



## Questions for 2022 Municipal Council Candidates



Olena Hankivsky

Mayor

The Port Hope and District Chamber of Commerce is the recognized voice of business in the Municipality of Port Hope. We support all businesses, not just our close to 200 members, and play a key role in advocating on their behalf regarding decisions made by levels of government that may impact them.

These questions are being asked as background research to form individual question(s) for our meet the candidate events and to keep the business community informed of your outlooks with regard to the future of the Municipality of Port Hope. Please be advised that your responses will be shared in full or in part with the community through our membership, community publications and Social Media networks.

### **1. What is your plan for the Municipality over the next 4 years?**

My vision for Port Hope in 4 years is:

- A municipality that works for and with the community
- A community with a vibrant and resilient economy
- An affordable place to live
- A model for sustainable development and climate action
- An inclusive and caring community

### **2. What do you believe is the biggest issue facing the business sector in the Municipality and how do you plan to address it?**

I believe there is a combination of issues starting with recovery from COVID-19, the lack of cohesion among businesses, the absence of an active person overseeing tourism and marketing, and the lack of planning and preparation on how to support businesses during the ongoing and future construction in the downtown core including both Walton and John Streets. Some ways to address these issues include: reinstating a dedicated staff person for tourism and marketing, supporting the establishment of a new group for bringing together businesses across all of Port Hope, and developing a clear plan, drawing on promising practices from other municipalities who have found effective ways to support their businesses through major and prolonged construction

**3. Explain your understanding of economic development and describe the significance to our community.**

From my perspective economic development is about creating jobs and increasing tax revenues but also importantly, improving the well-being and quality of life for a community. Economic development includes efforts to retain existing businesses and to help them expand, securing new investments, providing opportunities for residents – and especially our youth - to be inspired to be entrepreneurial, and creating cooperation and relationships between different levels of government to develop economic resilience. For Port Hope, the limited tax base and growing demands to provide new services and programs in emerging areas of priority, makes such a comprehensive approach to economic development essential for our community.

**4. The downtown core is an integral part of the business community, however there are businesses throughout the municipality including, but not limited to, home based and agri-businesses. What do you believe the municipality can do to support the businesses throughout the entire community and not just in the downtown core?**

The municipality could require each business in Port Hope to apply for a license that would allow for the collection of information about each business, the chance to regularly ask questions about their experiences and needs, and to capture changing trends – including for example the growing challenges of staff shortages, which are in large part linked the lack of affordable housing in our community. The municipality can provide better opportunities for businesses to connect with one another, develop a welcome package and a toolkit for new businesses, hold orientation and regular information sessions for business owners, create and promote regular events between businesses across all of Port Hope, and promote a dynamic calendar of upcoming events.

**5. The municipality has been restructuring and reconsidering their approach to economic development, building and planning. What do you think the best thing the municipality can do in the short, mid and long term to better support growth and development in a fair, timely and financially sound way?**

While it is a promising development that an economic development plan has been introduced, the municipality should detail with whom stakeholder interview and focus groups will be conducted and what kind of strategic priorities workshop is being developed. More attention could be paid to economic development through regional governance structures involving municipalities to strengthen coordinated efforts.

Mid and longer term, the municipality should better collaborate with other levels of government. Economic development activity requires collaboration across all orders of government as well as partnerships with businesses, academic institutions, and not-for-profit organizations. For example, attracting business investment into a community also requires investments into transportation, housing, education, health, art and culture, recreation, and skills development, and these involve both the provincial and federal governments.

The municipality should prioritize the right development in the right places and in the right way and this is especially the case in terms of protecting our farmlands, creating more affordable housing options and using sustainable development practices. In terms of building and planning, the municipality should ensure clarity and predictability, less red tape, more streamlined and predictable processes, and ensuring that decisions are aligned with a new Strategic Plan for Port Hope.

**6. Agriculture and rural businesses are a key piece of the economic viability of this community. What do you think the Municipality should be doing to better support this sector?**

The first priority is to protect agricultural and farming land in this community. The second priority is to engage directly with agricultural and rural businesses to find out what their needs are in terms of municipal support. Thirdly, the municipality should provide opportunities for innovative processes, technologies, products or services that advance agri-sector competitiveness and sustainability to develop, and to assist in identifying and helping to access funding for such innovations.