

Mike Balsom 0:00

I'm not going to say a lot to begin with because we want to get to the questions. We want to hear what the candidates have to say. But just to set things up for you, questions were submitted by you and the NOTL Residents Association, who I need to thank as well for asking me to host these three forums, or I think you call them fora. In plural, I think that's actually correct. But if I said that, if I wrote that, nobody would know what the heck I was saying. Questions were submitted by you, and we have about six of them that we're hoping to get to. We'll see where the time takes us. Candidates will have three minutes to deliver their opening statements. Each will have three minutes. Before all of this started out here, we were in the ladies' change room together, all of us, and they pulled the letters A, B, C, D, and F. That's how we chose the order. Sandra pulled A. Tim pulled F. So the order to the opening statements is going to be Sandra through to Tim, and then when we get to the first question, it's going to be Maria through to Tim and back to Sandra at the end, and then we're going to continue that rotation. When we get to the closing statements, which we hopefully do at the end of the evening, we're going to go the other way across the table. That's how it works, and we are going to begin with our first opening statement. My back's going to be with you, or be facing you, I should say, for most of this. I apologize for that, but I'm glad I got my hair cut. Sandra O'Connor, three minutes.

Sandra O'Connor 1:35

Thank you. Can you hear me? Okay. No. Yes, closer. How is that? Is that better? Yay! Yay! Okay. So I'm Sandra O'Connor, and I'd like to thank you all for taking your time to come here to participate in the democratic process of choosing your your counselor. And I'd like to thank the NOTL Residents Association for holding this kind of forum, so you could learn about a little more about us and what we stand for. I wanted to talk a little bit about my background because you may not, and some people know about me, but some people don't. I was born and raised in in Niagara. My grandparents had a farm online too, where my my father was raised, I went to Brock University and I studied physical geography and urban studies. So I think that gives me some background for to fulfill this position. I moved away from Niagara for my career. I worked mainly in scientific organizations with governments and universities in research capacities, and at one point I did own my own business too, so I certainly know the challenges of the business sector as well. So I have served on council for six years, and I've been listening to the residents across all of all of Niagara on the Lake, and I have been acting upon what I have heard. I've made tough decisions, and I'm not afraid to do the right thing for Niagara on the Lake for you. I've demonstrated leadership over my six years. I have a proven track record. I have a residence-first approach, and I have

a commitment to integrity. I have also been true to my previous campaign. All the commitments that I made in the previous campaign, you could track if you're interested, and I have maintained them. I didn't change. I do have a website and a Facebook if you wanted to know more information about what I think my accomplishments are. But I thought you might want to know a little bit right now about what my commitment to you is going forward, and one is responsible growth, meaning I do support development, a balanced development that takes into consideration the infrastructure that protects and protecting the neighbourhood character and things that strengthen our community. I protect what matters, and to me, that means our heritage, our environment, and our community character. And I, I believe that I have demonstrated that I am transparent, accountable, and community focused. And I intend to go forward with that as well, I believe that trust has been eroded between the Alexandra.

Mike Balsom 4:47

Your time is up. The three minutes is up.

Sandra O'Connor 4:49

Thank you.

Mike Balsom 4:50

I should mention that sitting beside me is Tony Varga, and he's going to hold up a yellow card when they have one minute left to go, and a red card. When time is up, and we will take the microphone down and cut you off, Maria. You're next.

Maria Mavridis 5:07

I could give a minute over to Sandra if permitted. Okay.

Speaker 1 5:11

All

Maria Mavridis 5:11

right. Thank you, everyone, for joining us this evening. Thank you to the NOTL Residents Association and all the volunteers for pulling this together. I'm Maria Mavridis. If there's one thing that I've learned, you've learned about me over the last four years, it's that I'm not afraid to ask the hard questions. Niagara Land Lake isn't just where I live; it's where I grew up and where I've chosen to raise my daughter. I grew up in Old Town, bought my first home in Glendale at 21. I rented in St. David's, and I currently live in Virgil. And maybe one day I'll retire in Queenston to complete the tour. Long before council, I was serving this community. I'm a founder of the NOTL Youth Collective, along with the amazing Caroline Polgrabia, my family helped fund the Pasto Mental Health Clinic at the Red Roof Retreat, and through Anchor Niagara, created in honour of my mother's legacy, I've helped raise more than \$600,000 for charities and not profits. I've served on boards and committees spanning tourism, business, our library, museum, youth, transit, and community grants. For four years, I've brought those experiences to this council. I've listened. I've learned. I've asked why when I believe something needed to change, and I worked to change it. I live in this community too. I drive the same roads. I see the same challenges. I hear the same frustrations, and sometimes from the outside, the solutions seem perfectly logical. Just fix it. Four years ago, I probably would have said the same thing. But after four years on council, I've learned that municipal government is rarely that simple and very different. There are provincial policies and legislations that we are required to follow. There's regional responsibilities and decisions outside the town's control, there are legal obligations, planning processes, budgets, infrastructure limitations, policies, and bylaws. It means we take action where we can. We change outdated policies. We modernize bylaws. We make organizational changes, and we invest in our infrastructure. But I am happier with where we are today than where I was four years ago, and I believe we've started making changes that will matter well beyond one council term. Tonight, I look forward to talking about our records and where we go next. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 8:02

Next opening statement from Karen Taylor Jones.

karen taylor jones 8:09

Good evening, everyone. My name is Karen Jones. I'd like to say thank you to the NOTL Association and actually to the school for letting us be here, and to all of you for coming. I go by Karen Jones because that's my legal name, but I use Taylor mostly because that's

how people know me. That's how I grew up. I've been an advocate of this town for many years, whether it be up front or behind the lines, I my grandmother was the very first mayor of the town of Niagara. Mayor, excuse me, not mayor. She was the very first. I'm sorry. She was the very first woman councillor of the town of Niagara on the lake. So I'm sort of trying to follow in her footsteps. Both my grandfather and my father were postmasters in Niagara Lake. I actually was a postmaster in St. David's temporarily. It just wasn't a shoe-in fit for me, so I went out and opened up my own business, wall periphery, painting renovations and houses and enjoyed it all my life. I sit on the my third term at the Legion for Niagara and Lake Legion Branch 124 as the Ways and Means Officer, and I also am the treasurer for the Ladies Auxiliary, so I try to put myself out there into the community all the time. I don't know all the answers, but all I can say is I'm willing to learn. I certainly don't know as much as these two ladies do, but I'm willing to put myself there out and listen and do everything. Can do to help,

Andrew Niven 10:06

Andrew. You're up. You've got the mic. Thank you. Not even a card, Karen. Great job. Good evening. I would like to thank the residents' association for organizing tonight's debate and thanking you for taking the time to be here. I'm Andrew Niven, and I'm asking for your support. I was appointed to council almost two years ago to fill a vacant seat. I know the appointment has been a topic of conversation, so I want to address that directly. When the opportunity came up, I put my name forward because I believed I could contribute and serve the community. Council ultimately chose chose me, and I'm grateful for that opportunity. But I've always understood that being appointed is different from being elected. So from day one, I had something to prove. I wanted to earn the trust of our residents by showing up, doing the work, asking the tough questions, listening to different perspectives, and making decisions that I believe were right for Niagara on the Lake. My commitment to this community didn't begin with council, though. Over the years, I've had the privilege of serving as the chair of the Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Nigerian Lake, chair of the town's tourism strategy, chair of the wineries of Niagara Lake. I also proudly serve on the museum board, the town's hotel tax committee, the Niagara Community Foundation and Nagrاند Lake Soccer, and I continue to volunteer with community programs like the Candlelight Stroll, the Ice Wine Festival, and the Nagrاند Lake Ambassadors. Those experience has given me a real appreciation for what makes Nagreena Lake so special, and the importance of bringing people together, supporting local businesses, and protecting our community's character, over the past two years on council, I've learned that municipal government is rarely about simple yes and no answers. It's

about balance. I believe we can grow without losing what has brought many of us here in the first place. But growth needs to be in the right place at the right scale, supported by the right infrastructure. That means taking our roads, stormwater, wastewater, and flooding seriously. What we experienced this summer reminded us that infrastructure directly affects people's homes, businesses, and quality of life. It also means protecting our agricultural lands, heritage, and neighborhoods while supporting local businesses, tourism, and responsible investment. My job isn't an automatic yes or no; is to consider policies, the evidence, the infrastructure, and the community impact, and make the decision I believe is right for Nagorno Lake. That's the kind of counselor I want to continue to be: someone who listens, asks questions, does the work, and puts Nagorno Lake first. Thank you,

Mike Balsom 12:48

Rick Mills. Get that microphone set up in three minutes.

Rick Mills 12:52

Good evening. My name is Rick Mills. I'd like to thank the Residents Association. The volunteerism is remarkable. I am a lifelong resident of Niagara on the Lake, literally born and raised. Through the process of deciding to run for town councilor or not, there were questions I asked myself: Why? What can I bring? 30 plus years of managerial experience in the thermal steel heat treating industry in nearby Port Robinson. 25 of those as plant manager. 25 plus years in pastoral ministry here in Niagara on the Lake, within a small congregation that started innocently as a gathering of people just wanting to love God deeper. They began 45 years ago this month in the old town. Throughout my career, I tried practicing three guiding words, and I still do: to listen, to learn, and to lend my voice. I've seen them work, and work it is. You live long enough, there is that gain of life experiences, knowledge, and maturity. Town council. I believe my character is proven. I know and have history of the town. Kathy and my parents were both citizens of the year from years gone by. My mom, the first female citizen of the Year in 1969, and that was before her ever working within the Water Safety Instruction and Recreational Service. Really, my mom didn't see it as a job; it was it was a service. And then my father-in-law, Nick Marino, in 1978, for his work primarily within the Legion and service as the Poppy Chairman for many years, am I name dropping? No, well, not really. My mom, they raised us well. I commit as if they were sitting in the front row to listen, beginning with fellow residents to learn what's required of a

counselor and their responsibilities, and. To lend my voice among six other peers, not just my voice, but yours, I think you can trust me, and I think I can do this. So thank you.

Mike Balsom 15:17

And our last opening statement from Tim Balasiuk..

Tim Balasiuk 15:21

Thank you, Mike. Just like to again, as everyone else says, thank the Niagara Lake Residents Association for being here, and also everyone else that has put their name forward to sit at town council. Good evening, everyone. My name is Tim Balasiuk. I'm seeking re-election for Niagara on the Lake Town Council. I was born, raised, born and raised here in Niagara on the Lake, this has always been my home, and my connection to this community goes back long before I ever thought about putting my name on a ballot. My family first came to Niagara on the Lake back in the early 1900s, and have lived here for a while. My grandmother was the lucky one that got to a great grandmother was the lucky one that got to take care of the Charles Inn, which was the Kiley House, which was Nina Hall. My grandfather, when he came to town, was across the street, Kitty Corner at 187 Queen or 184 Queen Street, and when he came to town, built the Pillar and Post. So, to me, sitting on the Municipal Heritage Committee, as you can see, obviously, that is a home that I care about a great deal. Sitting on the mat tax committee and sitting on the tourism Niagara Lake Board of Directors, I have an understanding. As growing up in Niagara on the Lake, like a lot of us did back in the early 90s, working in hospitality, we have an understanding of the balance between tourism and the residents. Now, with that being said, four years ago, the residents gave me the privilege of representing them on town council. I took that responsibility seriously then, and after four years around the council table, I take it even more seriously now. The last four years have taught me a lot. I have learned that sometimes the most important part of this job is answering the phone and listening to someone who feels they are not being heard. I have learned that decisions can seem straightforward on paper and look very different when you understand how they affect a resident, or a neighborhood, or a local business. I have learned that being a good counselor does not always mean agreeing with everyone. It means doing your homework, asking questions, being accountable for your decisions and remembering who you are to the who you are there to represent. I care deeply about Niagara on the Lake and protecting the things that make our community special, our heritage, our neighborhoods, our agricultural land, and our green spaces. At the same time, we have real work ahead of us. We need to manage

growth responsibly, address our infrastructure. We have now been doing that over the last 14 months, and we've started great work. And I really would hope that I can continue that work. And we need to respect the taxpayers who ultimately pay for the decisions that we make. Over the past four years, I've been accessible. I listen. I ask questions, and I stand behind my decisions. I am seeking another term because there is more work to do. Niagara on the Lake is changing; some change is inevitable, but how we manage that change is a choice. I want to make sure that Niagara on the Lake moves forward. We protect what makes our community special while continuing to build the town where longtime residents, new residents, and future generations can feel proud to call Niagara on the Lake home. It has been an honor to serve this community. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Mike Balsom 18:26

Thank you, Tim. Now we've got that out of the way. Let's go to our first question, and Maria, you'll be answering this one first. Niagara on the Lake has an official plan and related bylaws. Do you expect developers to submit proposals that adhere to these official requirements? If not, what exceptions are acceptable to you? And furthermore, are you concerned that approving exceptions to the official plan and bylaws establish precedents for future proposals by developers, there's a lot in there. Basically, it's about exceptions to the official plan for new developments.

