



www.aware-simcoe.ca

2018 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Municipality

Date:

Bill French.....

.....Springwater

Sept 21, 2018

Please return the completed questionnaire to the sender as soon as possible, but no later than October 4, 2018. **N.B: As this is a Word document, you can take as much space as you wish to respond.** The answers will be posted on the AWARE Simcoe website.

=====

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?

ANSWER

Of course protecting our natural life giving resources is key and all efforts should be taken to protect those resources. The best way of doing that from a municipal perspective is to build protection into your Official Plan as local plans can be more restrictive than the guiding policies that govern them.

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?

ANSWER

The current legislation unfortunately prohibits full recovery of growth related capital projects and depending on benefit to existing residents, it has been proven that at best about 75% of growth infrastructure is recovered by DC's. The highest rate is 90% and this is complicated even more as new facilities and added services never before offered are

based on a lower recovery rate. Most fast growing municipalities experience tremendous debt growth as new facilities have DC recovered at building permit stage which has no guaranteed timeline and the facility has to be built on borrowed money. The recent Barrie Advance story on Barrie's debt is a good example. Since front end agreements are discouraged by legislation, municipalities must look at other approaches such as Capital Contributions for needed infrastructure to avoid burdening the taxpayer.

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

ANSWER

I think the question should be broader and focused more on the AWARE Vision that I helped create. It saw clearly the need for the protection of the 3P's People, Planet and Profit. In other words there must be a balance of Economic, Social and Environmental considerations to be truly sustainable and resilient as the universe changes. The Greenbelt Study Area in Simcoe County was a limp attempt by the Liberals to regain favour as the kindergarten drawn ovals with no detail were an insult to those attending the information session and created more problems than solutions. I think it was also an insult to the hard work that organizations such as the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition has done to try and educate the masses. The Province must combine the Greenbelt, Natural Heritage, Agricultural Mapping and any other environmental protection into one policy regime including rolling in the Conservation authorities as they have been inconsistent and at times unnecessarily obstructive. We seem to forget that most of the land mass in Ontario is operated by farmers and they have proven for two centuries they are pretty good stewards of the land but they have not been adequately engaged in the dialogue and this must change. It is great to say that 95% of the population supports the Greenbelt but about 98% of farmers do not and only see it as more red tape and costs in a very competitive industry especially in the days of the Trump trade wars. I support the Greenbelt as a methodology to stop sprawl and further encroachment of farmland and sensitive areas but BC has been able to accomplish this with strong agricultural land protection legislation. If the Greenbelt causes loss of current agricultural operations or increased costs because of red tape, there must be a compensation plan attached to it. To me it would be appropriate to tax the urban dweller and share subsidies with the farmers that are affected especially if they lose valuable acreage because of restrictions or setbacks. Are we willing to pay a little more for our food, as the supporters of the

Greenbelt must share the cost of its implementation? Don't ignore the farmer that feed us during the dialogue is my clear message.

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?

ANSWER

I have argued from day one that the ERRC should be in an industrial zone. Even though the cost of real estate in the Bertram Industrial subdivision, less than 2 KM from the chosen site may be a little more, I expect it would be less than the cost of the reconstruction of the roads and entrances. It is not appropriate to use forested lands that were given or sold at low prices and intended to be preserved for forests, in perpetuity, should ever be used for convenience by the County for their own services. I also think that the County should partner with their current organics 3rd party service provider and invest to create a world class facility that will enjoy economies of scale and drive down costs rather than having them escalate which will be the situation with the Horseshoe Valley Road facility if it receives final approval. I will definitely not support local OPA's or Zoning changes at the Township level when it comes forward.

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?

ANSWER

I don't have a lot of first hand knowledge, but all the local growers and land steward organizations such as the NVCA, SSEA and other groups are surprised and appalled by the decision to close this facility and I would support its retention before it is too late.

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

ANSWER

Ensure that the final EA, Long Term Financial Plan and development Agreements of the Midhurst Secondary Plan are reviewed thoroughly before any final approvals to build as there are many concerns and I will work with Ministries to ensure thoroughness. I was disappointed that Minister McMeekin in 2015 refused my direct request to reconsider to at least review and possibly pause the MSP, and it appears that other political influences seemed to rule the day. If or when the MSP receives a final approval, I am the best person to manage the growth of the Midhurst Secondary Plan as I have the background and understand the need for changing the phasing to cause the least impact on residents.

Revisit the governance model of the County and hopefully target 2022 election year as the start of electing one County Councillor for each Municipality rather than having the Mayor and Deputy Mayor serve as County Councillors. It is impossible to do both jobs effectively as residents vote for their Mayor to put their municipality first and the concept of answering to two masters has never worked as we all know.

Involve as many youth as possible in all levels and aspects of what we do to ensure we have an engaged future generation to govern and build our local municipalities, towns and villages.

=====

Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire