



## Questions for 2022 Municipal Council Candidates



# Terry Hickey Councillor Ward 1

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?**

Your Municipal government is a “Service Provider”. It should be the overarching goal of Council to not only meet the needs of our community but to anticipate them. That will come about with all departments functioning with the greatest levels of efficiency and at all times ensure timely and appropriate response to the public.

By definition, that will require that all Councillors have a strong working knowledge of all departments and an in-depth understanding of their own portfolio. Combined with that is a reliable and strong communication with the public.

While headline issues tend to take focus during an election, your Councillors will be dealing with dozens of significant issues over the course of their term. Fully understanding issues through input from staff, management and the public will be a necessity.

By ensuring high quality service, those who live here will feel good about what they are receiving and those who visit may well want to relocate here.

It will be incumbent upon Council to manage growth both from a cost and revenue viewpoint and at the same time, keep Port Hope the kind of community that either brought us here or keeps us here.

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

Businesses need to be kept informed. Information coming from the Chamber of Commerce, HBIA and the Municipality should not be conflicting. Surprises can be devastating. Whether on Walton Street, Peter Street, Toronto Road or elsewhere, businesses need to have reliable and consistent service so that clients/customers can actually get to them. If they are ill informed or not informed of service interruptions, business can suffer.

The upcoming rebuild on Walton is a good case in point. There should be at least one person either in, or seconded to, Economic Development whose prime mandate is to be a conduit of information amongst the merchants, Works and the Contractor. Concerns regardless of their points of origin need to be addressed with speed and clarity. The single largest issue I heard from merchants is lack of information. They understand the necessity of the work and want to ensure they are “in the loop” and considered in the process of the improvements.

They also want to be provided with information as to how the Municipality will assist in making it possible for customers to reach their businesses. If Covid 19 was not bad enough, an inaccessible front door is certainly problematic. What is the plan?

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

Economic Development is programs, policies or activities that seek to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. While there may be some common considerations regardless of the community, every community has its own opportunities, challenges and priorities.

Port Hope leans heavily on homeowners to derive revenue. Commercial and Industrial sources are limited and much harder to acquire that several decades ago. The challenge will be to bring new industry or commerce here unless we have a defined Economic Strategic Plan and the experienced personnel to make it happen.

If we want Economic Development we do not dip our toes into the water, but jump in.

- 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?**

I will take you back to question 2. Add to that the need to ensure we have a complete registry of all businesses in Port Hope and ensure we can provide that information to prospective business newcomers who want to know our business composition.

And, as service provider, how can we ensure that their businesses are not hampered by such simple issues as garbage not being regularly picked up and allowed to become unsightly.

- 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?**

Be fully committed! The Economic Development office should have all the resources it needs to aggressively both retain business and expand it. That would demand having people with the experience to tackle the challenge.

Planning needs to be more responsive, open and able to provide a welcoming environment to newcomers on all projects, regardless of size. It does not appear we have the personnel or processes to do this currently.

**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?**

We need to better understand rural business. We should strive to do so. Also, current economic influences are having a far greater and negative impact on farmers. To that end I believe we need to:

- a) Ensure we have suitable infrastructure such as good roads to allow agri-businesses to function.
- b) Continue to aggressively seek a broadband solution.
- c) Review by-laws that currently negatively impact farmers and should be subject to change
- d) Provide faster and simpler building approvals and potentially remove some or all of the development charges.
- e) Work with the Province to establish a BR+E program ( Business Retention and Expansion ) as we do with urban businesses
- f) Start Agri Food Asset Mapping
- g) Consider a rural CIP program