Maria Mavridis 19:22

I'm sorry. Can you say the question again? Having a hard time hearing you. If you can be a little louder.

Mike Balsom 19:28

So, do you expect developers to submit proposals that adhere to the official plan? If not, what exceptions would you find acceptable? And are you also concerned that approving exceptions to the official plan and bylaws might set a precedent for future proposals. So it's really a three-part question.

Maria Mavridis 19:50

Okay, thank you. I actually asked that when I initially took the seat. So, to be fair, I didn't know what our official plan was because I didn't look into it as a resident. Once I got on council, I read the official plan, which is the one from 2017. We still go by. I understand that every application that comes forward must be viewed by the staff, and then, if it meets all requirements of the application, it is accepted. Then it comes to council. That's what's the second part of the question. That's a long question. It is a

Mike Balsom 20:38

long question. It's not the longest one here today, but if not, what exceptions do you find acceptable?

Maria Mavridis 20:47

What exceptions to yeah? What exceptions

Mike Balsom 20:49

would you find acceptable from a developer's proposal? Exceptions to the official plan?

Maria Mavridis 20:55

Amendments is what you're saying. Okay, so I don't I don't know how many amendments is too many amendments. I do I do understand, and I did learn that amendments are permitted in an application. The questions I had at the beginning were, why do we do it this way? Why are they allowed to do it that way? And why are they allowed to apply if it's outside of this and they're asking for different setback or different; those are amendments, and the answer was, well, it goes with the provincial policy, or they can comment and ask, and you can say no. I said, okay. So what happens if we say no? Well, then because it's been permitted and accepted, and it's got a positive staff report. It's going to be tough to fight at the OLT. So I decided I was going to look at each and every application individually. I also understood that there's no precedent setting, and although they say that, I I do argue that point. I think that an application that comes forward could have some amendments that are within reason, obviously, but we have had applications that came before us that had, in my opinion, and it's my opinion, and from speaking to residents, way too many amendments, and some would have some negative effects if council did approve it. So I

did oppose a few. They did go on to the OLT. I don't have a straightforward answer. Every application is different. I can't say too many, you know, amendments on one and not on the other. It all depends on the individual application, what the the provincial policies are, and what is outlined in our official plan. Now being a new official plan that we worked on and approved. So,

Mike Balsom 22:58

thank you, Karen. Would you like me to repeat the three parts of the question? Yes. Okay. So the first part: Do you expect developers to submit proposals that stick to the official plan? What exceptions would be acceptable for you? And are you worried that by accepting exceptions, it would set a precedent.

karen taylor jones 23:29

Well, the official plan is probably mostly the reason I'm here, because I completely disagreed with changes that were made on a few different places in town. So no, I am not. I don't care for the amendments. I don't agree with some of the amendments because our town is a historical town, and if it starts losing the shape of that history, where are we going? So, yeah, I don't even know how to fight about it because I thought an official plan was official, and apparently, it's not. As Maria has said, there's various different ways to change it. So where are we? But I'll fight it as long as I can. Thank you. Thank

Mike Balsom 24:26

you,

Andrew Niven 24:31

Andrew Niveng. Thanks, Mike. So for me, it's easy. I think I think we have an official plan for one reason, and and one amendment is too many for for me. I think we have to follow the policy that we put in place because that's that's ultimately why we put it there. Outside of outside of policy, I think we also have to look at community character. So we can abide by anything from a from a policy perspective, but if it doesn't fit the community, I think that's another thing we we have to to take into effect. So I don't know. I'm. I've always been a proponent, and I can sit up here and tell you tell you these things right now. But but if you

look at my voting record, my voting record matches exactly what I'm saying. I've strongly opposed applications that have come forward with very few amendments because I feel that's why we have these policies in place. I think we need to look at the right growth, the right place and and the right scale, and and I have stood by that, and I continue to stand by that, and I believe that's why we have policies. Thank you. Thank you,

Mike Balsom 25:33

Rick Mills. Do you need any of that repeated? Any of the questions,

Rick Mills 25:36

Mikey? That was a mouthful. It

Mike Balsom 25:37

was a mouthful.

Rick Mills 25:38

That was a mouthful. And my guess is the next longest question will probably be I'll be the first one. Well,

Mike Balsom 25:43

I'm not. Yeah, I know. I know. I'm not restricted to three minutes. Number

Rick Mills 25:48

one. Number one. Yes, yes. My answer is yes. I am concerned. And number two is what exceptions? Exceptions must be minimal, and they must be be treated very seriously. It's one of the reasons we have a council. Your official plan is a living document, and there's guardrails. And I think the guardrails, in part, is your council, and your council are the representatives of the residents, and that's why we sit at a table, and that's one of the reasons I put my name forward, is that we can honor, adhere to the the official plan. There

are going to be amendments. They're going to be presented. It's how we respond to them that's most important. And the third, what was the third? Am I concerned? Yes, I am concerned. I already answered that. Yes, I am concerned. And again, that's why I'm here.

Mike Balsom 26:34

Thank you, Rick. Tim, you're ready.

Tim Balasiuk 26:41

Yes, Mike. Thank you for the question. Yes, so I do expect developers to adhere to the official plan, but it's not always the case, as we see with the number of applications that come forward over the course of the last four years. That's exactly what I would have expected. But as the applications come forward, and we hear from residents all the time. This is, you know, how can you accept this application? The fact of the matter is, as a municipality, we have to accept the application. Then we go through the planning process. The planning department then weighs everything, which leads to the variances. So it's the reason why we have the committee of adjustments. If there are small adjustments that need to be made, if there are small variances that need to be made, that's something that the committee can handle. And I do not want to see any more committees dismantled. I think that the committee of adjustment has a purpose. That is one thing that I stand for 100%. As far as precedent setting goes, this is one thing that we have heard for the last four years. And as you know, so with my first term of council, it was always you have precedent setting, and then you have we weigh every application on its own individual merit, and both are true, so for when we first got on, it was either one or the other. And after four years, I realized yes, there is there is precedent setting decisions that get made. With that being said, the planning department also does weigh all of the applications on their own individual merits, so it is it's not as black and white, and I think that's what I really hope residents see with the people that are sitting at council. It's not all black and white, and they are difficult decisions. For me, yes, the official plan. I'm so happy that we actually have one in place now. It is definitely needed, and I I really do I I would I need to see developers adhering to the official plan. That is moving forward. We really, we really need it because it's. Yeah, it's. It's a changing time. Thank you

Mike Balsom 29:00

And all the way, we got to get that microphone over to Sandra. Our last response to question number one, Sandra O'Connor.

Sandra O'Connor 29:09

Thank you very much. First of all, council works very hard in putting together our official plan. It takes into consideration all of the land use policies that come from the provincial government, and it takes into consideration some of the unique things of Nagger Lake, that being the specialty crop soils, and the unique heritage we have from the War of 1812 to the First Parliament of Upper Canada, et cetera, et cetera. So when we, as a council, approve this, as we go forward, I think that any amendments or exceptions to all the hard work we have done should not be the norm. It should be an exception. It has become the norm, and that's. My problem here. I want it to be just used for the exceptions. What would the exceptions be? Well, that depends on what the proposal is. Is it residential? Is it employment lands? Is it institutional? I don't know. I can't tell you specifics. But whatever it is, it has to be extraordinary in my in my opinion to consider any exceptions to what we consider is an approved official plan that we worked hard to do. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 30:38

On question two, Karen, you will be first on this one. The 2026 municipal election is our first since Niagara on the Lake was designated by the province as a municipality. You can't hear me. Oh, okay. Turn the speaker a little bit. Okay, I'll wait till Tony just gives you a little bit of audio there. Okay, let's try this again, Karen. The 2026 municipal election is our first since Niagara on the Lake was designated by the province as a municipality whose mayor will have strong mayor powers. Can you hear that? Yep. Okay. Add to that, we're now electing two fewer council members. What that means is, in many circumstances, the Lord Mayor plus two of you will have the legal authority to override the will of the majority of town council. Would you, if elected, join the Lord Mayor in overriding a decision made by the majority of elected councilors. In other words, would you support the Lord Mayor invoking the strong mayor powers, and in what circumstances would you do that? If so,

karen taylor jones 31:52

well, I guess the very first circumstance would be, who's the Lord Mayor? That would make my decision bend one way or the other. What can I say? Council should work as council works, and that's all I can say, sir.

Andrew Niven 32:25

Andrew, your turn. Thanks, Mike. So I feel I don't agree with the strong mayors. I feel that council is there for a reason. Council should have a meaningful role at the table, and I think what comes from those discussions at the council table via healthy debate is why we're all here. So I've the strong mayor vote has come up a couple times over council this year. I voted against it every every time. It's it's just something I I really don't agree with. I feel we should focus as a council, including the mayor, on on being accountable to you, the residents, and that should be first and foremost our our main our main focus and goal of this council. So no, I I don't support it, and I don't intend on supporting it. Thank you, Rick

Mike Balsom 33:14

Mills. You've got three minutes. None of you are using the three minutes so far, but go ahead, Rick.

Rick Mills 33:20

I don't support it. All the more reason I think it's again another reason why I've decided to run. We've gone from eight councilors to six, so now whoever the mayor is has less people he has to convince, and I don't think it's it's it's a tool. It's become a tool, whether we like it or not. I'm not going to mislead you by telling you a flat yes, I will, or no, I won't, because I don't know. It's it's a tool that the province has given to us, has given to the mayor, and I just hope that tool stays in the cabinet and gets never used.

Tim Balasiuk 34:03

Tim, thank you for the question, Mike. We're down two. We have six councilors now. This is one thing that I have said when I've been going around knocking on doors and talking with residents: is strong mayor's powers doesn't really mean anything if we have a strong council, and I really am pushing that hard around the community. If we are able to get the right people on council, then strong mayors' powers doesn't stand a chance. Now I will speak to what Rick said. It is a tool that's been given to us by the province, has it been used? It was used in our budget process. What ended up happening? It streamlined the budget process. It was done faster. We were able to get out to tender faster. We were able to save the taxpayers a lot of money through that process. So that is one. One case where it

can be a useful tool. Obviously, on the more heated topics, yeah, I would say no. It's it's it's not something that we're going to utilize. And again, that's why if we have a strong council, it's two thirds. We can open it back up again, and we can shut it down. We just need a strong council to make sure that the tool is used wisely. Thank you,

Mike Balsom 35:26

Sandra. Over to you. Yes.

Sandra O'Connor 35:29

Thank you. Let me state I'm against the strong mayor's powers, and I am against the strong chair powers at the at the region. That. Thank you. Back when the strong mayor's powers was first introduced to a few of the larger municipalities in Ontario, I moved a motion that strong mayor's powers should not be used or should not come to Niagara on the Lake. Fortunately, that didn't happen. And in addition, I also made representation to the legislative committee of the province with regards to strong chair powers, saying that they are undemocratic, as I think it is with the strong mayor's powers. So, having said that, we have it. So how do I live with that? So one of the things is, first of all, the strong mayor's powers are supposed to be focused on residential building, build more homes faster, you know, rhetoric, and the budget. So when it is not used for build more homes, and is used to try and put a building in the agricultural area of Niagara Lake. I fight that. I fight that as hard as I can. And with regards to its use at the budget, I've heard it stated. That's why we were able to bring in such a great budget this year within a record time. Well, in my opinion, it was not because of the strong mayor's powers that was done. It was because we had a new CAO who brought in a reasonable budget so that we didn't have to do all the work to try and cut that down, it minimized the work on council. So, I did. I don't see that at least to date impacting our budget process. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 37:32

Thank you. And our last response from Maria.

Maria Mavridis 37:39

Thank you. So, as Councilor O'Connor, sorry, not tonight. Sandra said she did motion to try and prevent strong mayor powers from coming. I seconded it. It's a democracy. We didn't get the votes to support it, but we did get votes to support to overturn a strong mayor decision on a on building in agricultural lands. So, thank you. It's exactly what was said earlier. Stronger councilors prevail. Stronger councilors will get the work done. Do I support strong mayor powers? Again, I do not. However, when it came to the budget, our CAO did an amazing job. He pulled it all together, did all the work, met with each individual councilor. We all had opportunities to go in, speak to staff, speak to the budget and bring amendments forward. I know we were criticized for not publicly bringing any changes on camera, but we did a lot of work behind the scenes to get that budget into where it came into. So I thank our CIO, and I believe that regardless of what the province is saying, you know, as long as we have a team of people strong enough sitting around that council table, we'll get the work done.

