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2022 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Municipality

Date:

Erik Schomann

Tiny Township

September 15, 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

I agree with this, wholeheartedly. In fact, this is at the very core of my bid to join council during this election. Beautifying the township, Tiny has been set aside as Simcoe’s defacto “Greenbelt” as part of the County development plan. I intend to keep it that way though transparent, responsive, and responsible people-centred and ecologically focused governance.

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 2011, Tiny became one of the first to sign on as a Blue Community. This is an initiative undertaken by the Council of Canadians to encourage municipalities and Indigenous communities to promote and support the idea of a water commons framework, recognizing that water is a shared resource for all, by passing resolutions that: recognises water and sanitation as human rights; bans or phases out the sale of bottled water in municipal

facilities and at municipal events; and promotes publicly financed, owned, and operated water and wastewater services.

While good on paper, and for many of the principles, Tiny has fared decently, past councils have been helpless in the face of directives of Queen's Park that have undermined those principles as happened in 2018 when the permit to draw more water from the pit was approved by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. This occurred in spite of the Township's wishes and popular sentiment.

I intend to be in place as a staunch competent champion of the water to stand up to Queen's Park and rally the various organisations that have been fighting for the water for over a decade, pool our resources, strategise and create a collective multipronged defence to let the Provincial government know that even and especially the Ministerial Zoning Orders cannot be issued without significant political cost.

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

Over 50 peer-reviewed studies conducted in over twelve years of research have definitively established the water of the recharge area under French's Hill as the purest known to science. If elected, protecting this water will have my top priority and many people in the community would know that about me.

For over three years, I've stood in staunch support of the efforts to preserve the water. In addition to having drafted editorials to local media on the subject; delivered deputations to council and protested in rain and sleet, additionally I've been instrumental in organising several events including an occasion that drew Elizabeth May to the gates of the Teedon Pit to pledge her support on behalf of her party in our efforts; I organised a pan-partisan event during the 2021 federal election when representatives and candidates of four major federal parties descended on the gates of Teedon Pit to speak in a unified voice on the importance of protecting that water; while Adam Chambers himself was not present, he certainly made up for it by sponsoring the petition to the House of Commons to evoke federal powers to help protect the water where the provincial government will not. I submitted and was party to its drafting and MP Adam Chambers will be presenting that petition to Parliament next month; I spoke at rallies at Queen's Park and at a recent event in Elmvale where we brought

provincial Green Party leader Mike Schreiner to emphasise and amplify the struggle to preserve the water with each of these events getting coverage in both local and national media.

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

ANSWER

As the “holy grail” of protection that even the provincial Conservative government will not directly undermine, not only do I support further expansion of the Green Belt into Simcoe County, I’d like to see the establishment of a Blue Belt for similar levels of protection into our region’s significant key headwater features, ground and surface water features, source water areas and river valley connections and watersheds that feed into Lake Simcoe and the Great Lakes. Despite the great work by organisations such as Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition, the lake is still in danger of degradation. In addition to working within Tiny’s watersheds to support the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, I’d vigorously support the establishment of the proposed Blue Belt to provide similar protection to our precious water resources on other fronts. The water needs defending for all our sakes.

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

ANSWER

In 2018, Tiny became signatory to the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) program. Since that time, the township has created an inventory of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and forecast; has set a reduction target of 30% for corporate GHG emissions and 6% for community emissions by 2028 from the 2015 baseline; and established a plan for meeting those targets. These three steps represent the first three of five milestones established by the PCP program. Milestone four is implementing the plan (which is ongoing with a number of steps already implemented) and milestone five involves drafting and delivering regular progress reports.

Having achieved three milestones within the first few years has put Tiny ahead of the curve for most municipalities participating in the program however, the pandemic has created unforeseen results and changed the landscape that must be put into consideration for the goals to be achieved.

The established plan is based on a prediction of the township having a permanent population of 12,500 by 2031 up from the 2016 survey population of 11,787. The problem is that the pandemic saw many part-time residents of the township moving to Tiny on a permanent basis as well as newer arrivals so that the 2021 census results show Tiny’s permanent

resident population is already at 12,966 (StatsCan, 2021). Tiny surpassed it's 2031 population projection a full decade early.

This means the plan established as the third milestone must be revisited. A new robust plan must be established with measures that address the current housing crisis while emphasising sustainability through a plan that includes actionable solutions such as tree-cutting bylaws and maintaining residential zoning designations and environmental protection zoning at their current levels to ensure the protection of significant forests, wetlands, valley bottoms and water courses for generations to come. In addition to combating climate change locally, preventing loss of biodiversity must be a priority.

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

Tiny is lucky in that it has been spared the more egregious sprawl directives of the County development plan that are affecting other regions however, climate change and geopolitical realities (ie. war in Ukraine) has made food security a global issue and municipalities are uniquely positioned to ensure that farmland designated for agriculture, particularly Class 1 and 2 soils, receive protection. In addition to supporting the preservation efforts of organisations such the Ontario Farmland Trust, the simplest way this can be done is through zoning designations, ensuring existing zoning ordinances are maintained and through a legal defence fund to resist extra-jurisdictional challenges to these designations through mechanism such as Ministerial Zoning Orders (MZOs) from the province that override local planning authority to approve development without engaging the usual expert analysis comprehensive and full environmental reviews or public participation. These are meant to be relied upon in urgent cases only, but the current provincial government seems quite fine employing MZOs whenever their mass development agenda is challenged.

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

My view is that the location for the ERRC (Site C136) is a horrible fit for the proposed waste handling facility. Though it was technically outside of the jurisdiction I was running in during the 2019 federal election, I had the opportunity to speak to members of the Friends of Simcoe Forests who were able to impress upon me that not only does locating a facility such as this within a protected forest contradict best practices for forest management, but the plan also contravenes the county's own Official Forest Management Plan 2011-2030.

I agree that the selection of the site is "well-intentioned but misguided" and further agree that the solution is to relocate the facility to a site zoned for industrial usage. That just makes sense.

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

ANSWER

1. Protecting our natural environment and preventing biodiversity loss by first Proposing a moratorium on gravel extraction at French's Hill until the current research by hydrogeologists Drs. Shotyk and Powell is completed in five years' time.

2. Revisiting and revamping the township's Climate Action Plan to meet the current population underestimates including the implementation of a tree cutting bylaw.

3. Addressing issues that have become increasingly disruptive to our community namely the regulation of short-term rentals and beach/property access/rights and facilitating a people-centred approach to finding the best solutions possible.

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Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire.