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2018 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

SANDIE MACDONALD

Municipality

ESSA TOWNSHIP

Date:

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1. Water is a finite resource. Do you feel there is a need to protect water, wetlands and recharge areas from development, aggregate extraction and other intrusive activities in your municipality? If so, how will you achieve this?

Protect Water Resources

Agreed. I believe we currently do a good job of protecting water resources in Essa and I will continue to work to ensure that going forward, Essa incorporates new policies into our new Official Plan. Science based surface and groundwater models have helped to form our own local Source Water Protection Plan; this was put in place in Essa and Simcoe County several years ago. We steer development away from water sources or hazards and protect wetlands. In fact, Essa's Official Plan requires water resource studies to be submitted with development applications.

Some of the effective legislation that is in place already includes: Lake Simcoe Protection Plan and the Source Water Protection under the Clean Waters Act.

Aggregates

Since aggregates are in short supply in Essa with very limited quantities left, we will not experience any mega-quarries here.

If pits are proposed, they should be operated with minimum impact to neighbours. Essa can require that trees are planted around the site to buffer some of the impacts.

The township also can control the gravel trucks on our roads by limiting their numbers and the times of day they travel (no trucks on weekends, school bus travel times or Honda shift changes.)

2. Development charges never fully cover the cost of new development. Will you make sure that all costs that *should be* paid by development charges under existing legislation *are* covered? When considering an application, on what basis will you decide whether a development is a net benefit for the community?

I believe that development should pay for development.

The Development Charges Act requires that the existing tax base pay for 10% of new infrastructure work. *Essa already follows this Act and “maxes out” what developers pay to lessen the burden on our existing tax base.*

Developers should pay what is *fair*...sometimes *more than one developer* has to pay and taxpayers and existing residents have to pay their fair share (10% as legislated in the Development Charges Act).

An example is the Centre Street traffic lights in Angus; developers are paying 90% of the cost of the lights which is fair.

3. Do you support/oppose expansion of the Greenbelt into Simcoe County? In either case, please explain why.

This is a complex issue and numerous factors must be considered.

It is good that an expansion of the Greenbelt would protect the Nottawasaga River but having said that, there is already good protection of the river with legislation protecting our water resources. Essa's Official Plan protects the Nottawasaga and surrounding lands as "significant environmental resources" and development is restricted. Simcoe County has a Greenland System which restricts development from the lands around the Nottawasaga and the NVCA's Regulated Authority also protects the lands around the river.

A Greenbelt expansion would encourage growth on the north side of Alliston and into Essa where we have prime agricultural land; also, it could impact Thornton's growth, again on prime agricultural land.

OVERALL, the possible Greenbelt expansion *would not help Essa control and steer development where it should go* (designated, zoned areas) so I would be opposed to the Greenbelt expansion for these reasons:

- We can achieve protection for Provincial resources (such as farmland and environmental land) using existing policies.
- An expansion of the Greenbelt would push development further away from the GTA where there are still important resources to protect. It is better to intensify within our existing communities and rely on existing policies.

- Greenbelt legislation will pile *another layer of government* approval on property owners seeking to construct a simple addition like a deck or other building projects.
- I believe that the Provincial Government should trust local municipal planning approval authorities who must adhere to Official Plans.
- The DRAFT MAP is not accurate nor is it consistent with mapping from other government studies and agencies. The focus is unfairly on north of the GTA and Simcoe County.

4. Simcoe County Council chose a county forest in Springwater – zoned Agricultural – as the site for a (needed) waste handling facility, the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre. Springwater Township objected, pointing out that this is an industrial use and there are suitable properties zoned Industrial. What is your view?

The County of Simcoe had 500 sites that they looked at for the Environmental Resources Recovery Centre in Simcoe County. Many sites and criteria were reviewed and all sites were scored. The only one that was central and had all the criteria needed for a Centre, was the Horseshoe Valley Road site in Springwater.

Can the public suggest a location that is better suited? Is there an industrial site large enough and meets all the criteria? If yes, then I would definitely look at it and bring it to the attention of the county and my colleagues. I am always willing to listen and explore other options.

Do we need to look at other methods to deal with waster? YES! I would be open with looking at other approaches including incineration.

The new plant will stress waste diversion. Continued education will be offered to encourage residents to reduce waste, stressing organics. County staff is open to exploring all avenues to make changes to our waste stream.

5. Since 1924, the Ontario Tree Seed Facility in Angus performed a vital task for the whole province of coordinating seed collection from 37 zones across the province to ensure seedlings are returned to grow in the zone to which they are uniquely suited. The Progressive Conservative government is reviewing the closing ordered by the Liberals. What is your opinion on this matter?

Beware of GMO seeds!

Our seeds need to be kept in the public domain. We need quality, local seeds.

This is a historic site and crucial to our local nurseries and businesses.

The former Ontario Liberal government chose to keep the pending closure quiet and not involve Essa, residents or even stakeholders until they started dismantling the facility and moving employees to other sites.

The best scenario is to keep the plant open and operating.

AWARE Essa, Friends of Utopia Gristmill and Park, MPP Jim Wilson have done a great job of speaking out and protesting the closure.

I will continue to support keeping the Angus Tree Seed Facility open!

6. If elected, what are your top three priorities?

1. Affordable housing and housing for seniors

I have worked on some Habitat for Humanity projects in Angus and I know there is a great need.

Currently Essa is working with the County of Simcoe on funding programs. We are also working with developers and encouraging them to support the need in their plans.

Several ideas for consideration:

- New, out-of-the-box incentives such as reduced parking requirements
- Surveying Seniors regarding the type of housing they prefer
- Asking Seniors to be part of a consultation group and provide input

2. Traffic calming

- Continue to keep Essa's roads safe with on-going upkeep e.g. Re-surfacing, pothole maintenance.
- Speed reduction measures will be continued.
- "Road diets" will be utilized to force drivers to slow down e.g. bumps outs.
- More connecting sidewalks with a priority in areas where there are children and seniors
- More crosswalks

3. Keeping our communities strong

- Support local businesses; continue "Shop Local" campaign
- Increase commercial and industrial tax base in designated areas (lands already have been provided at both ends of Angus).
- Intensify development in "settlement areas"; for example, create apartments over stores
- Support building complexes with mixed use combining retail, commercial and residential. Put seniors housing or low income without cars near stores and services.
- Support conversion of commercial buildings to apartments or condominiums where businesses don't make sense anymore.
- Continue to add to parks and programs to keep residents active and engaged.