Mike Balsom 39:16

Thank you. On to question three, Andrew Niven, you'll be first on this one. This summer, Niagara on the Lake experienced multiple major flooding events, damaging residents' homes, farms, and businesses. It's reasonable to expect that severe weather will be an increasing fact of life. What steps need to be taken by council and town staff to prepare for future severe weather events. That's the question.

Andrew Niven 39:47

Thanks, Mike. So I feel that it starts. It starts with planning, knowing these events. They they're not the norm anymore. They don't seem to be the norm. So I think instead of we we've been some. Reactive, and I think throughout the summer, and we've seen that, and I think we've paid the price for it. So I think it's it's going to start with making some serious investments and or continued investments, and start to plan start to plan long term because I think this is this is this is not not the last of it, and going to become the norm. So yeah, I think we have to start to prioritize when we look at our budget cycle coming up. Start to prioritize some of these long-term projects. I live in Saint David, so I've dealt with the with the flooding a lot in Saint David's, and that seems to be a collection of small small problems or small little parcels in the area. And some of it's some of it's the regional sewage area, some of it's the the drainage pond and the mill pond area. So I think we we need to come together, the community. I think we need to take a serious look at the the

impact the environment's having, and really start to look at some long term decisions. And I think we'll see it at this budget cycle. So that's my thanks.

Mike Balsom 41:02

Okay, Rick, your turn.

Rick Mills 41:05

Again, back to the official plan. I think the official plan is going to help us as a principal tool to help us with development, with the roads or water mains, our sewers, the infrastructure. Working with the CAO and his team to make sure that we are using every tool available to maintain our ditches and to make investments in infrastructure and improvements. Always look for improvements. I think that working with the province, with anything that's available to us, to to to help us with our infrastructure, and to look at our development, monitor our development, look and see where we are taking away green space and and and and putting hard surfaces, allowing for hard surfaces, considering what do we do for pliable surfaces, it's it's going to take a team effort. It's been a it was just it was just not a good experience for many, and it's just going to take working within the official plan and the guardrails available to us.

Mike Balsom 42:21

Thank you, Tim Bellisuk.

Tim Balasiuk 42:26

Thank you, Mike. As someone who was seriously affected by the floods, we lost our basement, four feet of water twice in five days. Saw the community come together to to help us. That was it. Was a very tough time, but I'll tell you, these are the norm now. It's not that they are not the norm. We are seeing serious weather events, and they are more and more over the last five years. We flooded the first time from a severe weather event three years ago. Been working with the town to fix things in my neighborhood. I will continue to work with the town to fix things in my neighborhood. Now, one thing I will say is, I don't know if this is the time or the place, but we are very lucky to have Sealer Ruler. When the floodings happened, a lot of people didn't know that he has already started working on a

plan. Of course, I've put a lot of pressure on him now because of what I experienced at the last council meeting. I believe it was \$433,000. We have now put towards locating all the storm sewers, all the catch basins, starting a review of all of them, checking all of our water retention ponds, doing sonar to figure out the depth and how they're getting cleaned up. There is work there that's being done, and it is good work. It's 14 months since we've had someone that you know has come on board that works in emergency services, and he is starting to use all of those tools that he has learned over the years to really make sure that we are able to get the Niagara drains and storm sewers working properly. I think that's the number one thing that we need to do first. When people say the system's broken, if it's broken, we need to fix the system before we throw more money at right-sizing or whatever it may be. I think if we get it running at top-notch, we get it running as best as it possibly can, and then look at ways to improve it. I think that's the most fiscally responsible thing to do. Thank you.

Sandra O'Connor 44:41

Thank you. Since I've been on council, I have been raising the issue of stormwater management and capacity issues for any new developments that come forward. I have sat on the Environment Committee and spearhead. The development of the climate change adaptation plan. I moved a motion that we need to increase the criteria from the one to 100 year storm that we use when we are assessing any new developments. One of our problems is that the details on whether the development has the capacity is normally deferred until the site plan stage. For your information, site plans do not come back to council to have a look at. So this, to me, is a disconnect. I'd like to have the site plan stage move forward so council could at least look at the stormwater capacities. So, having said that, another issue is the coverage. The impermeable coverage of developments have increased from what a norm was of 33 percent to 55 percent, and what does that do? It increases more runoff. So, what do we need to do? First of all, we have to highlight what are the most critical flooded areas within the last month, so that we could start there first because it's urgently needed. Then we have to have a plan to address other flooded areas. We have to look at the criteria. We have to expand the stormwater ponds. We have to increase the culverts. We have to make sure that the drainage ditches are cleared. We have to look at using green infrastructure in addition to the hardscape infrastructure that we use, so things like rainways and tree planting and rain barrels, so all of these all of these things have to be looked at holistically. I also moved and put and not spearheaded push for the watershed plan for Four Mile Creek, it's being done in conjunction with the Niger

Peninsula Conservation Authority, and that should help us considerably in addressing that whole watershed. Thank you.

Maria Mavridis 47:18

Thank you, Sandra. Did amazing. She did do all of that, and she has suggested all of that. And at the end of the day, that all costs money. So from every dollar that from your taxes, 65 cents goes to the region, 13 cents to the school board, and 22 cents on every dollar stays here, so with those funds, we have to create our budget and get our wish lists done. What happened is years of funding being deferred out of the infrastructure were playing catch up, so low taxes over the last eight years. We but we finally have moved money back into infrastructure, and we for the first time, which I was surprised as a new councilor, we never had an infrastructure assets plan. This term we created one. We never had one before. We've taken it seriously. I don't think we've been reactive. We have been proactive. But as Sandra said, 100-year storm is very outdated, and we need to change that criteria because applications coming before us-that's the policies we have to follow because those are the policies currently in place. On ditches, two councils ago, staff recommended not to do ditching because of erosion. I learned this recently, actually five months ago. So that's why the ditches weren't being done. As soon as that was brought up, we moved funding, and we have moved forward. But there's again, it's a catch-up game. So we do need to to be a little more proactive. Unfortunately, we are being reactive because there's items that weren't done previously, and to be fair, I think that we've started in the right direction. But there's so much more work to do, and a lot of work that needs to be done. I also wanted to bring something up about permeable. We went into a closed session. I will not talk about closed session, it was legal, but in that closed session, when we rose and said we bought a pond, we bought we bought property. Sorry for a stormwater pond because we were shown two pictures in St. David's1. aerial aerial view was 10 years ago, and the same aerial view 10 years later. And the green space on properties after their purchase, people put in pools and patios and concrete pads for sheds. They widened their driveways. There was no more permeable space. So I, I think we need to also not micromanage, but look at things like that, and take those into consideration as well. You're turning my microphone off. Okay.

Mike Balsom 50:26

Thanks, Maria. It's a slow fade down. Yeah. Karen, you're last on this one.

karen taylor jones 50:35

I finally get to be last.

Mike Balsom 50:36

Yes, you do.

karen taylor jones 50:37

Okay. Well, you know, you have to prevent problems instead of reacting to them, and the opposite has happened here. The accidents have happened. I don't know whether anybody pays attention to what's going on in the world as far as weather and climate goes. It's something I'm kind of into, and if you watch what happens to the Pacific Ocean, and it all depends on what's happening in the Pacific Ocean with the El Nino and the rise of the water, the temperature of the water depends on what we get. We're going to get more. We have to be way more proactive in cleaning out our ditches and everything else that involves. Like I, I drove around. There's many irrigation ditches out there. Most of them that I saw were full of bulrush weeds. How is water supposed to flow through that? So all of this needs to be taken into consideration. I know it's a budget problem as well, but we have to look into it and make some changes.

Mike Balsom 51:52

Thank you. On to question four, Rick. You'll be first on this one. 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?

Rick Mills 52:14

No. No, I don't.

Mike Balsom 52:21

Can you say that about 1000 more times to use up to three minutes? Tim, you're next.

Tim Balasiuk 52:30

No,

Mike Balsom 52:33

we're whipping through this one. Sandra, over to you.

Sandra O'Connor 52:39

No, I do not have any relationships with the Bella person. I just want to make it clear because someone once said, "Sandor, you should have said what about O'Connor Real Estate here? I'm no relation to that branch of the of the family, and I wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 52:56

Thank you, Maria.

Maria Mavridis 53:00

Can you repeat the full question?

Mike Balsom 53:02

Yeah, 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?

Maria Mavridis 53:13

Okay, just developers. You're not asking about being transparent on all conflicts. Just any with developers. This

Mike Balsom 53:20

particular question was about developers.

Maria Mavridis 53:22

Okay, so because at St. David's last week they asked if anyone has a conflict or will have a future conflict, and everyone said no except for me, of course. But you don't know if you have a future conflict because we don't know what applications are coming down. If you live 120 meters within any application, it's a catchment area. You have a conflict. I have a conflict on a property that my father owns, that has has or had an application come before council. He owned it prior to me becoming a counselor. My I don't call him a developer. He's dad, and I declared that conflict very openly and clearly. I also declared a conflict on a couple other properties that came up within the catchment area because those are the rules. And yeah, as for any other developers? No, I do not have any conflicts. But I don't like calling them developers. I'd like to change that in this town. Many of them live here; they're residents as well, and they invest in this community. I will say that. So I I do not have any conflicts with developers. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 54:46

Thank you, Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 54:54

No, I don't have any conflict with any developers, except maybe. Mr. Morato called me and asked me if I wanted to buy Parliament Oak School.

Mike Balsom 55:08

I'm assuming you said no, but yeah, we'll we'll move on to Andrew. Andrew,

Andrew Niven 55:12

what was the answer, Karen?

Maria Mavridis 55:13

Yeah,

karen taylor jones 55:13

my answer was, will you lend me the money?

Andrew Niven 55:21

No, Mike. You're up,

Mike Balsom 55:22

Andrew.

Andrew Niven 55:23

I I do not, Mike. No. The answer is no.

Mike Balsom 55:30

Okay. We will move on to the next question. Long preamble on this one. So again, as I said earlier, remember you guys have a three-minute limit. There, there was no limit for me. This might take me long to get through this. Nice and slow. From the residents' perspective, many times value for money meeting our tax dollars is evident in core services and programs delivered by the town. Lately, there has been much talk about value for money relating to infrastructure investments and funding requests aligning more with visitor and developer needs than with resident, in other words, taxpayer needs. So that's the preamble. If elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process, considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence. What budget and funding allocations will you champion? Will you fight for to ensure residents' needs are the top priority over the next four years, so putting residents first specifically, what are your priorities to deliver on that? Tim Balasuk, you're first.

Tim Balasiuk 56:54

Thank you for the question, Mike. As I always say, it's I'm a resident first, councilor second. As far as the value goes for our tax dollars, we have. I know the development is a hot topic. We have seen development actually go down. So we are. I took the fact from a previous meeting. We had 65 development applications in 2026, which is substantially lower from three four years ago. So with that, our DCs, our development charges, are going down. So that reserve is diminishing, and I think people, Maybe staff, what have you, are looking to lend a hand to some of these builders, hoping that they will build because then we will see development charge revenue come into town. We can't bank on that. If you look at the town, pretty much all of the developable land in Virgil is bought up now. It is being developed. You look at Niagara on the Lake, and all we have left now, as far as areas that you can develop into a subdivision, is of course Randwood. We've had a number of applications that have come forward for apartment buildings because we are hearing that we need different levels of of housing in Niagara, which I I can't argue that if it wasn't for the Davie Street regional housing, my aunts wouldn't have been able to live in Niagara on the lake into their their latter years. So we definitely need need that, and I think working with some builders, some developers working with other government agencies, we can see that type of of construction. But will we see development charges from that? So I think that's where the the money, the the revenue that we're getting is from builders. It's diminishing. As far as visitors go, I sat with Councilor O'Connor on the mat tax. Mat tax is now serious revenue generator for Niagara on the Lake. It's not. It's not a lot, but you know we're looking at millions of dollars, and those millions of dollars from those visitors coming in and spending time in Niagara on the Lake, they they do end up relieving the the tax burden on the the the homeowners and the residents of Niagara, so I really do think that we need to work on the balance with the residents and the visitors. One of the reasons why I'm excited to sit on the board of directors for the tourism Niagara on the Lake, we're we're starting to see how we can utilize the MAT dollars there, and then also be able to utilize the mat dollars at the town. But as far as how we're spending that money, the town is actually opening up the mat dollars in Niagara on the Lake, and we are using it. It was very straightforward how we were going to utilize it, but we are utilizing it now.

