

Norm Arsenault

Thank you for your inquiries in our election. See my responses below. In the unlikely event of minor typos, please make the necessary corrections.

All the best.

Below is a list of questions on which SORE is requesting your response. We intend to post all responses on our website and possibly to refer to them in our ongoing communications with NOTL residents. We ask for your response no later than September 15, 2018.

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. Absolutely. As a matter of fact, I would like to have the new updated plan in place by end June 2019 whether it is 100% updated or not. I believe we need to move ahead with the implementation and then strike a committee to complete the process within six months. The new proposed plan is a complete re-write, therefore there are many elements that have been added, amended, removed but the two that are very relevant in my opinion are section 10.5 which introduces for the first time in the Official Plan the Development Permit System now known as the Community Planning Permit System and section 13.4 with respect to the Randwood Estate.

1. 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: There is no simple answer to this question. Niagara-on-the-Lake is an extremely important historical part of Canada. It is imperative that we preserve the heritage and cultural aspects of each of the main areas that make up our town. Old Town is just about done as far as major developments are concerned with the exception of Randwood and adjoining lands. The subdivision that has been bandied around behind Randwood Estates needs to be carefully developed in my opinion as either low or medium density with the architecture to blend in with surrounding neighbourhoods. There is an opportunity to create a great community linked by trails, sidewalks and park areas that can be enjoyed by the new residents that will eventually make this area their homes. Virgil is still a growth area with the bulk of future development to take place between Stone Road along Concession 6 to Line One. Once this is completed, then you are dealing with intensification as mandated by Provincial and Regional Plans. St David's is also an area that has a reasonable amount of development space available and once again this needs to be managed to ensure that growth is both sensible and sustainable. By far the future development area is Glendale. There was a study recently that has created a vision of this area which comprises over 700 hectares of land. This will be made up fairly high-density housing with a village centre, shopping and possibly even access to GO trains and a large park area west of Homer Road. Glendale is also the area that comprises tremendous opportunities for employment. Queenston has little space left in its current boundaries for expansion of any new large scale developments. All of this needs to be managed in a way that ensures that there is sufficient infrastructure in place to handle this kind of growth. In my opinion, over the past several years the infrastructure has simply not been given sufficient importance and growth has been happening without adequate overview.

1. 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?

Answer: No, it is not. The land is currently Zone for a three-storey hotel. The proposed 6 storey Marotta proposal does not fit properly based on the scale of this project. I question the need for a 145-room hotel when two large hotels have just opened in Glendale and at least one or two more have already been approved but have yet to be started in town. I don't believe there is an urgent need for more accommodation of this scale at this time. A four-storey hotel may be feasible at some point but I would not support any kind of outdoor activity due to the proximity of the residential neighbourhoods.

1. 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 - OPA51 must be used when looking at approving the Marotta proposal. This amendment was made at the time with considerable input from various groups including the MHC and I don't believe that we need to start from scratch at this stage. I agree with all aspect of Section B Commercial with one exception. Part 3 states that the MHC should be given final "approval" on the design and architecture of the project. I believe final approval falls to an elected Council and not a committee. The MHC recommendations absolutely must be taken seriously otherwise what is the point of having such a committee is Council does not listen to professional recommendations. The one thing that annoys me about this entire process is why did the town wait until now to finally apply for Heritage Designation of the Estate. So much time and effort could have been saved had Council and the MHC been a bit more proactive in this matter. However, that ship has sailed as it were and better late than never in my view. We have an opportunity here to do something special if all parties can get together and come up with a concept that respect our heritage, our architecture and culture.

1. 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 believe that an immediate review of the Heritage Register is in order to re-assess the need to designate additional properties. The MHC at the direction of Council needs to take the lead, identify all properties that may need to be preserved as heritage properties with perhaps a new look at the criteria that has been used in the past. I could never understand why the Heritage District stops at Prideaux south side only and does not go down to the waterline. This needs to be reviewed and all properties from Prideaux down should be subject to immediate review as well as other properties shown on the register.

1. 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 am proposing adopting a permit system that has been part of the Municipal Act since 2007. This system is known as the Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) formerly known

as the Development Permit System. What this system does is allow Municipality to designate various stressed development areas and create specific development areas within a Municipality. The CPPS replaces or in some instances works alongside the existing approval process, however, the big difference is the CPPS allows input from all stakeholders within the proposed development area with the goal of identifying the needs of an entire development area rather than a property by property approval process. It allows stakeholders and developers alike the opportunity to create a framework of what the designated development should look like from the perspective of setbacks, architecture, green space, clearances etc... All of this is agreed upon up front and a By-law is passed identifying what can be built within the development area. The by-law is then used as the basis to approve building permits and reduces the time frame to 45 days. The CPPS replaces the adversarial zoning, site plan and minor variance processes that is currently commonly used. It takes a bit more time up front to set up but once the by-law has been created, then everyone is playing by the same rules which have already been agreed to by the stakeholders. Stakeholders would be limited to those individuals and/or businesses affected by changes within a specific development area and not necessarily involve the entire community. The CPPS has now been added to the proposed Official Plan and can be found in section 10.5 of Draft 3.

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

Answer: Not on my watch. The Greenbelt has been encroached upon with abandon in the GTA and that has no place in NOTL. We have sufficient growth areas within the Municipality to accommodate housing demand for years to come. While Old town may be reaching capacity, there is no need to expand those boundaries. The existing character of the town is simply too important to continue encroaching on it's heritage. We are at a turning point. Decisions made today will affect the living standards of residents for decades. We need responsible councillors with the instestinal fortitude to do what is right and not what is easy and convenient. Vote wisely on October 22nd.