

**SORE Questionnaire Response – Daniel Turner, Lord Mayoral
Candidate for the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake**

- 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?**

It deeply concerns me that we do not have an official plan. It should have been updated in the first two years of this council. Given how long it has taken, the town should be able to get this done well within a year. I was informed that the consultant doing this is being paid \$225K.

I believe that there are measures that could have been taken to have a better Plan at far less cost. This on top of the \$20K consultant on an unnecessary Tree Protection research and a \$100 K consultant for the pool in St. David's. What else?

It is possible to submit our updated Official plan to the Niagara Region within the first year of the new council's term only if we elect a council that understands the importance of preserving Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic heritage. It is crucial that we hire a new CAO that is capable of dealing with the extreme development pressures that NOTL is facing now and in future. It should take months not a year.

Key elements of a new Official Plan: should have terms that are well defined and action oriented, with timelines and accountability. The new Official Plan's guidelines must be more quantitative, to prevent general interpretation in the future. What we have now is not acceptable.

- 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?**

Glendale- Allow for commercial, industrial development. Higher density residential developments.

Old Town- Preserve the historic nature of the Old Town with strict restrictions on building and tree removal. The "Bone House" on Front Street should never have been built in that location.

Queenston- Preserve the historic nature of Queenston.

St. David's- Allow for low density residential development within the Urban Boundaries

Virgil - Allow for low density residential development within the Urban Boundaries. Prevent Niagara Stone Road and surrounding areas from looking like a street in Mississauga. The new developments look too generic and do not fit in with the historic theme of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Focus on the Airport area in order to attract service business to NOTL and allow executives easy access to Toronto. I also believe that we must avoid manufacturing business development because of the implications for traffic and roads.

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

I do not think that a proposal for any development, which does not seek to simply preserve the Randwood property is appropriate. I would like to see this property be used as a designated historic property for future generations to enjoy. Any commercial development must conform with the architectural standards we will set in the Official Plan. If this had been done, the proposal would not have been made in the first place.

At the time that the "Bone House" was built on Front Street, with deliberate lack of consultation among the local residents, there should have been outrage.

- 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?**

The previous council that allowed for the OPA51 amendment should not have allowed for an amendment on this property. Ideally this property should be fully preserved

- 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?**

I would like to create an inventory of each historic property in Niagara-on-the-Lake to ensure that each property is adequately protected from potential developments. Once these historic buildings are destroyed there is no going back.

There was a Historic building on the property next to the Post Office on Queen Street, that the town allowed Solmar to demolish. The original plan was to preserve it and move it in sections.

We also must add a backup home inspection for all historic homes when they are sold. Just having oversight on the exterior is not sufficient. There may be structural issues with

the properties. This actually happened in the old town in 2013 where a historic home needed emergency supports installed to prevent the structure from collapsing. Recommendations were made to the Town and Councilors. No action was taken to protect buildings that may have similar issues in the future.

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)?

I would like to host public consultations at or nearby the properties that are under discussion to help the public to clearly visualize the properties that are being discussed. I would like to create a list of citizens' emails and mailing addresses to adequately inform them of proposals of developments in their neighborhoods.

In the instance of the "Bone House" on Front Street there was no consultation and this seemed to be deliberate based on a review of emails and news coverage on what happened there.

<https://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/news-story/8182350-neighbours-have-bone-to-pick-about-new-notl-home/>

<https://www.niagarafallsreview.ca/news-story/8182386-notl-house-approval-fell-through-the-cracks-councillor/>

There was also coverage on CHCH TV. A very concerned homeowner was behind these initiatives. There was no outrage. This, in my opinion, set the stage for what is happening at the Rand Estate.

To: [Jim Collard](#)

Cc: [Pat Darte](#)

Sent: Friday, June 12, 2015 4:25 PM

Subject: Monster home on Front? Have people lost their minds?? (excerpts)

"The HISTORIC Kirby home, with the large ON Heritage plaque, is located right across the street. So the Kirby house must meet every requirement you can think of...but the house across the street can be a free for all? "

"Who in thier right mind would approve this design?...a complete and absolute disaster".

" I could not believe for a second that the neighbours near this property would be OK with what is being built. "

"But the big question is this...exactly WHOM are the people who are the custodians of the history and image of NOTL? "

"The Town of NOTL is allowing developers and individuals to do anything they want. The same things that destroyed the town I grew up in on LI (all but one historic building

are gone) are happening here, one step at a time and it is accelerating. And that destruction of an important part of American History took place due to developers and absolute corruption on Long Island in the 50's and 60's.

Everyone I talk to in town is furious. And no one is interested in excuses at this point. If I owned the Kirby house the lawyers would be very busy people.

We did not move here, nor did others, to continue to put up with this nonsense. Living here is supposed to be a reward for a life of hard work and success. Instead it has turned into a disaster movie script. “

Kevin Conway, 132 Prideaux St. (Betty Disero was forwarded a copy of this email)

This is a quote from an email Betty Disero sent to Mr. Conway:

"I did pass by the site and it does look monstrous. I am hoping that the landscaping will eventually make it look softer. The Heritage Committee at the time must have felt that contemporary design can compliment Heritage, I'm not really sure why it was approved. I have gone through the documentation and I accept Denise Horne's explanation to you."

Further to this Solmar clear cut the property next to the Post Office. They also destroyed a historic building, with the approval of the Town, which was originally supposed to be preserved.

On April 13, 2015 Mr. Conway presented his concerns to Council. Jim Collard noted changes to the plan that allowed for further cutting of trees near his property line Solmar had initially agreed to retain.

The video is on the Town website. The town was to get back to him on the matter. The plan was approved, Mr. Conway was not consulted and on April 15, the tree removal company removed all the trees and damaged a beautiful mulberry tree on his property line. Under the Forestry Act this tree was protected and damaging it is a Criminal Offense that carries a \$20,000 maximum fine + 3 months in jail (in all 3 trees were cut or damaged on his property line). When he called Jim Collard on April 15 to come to the house and see what happened he could not because he was in Florida fishing. The next day John Hendricks and Marizario Rogatto (Solmar) met to discuss the damages. Mr. Conway made preliminary filings directly with the Minister of Natural Resources but has not taken further action until he sees if Solmar makes good on their commitments of restitution once the property is developed.

Mr. Conway has extensive municipal and government experience across Canada and at one time was Director of Business Development for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

He took the matter up with his friends at Communities in Bloom and Tree Canada. This is part of the response from Mike Rosen, CEO Tree Canada, on Aug 12, 2015 which begins

“I find it very distressing that NOTL, with all its beauty and proactive efforts on its heritage (and beautiful trees!) does not have a tree cutting bylaw....”

Mr. Conway shared the full response with the Town. The recommended municipality to follow was Fort Erie.

Mr. Conway engaged Betty Disero on the Queen Street property issue as well. I have seen the series of exchanges. This was the final one. You can understand the frustration. It is like watching a slow-moving train wreck and no one is willing to do anything. Why was there no outrage at the time from the people of NOTL when there was the opportunity to get real changes made?

"From: [Kevin Conway](#)

Sent: Saturday, August 22, 2015 8:48 AM

To: BDisero@notl.org

Subject: Re: 135 Queen Street

Sure Betty. Just like the BONE house?

Betty, you do not seem to understand that the developers and people with money will do whatever they like. What happened behind me was the plan all along...the Town went along with it and aided the process. The BONE house was built without any consultation just at the Town wanted...slight of hand...too late..

If you are going to be like all the others then there is no point having any further discussions. I want to see someone, anyone in the TOWN show REAL Historic Preservation Leadership.

Because NOTL is in the process of being destroyed and the long term price will be significant...it will become a bedroom commuter community just like my home town on LI...only historic building left is the Historic Museum. The hotels, resorts, attractions, old beautiful homes are long gone.

Cheers

Kevin Conway, 132 Prideaux Street,

Mr. Conway has asked that I include this as part of his agreement to provide his input:

“I gave Betty Disero great opportunity to take a stand on Historic Preservation Issues as well as moving quickly to get Tree By-laws in place (I was concerned about the impact on not having these given the evaluation process by Communities in Bloom). I wanted to see true leadership and strong public engagement, under this leadership. 2015 was a year of opportunity lost. The foundations for the Rand Estate were then well established”

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

Under no circumstances would I allow for the expansion of the current NOTL urban boundaries into agricultural land or the Greenbelt short term. Once this starts then all will be lost. I understand that the newly elected Provincial Government wants to do this in the areas near the GTA. Any development must be restricted to pre determined areas.

Population expansion in the region will force more development and once the Go Train is in operation this will accelerate. There is a long history of the same in municipalities all over Canada and the US. We must do everything possible now to have well defined long term limits. If we do this then the population and commercial expansion will be in areas outside of NOTL. This will reduce our infrastructure's long term costs but at the same time be able to capitalize on the revenue generation this expansion will bring to the town. This is going to be a long term balancing act.

8. Trees on Randwood Estate

I would like to add to this that there are issues concerning the Randwood Estate and tree removal.

People are saying that trees have simply been cut down. It is my understanding that this is not the case. Bill Buchannon, a Master Arborist, with extensive experience in the US (including a Martha Stewart estate) is overseeing this. Trees cut down were dead or dying for the most part and all this was done in conjunction with the Town.

The feedback I have been getting from angry residents is that the trees were simply cut down without any concern. This does not help with constructive discussion needed to resolve the final outcome for the Estate. Heated confrontation hinders any progress.

There are two separate issues, the trees and landscaping and the buildings and architecture.

In 2015 we could have easily had gold standard Tree Protection By-laws. Mr. Conway had started to push for these when he moved here in 2013. Now there is a panic to pass these since there is an election on our doorsteps.