Mike Balsom 59:59

Thank you, Tim. Sandra O'Connor, you're up.

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:09

I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question again? I sure will. Yeah. If

Mike Balsom 1:00:12

elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process. Considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence, what budget and funding allocations will you fight for? Will you champion to ensure residents' needs are your top priority?

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:29

Okay. Thank you very much for that. First of all, I think the goal of putting together a municipal budget is to maintain our essential community services invest in infrastructure and financial sustainability, and in those, what I consider three major goals, I'm looking at what is best for the residents here. I think that there are there are things that we can put forward to help to help our economy because because that's important to have a sustainable town is to support our economy. But some of the things that are, for instance, tourism related, there are other funding sources I think that we need to look at for those types of things, be them dedicated government grants, be it the municipal accommodations task, which is supposed to be used for, or could be used for tourism-related issues, be it our parking funding. I don't think that those kinds of things should that we feel we need for non-residents should be coming out of the tax levy that you have that that that goes to you to pay for this. I'm not sure if I've really addressed the question because I'm not giving specifics about what I would promote because it it varies from from year to year, budget to budget. Like I could foresee us putting a lot of funding into the flood mitigation coming forward, and I also think that there are government grants that can help in in preparing our plans for for this. So I just want to assure you that I will always put the residents first, and try and find ways of other funding to to support other things. Like I'll give you an example. The provincial government a couple years ago came out with a new community benefits tax that we could put on buildings that are five stories or greater. So I'm thinking Glendale because that's where we're going to have a large story, five stories or greater, so that it will support the infrastructure needed for for that area. We need to institute that. I moved a motion; it hasn't been done yet, but it's in the books to get done, let's think outside of the box to try and get more funding for the things we need.

Mike Balsom 1:03:06

Thank you, Maria.

Maria Mavridis 1:03:12

So I won't promise any like any tax freezes, regardless of any circumstances, because municipality still has roads, fire services, parks, infrastructure to fund. But before asking the taxpayer for more, what we have done and what I will continue to do is examine efficiencies, grants, as Councilor O'Connor mentioned, Development-related funding, mat parking, and other non-property tax revenues, and I cannot stress enough the long-term asset management, that deferred maintenance. We need to get get on top of it and stay on top of it, so it doesn't become a larger future bill. Keeping the taxes artificially low by ignoring infrastructure simply hands a bigger bill down to the taxpayer of tomorrow, or in our case of today. The your question is kind of too well. I feel like it's 234, parts, but there I heard a part in there about the allocation for top priority needs for residents. Okay, so the residents that I hear from because of recent events, infrastructure is number one. Number two, what I for. what I've heard, and I'd love to hear from more, is the tax increases. We did motion and give staff guidance to stay within inflation for this upcoming budget. But again, we did that last year as well, and then when you budget nine, well, \$695,000 for legal fees, and the bill comes in the millions, you got to reallocate and move. So, but I will, I, I will always look at efficiencies and try not to cut, but come up with new ways and new revenue streams. The parking, paid parking that was brought in back in, I believe Gary Burrows was Lord Mayor back then. We never charged for parking before. It was brilliant, and it's been it's been a revenue source for this town in more ways than anyone can imagine. When it comes to budget time, we need to come up with another one of those brilliant ideas. We're working on it.

Mike Balsom 1:05:52

Thank you, Maria. Karen.

karen taylor jones 1:05:56

Okay, this is a hard one for me because I'm not really introduced to the taxes and budgets at this point, but I will say we have to look at spending and and revenue and don't just attack the reserves that we have. We need to take care of what we have. Reserves are not an endless bank account, that's for sure. So yeah, I don't I don't know enough about it to speak really that much about it. So I'm gonna just let it ride.

Mike Balsom 1:06:33

Okay,

Andrew Niven 1:06:34

Andrew. Karen, no one likes a tax question. I promise you, it's not just you. So I I just feel we have to. It starts with providing value to our residents. I think that's the that's the major focus of of what we do as council, in terms of prioritizing. I think it's it's prioritizing core services and the critical critical infrastructure that goes along along with that. That would include things like focusing on on long term planning, considering life cycles, looking at efficiencies, maximizing grants-that's that's where I, in terms of prioritization, I'd go. I just think it's important that we don't like we we would look at that without compromising what our like what we do in Negram Lake and and and without I guess compromising our service that we would provide to the residents. So I think I think that's most important. But if you're looking at prioritization, I think it's it's the critical infrastructure and core services that we must continue to do.

Mike Balsom 1:07:30

And last but not least, Rick,

Rick Mills 1:07:35

revenue and income increase is necessary. My my default is and will be is to bring a better, maintain a safer living conditions for residents, essential services. I look forward to sitting in on the budget meetings and and and creating a budget. From all the people I spoke to, in listening to the residents, they are feeling that they're being minimized, left out. That development and people coming in wanting to start businesses or building are getting the highest priority. They're getting they're they're getting their money, and I gave many of them my word that the residents are essential services. Maintaining a healthy and better life, maintaining that life for residents, will will always be my default, and be my priority.

Mike Balsom 1:08:44

Thank you, Rick. We're on to question number six, and we're back to the original order now, Sandra. So you'll go first. This one also throws tourism into the preamble. Tourism is

important to Nagar on the Lake's economy, if elected, you will face many issues requiring you to balance the needs of residents with those of the tourists. These issues could include questions relating to the appropriate allocation of Nagar on the Lake's municipal accommodation tax, measures to limit the number of licensed short-term rental properties, and assessing the social, environmental, and economic impact of tourism on our communities. There's a lot there. Identify three specific steps you would take to manage tourism over the next four years. Three specific steps you would take to manage tourism during this term, Sandra.

Sandra O'Connor 1:09:48

Well, you mentioned a couple: the mat tax, the short-term rental, and the impact. So I'm going to address what concrete things I would do with regards to. Those to start. I was the chair of the municipal accommodations tax committee. We developed a criteria for allocation of funds and how to move forward on that. It is not yet being implemented, but I would like to implement what that committee had suggested. And there were people on the committee from tourists, the tourist sector, as well as residents. So they were in agreement on this. Basically, three different pots, and one of the pots, believe it or not, was dedicated to infrastructure for this town because, in recognition of the of the impact of the tourism on our infrastructure. Some of that funding should go back into the infrastructure, so that's number one. Number two, short-term rentals. We had a committee a couple years ago. It's probably more than time flies, more than a couple years ago, who had quite a significant number of recommendations. Some of them were put forward, and others were not yet. So I would like to have a committee to revisit these recommendations and reconsider some things such as hosted versus unhosted short-term rentals and the impact, such as things like noise bylaws, hollowing out of our neighborhood, whether they are significant issues that should be dealt with in the way of bylaw changes. So that's what I'd like to do there. And with regards to tourism impact, I really think that a it is an economic driver. I have to recognize that it's important to this community. But b we also have to ensure that residents come first. For instance, in parking issues, we have to make sure that cars are not blocking residents' driveways, and a number of other issues on how it impacts with the residents. So consultation with the residents is going to be important in moving forward, and that's what I want to ensure meaningful consultation there. But in recognizing how important this is an economic driver for for this for this town, and that's going to be hard to do when we have the province saying we want to double your tourism to Niagara. So it's a significant challenge. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 1:12:32

Thank you, Sandra. Maria.

Maria Mavridis 1:12:38

So I think my entire life to tourism. I owe I owe today to tourism. We came in 1991. My parents borrowed money, purchased Taylor's Bakery on Queen Street, and from those ice cream liquors, as people call them, We worked six years, drove back and forth from Hamilton until we paid back the money borrowed, and we were able to afford to move to Niagara on the Lake. I was 16, so tourism matters, and it matters to the local economy. But success should never be measured by tourism volume. And recently, I was appointed to Destination Ontario board, and I have had people say, "Well, of course, because you're all pro tourism. I was speaking to a very tight friend that I went to this morning and told her that the board meeting two weeks ago, I stood up and I said to the assistant deputy minister, or it's the deputy minister Nancy Kennedy, and to Destination Niagara, there's no casinos coming to my Niagara Lake. Like that's a hard, no hard stop. Casinos are not coming to Niagara Lake. We discussed, you know, increasing the the tourist volume, and I said, "Whoa, okay, that's great. You can increase the tourist volume, but we want quality tourists. We don't want quantity. So that on tourism side, I mean, the policy we have policies in place to protect resident quality of life. They they do. It's a living document. We do need to work on it and continue to work on it. And finally, through the MAC committee, we do have what's the English word? Criteria that that the town will follow on the short-term rentals. I motioned to freeze the short-term rental licensing because we wanted we Councilor Vazari wanted. To end short-term rentals, but I said let's look at the numbers, and we engaged and did did some case studies. We are waiting for a little more information to come back, but we had to lift the freeze. You can't have a freeze forever. The reasoning for short-term rentals, I understand, is because visitors need somewhere to stay, but at the same time, residential taxes are being paid on a commercial entity. For me, I think bed and breakfasts are add to an experience and a charm when a visitor comes to Niagara in the Lake. And I don't want to shut down businesses. I know people make a living off of short-term Airbnbs, etc. but it affects our town, and it needs to be looked at. Thank you. Thank you. I'm sorry,

Mike Balsom 1:15:52

Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 1:15:53

Okay, I'm up. This is okay. There has to be a balance somewhere. Quality of life affects all residents. Peak season pressure and balancing with tourism, economic benefits, and with residential impacts. Community services, tourism committees, similarity says its role is to balance the community, the well-being, and economy, economic activity. Tourism matters, but our residents have to come first.

Mike Balsom 1:16:39

Thank you, Karen.

Andrew Niven 1:16:43

Andrew, thanks, Mike. So I, I think the first point I want to make is I, I do feel we need, as as the town, I feel we need more information on, on tourism visitation, on hotel occupancy. It's just something we don't have, so it's it's really hard for us to make informed decisions without, without knowing those numbers, we get asked a lot about. I hear numbers being thrown at 2 million, 3 million visitors coming to Enhanced, but we don't have a solid, defined number. So I think that would really help guide some of the decision making. I hear a lot out there just from knocking some knocking doors about about hotels and do we do we need more hotels in this town and and where are these people staying, and and it's another good question. But the the issue is like we don't have that information and data, which I I feel Tourism Nautilus could and are working on it. But to this point, we we haven't had those those numbers, so that I feel would help guide decisions. The tourism strategy, I chaired that committee. Looking back over the past two years, I've been on. I've been actually I've been disappointed. We've we came up with 22 action items on the tourism strategy when I was on it. We started it four years ago, and not a single item has has been has been completed. So that directly is is disassociated from the marketing. Tourism Natto does marketing. That tourism strategy is directed towards towards community and towards community infrastructure. That is a result of tourism. So that that's a major focus of mine, and that's that's something I would like to do going going forward. Really dive into using the mat funds that have sat in an account and virtually not been used. While there's a strategy there that's guiding us on how to use those funds, so that would be a major priority for me. And then the third with with hosted and unhosted short-term rentals, I'm completely in favor of hosted bed and breakfast. I think we need to further look at the impact that the unhosted have. One idea that that I would like to push is is looking at settlement area and defining and putting caps and limits on settlement areas in Niagara Lake. So, as an

example, maybe we could look at less unhosted short-term rentals in the old town in the in Chautauqua area. We where we see from data where they seem to really develop and be around. I feel it hollows out neighborhoods. It provides no economic impact to the town. And then, if we start to if we start to move them outside of those areas and and really start to control where these unhosted licenses are being granted, I I think we'd see a more of a broader community look and feel, and it would help protect our our communities and neighborhoods. So that's that's my idea. Thank you.

Sandra O'Connor 52:39

No, I do not have any relationships with the Bella person. I just want to make it clear because someone once said, "Sandor, you should have said what about O'Connor Real Estate here? I'm no relation to that branch of the of the family, and I wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 52:56

Thank you, Maria.

Maria Mavridis 53:00

Can you repeat the full question?

Mike Balsom 53:02

Yeah, 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?

Maria Mavridis 53:13

Okay, just developers. You're not asking about being transparent on all conflicts. Just any with developers. This

Mike Balsom 53:20

particular question was about developers.

Maria Mavridis 53:22

Okay, so because at St. David's last week they asked if anyone has a conflict or will have a future conflict, and everyone said no except for me, of course. But you don't know if you have a future conflict because we don't know what applications are coming down. If you live 120 meters within any application, it's a catchment area. You have a conflict. I have a conflict on a property that my father owns, that has has or had an application come before council. He owned it prior to me becoming a counselor. My I don't call him a developer. He's dad, and I declared that conflict very openly and clearly. I also declared a conflict on a couple other properties that came up within the catchment area because those are the rules. And yeah, as for any other developers? No, I do not have any conflicts. But I don't like calling them developers. I'd like to change that in this town. Many of them live here; they're residents as well, and they invest in this community. I will say that. So I I do not have any conflicts with developers. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 54:46

Thank you, Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 54:54

No, I don't have any conflict with any developers, except maybe. Mr. Morato called me and asked me if I wanted to buy Parliament Oak School.

Mike Balsom 55:08

I'm assuming you said no, but yeah, we'll we'll move on to Andrew. Andrew,

Andrew Niven 55:12

what was the answer, Karen?

Maria Mavridis 55:13

Yeah,

karen taylor jones 55:13

my answer was, will you lend me the money?

Andrew Niven 55:21

No, Mike. You're up,

Mike Balsom 55:22

Andrew.

Andrew Niven 55:23

I I do not, Mike. No. The answer is no.

Mike Balsom 55:30

Okay. We will move on to the next question. Long preamble on this one. So again, as I said earlier, remember you guys have a three-minute limit. There, there was no limit for me. This might take me long to get through this. Nice and slow. From the residents' perspective, many times value for money meeting our tax dollars is evident in core services and programs delivered by the town. Lately, there has been much talk about value for money relating to infrastructure investments and funding requests aligning more with visitor and developer needs than with resident, in other words, taxpayer needs. So that's the preamble. If elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process, considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence. What budget and funding allocations will you champion? Will you fight for to ensure residents' needs are the top priority over the next four years, so putting residents first specifically, what are your priorities to deliver on that? Tim Balasuk, you're first.

Tim Balasiuk 56:54

Thank you for the question, Mike. As I always say, it's I'm a resident first, councilor second. As far as the value goes for our tax dollars, we have. I know the development is a hot topic. We have seen development actually go down. So we are. I took the fact from a previous meeting. We had 65 development applications in 2026, which is substantially lower from three four years ago. So with that, our DCs, our development charges, are going down. So that reserve is diminishing, and I think people, Maybe staff, what have you, are looking to lend a hand to some of these builders, hoping that they will build because then we will see development charge revenue come into town. We can't bank on that. If you look at the town, pretty much all of the developable land in Virgil is bought up now. It is being developed. You look at Niagara on the Lake, and all we have left now, as far as areas that you can develop into a subdivision, is of course Randwood. We've had a number of applications that have come forward for apartment buildings because we are hearing that we need different levels of of housing in Niagara, which I I can't argue that if it wasn't for the Davie Street regional housing, my aunts wouldn't have been able to live in Niagara on the lake into their their latter years. So we definitely need need that, and I think working with some builders, some developers working with other government agencies, we can see that type of of construction. But will we see development charges from that? So I think that's where the the money, the the revenue that we're getting is from builders. It's diminishing. As far as visitors go, I sat with Councilor O'Connor on the mat tax. Mat tax is now serious revenue generator for Niagara on the Lake. It's not. It's not a lot, but you know we're looking at millions of dollars, and those millions of dollars from those visitors coming in and spending time in Niagara on the Lake, they they do end up relieving the the tax burden on the the the homeowners and the residents of Niagara, so I really do think that we need to work on the balance with the residents and the visitors. One of the reasons why I'm excited to sit on the board of directors for the tourism Niagara on the Lake, we're we're starting to see how we can utilize the MAT dollars there, and then also be able to utilize the mat dollars at the town. But as far as how we're spending that money, the town is actually opening up the mat dollars in Niagara on the Lake, and we are using it. It was very straightforward how we were going to utilize it, but we are utilizing it now.

Mike Balsom 59:59

Thank you, Tim. Sandra O'Connor, you're up.

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:09

I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question again? I sure will. Yeah. If

Mike Balsom 1:00:12

elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process. Considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence, what budget and funding allocations will you fight for? Will you champion to ensure residents' needs are your top priority?

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:29

Okay. Thank you very much for that. First of all, I think the goal of putting together a municipal budget is to maintain our essential community services invest in infrastructure and financial sustainability, and in those, what I consider three major goals, I'm looking at what is best for the residents here. I think that there are there are things that we can put forward to help to help our economy because because that's important to have a sustainable town is to support our economy. But some of the things that are, for instance, tourism related, there are other funding sources I think that we need to look at for those types of things, be them dedicated government grants, be it the municipal accommodations task, which is supposed to be used for, or could be used for tourism-related issues, be it our parking funding. I don't think that those kinds of things should that we feel we need for non-residents should be coming out of the tax levy that you have that that that goes to you to pay for this. I'm not sure if I've really addressed the question because I'm not giving specifics about what I would promote because it it varies from from year to year, budget to budget. Like I could foresee us putting a lot of funding into the flood mitigation coming forward, and I also think that there are government grants that can help in in preparing our plans for for this. So I just want to assure you that I will always put the residents first, and try and find ways of other funding to to support other things. Like I'll give you an example. The provincial government a couple years ago came out with a new community benefits tax that we could put on buildings that are five stories or greater. So I'm thinking Glendale because that's where we're going to have a large story, five stories or greater, so that it will support the infrastructure needed for for that area. We need to institute that. I moved a motion; it hasn't been done yet, but it's in the books to get done, let's think outside of the box to try and get more funding for the things we need.

Mike Balsom 1:03:06

Thank you, Maria.

Maria Mavridis 1:03:12

So I won't promise any like any tax freezes, regardless of any circumstances, because municipality still has roads, fire services, parks, infrastructure to fund. But before asking the taxpayer for more, what we have done and what I will continue to do is examine efficiencies, grants, as Councilor O'Connor mentioned, Development-related funding, mat parking, and other non-property tax revenues, and I cannot stress enough the long-term asset management, that deferred maintenance. We need to get get on top of it and stay on top of it, so it doesn't become a larger future bill. Keeping the taxes artificially low by ignoring infrastructure simply hands a bigger bill down to the taxpayer of tomorrow, or in our case of today. The your question is kind of too well. I feel like it's 234, parts, but there I heard a part in there about the allocation for top priority needs for residents. Okay, so the residents that I hear from because of recent events, infrastructure is number one. Number two, what I for. what I've heard, and I'd love to hear from more, is the tax increases. We did motion and give staff guidance to stay within inflation for this upcoming budget. But again, we did that last year as well, and then when you budget nine, well, \$695,000 for legal fees, and the bill comes in the millions, you got to reallocate and move. So, but I will, I, I will always look at efficiencies and try not to cut, but come up with new ways and new revenue streams. The parking, paid parking that was brought in back in, I believe Gary Burrows was Lord Mayor back then. We never charged for parking before. It was brilliant, and it's been it's been a revenue source for this town in more ways than anyone can imagine. When it comes to budget time, we need to come up with another one of those brilliant ideas. We're working on it.

Mike Balsom 1:05:52

Thank you, Maria. Karen.

karen taylor jones 1:05:56

Okay, this is a hard one for me because I'm not really introduced to the taxes and budgets at this point, but I will say we have to look at spending and and revenue and don't just attack the reserves that we have. We need to take care of what we have. Reserves are not an endless bank account, that's for sure. So yeah, I don't I don't know enough about it to speak really that much about it. So I'm gonna just let it ride.

Mike Balsom 1:06:33

Okay,

Andrew Niven 1:06:34

Andrew. Karen, no one likes a tax question. I promise you, it's not just you. So I I just feel we have to. It starts with providing value to our residents. I think that's the that's the major focus of of what we do as council, in terms of prioritizing. I think it's it's prioritizing core services and the critical critical infrastructure that goes along along with that. That would include things like focusing on on long term planning, considering life cycles, looking at efficiencies, maximizing grants-that's that's where I, in terms of prioritization, I'd go. I just think it's important that we don't like we we would look at that without compromising what our like what we do in Negram Lake and and and without I guess compromising our service that we would provide to the residents. So I think I think that's most important. But if you're looking at prioritization, I think it's it's the critical infrastructure and core services that we must continue to do.

Mike Balsom 1:07:30

And last but not least, Rick,

Rick Mills 1:07:35

revenue and income increase is necessary. My my default is and will be is to bring a better, maintain a safer living conditions for residents, essential services. I look forward to sitting in on the budget meetings and and and creating a budget. From all the people I spoke to, in listening to the residents, they are feeling that they're being minimized, left out. That development and people coming in wanting to start businesses or building are getting the highest priority. They're getting they're they're getting their money, and I gave many of them my word that the residents are essential services. Maintaining a healthy and better life, maintaining that life for residents, will will always be my default, and be my priority.

Mike Balsom 1:08:44

Thank you, Rick. We're on to question number six, and we're back to the original order now, Sandra. So you'll go first. This one also throws tourism into the preamble. Tourism is

important to Nagar on the Lake's economy, if elected, you will face many issues requiring you to balance the needs of residents with those of the tourists. These issues could include questions relating to the appropriate allocation of Nagar on the Lake's municipal accommodation tax, measures to limit the number of licensed short-term rental properties, and assessing the social, environmental, and economic impact of tourism on our communities. There's a lot there. Identify three specific steps you would take to manage tourism over the next four years. Three specific steps you would take to manage tourism during this term, Sandra.

Sandra O'Connor 1:09:48

Well, you mentioned a couple: the mat tax, the short-term rental, and the impact. So I'm going to address what concrete things I would do with regards to. Those to start. I was the chair of the municipal accommodations tax committee. We developed a criteria for allocation of funds and how to move forward on that. It is not yet being implemented, but I would like to implement what that committee had suggested. And there were people on the committee from tourists, the tourist sector, as well as residents. So they were in agreement on this. Basically, three different pots, and one of the pots, believe it or not, was dedicated to infrastructure for this town because, in recognition of the of the impact of the tourism on our infrastructure. Some of that funding should go back into the infrastructure, so that's number one. Number two, short-term rentals. We had a committee a couple years ago. It's probably more than time flies, more than a couple years ago, who had quite a significant number of recommendations. Some of them were put forward, and others were not yet. So I would like to have a committee to revisit these recommendations and reconsider some things such as hosted versus unhosted short-term rentals and the impact, such as things like noise bylaws, hollowing out of our neighborhood, whether they are significant issues that should be dealt with in the way of bylaw changes. So that's what I'd like to do there. And with regards to tourism impact, I really think that a it is an economic driver. I have to recognize that it's important to this community. But b we also have to ensure that residents come first. For instance, in parking issues, we have to make sure that cars are not blocking residents' driveways, and a number of other issues on how it impacts with the residents. So consultation with the residents is going to be important in moving forward, and that's what I want to ensure meaningful consultation there. But in recognizing how important this is an economic driver for for this for this town, and that's going to be hard to do when we have the province saying we want to double your tourism to Niagara. So it's a significant challenge. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 1:12:32

Thank you, Sandra. Maria.

Maria Mavridis 1:12:38

So I think my entire life to tourism. I owe I owe today to tourism. We came in 1991. My parents borrowed money, purchased Taylor's Bakery on Queen Street, and from those ice cream liquors, as people call them, We worked six years, drove back and forth from Hamilton until we paid back the money borrowed, and we were able to afford to move to Niagara on the Lake. I was 16, so tourism matters, and it matters to the local economy. But success should never be measured by tourism volume. And recently, I was appointed to Destination Ontario board, and I have had people say, "Well, of course, because you're all pro tourism. I was speaking to a very tight friend that I went to this morning and told her that the board meeting two weeks ago, I stood up and I said to the assistant deputy minister, or it's the deputy minister Nancy Kennedy, and to Destination Niagara, there's no casinos coming to my Niagara Lake. Like that's a hard, no hard stop. Casinos are not coming to Niagara Lake. We discussed, you know, increasing the the tourist volume, and I said, "Whoa, okay, that's great. You can increase the tourist volume, but we want quality tourists. We don't want quantity. So that on tourism side, I mean, the policy we have policies in place to protect resident quality of life. They they do. It's a living document. We do need to work on it and continue to work on it. And finally, through the MAC committee, we do have what's the English word? Criteria that that the town will follow on the short-term rentals. I motioned to freeze the short-term rental licensing because we wanted we Councilor Vazari wanted. To end short-term rentals, but I said let's look at the numbers, and we engaged and did did some case studies. We are waiting for a little more information to come back, but we had to lift the freeze. You can't have a freeze forever. The reasoning for short-term rentals, I understand, is because visitors need somewhere to stay, but at the same time, residential taxes are being paid on a commercial entity. For me, I think bed and breakfasts are add to an experience and a charm when a visitor comes to Niagara in the Lake. And I don't want to shut down businesses. I know people make a living off of short-term Airbnbs, etc. but it affects our town, and it needs to be looked at. Thank you. Thank you. I'm sorry,

Mike Balsom 1:15:52

Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 1:15:53

Okay, I'm up. This is okay. There has to be a balance somewhere. Quality of life affects all residents. Peak season pressure and balancing with tourism, economic benefits, and with residential impacts. Community services, tourism committees, similarity says its role is to balance the community, the well-being, and economy, economic activity. Tourism matters, but our residents have to come first.

Mike Balsom 1:16:39

Thank you, Karen.

Andrew Niven 1:16:43

Andrew, thanks, Mike. So I, I think the first point I want to make is I, I do feel we need, as as the town, I feel we need more information on, on tourism visitation, on hotel occupancy. It's just something we don't have, so it's it's really hard for us to make informed decisions without, without knowing those numbers, we get asked a lot about. I hear numbers being thrown at 2 million, 3 million visitors coming to Enhanced, but we don't have a solid, defined number. So I think that would really help guide some of the decision making. I hear a lot out there just from knocking some knocking doors about about hotels and do we do we need more hotels in this town and and where are these people staying, and and it's another good question. But the the issue is like we don't have that information and data, which I I feel Tourism Nautilus could and are working on it. But to this point, we we haven't had those those numbers, so that I feel would help guide decisions. The tourism strategy, I chaired that committee. Looking back over the past two years, I've been on. I've been actually I've been disappointed. We've we came up with 22 action items on the tourism strategy when I was on it. We started it four years ago, and not a single item has has been has been completed. So that directly is is disassociated from the marketing. Tourism Natto does marketing. That tourism strategy is directed towards towards community and towards community infrastructure. That is a result of tourism. So that that's a major focus of mine, and that's that's something I would like to do going going forward. Really dive into using the mat funds that have sat in an account and virtually not been used. While there's a strategy there that's guiding us on how to use those funds, so that would be a major priority for me. And then the third with with hosted and unhosted short-term rentals, I'm completely in favor of hosted bed and breakfast. I think we need to further look at the impact that the unhosted have. One idea that that I would like to push is is looking at settlement area and defining and putting caps and limits on settlement areas in Niagara Lake. So, as an

example, maybe we could look at less unhosted short-term rentals in the old town in the in Chautauqua area. We where we see from data where they seem to really develop and be around. I feel it hollows out neighborhoods. It provides no economic impact to the town. And then, if we start to if we start to move them outside of those areas and and really start to control where these unhosted licenses are being granted, I I think we'd see a more of a broader community look and feel, and it would help protect our our communities and neighborhoods. So that's that's my idea. Thank you.

Sandra O'Connor 52:39

No, I do not have any relationships with the Bella person. I just want to make it clear because someone once said, "Sandor, you should have said what about O'Connor Real Estate here? I'm no relation to that branch of the of the family, and I wanted to make that clear. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 52:56

Thank you, Maria.

Maria Mavridis 53:00

Can you repeat the full question?

Mike Balsom 53:02

Yeah, 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?

Maria Mavridis 53:13

Okay, just developers. You're not asking about being transparent on all conflicts. Just any with developers. This

Mike Balsom 53:20

particular question was about developers.

Maria Mavridis 53:22

Okay, so because at St. David's last week they asked if anyone has a conflict or will have a future conflict, and everyone said no except for me, of course. But you don't know if you have a future conflict because we don't know what applications are coming down. If you live 120 meters within any application, it's a catchment area. You have a conflict. I have a conflict on a property that my father owns, that has or had an application come before council. He owned it prior to me becoming a counselor. My I don't call him a developer. He's dad, and I declared that conflict very openly and clearly. I also declared a conflict on a couple other properties that came up within the catchment area because those are the rules. And yeah, as for any other developers? No, I do not have any conflicts. But I don't like calling them developers. I'd like to change that in this town. Many of them live here; they're residents as well, and they invest in this community. I will say that. So I I do not have any conflicts with developers. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 54:46

Thank you, Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 54:54

No, I don't have any conflict with any developers, except maybe. Mr. Morato called me and asked me if I wanted to buy Parliament Oak School.

Mike Balsom 55:08

I'm assuming you said no, but yeah, we'll we'll move on to Andrew. Andrew,

Andrew Niven 55:12

what was the answer, Karen?

Maria Mavridis 55:13

Yeah,

karen taylor jones 55:13

my answer was, will you lend me the money?

Andrew Niven 55:21

No, Mike. You're up,

Mike Balsom 55:22

Andrew.

Andrew Niven 55:23

I I do not, Mike. No. The answer is no.

Mike Balsom 55:30

Okay. We will move on to the next question. Long preamble on this one. So again, as I said earlier, remember you guys have a three-minute limit. There, there was no limit for me. This might take me long to get through this. Nice and slow. From the residents' perspective, many times value for money meeting our tax dollars is evident in core services and programs delivered by the town. Lately, there has been much talk about value for money relating to infrastructure investments and funding requests aligning more with visitor and developer needs than with resident, in other words, taxpayer needs. So that's the preamble. If elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process, considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence. What budget and funding allocations will you champion? Will you fight for to ensure residents' needs are the top priority over the next four years, so putting residents first specifically, what are your priorities to deliver on that? Tim Balasuk, you're first.

Tim Balasiuk 56:54

Thank you for the question, Mike. As I always say, it's I'm a resident first, councilor second. As far as the value goes for our tax dollars, we have. I know the development is a hot topic. We have seen development actually go down. So we are. I took the fact from a previous meeting. We had 65 development applications in 2026, which is substantially lower from three four years ago. So with that, our DCs, our development charges, are going down. So that reserve is diminishing, and I think people, Maybe staff, what have you, are looking to lend a hand to some of these builders, hoping that they will build because then we will see development charge revenue come into town. We can't bank on that. If you look at the town, pretty much all of the developable land in Virgil is bought up now. It is being developed. You look at Niagara on the Lake, and all we have left now, as far as areas that you can develop into a subdivision, is of course Randwood. We've had a number of applications that have come forward for apartment buildings because we are hearing that we need different levels of of housing in Niagara, which I I can't argue that if it wasn't for the Davie Street regional housing, my aunts wouldn't have been able to live in Niagara on the lake into their their latter years. So we definitely need need that, and I think working with some builders, some developers working with other government agencies, we can see that type of of construction. But will we see development charges from that? So I think that's where the the money, the the revenue that we're getting is from builders. It's diminishing. As far as visitors go, I sat with Councilor O'Connor on the mat tax. Mat tax is now serious revenue generator for Niagara on the Lake. It's not. It's not a lot, but you know we're looking at millions of dollars, and those millions of dollars from those visitors coming in and spending time in Niagara on the Lake, they they do end up relieving the the tax burden on the the the homeowners and the residents of Niagara, so I really do think that we need to work on the balance with the residents and the visitors. One of the reasons why I'm excited to sit on the board of directors for the tourism Niagara on the Lake, we're we're starting to see how we can utilize the MAT dollars there, and then also be able to utilize the mat dollars at the town. But as far as how we're spending that money, the town is actually opening up the mat dollars in Niagara on the Lake, and we are using it. It was very straightforward how we were going to utilize it, but we are utilizing it now.

Mike Balsom 59:59

Thank you, Tim. Sandra O'Connor, you're up.

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:09

I'm sorry. Could you repeat the question again? I sure will. Yeah. If

Mike Balsom 1:00:12

elected, you will have a voice in the town's annual budget process. Considering the potential impacts of strong mayor and strong regional chair influence, what budget and funding allocations will you fight for? Will you champion to ensure residents' needs are your top priority?

Sandra O'Connor 1:00:29

Okay. Thank you very much for that. First of all, I think the goal of putting together a municipal budget is to maintain our essential community services invest in infrastructure and financial sustainability, and in those, what I consider three major goals, I'm looking at what is best for the residents here. I think that there are there are things that we can put forward to help to help our economy because because that's important to have a sustainable town is to support our economy. But some of the things that are, for instance, tourism related, there are other funding sources I think that we need to look at for those types of things, be them dedicated government grants, be it the municipal accommodations task, which is supposed to be used for, or could be used for tourism-related issues, be it our parking funding. I don't think that those kinds of things should that we feel we need for non-residents should be coming out of the tax levy that you have that that that goes to you to pay for this. I'm not sure if I've really addressed the question because I'm not giving specifics about what I would promote because it it varies from from year to year, budget to budget. Like I could foresee us putting a lot of funding into the flood mitigation coming forward, and I also think that there are government grants that can help in in preparing our plans for for this. So I just want to assure you that I will always put the residents first, and try and find ways of other funding to to support other things. Like I'll give you an example. The provincial government a couple years ago came out with a new community benefits tax that we could put on buildings that are five stories or greater. So I'm thinking Glendale because that's where we're going to have a large story, five stories or greater, so that it will support the infrastructure needed for for that area. We need to institute that. I moved a motion; it hasn't been done yet, but it's in the books to get done, let's think outside of the box to try and get more funding for the things we need.

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Maria Mavridis 1:03:12

So I won't promise any like any tax freezes, regardless of any circumstances, because municipality still has roads, fire services, parks, infrastructure to fund. But before asking the taxpayer for more, what we have done and what I will continue to do is examine efficiencies, grants, as Councilor O'Connor mentioned, Development-related funding, mat parking, and other non-property tax revenues, and I cannot stress enough the long-term asset management, that deferred maintenance. We need to get get on top of it and stay on top of it, so it doesn't become a larger future bill. Keeping the taxes artificially low by ignoring infrastructure simply hands a bigger bill down to the taxpayer of tomorrow, or in our case of today. The your question is kind of too well. I feel like it's 234, parts, but there I heard a part in there about the allocation for top priority needs for residents. Okay, so the residents that I hear from because of recent events, infrastructure is number one. Number two, what I for. what I've heard, and I'd love to hear from more, is the tax increases. We did motion and give staff guidance to stay within inflation for this upcoming budget. But again, we did that last year as well, and then when you budget nine, well, \$695,000 for legal fees, and the bill comes in the millions, you got to reallocate and move. So, but I will, I, I will always look at efficiencies and try not to cut, but come up with new ways and new revenue streams. The parking, paid parking that was brought in back in, I believe Gary Burrows was Lord Mayor back then. We never charged for parking before. It was brilliant, and it's been it's been a revenue source for this town in more ways than anyone can imagine. When it comes to budget time, we need to come up with another one of those brilliant ideas. We're working on it.

Mike Balsom 1:05:52

Thank you, Maria. Karen.

karen taylor jones 1:05:56

Okay, this is a hard one for me because I'm not really introduced to the taxes and budgets at this point, but I will say we have to look at spending and and revenue and don't just attack the reserves that we have. We need to take care of what we have. Reserves are not an endless bank account, that's for sure. So yeah, I don't I don't know enough about it to speak really that much about it. So I'm gonna just let it ride.

Mike Balsom 1:06:33

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Andrew Niven 1:06:34

Andrew. Karen, no one likes a tax question. I promise you, it's not just you. So I I just feel we have to. It starts with providing value to our residents. I think that's the that's the major focus of of what we do as council, in terms of prioritizing. I think it's it's prioritizing core services and the critical critical infrastructure that goes along along with that. That would include things like focusing on on long term planning, considering life cycles, looking at efficiencies, maximizing grants-that's that's where I, in terms of prioritization, I'd go. I just think it's important that we don't like we we would look at that without compromising what our like what we do in Negram Lake and and and without I guess compromising our service that we would provide to the residents. So I think I think that's most important. But if you're looking at prioritization, I think it's it's the critical infrastructure and core services that we must continue to do.

Mike Balsom 1:07:30

And last but not least, Rick,

Rick Mills 1:07:35

revenue and income increase is necessary. My my default is and will be is to bring a better, maintain a safer living conditions for residents, essential services. I look forward to sitting in on the budget meetings and and and creating a budget. From all the people I spoke to, in listening to the residents, they are feeling that they're being minimized, left out. That development and people coming in wanting to start businesses or building are getting the highest priority. They're getting they're they're getting their money, and I gave many of them my word that the residents are essential services. Maintaining a healthy and better life, maintaining that life for residents, will will always be my default, and be my priority.

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important to Nagar on the Lake's economy, if elected, you will face many issues requiring you to balance the needs of residents with those of the tourists. These issues could include questions relating to the appropriate allocation of Nagar on the Lake's municipal accommodation tax, measures to limit the number of licensed short-term rental properties, and assessing the social, environmental, and economic impact of tourism on our communities. There's a lot there. Identify three specific steps you would take to manage tourism over the next four years. Three specific steps you would take to manage tourism during this term, Sandra.

