

Terry Davis

Q: Do you think that it is possible to finalize a new official plan in 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?

A: While I am committed to getting Niagara-on-the-Lake's official plan finalized as quickly as possible, ideally within a year of being elected to council, the speed at which this work can be successfully completed will depend to a large extent on the composition of the new council. We need councillors who are willing to put in the hours required to get the job done, and who understand the importance of the plan as a means of ensuring that future development in our town is appropriate (i.e. in keeping with the character of town, and its heritage and natural characteristics).

At this point, I believe that it would be inappropriate for me to comment on the key elements I would like to see in the new plan that differ from elements in the existing plan. I would like to see more public and stakeholder consultation take place before the new plan is finalized, plus I would need to carefully consider and review both the region's official plan as well as provincial regulations and policies, alongside NOTL's current official plan, before I would feel comfortable taking a position on the elements I would like to see in a new town plan. Bottom line, I need more information and to hear from residents to be able to answer this question, but I will put in the time required to get the job of finalizing a new official plan for NOTL done.

However, I will say that I would like the new plan to include appropriate setbacks, lot sizes and density levels, with the goal of maintaining the heritage and natural characteristics of our town, and that in areas where the plan allows high-density developments, I would like to see height and architectural design provisions to ensure that the look and feel of new developments are consistent with the unique characteristics of Niagara-on-the-Lake.

I would also like the official plan to be finalized in conjunction with a new tree bylaw, which places a priority on preserving municipal trees as well as healthy trees on private land, to ensure that our town's tree canopy is maintained as new development occurs.

We need new development, both residential and commercial, to ensure that Niagara-on-the-Lake continues to be a vibrant, economically sustainable community that has the financial resources to provide residents with the services, facilities, programs and infrastructure they need and want. But we need the right development in the right places, and the official plan can be a powerful tool in that regard.

Q: What is your 10-year vision for the communities that comprise NOTL (Glendale, Old Town, Queenston, St Davids and Virgil) with respect to residential and commercial development?

A: Developing a 10-year vision for the future of the communities that together make up Niagara-on-the-Lake is a commendable objective to work toward. However, it is not an exercise that should be undertaken in isolation. I believe that the vision must be shared by the people who live and work in Niagara-on-the-Lake, and we must both consult and work with them to develop it. It will not be easy. It's going to take a lot of work. But it needs to be done. As I have stated in my election platform: "Together, we can determine and shape the future of our town."

Q: 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?

A: I do not believe that the current proposal for Randwood is appropriate for the site. There are several reasons for this, including the height of the proposed hotel and, based on the architect's drawings I have seen, its design. A hotel of three to four stories, with an overall height that is consistent with what council approved in 2011, and an exterior façade/design that is consistent with the heritage nature of the site and Old Town would be acceptable. So would a hotel that has a larger footprint on the property to accommodate the number of rooms being proposed by the developer, provided that all heritage buildings on the site are preserved. If council does eventually approve a proposal that includes building a hotel, it should be cognizant of potential noise and traffic issues, and ensure that both the noise bylaw in NOTL and the enforcement of the noise bylaw are enhanced to address the concerns of residents. It should also take action that supports traffic safety, and greater enforcement of speed limits as well as stop sign laws and regulations.

Q: 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?

A: It stands to reason that when the current developer purchased the Randwood estate, the developer was aware of the zoning amendments that had been approved by council in 2011 to change the permitted use of the property from residential to commercial, and of the height as well as other restrictions that council had put in place related to the proposal to build a hotel and conference centre on the property. Ideally, the developer should have brought forward a proposal that respected the 2011 zoning amendments. Media coverage of the current proposal suggests that the council of 2011 carefully considered the requested bylaw amendments and the potential impacts of the 2011 proposal on the adjoining residential neighbourhood. It also suggests that while the issue was contentious, the decision of council to approve the 2011 proposal was accepted by residents as a reasonable outcome. I need to do more research on this matter before taking a definitive position on the relevance of OPA51 to the current proposal, but I believe that council

should hold firm on maintaining the height and sightline restrictions established in the 2011 amendment.

Q: 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?

A: Ideally, town should work with the owners of heritage buildings to protect them. I am not fully aware of what has been done to date in this regard, such as establishing an inventory of heritage buildings, and undertaking an evaluation of the heritage characteristics of buildings in the inventory to assess whether or not they should be protected through heritage designation. Ideally, however, I would like to see this process carried out collaboratively with property owners. As part of this work, town, possibly through the heritage committee, could provide owners with information on the federal and provincial funding programs available to support the restoration and preservation of heritage buildings. I would like this to occur in a planned and ongoing manner, so that heritage buildings are designated and protected – to the extent this is possible under municipal, regional, provincial and federal regulations – well in advance of them being put under threat by future development. I am committed to preserving NOTL’s built and natural heritage, and will work hard to achieve this goal.

Q: 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)?

A: I have made a commitment in my campaign literature to consider and strive to balance the needs and aspirations of urban and rural rate payers from all districts of our town in municipal bylaws and planning, and work to ensure that all their views are heard in future council decisions. When contentious issues arise, I believe residents, businesses and stakeholders should have an opportunity to present their views and positions to council, and that council should ensure that meetings are held in locations that support this when possible – i.e. in venues that accommodate larger numbers of people. Meetings should be organized in a manner that allows sufficient time for interested participants to address council, and that respects the accepted rules of order for the conduct of meetings. Whether this is achievable will depend on the composition of the new council following the Oct. 22 election.

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

A: I am opposed to the expansion of the current NOTL urban boundaries into the greenbelt. Although there are circumstances where I’d be willing to consider exceptions, such as using lands in the greenbelt to create parks, recreational facilities and trails, or cultural opportunities, as a general rule I would not support proposals that see NOTL’s urban boundaries encroach into the greenbelt. I also favour, as a general principle, keeping agricultural land agricultural. Significant parcels of prime agricultural land have already

been permanently taken out of production in Canada to allow residential and commercial development, reducing our nation's capacity to be food self-sufficient. I would have great difficulty supporting development proposals that continued this trend. Again, it may be possible to make exceptions to allow the creation of parks, recreational facilities and trails or cultural experiences. Other considerations, such as the need to enhance road safety, may also be factors that could warrant an exception being made.