

## Questions submitted from the floor at the BMVA All Candidates Debate

1. Current council does not allow ride-sharing apps like LYFT and Uber. Innisfil has taken a different approach. What are your thoughts?

I prefer local businesses rather than those that send most of the profits to some unknown entity that will never make any sort of investment in our town. LYFT and Uber are not going to sponsor your child's soccer team or contribute to the Christmas hamper program. I think we should support the local taxi companies. I do agree that we need more public transportation systems but I would prefer that these be systems responsive to us and whose profits stay here.

2. AirBnB and other short-term rental websites are a reality that cannot be ignored. If elected, what rules would you want in place for STA?

Short-term rentals should all be licensed and monitored under our existing by-laws. We cannot stop someone renting their property unless neighbours call the by-law enforcement department or the OPP and let them know about it. Town by-law staff actively seek out websites that promote these operations to ensure that all STA operators are given equal treatment.

3. Some areas of TBM do not have the greatest cellular and internet coverage. What will you do to ensure all of TBM have access to reliable high-speed internet and cellular coverage?

Grey County already has a program to expand cellular and internet access, but this really depends on the service providers. Our Economic Development program should work with the County to push service providers to expand their coverage areas and improve service. Internet and cell phone use are not a luxury – they are essential in our society today.

4. Several candidates mention the need to manage spending in the TBM, how do you plan to keep property taxes affordable for residents?

We have to carefully manage the town's budget. I do not believe our town has been wasteful in its spending. I've watched the budgeting process for several years – it is open to the public to attend the meetings – and, although I might not agree with every expenditure and the priorities are not always in line with my own, I can understand the choices that are made. You should be aware that a lot of programs and services are paid for by user fees and rates. This includes water and sewer services, Thornbury Harbour, building fees, planning fees and so on. We also have development charges so that new development pays its fair share of costs for services and infrastructure. Finally, the town has, for many years, used a system of reserve funds – similar to a savings account -- to ensure there is money available for major capital expenditures. This reduces or removes the need to borrow money.

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5. Ensuring a diversified and balanced tax base is a goal for most municipalities. Do you feel we are currently achieving this goal? What steps would you take to bring the Town more into balance?

Setting up our Economic Development program to attract small to medium businesses and light industry as well as green industries will help us to expand the commercial and industrial base. For example, we need to encourage and, if possible, actively assist our agricultural sector to develop new value-added farm businesses such as cider and wine shops, similar to those in the Niagara area and Prince Edward County. Expanding our attainable housing base will allow more young workers and young entrepreneurs to live here and that, too, will help expand commercial tax base.

6. In approving new subdivisions in TBM, residents have complained that the entire parcel of land is deforested to build homes. Do you agree with this approach to development or would you fight to ensure developers keep some of the existing trees?

Trees are a crucial part of our environment. We have to keep as many of them as we can. I realize trees have to be removed, but we have a lot of subdivisions, here, in which trees were retained, especially around the perimeter. These homes are almost invisible from the roadways. This is the environmentally-responsible approach with the added benefit that the trees help retain the feeling of rural countryside. I know there have been incidents of developers clear-cutting land in contravention of the by-laws and town staff have acted accordingly. These cases should be prosecuted to ensure there is an appropriate resolution.

7. Many Ontario municipalities are grappling with an infrastructure deficit. Aging pipes, roads and building are adding up. What priorities do you have for the Town that needs immediate attention?

I spoke at a recent council meeting about the need to begin identifying outdated infrastructure and set in place a plan to replace it over a reasonable period of time. We have, for example, some outdated water lines that were installed many years ago by one or two homeowners as a do-it-yourself project. We have stormwater management systems that will not handle the increasingly-heavy rains and spring melts. Town staff advise that they are changing the way they evaluate drainage systems because weather systems, today, are delivering much stronger storm events on a more frequent basis. The systems were designed for the "100-year" storm, but the "100-year" storms are coming more often and with more intensity than anyone expected. Future systems will have to be even more robust. We have to get to work on this now.

8. Will you extend the operating hours for the landfill?

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If there is a need I think we could expand the hours, provided everyone understands that there would be additional staffing costs. I would want to first do an assessment of how many hours are needed and what times of day would work best.

9. In your opinion, what services or programs does our community lack and how will you address this?

The biggest need is more diversity of housing that will allow more young families to live here. I would like to see a recreation centre, including an aquatics facility, but that will be an expensive project and we need to be sure it will be used. The same goes for a transit system. I dislike seeing empty buses driving a route just because there's a schedule that requires that bus to drive that route at that time. Perhaps an on-call transit system, locally owned and operated, could work. We should go back to The Sustainable Path and other documents created by the community over the past decade and review them as a means to start a discussion about how to prioritize services and programs.

10. Some candidates have suggested their preference for a ward system, others are happy with the current at-large system of electing council. Where do you stand on this issue? What if any other changes would you propose to council to help it better serve the community?

I do not advocate for a ward system. I think all members of council should serve the entire community. Ward systems tend to encourage backroom deal-making – you support my pet project and I'll support yours. Many people are unhappy with the way Grey County Council operates – it is a ward system. I would not want to see that sort of governance in our town.

11. Please share your thoughts on the Pretty River Quarry proposal?

I see very little local benefit and it will be our taxpayers who will have to put up with the noise, truck traffic and potential drainage and water table issues (if extraction is permitted below the water table). The proximity to the Pretty River Valley is another big concern. Council has rejected this proposal although Grey County has approved. Council will work with residents to ensure our voices are heard.

12. Do you have plans to create or protect more green space in TBM?

Of course. With the exception that we might use some of the existing unused park space to create attainable housing – so that the town can retain ownership of the land and, thereby, ensure rents and prices are controlled – I believe green space is the stock-in-trade of our town. We can require, as has long been the case, developers to include green space in and around their development lands.

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13. As more people use bikes to commute, exercise and enjoy the outdoors they find themselves in competition with cars for scarce routes. How would you address the concerns of cyclists who are looking for improved safety and capacity?

We need to add bicycle lanes to all our connecting roads. This might mean extra cost initially, but my understanding is that bicycle lanes mean less wear and tear on the road edges so roads last longer and remain in better condition through their lifetime. That is, of course, not as important as safety of cyclists, especially children. On rural roads, where there are no sidewalks, I see cycling lanes as being also a walking trail. Again, I'm not suggesting we do this overnight, but as we replace and upgrade roads, or new roads are built, cycling lanes and sidewalks or walking paths should be included.