

HALIFAX CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Halifax Chamber of Commerce
2020 Municipal Election
Candidate Questionnaire Responses

Election: Oct 17th, 2020

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Note: Over the past few weeks, the Halifax Chamber of Commerce has been collecting responses from candidates running for mayor and councillor. We have compiled these answers for your review. Responses are in no particular order. We will continue to update this document when new submissions are received.

MAYOR QUESTIONS

Matt Whitman

Why are you running for Mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality?

I love HRM and its residents. My professional career & experience on Council makes me the right choice to lead our growing municipality through the tough times post Covid. We need a leader who will protect taxpayers' dollars & invest wisely. We can't spend our way out of this pandemic.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period?

I firmly believe we need to support small business's priorities and ensure their survival, Not pander to special interest groups & pet projects but reduce red tape and ensure those willing to invest their private dollars and employ our loved ones get the support & encouragement needed to thrive post Covid.

Is there a topic you wish people were talking about more in this election?

Spending Taxpayer dollars wisely! Prioritizing smart investment in infrastructure. I'm all for spending wisely not frivolously overspending on silly pet projects like the \$7million bicycle Bridge ramp, \$3.5Million roundabout, million dollar bathrooms, snowplowing bike lanes and social media staff, speech writers & communication teams, secret executive severance packages, paid statue removal task-force, unenforced smoking bylaw, police tank and a CFL stadium!

Given how well Halifax is doing mitigating the COVID-19 crisis, are you prepared to partner with the province to increase attraction of organizations and businesses to Halifax?

Partnering with the province is key. They are lead in our recovery. We follow direction Premier McNeil & Dr Strang. I think a 2-way street of communication works best. This is key during non-crisis times as well.

Do you believe it to be the responsibility of the Mayor to keep council and municipality staff accountable for their actions and transparent in their decisions?

YES. We've seen recent secret severance packages & firings by our top executive staff with no input from Mayor & Council. Transparency is key. More Transparent tough decisions must be made by elected officials not bureaucrats.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

There's no easy fix for commercial tax reform. Fair taxation for businesses can be achieved by watching City Hall spending and not rubber stamping every multimillion-dollar pet project & special interest group. HRM overspending on every stapler, fax machine, firetruck, jungle gym & F150.

How do we encourage immigration, especially now as our borders remain closed and travel is restricted and less encouraged?

We need to continue being the best, most welcoming municipality in the country to locate your family & business. When that is true it's easier to convince others to join us and participate in our success & awesome lifestyle & natural beauty.

What do you believe will be your biggest challenge?

Encouraging all to participate in our post Covid recovery & comeback. Don't wait for any level of government to solve our problems. Take risks and benefit from reduced red tape and a culture of partnership that wants all to succeed.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Making it easier for private dollars to invest in HRM in a red tape reduced, positive local environment that encourages & celebrates collaboration and cooperation. City Hall should be a partner (Not a roadblock) enabling private investment for long term sustainable growth and investment.

How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

I've partnered with the Junior, Atlantic, local & National Chambers for nearly 30 years. It works. "Open" means willing to partner, not block. Not stand in the way. Make it easier for business to do business. To grow our economy not our bureaucracy!

How do you plan to be a leader in the municipality?

I lead by example. Make wise informed spending decisions. Be transparent & accountable. Smart spending not photo ops.

What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax's economy?

Partner with private businesses who want to invest in HRM. Not spend public dollars on stadiums, tanks, speech writers, Removing statues & plowing bike lanes etc.

Mike Savage

Why are you running for Mayor of the Halifax Regional Municipality?

Over the last eight years, I have had the pleasure to work collaboratively with my Council colleagues to make Halifax a city on the rise. We have managed the finances of the municipality wisely and kept taxes among the lowest in major Canadian cities, despite our unprecedented growth. We have maintained strong reserves and paid down debt, which helped position us to manage the financial impacts of COVID-19. At the same time, we have made significant investments in people and in the protection of our environment. Investment in public amenities has spurred the private development that has given Halifax a new energy and brought people back to a downtown that was hollowing out.

I want to continue the work to grow our economy and increase efforts to ensure the benefits of economic activity help more people and contribute to strong communities throughout HRM. I believe the fundamentals are strong and despite COVID-19 we can continue to attract business and foster the innovation that will create new businesses. The Mayor and Council that are elected in October have a deep responsibility to provide leadership based on hope for the future, faith in our community, and a sound understanding of stewardship of our finances. I want to continue to be that voice at the table - and your Mayor.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period?

We know that the strengths of our municipality when COVID-19 hit will position us well for recovery, but our recovery must be a team effort. We need to work collaboratively, make sensible decisions, but also not lose hope that we will get through this crisis.

As a city, we have to recognize those things we can do and the things we cannot do. One of the things we can do is control is the tax rate. We must keep pressure on residential and commercial tax rates, so they remain low by comparison to benchmark cities. How we budget is also within our control. We cannot lose sight that there will be a “post-COVID” Halifax. We must maintain a state of good repair on municipal assets, while also advancing strategic investments in community-building projects that improve livability. We’ve continued to move on infrastructure and other projects that generate business and employment income and make us an attractive place to live and invest. Recovery plans must be focused on resiliency and recognition that the pandemic has impacted sectors of our economy and society differently. For example, our tourism industry has been disproportionately affected by travel restrictions. That is why we extended sidewalks and closed streets to traffic, so businesses would have a better chance of bringing more people in while adhering to the Public Health directives. “Buy local” has become a rallying cry as we deal with the pandemic, and I see this support continuing. Ultimately, the path to greater economic activity is low to no transmission – by supporting strong public health measures we have done exceptionally well by comparison with other jurisdictions, and we are now able to gather in larger numbers, eat in restaurants, and return to workplaces, albeit with some restrictions. We have a way to go, but we have made progress. I will continue to work alongside Mayors from other large cities to press the urgent needs of cities, their residents and their businesses. We will also continue to press the Province of Nova Scotia to roll out federal restart dollars for municipalities so we can support the local economy.

Together, we can get through the current crisis and regain momentum. And, while we’re at it, we can work harder to ensure more people in this community are able to meet their potential and share in the next Halifax.

Is there a topic you wish people were talking about more in this election?

I think one of topics we need to be talking about is housing. When I was elected and developers started to build in the city, people used to question where the people are coming from for those developments and that we don't need them. Now the question is exactly the opposite. We need more places for people to live in and let's get some built. The municipality is seeking provincial approval for increased flexibility in density bonusing and other means of creating far more affordable housing. We need active partners in the Province, the private sector and the community as we stretch our municipal mandate to incentivize and encourage a broad range of affordable housing and take full advantage of federal funding streams. I also think poverty overall deserves more attention. It was the case when I was a Member of Parliament, there wasn't a lot of work on poverty. Poverty hasn't been as much of a voting issue as it should be. In a country such as Canada and a city that's done as well as we have, tackling poverty in a meaningful way, addressing social exclusion, food insecurity and housing affordability are really important issues.

Given how well Halifax is doing mitigating the COVID-19 crisis, are you prepared to partner with the province to increase attraction of organizations and businesses to Halifax? If yes, how would you do so?

In my time as Mayor of HRM, I have always believed in being a force multiplier – working with the province, the federal government, my fellow members of the Big City Mayors Caucus and others.

Our plan for recovery must ensure that we are not just a bigger city, but working toward a community where everyone has enough to eat and a secure place to sleep, where every citizen finds a place to match their talent and their ambition, and where we all contribute to a healthy environment

The Halifax Partnership has been a tremendously valuable organization over the years in our efforts to attract and retain businesses to Halifax. I am pleased to say 10 new businesses have been attracted during the pandemic. We have also worked closely with the Chamber, the CFIB and others to address key priorities that will make HRM an increasingly attractive place to live, play, work and do business.

I have long viewed my role, in part, as the city's Marketer-in-Chief and I see that continuing. It has allowed me to market the incredible earned and natural attributes of our city to many prospective businesses, some of which have since chosen to locate here.

Do you believe it to be the responsibility of the Mayor to keep council and municipality staff accountable for their actions and transparent in their decisions? We have made strides in becoming more transparent and accountable to our citizens over my time on Council. HRM has a number of mechanisms to increase the transparency of our operations, and to promote accountability, which can be found here: <https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/accountability-transparency>. Council directly employs only two people, a CAO and an Auditor General, both of whom carry significant responsibility for transparency and accountability and report through Council to the public.

Both elected – and non-elected – members of HRM staff and council should always maintain the highest standards of transparency and accountability. Along with Councillors, I routinely post expenses and meet all legislative requirements for financial accounting.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Currently, less than 40 percent of our property tax revenue comes from commercial, compared with 50 percent when I took office eight years ago. We do not charge business occupancy either. We know the business community creates jobs, but we also recognize that we cannot shift an undue burden of taxation on the residential side either. We have managed the finances of the municipality wisely and kept taxes among the lowest in major Canadian cities, despite our unprecedented growth. We have maintained strong reserves and paid down debt, which helped position us to manage the financial impacts of COVID.

Cities do well when people and businesses do well. Sustainable growth allows us to ensure more opportunities for more people, to become a fertile ground for ideas and investment.

Faced with the budget pressures of COVID-19, we did not increase commercial tax rates, this can't be said for other cities.

How do we encourage immigration, especially now as our borders remain closed and travel is restricted and less encouraged?

COVID-19 has thrown the world for a loop. Eight years ago, there was a great deal of conversation and unnecessary fear about people "from away". With COVID, that fear of outsiders could re-emerge. Let's follow all the protocols around COVID-19, but let's not be insular in our thinking or reduce our commitment to immigration. I think COVID-19 has shown people you can work from anywhere, and Halifax is an attractive proposition. Last year we hit a new record in population growth. We need to continue to work hard to welcome more new people from across Canada and the world who want to live here. Companies have come to Halifax even during COVID-19. They've been looking at many locations but ended up coming down here to start businesses. We're going to continue to grow.

Finding a good place to do business is going to help us long term. COVID-19 has been tough on a lot of people, businesses and organizations. But we must learn the lessons and come out stronger than ever.

What do you believe will be your biggest challenge? Biggest opportunity?

The biggest short-term challenge will be how – and how quickly – we rebound from COVID-19 and recapture the momentum HRM has built up over the last number of years. Over the medium-term, the challenges of alleviating poverty, and building a sustainable municipal infrastructure, are key focus areas. And while I call these “challenges”, because of their complexity – I also believe these to be our greatest opportunities. When we raise the standard of living – and access to affordable housing – for those most disadvantaged in our city, we are increasing the livability of our municipality for everyone.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

It will be important for council to have two horizons over the next four years – a short-term one, with COVID-19 resilience and recovery as our key, overriding, objectives. At the same time, we must continue to focus on sustainability – environmental, economic, cultural and social.

Everything from social procurement – opening our businesses and their purchasing power to an even broader group of citizens – to focusing on our natural assets.

How will you ensure Halifax has an open for business culture?

The challenge brought forth by COVID-19 means that we must not only focus on a culture that is “open for business” – but in supporting the very companies and organizations that entrepreneurs have worked so hard to build in the first place. Ensuring that Halifax businesses can benefit from the Federal and Provincial programs put in place to help our businesses remain resilient in the face of this unprecedented challenge. Cities do well when people and businesses do well. Sustainable growth allows us to ensure more opportunities for more people, to become a fertile ground for ideas and investment. The reality is our businesses – and their associations, such as the Chamber, and organizations like Halifax Partnership – know best the challenges they face during this pandemic, and what will be required in partnership with their municipal government to rebound as strongly and efficiently as possible.

I try to lead by example. I very much enjoy the role of ‘Marketer-in-Chief’ for our city, and I will continue to embrace that role during the next four years. We will also continue to make progress in reducing red tape over the next four years.

How do you plan to be a leader in the municipality?

I’ve shown strong and mature leadership in the city. I represent the city well in the community, with my Council colleagues and municipal staff, and in our relationships with other cities, the Province and Ottawa. I also work well with people. They know I love this city, its many communities, and see that we have vast potential to secure a strong economic and social future.

What is the most important thing Council can do to grow Halifax’s economy?

We have fostered a broad-based Halifax economy - including a unique and substantial innovation ecosystem that creates a fertile ground for start-ups and scale-ups - that takes full advantage of our ocean location and the rich resource that is our post-secondary sector. The most important thing for

Council to do is create the right climate for sustainable growth in our city and in communities that are well-designed, well-planned, and ready to accommodate more people in ways that are healthy, livable, affordable and welcoming. As we continue to foster the economy, we must challenge ourselves to address inclusiveness of opportunity in our growing city. I am particularly pleased to see strong work on the African Nova Scotian Road to Economic Prosperity. Council has endorsed this work, which originated with the Halifax Partnership and members of the Black community and I am excited to see where it leads.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

DISTRICT 1

Arthur Wamback

Why are you running for councillor?

I believe the role of a councillor is one of the most important jobs someone can take on and make a real difference in the community. I can make a real difference, and I am prepared for the sacrifices and hard work.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

Leaders cannot lead unless they understand the people they are leading. I believe leaders inspire people and planning for the future with the motivating factors of relationship building and community service. I intend to lead through community inclusiveness and transparency in governance. I will make communication in the community a top priority. Together we can frame a vision for the community and determine a way to achieve that vision.

Covid-19 has had a significant impact on our business community; how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Working with our business partners, HRM leadership, stakeholders, and the communities, I believe a comprehensive COVID-19 Business Response Action Plan is necessary. I will support the development of this plan, which will assist the local economy in returning smarter and stronger after COVID-19. This plan will also identify local initiatives to aid the recovery process and help guide local investment in the economic recovery. Business will never go back to "the good old days"; we will adapt. One area I believe we can assist at the local level is by the provision of technical support to small business and aid them in building a digital presence and minimize the economic impact. This program will provide no-cost assistance in getting business online.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I will assist and support the tremendous efforts of the Halifax Partnership. HRM and the Halifax Partnership are leading economic recovery efforts with our stakeholders and community partners. Municipal leadership can contribute to connecting active job seekers and businesses, assisting with the Virtual Adviser Program, and raising awareness locally, nationally, and internationally that Halifax's is open for business.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

A good data source is original, comprehensive, current, and reliable. By accepting that others can provide the data better, decisions by the council can be more fulsome. By drawing upon expertise from the private sector, academia, and other industry partners, the best data can be made available. The establishment of a Municipal level information management office would assist this effort.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

A key priority initially will be to establish trust with the community that their leadership is listening to, and engaged with, their concerns. Transparency of governance will go a long way in establishing this trust. With timely and accurate information, the public can provide qualitative contributions to determining future actions. I will facilitate the

establishment of consistent and relevant information, "go-to" sources. This action will be coupled with regular town halls, which will allow face-to-face collaboration between the community and their elected representative.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

This is an issue that I believe can be provided some relief and efficiency through a Municipal Information Management Office. There is always someone smarter in the room; by drawing upon the expertise and knowledge of agencies outside of council staff, we can get the right answer on time.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I believe the inclusion of the public and stakeholders in the development and progress of the various staff reports and projects; also including defined "status checks" in their drafting and execution, will provide greater inclusive feedback and collaboration.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

The big three, there are others. In no order: Quality of Life for residents. Achieved by ensuring community-based supports and services are designed to help community-dwelling older adults remain safely in their homes and live with the dignity they deserve. Developing the infrastructure to allow communities to help young people grow to their full potential by strengthening services, opportunities, and supports and improving the opportunity for residents to travel safely in their neighborhoods without having to take the car to the corner store. This will be achieved by developing and building much-needed sidewalks and bike lanes in our District and establishing scheduled Public Transit service coupled with an active rural transit system connecting all parts of the HRM. Good Governance. Participation by residents of District 1 is a critical factor in ensuring a representative and robust voice at the council. Residents should feel their council provides enough opportunities for feedback and community opinions. In a democracy, every opinion matters. I plan on holding regular and consistent town halls to ensure face-to-face communication. These meetings will be held at times and venues most convenient to residents. Local Economy. Local businesses are important because they provide opportunities for entrepreneurs and create meaningful jobs; they foster the local economy, keeping money close to home, and supporting neighborhoods and communities. To achieve this, I will assist and encourage the expansion of local businesses by engaging youth, communities, and businesses to find solutions for challenges being faced in the District. I will promote and expand local business training opportunities for youth and local business start-ups.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

As I have not served on the council, there are no current municipal projects in which I can take any credit. Two of the projects which I am much looking forward to are the implementation of HalifACT 2050 and the review of the Regional Development Plan. These two projects can have a significant positive benefit to District 1.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue, or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I believe year-to-year budgets end up being firefighting activities. What is needed is a comprehensive 5- & 10-year business plan with the level of resources assigned. A yearly budget status check is warranted to allow any modifications necessary to achieve the longer vision business plan.

How do you plan to engage with your District and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I will facilitate the establishment of consistent and relevant information, "go-to" sources. This action will be coupled with regular town halls, which will allow face-to-face collaboration between the community and their elected representative.

What do you believe should be the council's biggest focus over the next four years?

Post COVID-19 economic and social recovery.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform. Do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I believe our commercial tax system requires amendment. I support the averaging of commercial tax bills to allow for a period of adjustment. Additionally, I support a system of tiered assessment rates and a review of commercial zones.

Cathy Deagle Gammon

Why are you running for councillor?

I have had a successful career in the non-profit sector and am ready for a new challenge that is still about building capacity in community. The time is right. We need more people around the Council table who put the community's interests first and apply good management discipline at the same time.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan to be a leader in the community as a full time fully invested councillor. District1 is the second largest district and covers rural, suburban, and urban communities. Each is distinct and has their own unique concerns. I will engage with all communities via in person (COVID protocols adhered to), online newsletter, joining in on community meetings, being responsive via phone, email etc., present on social media. My leadership will involve bringing like minded groups together to share skills, learning, resources and build capacity.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

- Support for the Halifax Partnership to grow Halifax as a destination for business.
- Encourage networks / leverage business networks to help each other – the buy local movement has been successful in Nova Scotia over the past few years and there are more businesses supporting each other through buy local initiatives.
- Further growth of business to business support will enhance local businesses and provide opportunities for growth.
- Support for and expansion of the Social Procurement policy.
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Burnside Business Association, Fall River and Area Business Association and other associations within District 1.
- Work collaboratively with all three levels of government to reduce the regulatory burden on business.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

- Continue to work with the province on the red tape reduction initiative for regulatory matters.
- Open to experimentation with closing streets to allow for more foot traffic.
- Promote HRM as the destination for small business with immigration community
- There may also be opportunities for such collaboration for businesses to help other businesses reach broader customer bases, including outside of Atlantic Canada by partnering together and taking advantage of existing sales networks or online platforms.
- Ongoing collaboration with the Provincial Department of Business to assess the gaps in services and/or supports for business.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Understanding an issue prior to a decision is very important and HRM staff are tasked with giving the council the information to make informed decisions. This can be augmented with consultation from community/business when a particular sector is impacted.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

- My platform includes the utilization of online newsletters, continued use of social media platforms like FB and Twitter, and notification in smaller local news outlets as well as virtual Town Halls and when we can - in person.
- Need to be open to new ways of engaging with citizens. The popularity (and drawbacks) of social media have shown that traditional methods of reach out and engagement are not effective. However, messages can get lost or twisted so it's important to find ways to engage on recognized / secure platforms.
- Active engagement and reaching out to groups to ask them what is the preferred method of engagement, committee participation and feedback.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

- Has anyone asked what outcome is trying to be achieved with the current process (i.e. reports) and why this tool is the de facto option? Are the root causes of the challenges understood well enough to jump to solutionism without first hearing from municipal staff?
- Sometimes a good decision does take time and should not be rushed. I will reach out to the subject matter experts to have a balanced view of issues and the impact that decisions will have on our district as well as HRM as a whole.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

- Building community has been my life's work to date. My approach is focused on giving as many people as possible a voice at the table, ensuring they are heard and respected in the process.
- The formats available need to be accessible and allow for meaningful engagement.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Thriving through COVID with balanced spending (investing) and managing our financial resources. Support for Buy Local to support business, Staycation in NS to support our tourism sector, Incentivise start-ups and innovation to name a few.

Champion HalifACT2050 to address Climate Change. Support for anti poverty strategy, Affordable housing and Safe enjoyment of our environment - walking, driving, cycling with safe roads, trail expansions and sport infrastructure.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

- Excited to engage in Social Procurement Policy
- Excited to engage in support for Small Medium Enterprises and growth in the rural economy.
- Excited in HRM Anti poverty Strategy.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

- Multi year budgets have significant advantages; however, in the current climate, it is difficult to budget effectively.
- Multi-year budgets should continue; however, with enough dedicated time and resources to challenge / update budgets as time progresses – within reason.
- Strategic goals established at the onset of the multi-year budgeting process should act as goal posts and any changes made should align to the strategic objectives.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

With a diverse population, multiple forms of engagement are required – in person, social media, letters, etc. Acknowledging that different people like to communicate / engage in different ways,

being a fulltime councillor and making myself available for safe interactions via social media, virtual town halls, newsletters, and continuing to be an active member in the community. I also plan on being fully present attending community meetings, hosting them, responding within a reasonable time frame. Posting where I am - what the schedule is for the day etc.

