



Town of The Blue Mountains Election - 2022 Candidate Questionnaire

A. Before we begin with our priorities, please tell us why you are running, what your priorities will be if elected, and finally, why BMVA members should vote for you?

I'm running for council in the Town Of The Blue Mountains for several reasons but the main reason is that a number of citizens, not-for-profits and service clubs have asked me to. I'm also concerned for my fellow citizens - as a councillor, I may have an impact on improving their lives. We also have a generation of people and many citizens who have lost hope for their future - the reasons are many, ranging from climate change, global events, to a system that has barred them from participating within it. I have been fortunate all of my life to have participated in one of the most predicible periods in the Canadian experience for both financial and social upward mobility. It is my hope that serving on council will allow me to help others see a positive future.

B. Have you worked with BMVA in the past and do you believe we add value to residents, businesses and government?

I have indirectly worked with the BMVA and I believe that the BMVA adds financial and social importance to the residents of the Town of the Blue Mountains and the surrounding municipalities.

On the business side, the BMVA brings to the table a level of expertise on marketing strategies and resources that are complementary to the area.

On the topic of government involvement, the BMVA is an active participant with lower tier and upper tier governments and brings to the table its concerns, along with other private sector operators within the tourism sector.

C. Did the outgoing council implement any changes/ bylaws /policies that you hope to reverse or change?

Any changes to bylaws and policies or implementation of new must be a decision of Council, after the municipality has gone through a robust consultation process, with representation from the entire municipality.

Economic Recovery & Development

BMVA supports continued growth and diversification of our local economy to assist businesses, municipalities and social agencies to meet the service needs of local

residents and visitors. Predictable and equitable tax rates, employment lands development, key infrastructure improvements and innovative partnerships between private, public and social agencies are needed. The local economy will be in recovery and rebuilding mode over the full course of the next municipal term of office. All sectors of the economy will require time and support to rebuild; now is not the time to implement new taxes, increase costs to do business or to over-regulate.

D. Do you support the above statement?

I support the statement but I'm not 100% sure that we are entirely in full recovery mode.

E. Will you continue to collaborate with and support BMVA's DMO/Tourism role as well as our arts, culture and sports programming?

I will collaborate and support the BMVA roles and activities; as long as they can be demonstrated to work in the best interest of the taxpayers.

F. Will you commit to not increasing taxes or implementing new taxes?

I am not a fan of taxation as being the magic cure-all. Having said that, the municipality who is, as we know, a child of the province and must beat to the drum of the municipal act and is maybe required to raise property taxes or alternate means of taxation in order to meet our social and financial responsibilities based on zero budgeting (and can't budget for a deficit).

Local Labour Market Development

Our local labour market is insufficient to meet the needs of businesses, municipalities, social agencies and consumers across the region. This is the result of population growth by demographics that do not participate in the local employment market, the size of Canada's workforce approaching retirement, high cost of living, out-migration of local youth, low local immigration settlement and more. The Town of The Blue Mountains needs to strengthen the local labour market by stimulating local infrastructure investments in: attainable and workforce housing, regional public transportation, local post-secondary programs, supports to welcome new Canadians and their families, childcare, productive relationships with upper- and lower-tier regional municipalities and more.

G. What initiatives would you support to attract and retain workers to the area and will you prioritize this issue?

Currently we are experiencing labour market shortages that are even confusing some of the economists. The labour market shortages, combined with inflation and rising interest rates, are going to impede the ability to hire, as people require more dollars to meet their own needs. Another thing that is compounding the issue is the level of overall government bureaucracy and government burden that is driving the labour market underground.

I think what we as a municipality might be able to do is assist in the development and the execution of increased use of technology and innovation into the workplace by encouraging

and promoting one of our colleges or universities to develop local employment needs. The bottom line is we need to have people produce more and pay them more and in the end reducing the reliance on labour dependency. I also think that business must take the lead along, with municipal and upper tier government support and that everyone within the business community, and I mean everyone, needs figure out a new deal that works for the both the employer and employee, as we are heading down a very slippery slope with a uncertain outcome.

H. New Canadians often look for unique supports (i.e., places of worship, community centres) when choosing a place to settle. What role do you see for the municipal government to assist in this regard?

I can see the municipality working collaboratively with those who are more experienced in such matters. The not-for-profits, service clubs and the already-established places of worship have a proven record in this area in the past and I would see no reason for a council to deviate from supporting these agencies in their efforts.

As for unique support systems, for example, places of worship or community centres, I can certainly see the municipality assisting in the application process and the introduction to those within the public and private sector to achieve their goals and objectives.

A group of citizens who we all should be having a conversation with are the First Nations, who also should be included in the labour market development conversation.

Transportation

Getting around South Georgian Bay and the Blue Mountains efficiently and safely has become an issue that urgently needs to be addressed. We believe the following priorities are critical: improved safety measures on local roads, new highway capacity, expanded public transit service, and increased active transportation and trails (particularly in the Craigeith/Village community).

I. Public transit, bike paths, highways and public parking often compete for the same municipal dollars, How will you juggle these competing transportation and transit priorities?

We need to get a handle on people speeding in residential areas and in particular around places with young children, schools and the elderly are located. This also must include pedestrian traffic, the cyclist, those with special needs, those within the agricultural community. and others who practice and use old transportation systems

J. What road safety improvements would you prioritize and why?

For this we will require increased signage, including electronic, for motorised vehicles, more crosswalks, in particular for those with special needs, increased paved shoulders, especially in some of our more heavily used traffic corridors, pedestrian sidewalks especially in areas with young children and seniors, and finally increased enforcement of speed limits and other traffic regulations.

K. What initiatives would you support to increase transportation options for visitors, residents and workers in the area?

As a potential elected official, I would like to see improved across the board public transportation system that speaks to the need of those going to work, or seniors going to buy groceries or for medical appointments . It needs to be predictable and use the power of service clubs, private participation and the public sector. I have had conversations with a citizen in Meaford about the modelling and I do believe that this is worth investigating further.

Why, these things just makes good sense and is the responsible thing to do.

L. E-scooters/bikes & electric cars, both privately owned and rental, are more available than ever before, do you support these modes of transportation and will you invest in infrastructure to allow the safe operation of them?

E bikes and electric cars I support both public and private as long as they meet local and provincial guidelines.

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Housing

The Town of The Blue Mountains lacks attainable home ownership, rental supply and workforce housing options. Numerous strategies have been created over the last decade by industry, local municipalities and our local not-for-profit Attainable Housing Corporation. We do not need to develop more strategic plans. We need changes to our Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw to permit development of a greater range of attainable residential and workforce housing options, as well as balanced and appropriate increases in density and height in the right places. A strengthened partnership between the Town and The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation can accelerate the right policies and implementation plans.

M. Will you champion the implementation of changes to our official plan and zoning bylaws to expedite the development of attainable and workforce housing? What else do you envision can be done to meet this need?

I'm not 100% sure how I should address this, since we are possibly going to see a housing correction that may lead to other outcomes that may influence our current thinking. Setting a housing correction aside, as a municipality, we will need to explore many approaches that will include a wide range of possibilities such as increased building heights, intensification, employer-based housing and upper tier subsidized housing programs. Everything should be on the table and nothing should be left unexplored. We will need to look at multi-generational housing, employer-based housing, tiny homes and increased rental housing. I had even wondered about housing above public and private parking lots as part of a re purposing method and

intensification, at the same time preserving the need for parking, while creating a space or housing close to the labour market.

Sustainability/Whole Communities

BMVA believes that a collaborative approach on key initiatives can make a big difference, including: financial incentives for businesses and residents to implement green technologies and upgrades, increasing electrical vehicle infrastructure, and joint municipal/private sector service delivery to achieve economies of scale (e.g., snow removal, waste, recycling).

Public greenspace, parks, family amenities, waterfront access and trails are lacking in the Craigleith/Blue Mountain Village community. With the recent boom in new residential development (and associated development charge and property tax revenues), residents want a more integrated, safe, green and accessible Craigleith/Blue Mountain Village community.

N. What commitments will you make to the residents of Craigleith and Blue Mountain Village to address these concerns?

O. Are there any current municipal services you would increase or decrease?

Snow removal is an interesting point and will need to be talked about in greater detail with a new council. We may also need to establish an official designated snow yard within the official plan for these areas, since climate change modelling seems to be predicting more erratic weather patterns. There are also some ideas coming out of other cool climate countries that use snow yards for cooling their buildings. Any and all practical ideas that use natural systems to conserve energy and fight climate change can only be positive.

As our population increases and become more permanent, residential waste management becomes increasingly more problematic. Our society is very wasteful, principally because we are a consumer based society, ranging from food to other purchases and these end up in our landfill that is paid for by you and me. I think we all need to get on the same page and reduce waste first and secondly we as a new council will all need to first better understand all the relationships, new and old, that exist between the citizens, both public and private.

As for increasing municipal parks in the Blue Mountain and Craigleith area, the municipality will need to acquire these lands using standard methods and from time to time allowing for re purposing and re programming since intensification should not only be the language used for housing.

Another idea that is being floated within the community is for the creation of a Federal or Provincial park ranging from Devil's Glen to Talisman, modelled perhaps like the Queen Elizabeth Provincial Park in the Haliburton area - this park may offer a solution in response to increased development

An interconnecting municipal trail system should be developed and implemented that ties into the Georgian Trail, Blue Mountain and Craigleith areas.

Access to water for recreation is becoming increasingly more difficult as property values continue to rise and houses become more valuable. At some point in time, the need to acquire waterfront may need to be explored or maybe something as creative, such as the development of an artificial lake for public use - this idea seems bold but bold ideas will be needed. In the interim, splashpads, fountains and cooling stations may be a doable solution as summer temperatures rise due to climate change and something that maybe of interest in the winter, one can create artificial ice using an ice cube system with enough excess heat generated to heat several buildings.

I would certainly not be exploring any significant changes as part of a new council, unless council as a whole decides to. As a potential elected official, I must be honest - I would embrace ideas that are new bold and creative and work in the best interest of the tax payer.