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2022 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Municipality

Date:

Allan Bray

Barrie

13 Sep 2022

Please return the completed questionnaire to the sender as soon as possible, but no later than September 15, 2022. The answers will then be posted on the AWARE Simcoe website.

N.B: As this is a Word document, you can take as much space as you wish to respond.

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1. AWARE Simcoe considers the preservation of farmland, the protection of water resources and natural heritage, and providing transparency and accountability in government decision making to be the primary issues of this election.

Our goal is to elect representatives who support those objectives. Do you agree with this?

ANSWER

Preservation of farmland, with appropriate controls to prevent agricultural runoff from impacting our rivers and lakes, is necessary from a cultural perspective. It is also a means of maintaining a diverse supply of food sources for our regions, so that Ontario residents are not wholly dependent on global supply chains that can be more easily disrupted, as we have seen in recent years.

Water resources are obviously crucial for all life. While it is possible to purify water through various processes, it is also expensive and energy-intensive. There is a reason why the Los Angeles basin relies on water diverted from the Colorado River, instead of de-salinating water from the Pacific Ocean. Generally, the fewer steps needed to produce drinkable water, the less expensive it is. Further, the quality of water from our natural resources impacts all life – so while we can treat our tap water, the raw water of our creeks, rivers and lakes is what is available to our flora and fauna, so we have an obligation to prevent its contamination.

By “natural heritage”, I interpret this to mean natural spaces. Unquestionably, natural spaces are critical from several viewpoints. Socially, access to natural spaces is important for youth development – you can find more information about this in “Last Child in the Woods” by

Richard Louv – and it is foundational to Scouting, something very close to my heart. Green spaces that are accessible to everybody provide a calming environment that encourages people to be active. In Simcoe County we are blessed with many green spaces, including those that are within the city of Barrie. We need to preserve green spaces and ensure there are connections between them, to allow the natural movement of fauna. They also function as a carbon sink, and while planting a tree won't offset the carbon emissions of my vehicle, paving them over means the release of much of the carbon to the atmosphere that was previously sequestered by the natural growth.

Transparency and accountability are key issues that relate not to just the above topics, but all aspects of governance in our municipalities, such as the taxes we pay, the services we get, the development of our infrastructure and how our city grows. As Ward Six councillor, I will build working relationships with other councillors and city staff to understand key things such as how department budgets are established, how contracts are awarded (bid and evaluation process) and how development is being guided according to the city's Official Plan. I intend to work with them to identify and eliminate loss, inefficiencies and non-compliances and ensure there are clear lines of accountability. I also intend to improve communications by holding quarterly Ward Six meetings with our residents, which will help improve transparency and accountability by sharing information on subjects relevant to our community.

2. 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

In line with my answers above, there is absolutely a need to protect water, wetlands and recharge areas. However, as citizens in an industrialized society we all recognize there is also a need for development, aggregate extraction and other intrusive activities.

Obviously, there is an inherent conflict between these two priorities. I firmly believe that policies and regulations based upon solid scientific foundations are the only way to proceed. As a councillor I will advocate for this approach to any activities within our city that have such a potential impact. To my knowledge there are no planned or current activities in the City of Barrie that have a potential negative impact on these aspects, but I will research this further.

3. Ancient deposits under the Simcoe Uplands in Simcoe County's Tiny, Springwater, Oro-Medonte and Tay townships contain pristine groundwater.

This water is the purest water known to science, and is the gold standard for water worldwide, a national and global treasure.

Ongoing gravel pit extractions on French's Hill, the water recharge area, now threaten to destroy this precious water. Will you work to protect this important local resource?

ANSWER

Clearly this is important, but it is outside of Barrie city limits, so as Ward Six councillor I would not have a direct impact. With that said, it is possible that the city could stipulate the purchase of gravel for city projects from another pit, to apply some economic pressure on the operation if they are not in compliance with regulations. However, if they are non-compliant, they should already be in trouble with the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. This also risks oversimplifying the issue, because it would only be helpful if we found another pit that does not expose its local aquifers to some risk, and the additional costs and greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting gravel from a greater distance did not offset the potential aquifer impact of a more local pit. I think the best approach is for citizens to organize and advocate for a change in provincial law.

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

ANSWER

In line with my answers above, I support the expansion of the Greenbelt into Simcoe County. However, its implementation does not directly affect the City of Barrie except possibly preventing further urban/suburban sprawl. The City of Barrie has a plan to increase housing density as the population grows, which should also limit sprawl and preserve the existing green spaces surrounding the city.

5. What are your plans to combat climate change in your municipality?

ANSWER

The City of Barrie has what appears to be a good plan to both improve resilience to climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, although it is lacking actionable steps (who will do what, by when). As Ward Six councillor one of my priorities is to attract industry, particularly tech industry, to Barrie. This has at least three effects: it would provide valuable careers for residents; it will help diversify the tax base; and it would also reduce the number of residents who need to commute long distances each day. Our society's dependence on cars is a major contributor to greenhouse gases. Anything we can do to reduce the need for cars not only helps from a greenhouse gas emission standpoint; it also improves quality of life (less time commuting) and supports active and healthy

living. In addition to attracting local industry, I will also advocate for a safe city-wide network of bicycle lanes, making our communities walkable, and evolving our public transportation system to increase ridership as the city grows.

6. Every municipality in Ontario is faced with row-on-row sprawl-style development, and surrounding farmland is being destructively gobbled up with little regard for future agricultural needs. Ontario is losing 319 acres of farmland every day, it needs to be protected before it's too late. We need to ensure we have the land to grow food for today and future generations. Once it's paved over, it's gone forever!

How will you protect agricultural lands within your municipality?

ANSWER

Barrie is one of the fastest growing communities in Canada, and it was recognized some years ago that simply allowing towns and cities to grow without limit is unsustainable. Barrie now has plans to intensify, adding higher density housing. Any former farmlands within the existing city limits will be developed to accommodate the population growth, but further growth of the city must be countered with further intensification of brown-field sites within city limits according to a plan that will preserve walkable communities and maintain neighbourhoods.

7. Simcoe County Council chose a county forest in Springwater Twp – zoned Agricultural, as the site for a (much needed) waste handling facility, the Environmental Resource Recovery Centre (ERRC). Many residents in Simcoe County objected to this location, pointing out that this is an industrial use and there are suitable properties zoned Industrial where the facility should be built. What is your view?

ANSWER

As councillor for Ward Six, I would have no influence on this, and Barrie has its own waste processing facilities.

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

ANSWER

1. Property taxes

- a. Eliminate waste and ensure value for money
- b. Minimize tax increases while maintaining valuable services to our community
- c. Diversify tax base

2. Employment and industry

- a. Attract industry to Barrie
- b. Grow local businesses
- c. Create valuable local careers

3. Community safety, security and comfort

- a. Work with police services and city operations to seek and implement effective solutions to:
 - i. Thefts from vehicles
 - ii. Speeding in our neighbourhoods
 - iii. Traffic volume and flow
 - iv. Excessively loud vehicles

4. Communication

- a. Quarterly Ward Six community meetings
- b. Ward Six website

5. Brevity

- a. Learn how to write short answers!

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Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire.