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2018 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Stephanie Kenny

Municipality

Orillia, Ward 4 Councillor Candidate

Date:

October 4, 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.

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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?

Yes, we should certainly protect these sensitive areas. Orillia is directly impacted by Lake Couchiching and Lake Simcoe, and without these resources, the community likely wouldn't have been located here in the first place.

I am by no means an environmental expert, but I am resourceful enough to know that you should surround yourself with knowledgeable professionals when that's the case. I will support our City planning staff in this protection, as well as local Conservation authorities and passionate community groups.

I also support appropriate zoning and official plan restrictions in environmentally sensitive areas, such as wetlands, agricultural areas, and forests. I will also support the shoreline development agreement process the City has in place – I am willing to review this process with appropriate internal and external parties to ensure it is kept up to date with changing legislation, as required.

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?

The City of Orillia has a Development Charges background study which was approved in December 2017, and is mandated to keep this updated on a regular basis to ensure that "growth pays for growth". Development charges that are paid by developers generally depend on the location of the development (downtown, suburban area, etc) and the type of development (residential, multi-residential, commercial, etc). I don't believe all development can be painted with the same brush. In many cases, developments have community benefits that extend past those within the area. For example, a new subdivision might provide a new connecting link to the road network making traffic more efficient, or allow for water and wastewater infrastructure to extend to new areas of the community in a more cost-effective way.

One thing I disagree with is the notion of "zero" industrial development charges within the City of Orillia. It is a requirement under the Development Charges Act to make the City's development charge account "whole", meaning if the industrial developer isn't paying any development charges, then the city's tax base must pay. Some may argue that this can create new jobs, generating an economic benefit to the City, however consider the future of industrial development: big, empty buildings, artificial intelligence, automation, and few jobs. There are other, non-financial ways to attract investment to a community rather than subsidizing developers.

Certain types of development (affordable housing, density, commercial, and industrial) could receive some form of development charge deferrals to improve the initial business case, but I am not in favour of development having their charges abated or reduced.

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

I am in favour of the expansion – with a few exemptions.

I believe certain key areas for job growth and development should be maintained, such as key industrial and commercial areas along Highways 400 and 11, as well as the settlement areas of the various communities. We may also wish to allow some

land surrounding these areas to become exempt as these communities are growing rapidly and will likely need land in the future.

We should, however, be encouraging more density in those settlement areas. By reducing the number of single family dwellings being built, and pivoting to townhomes, condominiums, and apartments, it ensures expansions to these areas are kept to a minimum, and may address some of the housing affordability issues we are facing in communities that surround the City of Toronto.

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?

I believe communities should respect their own official plans and zoning bylaws – documents that go through stringent public consultation, and multiple reviews from upper levels of government.

The Springwater zoning bylaw that maintained that forest as agricultural would have been reviewed by the County itself, and then that approval authority chose to go against their own recommendations. If a private developer were to suggest something like this, it would be swiftly denied by local and county planners, requiring an unlikely official plan amendment to both the local and County official plans, as well as a zoning bylaw amendment. The same rules should apply to everyone.

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?

I do not have enough information on this to make an informed comment.

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

Communication – Residents should be consulted before decisions are made, rather than informed afterwards, and in ways that are relevant to them. Most people do not have time to attend meetings, regardless of what time/day they are scheduled. Mass emails, social media, signage, paper newsletters, mailouts, “popup”

consultations at busy locations, websites, and text messages should be considered. Greater consultation should occur on all projects – large and small.

Affordability - Our taxes are some of the highest in the area, and higher than most communities in the GTA. We need to reassess all programs that the City operates, and decide what is absolutely required, and which are "nice to have". Some very large spending decisions are on the horizon, and cannot be continually funded the by the taxpayers who are already struggling with high tax bills. We must also maintain public ownership of Orillia Power for future generations.

Modernization - We need to focus on innovation and creative thinking over "that's the way we've always done it." The City can serve its residents more efficiently by embracing technology and ensuring our infrastructure is modern and maintained. We should remove unnecessary barriers, so that innovative businesses such as Uber can operate freely. I've heard that it can be extremely difficult to navigate City Hall for residents and businesses alike, so reviewing the entire service delivery model must be considered.

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Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire