

Aware Simcoe / Aware Essa – 2018 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire. **Keith White, Ward 1 Councillor.**

Oct 2, 2018

Question 1)

Yes. I will support policies established to protect water, wetlands and recharge areas by the Township of Essa, County of Simcoe County, Province of Ontario, the South Georgian Bay Lake Simcoe Source Protection Plan, and the 36 Conservation Authorities in Ontario.

Question 2)

Yes. The Ontario “Development Charges Act (1989, revised 1997) sets out the process by which the Township of Essa can establish development charge by-laws. A background study has been completed every 5 years (most recently June 2018), and the associated by-law, which ensures that new development will pay for identified costs of new development. They are not to be a financial burden on existing residential, commercial, and industrial development. Growth should pay for growth.

The basis for deciding upon the net benefit of development in the Township of Essa is largely based on the population and employment targets set (for 2031 and 2041) by the Province of Ontario and the County of Simcoe. In Essa, designated residential lands are either already built out or previously approved for development. Therefore, it is my opinion the focus for the coming years should be on local employment, being development of designated commercial and industrial lands.

Question 3)

I support some limited expansion of the Greenbelt into the County of Simcoe. However the 16 municipal Official Plans and Zoning By-laws (including that of the Township of Essa), and that of the County of Simcoe already designate all land uses across the County. Considerable local experience, history, and science have gone into these current Official Plans, which were also approved by the Province of Ontario. In my opinion any Greenbelt expansion should conform to them.

Question 4)

Waste Management is a responsibility of the County of Simcoe, and along with many other services is overseen by County Council (the Mayors and Deputy Mayors of the 16 municipalities). In my view, if County Council has all the necessary staff and consultant reports, and makes decisions “For The Greater Good” through discussion and a vote - that should be the outcome. Should 1 of the 16 municipalities object to a decision of County Council then they may pursue any rights of appeal which may be open to them.

Question 5)

My opinion is that Ministry of Natural Resources staff did not do a thorough job of consulting all stakeholders including those in the industry (seedling growers, etc) before making the recommendation and final decision to close the Tree Seed Facility here in Angus. It seems the goal was only to eliminate a \$1.2 million per year expense and to sell an asset of 20 acres worth many more millions. Through better consultation and creative thinking I am sure that options to maintain a Tree Seed Facility could have been developed. I was pleased to hear that the new provincial government is currently making a full review of the decision, and is consulting all stakeholders.

Question 6)

My top three priorities are (no particular order):

Vehicular Speeding and Traffic Safety – The number one item which has been raised in the past year or so has been speeding, and lack of adherence to stop signs and traffic control signals, especially as it affects pedestrians. In the past year I supported use of numerous radar display units, implementing a Traffic Calming Policy with initiatives to be implemented in 2019, communicating concerns to the OPP, and seeking direction from the Province of Ontario for the ability to utilize cameras at intersections and more radar speed enforcement initiatives.

Essa Township Strategic Plan – Commence a fully public process in 2019 which would engage residents and businesses on matters of services being provided for their tax dollars. From this process establish a shared vision and future needs of the community. The last Township of Essa Strategic Plan was in 2003.

Long Term Financial Budget – With the results of the Strategic Plan, financial projections could be completed for up to 5 years forward, rather than just annually. This will facilitate long term planning for public services, allocation for capital items and reserve funds, possible new funding opportunities, and stable annual property taxes.