

**June Porter candidate for Councillor responses**  
**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?

**As part of a transit solution ride-sharing apps like LYFT and Uber must be given full consideration. I have looked at the Innisfil Transit and particularly like the section titled 'affordable' rides with flat fares to a set list of popular destinations and teen accounts which give parents a level of comfort. As an elected councillor I would engage Innisfil to understand their experience. The newly elected council with its substantive agenda to deliver cannot afford to reinvent - we must learn and adopt ideas from others and adjust as required.**

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?

**AirBnB services clearly have benefits, as they promise to make tourism more affordable for visitors and provide new income streams to residents. However, as with STAs, there are also concerns associated with home-sharing, such as its potentially detrimental impacts on the availability of rental options for residents and on noise in residential neighbourhoods.**

**Whistler has already responded to AirBnB in adopting a new Tourism Accommodation Regulation bylaw to give the municipality the ability to provide assurances to visitors that the accommodations they are booking are being rented legally. The Town of The Blue Mountain should look to resort towns such as this as to not reinvent the wheel and be more efficient in their decision making. Since Whistler's bylaw has been in force for over a year the town can benefit from their experience to date and lessons learned. I noted that in the last set of staff reports regarding STAs that the word AirBnB was not contained within the document.**

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?

**Your concern is very real; given it has been fifteen (15) years since the federal government launched its first funding program to address the internet access gap in rural and remote areas problems as you cite remain. The gaps in service, impact business (including agriculture), tourism, education, and social activities.**

**There has been progress in the region, however, transmission via towers are negatively impacted by the uneven terrain. Satellites work well when the weather is good. Fiber optics is the preferred yet most expensive option.**

**Grey County has been successful in leveraging programs like Rural**

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**Connections and SouthWest Integrated Fibre Technology Network (SWIFT). Currently SWIFT's release of final network design and construction is scheduled for late 2018/early 2019 with the first phase being completed in 2022.**

**The latest update from SWIFT to Grey County is dated July 30, 2018. In this update they include a link to an online survey which is still active as of Monday October 8, 2018. The link is [www.swiftnetwork.ca/survey](http://www.swiftnetwork.ca/survey) The survey has a selection of portals; business, residential/farm and also a hard copy option. They notable state that they include seasonal dwellings. If you haven't provided input to date I would encourage to consider participating.**

**Given the impact that high speed internet and cellular coverage has on all residents and equally community economic development, if elected I would keep community informed and ensure Grey County holds SWIFT to their timelines and deliverables. High speed internet and cellular coverage are key infrastructures need to be in placed to support economic development.**

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

**There needs to be significant reductions in the legal and consulting spend by the town. Not only has the spending been a misuse of tax dollars, the need for these services creates unnecessary distractions and delays in decision making.**

**I understand that even recently the town sought a legal opinion regarding 3) Election signs on page 21/42 of By-Law Number 2016 - 71. While only one example, it is the cumulative effect of both staff and chargeable hours which add up to unnecessary spend which ultimately impacts future budgets.**

**Another form of managing spending is the exploration of shared regional services and opportunities for this need to be within and across county boundaries. Yes, shared services should be actively explored to manage tax dollars in the most efficient manner.**

**The residents would also need to 'buy-into' the need for a change of this magnitude. The underlying need for this is that generally residents perceive this as a loss; therefore the case for change would need to be compelling. That is they also need to be aware of how the 'saving' of tax dollars will directly impact them.**

**I have experience in outsourcing, service consolidation and the benefits of shared services, which in health care cross government imposed boundaries.**

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**This would also require Grey and other counties/municipalities to take a broader systems approach to human resource planning. However, given the concern over property taxes is not unique to the Town of The Blue Mountains, I would leverage the broader win for county and or neighbouring municipalities all or which will have some new players to the table.**

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?

**Interesting questions. The short answer is no, I don't feel the town is currently achieving this goal. There have been attempts in the past to start working towards the achievement of this goal as evidenced through the development of the following documents:**

**The Sustainable Path  
Red, Hot and Blue**

**The development of the above documents while undertaken with hope and optimism for a prosperous future were not actioned. These should have enabled the town to embark on a strategic approach to identify the 'very' best growth opportunities and nurture them, planning so that the town and its surroundings could cope with the demands of growth have placed upon them, integrating environmental thinking and ensuring that all residents enjoy their town's prosperity.**

**There are still some salient points in this document, however, there is a critical need to invest in infrastructure to work towards a more diversified and balanced tax base. The need for infrastructure is commented on in more detail under questions # 1, 3, 7, 9, 12 and 13.**

**I am committed to working if elected with others to identify the very best growth opportunities and provide the necessary infrastructure for the town to prosper.**

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?

**While I appreciate that developers find cleared land easier for construction, the buyers of these residential dwellings actually like and want trees on their property – mature trees. A well-planned and maintained tree canopy improves air quality, access to green space/natural settings for recreational and social opportunities, and mental health promotion.**

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**Changes to the municipal act now require municipalities to have tree canopy policies, which they can tailor to suit local needs. Development of these a tree canopy policy would not be a labour intensive exercise given that there are an abundance of examples from municipalities who were ahead of the curve over a decade ago.**

**Developers can and do seek forgiveness after the fact and payment of a fine be considered the cost of doing business. Therefore there needs to be tighter controls put in place at the onset of development approvals which include clauses such as: for every tree removed in violation a predetermined number (x) of a similar size will be planted. Bylaw officers also need to be proactive as opposed to reactive.**

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?

**Currently I actively follow the unfolding of the Town of The Blue Mountains' Thornbury West Master Drainage Plan by attending public meetings and asking questions. There is also the Master Plan Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) to investigate opportunities to improve water and wastewater services to all properties in the Clarksburg Service Area. Lastly, there is a Town-wide Water Distribution Master Plan EA, although no public meetings & information centres dates have been determined.**

**This are very important undertaking as there are a significant number of concerned residents with respect to the impact of water drainage on their personal residents, including excessive sump pump operation and basement flooding. I am equally interested in how the alternative drainage solutions will be developed and evaluated. My rationale for this is that when I have asked questions on the weighting applied to the evaluation criteria; natural, physical, social, cultural and economic impacts and the opportunities and constraints of the project there have been no readily available answers which are of great concern. The proposal of solutions and subsequent weighting of them is critical to the addressing and resolving the drainage issue particularly as there is current vacant land which is most likely going to be developed.**

**There is also the need to address management of Leachate.**

**They are all priorities; however, the weighting and ordering of priorities can be impacted by the availability of federal and provincial funds. Having said that even when funds are available it needs to be the right solution; an example of what not to do was the pipeline for the Leachate which was dependent on provincial funding.**

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**The prioritization process needs to fit into the context of the bigger picture as to ensure that there is no rework (wasted tax dollars) in the overall plan.**

**Everything being equal I would prioritize immediate action where the impact on our other pressing needs would reap greatest return; such as attainable housing and transit.**

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

**Yes, as they need to be more flexible to accommodate those who are weekenders. I would look to extend the evening and weekend hours and monitoring uptake to ensure cost effectiveness.**

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

**The community while benefiting from a range of services and programs would benefit from with respect to:**

**Attainable housing:**

**Have town staff develop a Request for Information (RFI) released to signal to developers the town is open for business and summarized information. Outline the potential property as have been requested in Staff Report FAF.18.125, dated September 10<sup>th</sup> 2018.**

**Have council direct staff to start the development of Request for Proposal for Attainable Housing to meet the 180 days which would ensure that it was issued by the summer of 2019.**

**Residents and businesses are looking for tangible evidence of action towards resolution – shovels in the ground, people moving in.**

**Transportation:**

**Following on from the housing comment above, there is a need to ensure the land for attainable housing have favourable walk scores. For the RFP it is important that any 'attainable' housing properties have walkability to grocery stores and potential high traffic areas as they are potential routes for transit.**

**Obtain an update on the transit pilot and to ascertain what works and what needs to change to progress to a sustainable service.**

**Engage with the Georgian Shores Drive Preservation Association regarding**

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**the potential widening of Hwy 26 to identify where the town and council need to take action as not to duplicate efforts and work in collaboration.**

**Give serious consideration to alternatives to public transportation such as the arrangement Innisfil has entered into with Uber. I have commented on this in more detail under question #1.**

**There also needs to be increased investment in cycling infrastructure. I have responded to this in more detail under question #13**

