



2022 Municipal Election Candidate Questionnaire

Candidate Name:

Municipality

Date:

Norm Sandberg

Collingwood

September 03, 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

Collingwood has been designated as a growth node by the Province and Simcoe County. Our population is projected to grow by 19,000 by 2045. This will put tremendous pressures on our built and natural heritage as well as our public works infrastructure, cultural/recreational infrastructure and social infrastructure (social services). The Collingwood of 2045 may not look much like the Collingwood of today if strong leadership and good planning do not prevail. We are already starting to see that impact.

There are three items that you raise in this question.

1. **Farmland** – *I grew up on a farm in Grey County. I know firsthand the importance of farming and some of the challenges it faces. Collingwood has limited agricultural lands available, as designated in the 2022 draft Official Plan. The Province’s and County’s intent in designating urban growth nodes is to manage urban sprawl thereby protecting the agricultural uses that are so important for food security. As a designated urban growth node, it may be a challenge to preserve this limited agricultural land within the Collingwood municipal boundary. However, if elected Mayor, I will be sitting at Simcoe County Council where I can continue to support our neighbouring municipalities protect their agricultural areas.. The “Buy Local” movement of food sourcing from within 100*

kms is something that I support and is not possible without protecting our agricultural lands.

- 2. **Water Resources and Natural Heritage** – Growth and development is and will continue to occur within Collingwood, as required by the Growth Node designation. We can embrace it and try managing it or we can fight it and have it happen anyway without our input. I believe that, in a Growth Node, lands must be developed to their highest potential. If the highest potential is no development because of an Environmental Protection or similar designation, there should be no further consideration. In Collingwood, we have Provincially Significant wetlands, designated forested natural areas and water courses that, clearly, must not be compromised by development.*
- 3. **Transparency and Accountability** – This is one of the keystones of my campaign and how I have always conducted myself over my four terms on Collingwood Council. No political gamesmanship. Direct answers to direct questions. Clearly stating my positions on the issues. A big part of this is to not support major initiatives without first having a clear understanding of the business case around it. No false promises of support only to later claim that the financial jeopardy is too great. Though this position may not be politically advantageous during an election, it is accountable and transparent.*

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

Clearly, protection of water, wetlands and recharge areas is important. Many municipalities in Simcoe County and, most certainly, farms and some residences rely upon groundwater as their primary source of drinking water, water for livestock and for irrigation. Other municipalities, such as Collingwood, rely upon surface water for their water source. Ever since Walkerton and, before that in Collingwood the outbreak of Cryptosporidiosis (a water borne parasite), the importance of water source protection has been highlighted throughout Ontario and the country. The Province of Ontario passed the Safe Drinking Water Act, part of which includes GUDI (Groundwater Under Direct Influence of surface water) guidelines for municipal and private source water protection. Wetlands are often the headwaters of our rivers and must be protected as such. However, wetlands also often provide a very important function as nature's "flood control system". Their very nature allows them to perform as a "sponge" to manage large volumes of water originating from snow melt and/or heavy rain. The nature of wetland vegetation also acts as nature's purifier by up-taking phosphates, nitrates and other nutrients/contaminates from the water. In my engineering career, I have designed one artificial wetland for this very purpose. The eradication of wetlands will result

in compromising our natural water systems resulting in reduction of water quality and necessitating engineering solutions to flood control.

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

I am not familiar with the specifics of gravel pit extractions on French's Hill nor the potential impacts on the water source. As a general observation, however, with designated Growth Areas throughout Simcoe County, the aggregate extraction for development related road construction, concrete for building and other uses must come from somewhere. For instance, a typical four-lane highway requires about 1,750 truckloads of gravel per kilometre. A typical 32,000 m² hospital requires about 3,750 truckloads of gravel. Collingwood, case in point, is looking at an overdue hospital redevelopment serving the Southern Georgian Bay region.

Pits and quarries are, with a few exceptions, not within the municipal jurisdiction. They are regulated by the Province of Ontario. Presumably, the pit operation has a Provincial License to operate and is in compliance with the Regulations stipulated therein? If not, the Province must act to enforce its Regulations.

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

ANSWER

This is a complex issue that has negative impacts regardless of what is done. Clearly, the headwaters (recharge areas) of the water courses that run both to Lake Ontario and to Southern Georgian Bay must be protected. One of the challenges, however, that has resulted from the current Green Belt area is the "leapfrogging" of commuter related development over the Greenbelt area into Simcoe County and similar areas north of the GTA. When I was on the Boards of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and the Ontario Small Urban Municipalities (two organisations advocating to the Provincial and Federal governments on behalf of the broader municipal sector), we "red flagged" the inevitability of this "leapfrogging" of development to municipalities that were not prepared financially, in terms

of physical infrastructure nor in terms of social infrastructure to deal with this growth pressure. This is exactly what we are seeing now.

Before expanding the Green Belt, the Province must provide adequate support to these municipalities. Otherwise, we would just be punting our growth issues to other municipalities.

Through the County Official Plan, there are protections of the Environmental Protection and similarly designated sensitive lands to control development on them. As a County Councillor, I would continue support of these policies to protect the green areas.

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

ANSWER

Collingwood has been active for decades in promoting a lower carbon footprint. Active transportation encouraging walking, cycling and non-motorised transportation is reflected in our tremendous trail system that was initiated and largely completed during my time on Council. This includes the start of “complete streets” road design to include bike lanes and multi-use wide sidewalks within the urban area. Also, during my time on the Collingwood Library Board, we constructed a Silver LEED Library, including a green roof to assist with temperature moderation and rainwater runoff control. These initiatives are typical of what I would continue to promote if elected as Mayor and, thereby, a County Councillor.

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

Refer to my response to Question 1, Section 1 - Farmland

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

County Council is committed to responsible environmental stewardship. I would continue with that commitment. Currently, Simcoe County is trucking organic wastes to Elmira for processing. The carbon footprint related to that trucking is significant. My understanding is that the County considered over 500 sites on the principle that local (County) organic waste must be dealt with locally. The County settled on the centrally located Springwater site. This site is located near the 400-highway corridor which helps in reducing the trucking footprint. The County did not think land expropriation was an appropriate way forward so it focused on County-owned lands. My understanding is that the selected site has no environmental concerns, especially on water resources. The organics processing facility provides an end product that can be used for agriculture. Also, the removed trees will be replaced by new plantings at a ration of 3:1.

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

ANSWER

1. *Responsible and reasonable taxation*
2. *Affordable housing from ranging from social housing to affordable rental to affordable housing for purchase.*
3. *Open and transparent government.*

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Thank you for completing the AWARE Simcoe candidate questionnaire.