large developer or a neighbour down the road, it needs to be objective. Asking the most important questions and the hardest questions. Does it conform to the policies this community already set? Does it suit the community it is going into? Does the community want it? If it does, I support it. If it does not, I do not. Crossing Ts and dotting Is. Not taking words on face value. Not the developer's and not the staff's. Too often this council has taken the report as the answer and dealt with things one at a time, after the fact. Everyone needs to be at the table before the decision, moving everything together, making the proper decision on the record and transparently.

Q2 - I have a question which of you have accepted money whether for performing services or as a gratuity from any developers or their related companies

A2 – I have never. Not for services, not as a gift, not ever.

Q3 - Several studies that the Town initiated identified major gaps in planned investment vs actual funds available particularly gaps in infrastructure funding. What steps will you take to find the required funds

A3 – First, check the gap. A study is a starting point, not a fact. I would not take its number at its word any more than I would take an application's. Second, get the actuals. Not what the budget says, what is actually there. Cash on hand, what sits in reserves, what is already committed, and where every dollar has been going. You cannot solve a problem until you know what you really have to work with. Third, collaborate with the committees that will be back. Residents who know this work, looking at it with fresh eyes, catch things a report won't. Finally look at options. What growth should be paying, what tourism should be carrying, what the Region owes, what the Province and Federal government will fund, and what the community can do. With real numbers in front of you, those choices get much clearer. Actuals first, then options on the table, then decisions.

Q4 - What does “transparency” mean to you?

A4 – Transparency means residents see the whole picture, questions answered, and doubt removed. Not just the part someone chose to show them. Full reports easier accessible. Reasons behind decisions, not just the result. Information in front of people before the vote. Closed sessions disclosed without crossing legal lines. Every single vote recorded. Straight answers when questions are asked.

Q5 - How would you describe your style of leadership?

A5 – Hands on, collaborative, and accountable. The same way I lead my business and my jobsites. I am the first one there and see things for myself. Collaborate with people doing the work before decisions are made, because they do the work everyday, to reach the collective end goal. Get out of the way of the people doing the work but knowing exactly what is happening, keeping an eye on the whole picture many steps ahead. I am a straight shooter. You will always know where I stand. I do not need the credit, and I do not fold when things get tough.

Q6 - What are the hallmarks of your personal code of conduct?

A6 – Conviction. If something is not right, I say so, even if I am the only one saying it. Diligence. I do the work. I go to the source myself to triple check. I get it in writing. Fairness. The same rules for everyone. Service. I stand up for the people who were never asked. It is never about me. No seat, no pay, nothing to gain. Respect. I question the application, the decision, and never the person. Commitment. Once I take something on, I see it through.

Q7 - How do you remain informed of issues that affect the greater good and wellbeing of our town?

A7 – By going to the source. Read every agenda and every report. Going to the meetings in person over a year and a half. Going to the sites myself. Multiple news sources even for the cities around NOTL that could affect NOTL. Most importantly, listening to residents. They are the first to know.

Q8 - What measures would you use to consult the voting public in order to reach consensus on major decisions, for example, on the future use of the old hospital site so that it serves the larger community?

A8 – Go to where people are instead of waiting for them to come to town hall or expect online participation. Set up tables at grocery stores, banks, farmers’ markets, library, community centre, etc. Go to seniors’ residences, church halls, service clubs, and resident groups. Setup onsite signage, etc. Post on the many resident NOTL socials not just the official NOTL social. Join the conversations is already happening and are great but it is not enough.

Q9 - How often and for what reasons do you engage in person with individual unelected residents of the Town of Niagara on the Lake?

A9 – Before this last year and a half of advocating I would just engage with other residents just living our day to day lives. Shopping, eating, etc. Since I started advocating and delegating, residents have been reaching out to me. Stopping me at town hall. Emailing me. Asking me questions. Bringing me their thoughts and concerns.

Q10 - As a rule, how soon after receiving a message from a NOTL resident do you respond to it?

A10 – The same day, as soon as possible in that day. Even if I need to look into something, I let them know that and I will get back to them with an answer. It’s always me answering and I find just giving a simple acknowledgement goes a long way.

Q11 - How would you approach deciding how to vote on issues of significance to residents of Niagara on the Lake?

A11 – I hear from the residents. It affects them the most. I read the whole report and check the information myself. I ask the questions; does it follow the policies that protect the community? Does it suit the community and serve the residents? Ask my hard questions to make sure it is done right. Then I vote, on the record, with an explanation why. There will be no doubt from residents when it comes to me.

Q12 - What three specific issues that affect the Town do you deem priorities to take action on?

A12 – I deem all issues to be priority, and it is hard to say only three but the immediate three residents raise with me most are infrastructure, overdevelopment not following the rules and creating better protections, and transparent and accountable governance. Again, though all issues are equal priorities. NOTL does not have the luxury to only focus on one or three and let the other issues wait. All issues must be pushed equally. Residents have waited long enough.

Q13 - What action would you be inclined to take on short-term rentals in NOTL?

A13 – I would put a freeze on unhosted short-term rentals and greatly lower the cap. Unhosted short-term rentals do not benefit the residents. Unhosted short-term rentals are commercial operations and need to be treated as such. The more unhosted short-term rentals the more residents are displaced, and the more residents get priced out of living in NOTL. Bed and Breakfasts need to be protected and showcase the soul of NOTL.

Q14 - What strategies would you use to ensure that longtime Town of NOTL residents are fairly considered and able to continue living in the area if they wish to do so?

A14 – Fairly considered means everyone who calls this town home. The seniors, the families raising kids, and the young people wanting to continue a future in NOTL. Bringing back resident committees so the people who live here help shape decisions, Give residents' concerns the same weight as an applicant's consultants or staff. Provide more outreach and sessions for public involvement to give residents what they actually want. Go to the people. In order to continue living in NOTL there has to be reasons to continue live in NOTL. Steady and lower taxes. Growth paying for growth. Tourism paying for it's impact. Aging in place options. Push the region and get partnerships for more childcare spaces and schools. Bring healthcare back to NOTL. Protect farmland for farm families to continue for generations. The idea of residents should not have to leave to fulfill their daily lives takes priority.

Q15 - How often do you shop in a Town of Niagara on the Lake supermarket or small business?

A15 - As often as possible. Haircut every month on York Road. Gas at Husky's on York Road (it will always be Husky's to me). Restaurants and groceries. Banking in Virgil. If I can do it in NOTL I do.

Q16 - Have you ever been arrested for any reason, accused of fraud or offered a bribe?

A16 – No.