Sandra O'Connor 1:09:48

Well, you mentioned a couple: the mat tax, the short-term rental, and the impact. So I'm going to address what concrete things I would do with regards to. Those to start. I was the chair of the municipal accommodations tax committee. We developed a criteria for allocation of funds and how to move forward on that. It is not yet being implemented, but I would like to implement what that committee had suggested. And there were people on the committee from tourists, the tourist sector, as well as residents. So they were in agreement on this. Basically, three different pots, and one of the pots, believe it or not, was dedicated to infrastructure for this town because, in recognition of the of the impact of the tourism on our infrastructure. Some of that funding should go back into the infrastructure, so that's number one. Number two, short-term rentals. We had a committee a couple years ago. It's probably more than time flies, more than a couple years ago, who had quite a significant number of recommendations. Some of them were put forward, and others were not yet. So I would like to have a committee to revisit these recommendations and reconsider some things such as hosted versus unhosted short-term rentals and the impact, such as things like noise bylaws, hollowing out of our neighborhood, whether they are significant issues that should be dealt with in the way of bylaw changes. So that's what I'd like to do there. And with regards to tourism impact, I really think that a it is an economic driver. I have to recognize that it's important to this community. But b we also have to ensure that residents come first. For instance, in parking issues, we have to make sure that cars are not blocking residents' driveways, and a number of other issues on how it impacts with the residents. So consultation with the residents is going to be important in moving forward, and that's what I want to ensure meaningful consultation there. But in recognizing how important this is an economic driver for for this for this town, and that's going to be hard to do when we have the province saying we want to double your tourism to Niagara. So it's a significant challenge. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 1:12:32

Thank you, Sandra. Maria.

Maria Mavridis 1:12:38

So I think my entire life to tourism. I owe I owe today to tourism. We came in 1991. My parents borrowed money, purchased Taylor's Bakery on Queen Street, and from those ice cream liquors, as people call them, We worked six years, drove back and forth from Hamilton until we paid back the money borrowed, and we were able to afford to move to Niagara on the Lake. I was 16, so tourism matters, and it matters to the local economy. But success should never be measured by tourism volume. And recently, I was appointed to Destination Ontario board, and I have had people say, "Well, of course, because you're all pro tourism. I was speaking to a very tight friend that I went to this morning and told her that the board meeting two weeks ago, I stood up and I said to the assistant deputy minister, or it's the deputy minister Nancy Kennedy, and to Destination Niagara, there's no casinos coming to my Niagara Lake. Like that's a hard, no hard stop. Casinos are not coming to Niagara Lake. We discussed, you know, increasing the the tourist volume, and I said, "Whoa, okay, that's great. You can increase the tourist volume, but we want quality tourists. We don't want quantity. So that on tourism side, I mean, the policy we have policies in place to protect resident quality of life. They they do. It's a living document. We do need to work on it and continue to work on it. And finally, through the MAC committee, we do have what's the English word? Criteria that that the town will follow on the short-term rentals. I motioned to freeze the short-term rental licensing because we wanted we Councilor Vazari wanted. To end short-term rentals, but I said let's look at the numbers, and we engaged and did did some case studies. We are waiting for a little more information to come back, but we had to lift the freeze. You can't have a freeze forever. The reasoning for short-term rentals, I understand, is because visitors need somewhere to stay, but at the same time, residential taxes are being paid on a commercial entity. For me, I think bed and breakfasts are add to an experience and a charm when a visitor comes to Niagara in the Lake. And I don't want to shut down businesses. I know people make a living off of short-term Airbnbs, etc. but it affects our town, and it needs to be looked at. Thank you. Thank you. I'm sorry,

Mike Balsom 1:15:52

Karen. You're up.

karen taylor jones 1:15:53

Okay, I'm up. This is okay. There has to be a balance somewhere. Quality of life affects all residents. Peak season pressure and balancing with tourism, economic benefits, and with residential impacts. Community services, tourism committees, similarity says its role is to balance the community, the well-being, and economy, economic activity. Tourism matters, but our residents have to come first.

Mike Balsom 1:16:39

Thank you, Karen.

Andrew Niven 1:16:43

Andrew, thanks, Mike. So I, I think the first point I want to make is I, I do feel we need, as as the town, I feel we need more information on, on tourism visitation, on hotel occupancy. It's just something we don't have, so it's it's really hard for us to make informed decisions without, without knowing those numbers, we get asked a lot about. I hear numbers being thrown at 2 million, 3 million visitors coming to Enhanced, but we don't have a solid, defined number. So I think that would really help guide some of the decision making. I hear a lot out there just from knocking some knocking doors about about hotels and do we do we need more hotels in this town and and where are these people staying, and and it's another good question. But the the issue is like we don't have that information and data, which I I feel Tourism Nautilus could and are working on it. But to this point, we we haven't had those those numbers, so that I feel would help guide decisions. The tourism strategy, I chaired that committee. Looking back over the past two years, I've been on. I've been actually I've been disappointed. We've we came up with 22 action items on the tourism strategy when I was on it. We started it four years ago, and not a single item has has been has been completed. So that directly is is disassociated from the marketing. Tourism Natto does marketing. That tourism strategy is directed towards towards community and towards community infrastructure. That is a result of tourism. So that that's a major focus of mine, and that's that's something I would like to do going going forward. Really dive into using the mat funds that have sat in an account and virtually not been used. While there's a strategy there that's guiding us on how to use those funds, so that would be a major priority for me. And then the third with with hosted and unhosted short-term rentals, I'm completely in favor of hosted bed and breakfast. I think we need to further look at the impact that the unhosted have. One idea that that I would like to push is is looking at settlement area and defining and putting caps and limits on settlement areas in Niagara Lake. So, as an

example, maybe we could look at less unhosted short-term rentals in the old town in the in Chautauqua area. We where we see from data where they seem to really develop and be around. I feel it hollows out neighborhoods. It provides no economic impact to the town. And then, if we start to if we start to move them outside of those areas and and really start to control where these unhosted licenses are being granted, I I think we'd see a more of a broader community look and feel, and it would help protect our our communities and neighborhoods. So that's that's my idea. Thank you.

karen taylor jones 1:30:20

Sorry, I was trying to hear.

Andrew Niven 1:30:22

I tried to sneak the mic. I feel that that heritage goes beyond heritage homes. I feel heritage is is the character of our community, and and I think the the biggest risk to your question is is is the growth or continued growth of our of our community, so that's I feel that's something we we should look at from a policy perspective. We should it's again the the word reactionary keeps coming up, but I don't I don't feel we should be reactionary. Should be we we should have sound planning policies in place that would that would guide our growth and and future buildouts, so it makes it easier for all of us, but it would also make it easier for the developers and these these people who are who are building to to align with what our what our community is and what our character is. Another another piece I'd like to say is the amalgamation. I feel that's that's a major risk to our heritage and in our community. So we we as a council, and not just me, really really pushed back and obviously fought against amalgamation. But if there's if there's one major risk outside of growth, I feel amalgamation and the the horrible possibility of of merging with Niagara Falls, Saint Catherine's, other communities. I'd like to remain unique. We are unique, and we're a special place. And to me, that's that's what heritage is, and that's why we have to protect it. Thanks.

Rick Mills 1:31:55

Thank you, Mike. I think that's one of the major risks or concerns I have with amalgamation is the loss of our heritage. It's and I'm hoping our heritage is is one of the reasons or one of the tools we have to push back against amalgamation. Heritage is a large part of Niagara on the Lake's identity. I think the threat is irresponsible development. We can't have a full stop

on development, but we can rein it in, and we need to rein it in responsibly. There has to be less compromise on essentials, and I hear myself saying this a lot. I think this a lot. I talk with people a lot, and but as residents first, you always have to think about the residents, what the cost is to the residents around the heritage areas, the Rand Estate. What happened at Royal George? I'm not going to be giving my opinion on that right now because that's it's happened, not the Rand Estate. It's happening. It's in process. I'll have a voice to that if you elect me. I look forward to it. But I think that our heritage, and like you said, more than the buildings, just our land. It's it's it and the residents. They they have to be first.

Tim Balasiuk 1:33:31

Thank you, Mike. After spending the last four years on the Municipal Heritage Committee, super proud of all of the designations that we've done. The one thing that council as a whole has done is really push back at the province, getting the extension for all of the heritage homes that are on the list, so we can actually get them designated. The amount of work that we've actually done with staff to really try to show homeowners homeowners the benefits that come along with designation. Designation has had a dark shadow over it for a very long time. There's only so many things you can do with your house, that sort of thing. But there are also grants that are available, not only through the municipality but through the province, so really trying to the homeowners. I guess is probably where I'm going to say is the biggest risk. That's we sit here and we talk about the risk of our heritage like it's not in front of us, and the front is in the ownership of the home. So we really need to show homeowners that they need to be proud in the heritage, going along with Bill C 24. Now they're talking about infill. We're seeing all of these beautiful estate lots that I grew up with. I absolutely loved. You're seeing them subdivided, and you're seeing that infill start to take place. Those estate lots, those larger properties, especially in the heritage district, is a significant part of what sets Niagara on the Lake aside from other communities. The old cottage homes from the folks from Buffalo that used to come over-that is, these are iconic estates. And as soon as that starts to go, that's when we're really going to start to see the heritage change, so really working with the homeowners, I think, is key. Difficult one for me at Randwood. I spent my childhood there. I my parents built a house on Six Christopher. That's where I grew up. We watched Weatherstone get built. That's the first chunk of property that was cut off of of Randwood. So I don't want to say I'm part of the problem, but I got to enjoy living next door to it. And my grandparents would host the Labor Day tennis tournament. It was always in Granny's backyard, and then the final tournament was always at Randwood, and it was really nice being able to jump the fence and run over and see all the people from town there. Losing that is going to be absolutely detrimental to the town of

Niagara on the Lake. We need to make sure that we stand strong. I voted against every application that's come forward. We have spent money on it. Yes, when people say we're tired of spending money, just remember why we're put in the position that we have to spend that money. We're fighting for the heritage of Niagara on the Lake. I voted against Parliament Oak. I will vote against Randwood.

Sandra O'Connor 1:36:28

Thank you. As others have said, the Rand estate. We must ensure that all of the heritage items, as stated from the Ontario Land Tribunal, get included in whatever next iteration is, the Royal George and the large mass and scale of the building within our our national heritage district is is an issue as a project. The the province has put a deadline for us for the designation of heritage homes. So that's a challenge for us to to address. Depending on how you define heritage, I think our agricultural area is heritage, and I think that the airport expansion would be a big threat to that heritage, so I'm I'm no to expanding the airport. Another thing that could be considered heritage is the Niagara Escarpment. It's it's it's iconic. It has its own commission, and if we have 24-story apartment or buildings in Glendale, it impacts the views of this heritage feature of the escarpment, so we have to be concerned with that. Also, a voice at the region about heritage with the strong chairs powers, how the the weighted formula is going to play out with the rural rural towns and how the heritage voice will come through. That's a concern for me. And one other item about heritage: in five years from now, in the year 2031, this municipality is going to be celebrating its 250th anniversary as a municipality, so that's a good heritage thing. It's not a risk, but I just had to get that in there. Thank you. It is

Mike Balsom 1:38:30

something to be proud of, that's for sure. Last question of the night before we go to the closing orders, and the first response will be from Karen. Okay, what actions would you take to support fairness, transparency, and accountability regarding planning and other decisions made by council and in the town's interactions with local businesses and residents? For example, do you support recording all votes at council meetings so that residents can see how their representatives have voted.

karen taylor jones 1:39:06

That was a lot of questions.

Mike Balsom 1:39:08

It was a lot of questions.

karen taylor jones 1:39:09

I'll try. I

Mike Balsom 1:39:12

didn't write the questions. No, I know that was a long one,

karen taylor jones 1:39:14

and I was hoping not to be first again. But the transparency. Ask the residents before the decisions are already finalized, basically finished. Give clear notice and explain what is actually changing. Tell the people first. Listen, then decide. Now, what was part two?

Mike Balsom 1:39:46

Well, the last part of the question said, "Would you support a recorded vote for every vote at council?"

karen taylor jones 1:39:54

Yes, yes, I do. I think it's very important that it's all. Recorded.

Mike Balsom 1:40:02

Thank you, Andrew Niven.

Andrew Niven 1:40:05

Thanks, thanks, Mike. Mike,

Mike Balsom 1:40:08

it's only you. That's because you. Should I use that one now, Mike?

