



2022 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ALL-CANDIDATES FORUM

WARD COUNCILLOR RESPONSES

KEVIN RITCHIE – WARD 1

Question: *In addition to the watermain reconstruction downtown and Downtown Reimagined, what other infrastructure projects need to be addressed over the next four years?*

Answer: The Peach King Center expansion, which will include a walking track and a full-sized gymnasium, is a major infrastructure project I am really passionate about. This is a massive project that will be amazing for our community. The great news is that it will not be a tax burden on residents because it is already fully funded through a combination of government grants and development charges.



Question: *The toxic environment and lack of decorum at council meetings over the last four years is well-documented, and reflects the disturbingly disrespectful discord in politics at all levels right now. How would you, as a member of the next council, contribute to a more respectful and collaborative environment within council chambers and dealing with staff, to focus on making Grimsby a better place for residents, the business community, and visitors?*



Answer: To foster a more positive environment, I will recommend training on topics such as The Roles and Responsibilities of a Member of Council, The Council Staff Relationship Policy, and Harassment in the Workplace. But while I believe we can improve how we disagree; I also think that disagreements are not a bad thing. Different viewpoints are valuable. This position is not about winning or losing votes, but about bringing viewpoints together to make the best collective decisions for our community.



Question: *What will you do to encourage the growth of the industrial and commercial tax base and control the rise in residential taxes?*

Answer: I will advocate for our business tax to remain competitive in comparison to other municipalities, and will encourage out-of-the-box thinking to find ways to maximize and utilize the properties that are available to us. Communication and collaboration between the town and the business community will provide a better understanding of what works and what doesn't. I will encourage us to review and revise our policies so that they are in line with the wants and needs of our community.



Question: *How do you plan to address the important issues and social justice initiatives of our time? The housing crisis, gender equity, Indigenous Reconciliation, 2SLGBTQ+ rights and safety, to name just a few.*

Answer: Because these issues affect all of us in one way or another, I think everyone will agree on the importance of addressing them. To make a difference, a new council will need to commit to: 1. better understanding the issues and the importance of working to resolve them, 2. learning and working on these issues with staff, committees and residents; 3. making social justice issues a council priority; and 4. being held accountable, which will mean dedicating time and resources to these issues.



Question: *Intensification is inevitable. Increased density is needed, especially along Main Street, to support the hospital and the GO train. How will you balance the need for intensification with preserving Grimsby's strong heritage?*

Answer: The town doesn't have the resources to fight off every proposed development separately. Also, we simply can't stop all growth. In addition to being mandated by higher levels of government, it is essential to solving important issues like housing shortages. What we need is a secondary plan that will let us work with residents and experts to develop a vision and guiding principles that reflect the needs of our community and which will guide development for future generations.



Question: *Economic Development is an investment, not an expense. Grimsby is finally catching up with our neighbours by hiring an Economic Development Officer. Do you support the Economic Development Strategy and its implementation? Will you invest in Grimsby's future to attract and retain jobs?*

Answer: I voted in favour of hiring Grimsby's first economic development officer because I believe it is important that we invest in jobs, fair wages, and living standards in Grimsby. I also supported the economic development strategy that was presented to council this year because I agreed with its focus on building partnerships within and outside the town in order to create opportunities for business success, growth, and attraction, which ultimately benefits all Grimsby residents.