**Primary health care:**

**There is a significant shortage of health care professionals to care for the current and future health needs of our residents. I would build on my extensive experience in health care as a Registered Nurse combined with my business acumen to work to bring a Family Health Team (FHT) to the town. FHTs include physicians, nurse practitioners, occupational therapist and psychology services. Given the rural nature of our community I would also leverage opportunities provided by Ontario Telemedicine Network, which provides health care in the comfort of your own home.**

**Affordable Childcare**

**This is a key underlying infrastructure to support community economic development and is needed if the town is to attract millennials and GenXers to the area. The BVO provides pre and post school care, but can find securing workers problematic. Overall the town needs to be more supportive in assisting entrepreneurs finding suitable premises. I recall in either late August, early September an entrepreneur was looking for assistance in securing a premise to provide day care through the local Facebook community forum.**

**Other services and programs include:**

**Internet and cellular covered in more detail in question #3**

**Green space covered in more detail in question #12**

- 10. Some candidates have suggested their preference for a ward system, others are current at-large system 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?**

**Representation and accountability are two basic pillars of any healthy democratic political system. Our municipal governments is our most proximate level of government as they are close, councils are people we see in**

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shops and restaurants and when, for example, water mains rupture, they're expected to clean up the mess.

The arguments against a ward system of representation largely focus upon two things: the potential for divisiveness, especially between rural and urban dwellers as well as the full and part time residents.

I feel that at the present time the **current at-large system** will serve the community while the council rebuilds trust with the residents and businesses. When that is truly in place, there can be open and honest public meetings on the subject of ward versus representation at large. The public meetings would also need to take place to accommodate the community in their locality. I would expect the desire for a referendum would arise from the residents as it needs to be their choice. What I would support is what the residents of the community feel best meets their needs.

Changes that would better serve the community at large include:

- Town meetings held in other parts of the community, such as at the Blue Mountain Village, Marsh Centre, and Ravenna Hall etc.
- Weekend and extended town hall hours during peak vacation times
- Conference call facilities within the town hall to enable residents to participate in meetings with town personnel
- Monthly postings of frequently asked questions arising from a town hall hot line as suggested by another candidate.
- **Personally, I will create and sustain a transparent relationship with you, establish a newsletter, webpage and meet with residents to let them know what is happening and where I stand on the issue before it goes to council. This will give residents the opportunity to voice their concerns and help me to understand them, as well as hold me accountable for my vote on council. I feel that this will assist those who are not here fulltime to have input to the town they enjoy.**

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

**I oppose the Pretty River Quarry. There are other ways and means of increasing production in Ontario without seeking changes to changes to our community's official plan. We need to remember our official plan describes how land in your community should be used. It is prepared with input from our community and helps to ensure that future planning and development will meet the specific needs of our community (according to the Municipal Act <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page1759.aspx> ). The changes would allow a new pit to be established bordering the Pretty River Valley Provincial Park and impact the wildlife habitat buffering the park. We need to protect the green space we have.**



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

**Yes, in keeping with the above answer to protect green space, there is also a need to create green space.**

**Last year I was at a public meeting for the unopened road allowances of Victoria and Bay Street West. At that time another item on the docket was the request of a developer in Lora Bay to claw back previous allocated green space for the purpose of creating additional residential building lots.**

**While residents need a place to live, they also need a place to walk to, enjoy sitting with their dog and or children/grandchildren or simply rest before returning home.**

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?

**I would support the development and implementation of a road usage plan in support of #CycleON and Bicycle Friendly Community. This should arise from a Road Usage Action Orientated Committee comprised of those stakeholders from the cycling, interested residents, the agricultural community and law enforcement. I say 'action orientated' as at the rate of cyclists increasing there is a pressing issue. The reason that all the stakeholders need to be involved is that they all need to be part of the strategic solutions. In working towards solutions, their respective needs and concerns have a platform to be heard, respective and addressed. A front page article in the Toronto star a few months back while painting both sides in an unfavourable light, did serve to highlight that there are 'issues'.**

**There are organizations such as the South Georgian Bay Cycling Coalition who would likely wish to participate in a committee of this nature. Especially, as they have in the lead up to this election asked all of the candidates to respond to seven (7) questions along this theme. I would also suggest that this be at a minimum a tri-municipality committee and residents of Collingwood and Meaford as cycling knows no boundaries.**