

Sandra O'Connor

1. Do you think it possible to finalize a new Official Plan within the first year of the new Council's term? What in your view should be the key elements of a new Official Plan that differ from the existing Official Plan?

Answer: Having a new Official Plan (OP) is one of my priorities, as it was when I ran in the last election, and I would work to have it implemented within a year. The Town is in the middle of a contract regarding the OP, which should be completed in the Spring after another public consultation with residents. The other constraint is that the Region must approve the OP before it is officially implemented.

The OP must recognize that growth should compliment the character and feel of the surrounding neighbourhoods and that the provincial targets are reduced for NOTL. The town urban density/intensification targets have been met for many years into the future and this should not be a driver for the land use development. This is extremely important for the recognition of the role that our natural environment plays in the health and heritage of our community, and to maintain the character and feel of it. Height restrictions should be considered as a tool to maintain the character of the Town. Estate lots need to be protected, heritage rules and regulations need to be brought into the plan.

Another key element would be to strengthen the heritage aspects of the plan – cultural, built and natural heritage. Words such as “may” should be changed to “shall”, in most cases. Other weak words that need strengthening are: “flexibility, if possible, and not significantly”.

The OP should also recognize the need to ensure that appropriate growth enhances the natural scenic beauty and character of the town. We must enhance, not just maintain it. The OP consultant's report recommends that we take out reference to the tree lined streets that make NOTL unique. This natural heritage needs to be kept in the OP.

2. What is your ten-year vision for the communities that comprise NOTL (Glendale, Old Town, Queenston, St. David's and Virgil) with respect to residential and commercial development?

Answer: My vision for all of NOTL is to continue to nurture the things that have evolved through time to make NOTL special: a community spirit, a sense of belonging, social responsibility, and an appreciation of cultural, built and natural heritage. New development opportunities should preserve and enhance this special community and lifestyle.

Our Official Plan is a long-range document meant to implement the vision. OP issues that are part of my vision for the next 10 years are:

- maintaining the special attributes of the Town;
- preserving the greenbelt and agricultural lands;
- enhancing our cultural, built and natural heritage (including increasing our urban tree canopy);
- maintaining development density to what is in the current OP i.e. limit increased density to designated areas such as the Glendale Area District Plan which will have prior public consultation with the community; and
- ensuring that adequate commercial and employment lands available to allow growth.

Each community has unique characteristics and inherent needs which are specific to it. They need to be considered individually yet interdependently.

3. Is the current proposal for Randwood (the most recent revised plan submitted by the Marotta group) appropriate for this site and neighbourhood given its significant cultural heritage value and its location in an established residential neighbourhood? Why or why not?

Answer: In my opinion, the current proposal is not appropriate for this site. The number of stories should be held to that previously approved for the Romance Inn and no higher. It is not in keeping with special character of the Town or that specific neighbourhood. There are too many details that would be intrusive to neighbours e.g. amenities close to residences, outdoor entertainment space too large, potential noise issues, etc. There is no natural heritage protection plan e.g. trees, shrubs. Both traffic and sewage issues are a major concern.

4. What consideration should be given in your view to the various matters specified in OPA51 (the Official Plan amendment in 2011 that permitted Randwood to be changed from residential to commercial for the Romance Inn- see attached) when deciding whether the Marotta group proposal should be approved?

Answer: All of the issues raised in Part B – The Amendment should be addressed in this new proposal. Since it states, “At the site plan approval stage, the property shall be designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act”, I don’t understand why it has taken so long to implement it. All the other matters are also very important to save the heritage (built and natural) aspects of the site and to minimize impact on surrounding residences.

5. What would you do to ensure the preservation and sensitive use of other heritage buildings and lands within each of the communities that comprise NOTL?

Answer: I would like to initiate a dialogue with the community on expanding our heritage designations and potentially our heritage areas. Ensuring that our natural heritage is adequately protected (e.g. heritage trees, special landscapes, area of natural and scientific interest, conservation areas) is a priority. Amendments to zoning would need to address the heritage of the area. I would advocate looking into expanding the mandate of the Municipal Heritage Committee.

6. How will you ensure appropriate public input into planning decisions affecting high-profile sites such as Randwood (e.g. encouraging staff to accommodate delegations, location of Council and committee meetings on matters of great public interest such as Randwood)?

Answer: I believe that Council and staff have to be more meaningfully responsive to the community. That would include holding Council and COTW meetings in a larger venue when the issue warrants it. Staff should be available to meet with delegations to discuss important Town changes. Communications should be clear and widely available on issues. The website should be more user friendly. All data should be readily available to the community in a timely manner.

7. Under what circumstances if any would you support the expansion of the current NOTL urban boundaries into agricultural land or the Greenbelt?

Answer: I would not support any expansion of the urban boundaries into the Greenbelt. It is our heritage. In addition, the current Council asked the previous provincial government to take Greenbelt designated land out of the Greenbelt on the parcel behind the Randwood Estate. The province did not approve it, thank goodness, however this Council has kept it in the proposed NOTL Official Plan. The new Council must remove that request.