Andrew Niven 1:40:13

So just I guess a fact that I was on the the town's customer and Experience Communications Committee, 778 years ago, and we were the committee that actually introduced the electronic voting because there was a need back then for it for clear and transparent decision making. So yeah, we is something we created at the committee level back then, and something that I would continue to support support now, and and I think that's just an important point because that's I think there's much. First of all, it's I believe the transparency starts at the at the at the council table, and it should go beyond just putting our hands up and simply voting yes or no. I think we owe it to the residents and we owe it to the community to explain why why we vote, the reasoning behind voting, and how we got to that decision. So I feel that that is a good step in in the right direction of having the electronic voting. But I think the other piece of that, though, is is is telling residents why we got there, and I feel that would go a long way with transparency. I think accessibility is another key point for for councilors. I think we being accessible to residents, and and if somebody calls, if somebody emails, we're there to answer because that that that ultimately helps guide our our decision because we're here working for our community. So yeah, I again I I believe it starts at the community table and or sorry the the council table and and we owe it to you to to be transparent and accountable. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 1:41:43

Thank you, Rick. Your turn.

Rick Mills 1:41:47

I've got a lot to learn, but I'm looking forward to it. One thing I do know is that we're as sick as our secrets, and I don't think there should be secrets. Now we don't share everything. There's there's policies there's procedures they have to be honored and respected, but transparency, especially to the residents, whatever whatever they we owe to them, they should get electronic voting results. Yes, absolutely. I think I think I have to say I think if we're allowed to, if it's if it's legal or if it's beneficial, I don't think we should be holding

anything back that is not beneficial to to the residents. So yeah, I'm in full support of transparency, and I think communication is of utmost importance. You know, I learned as a young father that 90% of conflict in a home is from wrong communication, and we want to communicate. We want to communicate. By the way, I'm still working on that. We want to communicate. We want to communicate properly and honestly, and I'll I will fully support that.

Mike Balsom 1:43:09

Thank you, Tim.

Tim Balasiuk 1:43:12

Can I hear the question again, please, Mike?

Mike Balsom 1:43:14

Of course. Yeah. What actions would you take to support fairness, transparency, and accountability regarding planning and other decisions made by council, and in the town's interactions with local businesses and residents. For example, do you support a recorded vote at all council meetings?

Tim Balasiuk 1:43:33

Thank you for the question. I again, I go back to what I've learned over the last four years, very controversial topic is the closed session meetings. When I first got on, I was told that the reason why we have closed session meetings is because typically we're in a lawsuit, and you don't want to necessarily show your cards when you're in that sort of a situation, upon the outcome of that, yes, I think everyone's votes should be recorded. Everyone, once it is settled, everyone should be able to show yes. Here it is at a full house, and we won or we lost, what have you. When we first got on, we had escribe. Pretty sure we were the first term to have escribe introduced. That's where we accessed all of our agendas. There is escribe voting. When we started this term, we voted through escribe, and for some reason, we stopped. I'm 100% fully comfortable with the escribe program. It was easy for me. I don't know if it was difficult for others or if it was difficult for staff to implement whatever it was. But 100% recorded vote. Let's implement escribe. We pay for it. Let's use.

Transparency. I stand by every single one of my votes. I'm proud of my votes. I'm proud that I had the opportunity to vote. So I will continue to be proud, and I will continue to vote openly and honestly and transparently. Transparently.

Mike Balsom 1:45:17

Thank you, Tim. Sandro O'Connor.

Sandra O'Connor 1:45:21

Thank you. Yes, I run on a platform of transparency, and how I fulfill this commitment to you is that I try and explain my rationale on the way I vote at council meetings, so that you know the background to this. I am I'm available to the public and to the media to discuss issues or concerns that you may have with regards to planning decisions. I think that all documents should be available to you if you wish to review them, and I moved a motion to ensure that site plan documents got put on our website, which they are now. They weren't before, in spite of one councilor saying that they're too technical for people to read. That's up to you whether it's too technical for you. Not up to us. Make that available. I definitely support having recorded votes on most of the critical, significant developments, I ask for a recorded vote. That it takes more time up at council. We do have the software. We were trained on the software on how to do an automatic recorded vote, so everybody can see why we're not using it. I don't know. It is there. It's very easy to implement, and I would vote to have that implemented. Thank you.

Maria Mavridis 1:46:51

So I, I mean, I'm as open and transparent as I can possibly be. I've even opened myself up to the point that I get attacked. But everyone here that's saying we don't-they don't know why we don't use the green button for yes vote and red button for no vote that we spent an hour being trained on, brand new software that the taxpayer paid for. We do know. A counselor said it was too difficult. They were getting confused, so we stopped. I think it's a brilliant program. It'll record everything, print everything off, and moving forward, I think we should use it. I also understand that we should accommodate for those you know that that can't do certain things, but I think we could push through and and learn the buttons as well. On what was the first part of the the transparency?

Mike Balsom 1:47:52

So, what actions would you take to support fairness, transparency, and accountability regarding planning and other decisions made by council and in the town's interactions with businesses and local residents, the

Maria Mavridis 1:48:04

closed sessions when we first started, I was told they're all for you know litigation purposes, and I'm like so. And then, as Councilor Balashev said, we well, you're not going to negotiate out you know on camera for the, you know, plaintiff or defendant, depending on what we're we're fighting, can see what your next steps are. I agree, but I also think that when we rise from closed session, that everyone should vote publicly, and and we should state why and how. Some some hide, you know, in closed session. Totally agree. We get unanimous decision every single time in a closed session, and then you hear you know a couple days later that oh they said this or they said that. So I think we have shifted a bit and changed it a bit, but there's policies that can be put in place to ensure that the clerk does have to when we rise, the clerk does have to call a recorded vote every single time. Look at O'Connor over here. We had consultation meetings with Queen Street businesses. That's how we engage businesses. So when the Act Dev officer started at the town, I said, "Let's do this, and we did. And councilors, some councilors joined and got to actually sit one on one and finally hear from business owners directly, and not you know just from from hearsay. So decisions moving forward after that for Queen Street, including the temporary patio program, were made from engagement and total feedback from all business owners, even the ones that don't want to go on social media to comment, worried about the retaliation from others. Collaboration is is key, and I'll continue to do it.

Mike Balsom 1:49:59

So. Great discussion tonight. We are going to go to our closing statement. So again, you each have three minutes if you wish to use it to close out today, and we're going to go backwards from right to left, our right to left, not yours, right to left on on the stage, and we'll start with Tim.

Tim Balasiuk 1:50:25

In closing, I will reiterate some of the things that I said earlier. Just in that, I am extremely proud to have been able to serve this municipality for the last four years. I've changed an incredible deal in the last four years. My parents think I'm a different person, and I'm very proud of that. This this municipality means a lot to me. Growing up here was the best. Walking through the Commons to Parliament Oak was awesome. Playing in Randwood was the best. Going swimming at the conservation area. These are all the things that I remember. That when we talk about protecting Niagara on the Lake, when we talk about being able to retain heritage, when we talk about slowing down development, we talk about all these things. These are. This is what I remember. This is what I recall. This is what I love. I love going to the stagecoach for breakfast and running into a lot of you. I love going to the Shaw plays and seeing the actors ride their bikes down the street practicing lines. This is this community is more than just a community to me. This is home. Yeah, can't imagine living anywhere else. I will give 100% to you. Give me the opportunity, please.

Rick Mills 1:51:57

Thank you for coming out. For all of you that stuck around to the end, I appreciate this opportunity to speak and to and to learn, which I have. I'll continue learning. In my position as plant manager, I answered to owners, corporate leaders, while managing a bargaining unit of very skilled employees in a very dangerous working environment of high temperature gaseous fired furnaces and a little city of moving people and equipment. Never a death or a workplace accident of career-ending injury. I participated in seven contract negotiations between management and the hourly workforce, and at every sitting, every contract, I purposed to sit at the end of the board table. I visualized myself as a bridge, and I, I had at one time I thought it was going to cost me my job. There was one owner that was not happy that I would sit at the end of the board table because I purposed to practice the L's for the well-being of everyone. I know it sounds romantic, but it was hard. It was stressful, but there was never a strike. It was close. I was one of the hourly employees at one time, and as a counselor, I'm a resident. I'm a resident first. I am willing to lend my voice, as all of ours. I'll bring experience. I'll bring knowledge, abilities, and maturity. Knowing that I can't, but we can. When I first went out to get my 25 signatures for nominations for voting, I purposed to cover all five villages in the green connecting all of us, rural Niagara, and I listened, and I was invited back once elected to every table I sat at to keep listening, looking for thoughts and advice, sounding boards, looking for counsel, if you will. Because of this, this whole process is about all of us. We need a team that can work together. I've proven. I have proven success in this as both a leader and being led, and I believe I represent. I can represent and be someone that I can work for and with people. I'm grateful. I'm grateful to

be able to call Niagara on the Lake home, and I'm grateful for your trust and vote. And good night. Thank you very much.

Andrew Niven 1:54:51

Thanks, Mike. So I simply wanted to start with saying thank you. Thank you to the residents' association for bringing us together. Thank you to my fellow. Candidates for putting your name forward, and thank you to everyone here who took the time out of their evening and to take an interest in the future of our community. So thank you. Serving on council over the past two years has been one of the greatest privileges of my life. I've learned a lot. I've been challenged. I've had the opportunity to meet and work with so many people who care deeply about our town, and that's what I've come to appreciate the most about our community. People may disagree on issues, and sometimes we may disagree pretty strongly, but underneath all that, there is a genuine passion for this place. I've tried to bring that same approach to council, to listen, to ask questions, to do my homework, and to make decisions on what I believe is the best for Nagarna Lake. I'm proud of the work I've done over the past two years, but I also know there's much more to do. Our community is changing. The decisions we make over the next few years will shape Niagara Lake for a very long time. I'm asking for your support because I believe I can continue to bring thoughtful, responsible, and accountable leadership to our town. I love this community, and I believe we can protect what makes Niagara Lake so special while building a future that we can all be proud of. Thank you.

karen taylor jones 1:56:18

Okay, for me, this has been the most horrifying night of my life. I've always been known, to be honest, but you know what? It's been worth the horrific night because I've gotten to speak and let you know who I am. You want you know what I want, or what I'd like to see. I would love to be a seat on the council, and make many decisions more to come. Thank you.

Maria Mavridis 1:57:03

Thank you. I'm not afraid of confrontation. I'm not afraid to ask hard questions, challenge the way things have always been done, or have difficult conversations. And I'm certainly not afraid of the discourse that comes with being open and accessible, because public service isn't about being comfortable; it's about showing up. For 46 years, it's my age, I've tried to

lead with kindness. For 26 years, I've raised funds, raised awareness, and given back. For 14 years, I've had my most important job-being a mother and raising an incredible daughter-and for the last four years, I've had the privilege of being your voice on council. I haven't made the easiest decisions, and definitely not some of the most popular ones, but I have done my homework. I've explained every decision I made, and I've stood behind my votes. I've listened. I've questioned. I've learned. I've worked, and I acted. Now I'm asking for four more years to keep doing all of it, to keep showing up, to keep asking those hard questions, to keep spreading kindness, and to keep working for the community that raised me, so I can give back. Thank you.

Sandra O'Connor 1:58:43

Thank you very much. I'd like to take a moment to revisit one of the questions because as soon as the microphone went, I thought, "Oh my gosh, that's a concrete example I can give. So it's about the budget, putting residents first. What I would like to see is the paid parking of Old town in the downtown center expanded, the prices significantly increased, and for residents to get free passes to come downtown. So that's a resident first example. Thank you. Now, I it's been an honor serving you for four four years. I'm asking for another four years, I stand on my record, which is available to to everyone. I appreciate you listening tonight, and I want to say that this particular election, I think, is very critical in determining what the vision of Niagara Lake that you want to see us, so you have to choose very carefully on your vote. You have to demand more from your councilors. I want to build a brighter future together with you, listening to you, so. Please, I ask for another term to fulfill this. Thank you.

Mike Balsom 2:00:05

Thank you, Sandra. And let's have a round of applause, maybe for all of them for participating, especially for Karen because she was terrified. Just a reminder before I hand things over to Stuart that we've got another one of these coming up october 2. I know it's the Friday of well, no, it's not the Friday. Thanks, yeah, October. It's not Thanksgiving. I know that's why I was just getting confused there. I was going to correct myself, but October 2 will be Gary Burrows, Adriana Cater Vasari, Nicholas Culinary, Steve McGinnis, and Weston Miller up here, and over to Stuart.

Speaker 2 2:00:44

Thank you all very much for coming. Thank you all very much for coming out this evening. May I request that when you leave the parking lot, don't try and turn left, turn right, and go up to the roundabout if you're going back into Old Town. We don't want any accidents with people trying to traverse to go left and block traffic, for that matter. Thank you all very much for coming.