What do you believe should be the council's biggest focus over the next four years?

Next four years – fiscal responsibility and recovery. HRM has some of the highest property taxes out there – higher than a lot of the bigger cities where it’s perceived as being “more expensive” to live. If we want to continue to encourage people to move to the HRM and help grow the city, we need to get the property taxes and fiscal spending to a reasonable basis as the property tax is very high relative to other cities and is going to become a deterrent for young people to move in / buy property even if property sales prices go down to a reasonable level.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, we need commercial tax reform - one size does not fit all. What I hear in our district is that business owners feel they do not get the services that they pay for and so a clear understanding is required. A consideration of the removal of the Capped Assessment Program has been proposed and I will learn more about the implications, timeline and impacts for both residents and business.

DISTRICT 2

Tim Milligan

Why are you running for councillor?

I feel the residence of District 2 are looking for a change and transparency. I feel that I have the qualities of a good leader. The ability to listen with an open mind coupled with a strong will and a passion for the well-being of everyone in the district 2 are strengths I poses.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan to be a lead by listening with an open mind to the needs and desires of the residents of the district. To work alongside as we strive to achieve goals. Be accessible and visible in the community.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

COVID-19 has made us rethink how we conduct business. Small businesses have adapted and overcome due the challenges of the Pandemic. Customers need to re-define how they shop, dine, vacation, etc. We need to promote, promote, promote....LOCAL. Buy Halifax #ImonboardNS

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

By eliminating the cumbersome red-tape processes for small businesses and fully support the same

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

We must realize that without business, there is no community foundation. Meaningful and relevant data should be utilized from organizations and government, including the Halifax Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and the provincial and federal governments. Depending on the issues, other organizations and the constituents should be consulted for input and any relevant data they may have. Knowledge is power.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

With today's technology, there is no reason we cannot involve more constituents in the noted sessions. First, we need to ensure all in HRM have high speed Internet capable of supporting these sessions.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Realistic deadlines

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

If elected, it is my duty to represent all constituents. Inclusivity means everyone and it is my commitment to engage and represent the diverse community that has elected me.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Family Safety, Healthy Community and District Equality. Focusing on creative ways to expedite administrative processes.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Investigate means to improve "clean and green" - especially transit expansion into District 2..

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Due to the current uncertainty, due to COVID-19, year to year would be the only option.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

Refer to answer for question 6.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Recovery/planning for the future.

The municipality prior to Covid working toward commercial tax reform do you believe our commercial tax system need to be amended and if so how would you like to do so?do you believe or commercial tax system need to be amended and if so how would you like to do so?

Too much uncertainty to give a definite answer at this time.

DISTRICT 3

Lloyd Jackson

Why are you running for councillor?

I have lived in District 3 for over 30 years. My wife and I have raised our family here and now our daughters with their partners are raising our grandchildren here. I believe Counsel will face many challenges post COVID 19. I also believe my training with 36 years of military service in team building and leadership will enable me to make a valuable contribution to council.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I will advocate for governance in an open, transparent and informed fashion. My experience as a commissioned officer and leader in the CF will help me in building relationships with different organizations in the District, with other councillors and city staff.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I believe we should support and enhance federal and provincial programs meant to support all business programs throughout HRM. Reduced or deferred taxes where possible, work with landlords to protect both business tenants and landlords and support accessing other government programs from all levels of government.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Halifax, the Province of Nova Scotia and Federal government of Canada need to be in step promoting Halifax as the Hub of Atlantic Canada. The port facilities we have, the Chamber of Commerce, our Universities, all our attributes need to be coordinated and HRM should be taking the lead and supporting every initiative to promote HRM.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I feel that staff reports should better explain the initial impact of decisions but also the future impact of these decisions to provide a complete package on what impact present and long term decisions made by council will have on HRM and the immediate area impacted by these decisions. Council sessions should have informed debate and allow citizens of HRM to see and feel that their concerns are being heard and addressed. Why or why not does council support or not staff recommendations.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

By holding meetings at times people can attend. Midafternoon, working day meetings are not conducive to large turnouts. By ensuring notification of meetings is properly done with written notice to those impacted. By not relying only on social media to pass on time and place of meetings.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I don't know we can speed up the process. I want reports that are accurate and complete in a timely fashion, but I am not prepared to reduce the quality of a report for speed. There will be occasions when timelines are an issue but with proper planning those can be kept to a minimum. Rarely should council be surprised by something but when that does occur, we can use every tool available to mitigate any requirements in producing an accurate and timely report.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Each project should be required to file an After-Action report upon completion of the project. A format that report would take would be provided and would ensure we are meeting goals set for diversity, provide for feedback from surrounding areas/residents impacted by projects and provide a lesson learnt portion from each project.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priority will be to work on the issue of traffic calming and safety within District 3 and HRM. Citizens throughout District 3 are concerned about excessive speed in their neighborhoods. They want their streets to be safe. This will be accomplished working with the HRM Traffic Engineer, the Chief of Police and local RCMP detachment commanders to enforce present speed limits and make changes where required. I want to ensure HRM is doing what we can to support all our businesses through this rough time and recovery from COVID 19, I want to see maintenance and improvement of infrastructure where possible as needed, these items will be achieved by producing a sound budget and plan.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I am very interested in the Traffic Calming that is underway. I also would like to work with HR Police on the use of body cameras for members. I am of course interested in the Regional Development plan that is in Macro phase and looking forward to being a part of that and the Micro portion as it moves forward.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

With the impact of COVID 19 as an example, I believe a year to year budget is preferable. COVID 19 has shown things can happen that have unexpected impacts on the economy and our revenue. Year to year budgets have better control.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

There are several local organizations that I will stay in close contact with and use of local media like The Beacon in Eastern Passage Cow Bay. I intend to continue going door to door after the election if elected and ensure I can return phone calls and emails from residents of District 3.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

I believe council needs to ensure we open, transparent and our citizens are properly informed about the decisions that are being made. We need to support all our businesses to help them through this rough time and work with the Province on several things including availability of affordable housing as one example.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

From speaking with some business owners, I have become aware of concerns they have about our commercial tax system. I believe if we are to support all our local businesses and attract new businesses to HRM we need to be competitive with other municipalities across Canada. So yes, I do believe a review of our commercial tax system is an excellent point to start and input from organizations like the Chamber would be welcomed.

Becky Kent

Why are you running for councillor?

I am running for Councillor because I care about the people who live in the communities in District 3 Dartmouth South-Eastern Passage. I have a genuine passion for improving people’s lives. It matters to me that people have safe communities with the services and infrastructure to support the needs for thriving neighborhoods.

I have 9 years of experience as a leader at two levels of government that I want to put to good use on your behalf. My approach is collaboration between communities and government.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

My approach to leadership is always collaborative. Build relationships with residents, community groups, businesses, stakeholders. Have real dialogue and understanding of the issues. Lead by example.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I intend to be a voice on council that consistently reminds that our businesses have already been impacted greatly by Covid 19. There needs to a fair and reasonable approach to any measures that affect business directly.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

The municipality must promote our area in all that we do. Working with business to help accelerate applications before Council. Keeping Municipal business doors open and accessible for business interactions.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Generally speaking, I find staff pretty good at providing data. For reports I think that Council members need to be very clear about the type of data that is needed for the report being asked for. Each is unique. Related to business sector decisions. I believe that agencies such as Chamber of Commerce and CFIB are experts in this area and should be

considered so. But there is still a layer within the Business community who do not engage on this level, that we have to find a way for them to be heard and considered in reports

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I will be very specific about community engagement. I don't think that HRM has been very good at this as of late. Development and planning have a very poor record of turn around on projects. These types of things need to be tightened up. If Council wants businesses to succeed, we need to put the processes and tools in place to help.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I will be bringing this to the Council table early in my tenure. I have been hearing a lot of the same types of statements that you have made here. Holding staff accountable to Council is important. We need to improve this. Especially during recover periods. It has been suggested that there are not enough staff to do the work required. I will want to look at this.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Inclusive practices and diverse representation should be a part of the fabric and culture of HRM. I will be looking for this in every report and council decision being brought forward. Policy development, hiring practices, service delivery and stakeholder engagement needs to be reviewed. The time has come to name the problems and act on these issues.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priorities are local in nature as well as municipal. One that is foremost in my mind for action is the speeding on many streets. I believe that it is happening through out HRM so I will be asking for a review and changes to the current Traffic Calming Framework that is currently on the books.

- Ending Racism and discrimination is a huge priority for me. Every opportunity I have to affect change, I will take it. As a woman in a male dominated world I can see and feel the setbacks that we have had on equal opportunities. Black lives matter, and its time to name it and make effective changes. I intend to be a strong voice on bringing experts and first voice to the table. The longstanding history of racism in Halifax continues to be a stain on our city. There are areas of progress that council has recently taken; HRM office of Diversity and Inclusion and African NS Affairs Integration Office. These need to be funded and supported. Dr Scott Wortleys recommendations need to be implemented as soon as possible. This is a just a start. There are many opportunities that must be realized.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

On a local level I am most excited about the development of the Eastern Passage Commons. As well there is movement happening on what I hope will be the Mt Hope/Caldwell Road Connector.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I believe in multi-year budgets generally, but given the current pressure for Covid 19 recovery, I am open to considering a yearly to enact specific and direct recovery action.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I have always taken the approach that access to the political leader in Districts is an absolute minimum. I will be engaging through town hall/online meetings, surveys, direct personal meetings, canvassing on issues, emails, phone, etc. I also intend to create working groups and engagement sessions on the priorities of the riding, such as speed on local streets, development in neighbourhoods, ending racism and enhancing diversity in our communities, educating and ending violence against women, just to name a few. The council seat belongs to the people. I will be the voice, but the voice is only as strong as the people who are behind me.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years? Economic Recovery during and post Covid-19, Ending Racism in HRM, better management of municipal processes for affordable housing, safer streets, just to name a few.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I believe that all tax systems need to be considered at this time. Commercial tax system reform is only one layer that will likely be on the table during this recovery period for all levels of government. It is a complex mixture of considerations so I prefer to wait for a comment on what I will do on this subject.

George Mbamalu

Why are you running for councillor?

I have lived in District 3 for 25 years – since 1995. I am blessed with four (4) children and this district has provided me the opportunity to raise them comfortably and safely. I am also the new grandfather of two (2) young grandchildren!

I want to give back to the district that has given so much to me.

Our neighborhoods' schools, roads, parks, and trails must be adequately maintained and improved regularly. Furthermore, provisions must be made to attract and sustain small businesses in our district. This, along with lowering property taxes, will help enhance the value of our homes while generating economic activities that support new and established local small businesses.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

To be the leader District 3 needs, I will connect with the members of the community on a regular basis to learn their concerns, discuss how matters have been addressed, and receive input on solutions that impact them. I will address all concerns fairly and bring their concerns and proposed solution to the Halifax council for adequate and appropriate review.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

To help the business community during the COVID-19 pandemic, I propose providing limited tax relief, and deferring/lowering residential and commercial property taxes.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

The Halifax Municipality must be inclusive and competitive. I will propose for the municipality to establish a policy that makes it easier to operate businesses by decreasing barriers related to the set up of and running business.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Only data that is relevant to the matter at hand should be utilized during staff reports and council sessions. Discussing general data, that is not specific to the issues being discussed or reported could result in inefficient use of the council's time.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I will ensure that people have access to education on their civic responsibilities and the benefits of civic participation.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I will propose providing grants to councillors that will enable them to do some independent research and reports themselves. These grants would have strict release criteria and all research and reports must be reviewed by an independent committee.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I will ensure public participation and engagement by making sure that every voice that wants to be heard is given that opportunity; thus, instilling trust in members of our community.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Traffic calming, the extension of sidewalks, and addition of crosswalks are a major concern in my district. I will work with the community and municipal staff to come up with traffic calming, sidewalk, and crosswalks solutions appropriate for our district. Other priorities include walkways and roads maintenance.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I am excited to engage with the following projects: Water service to the Fall River Village Centre, Argyle & Grafton Shared Streetscape Project, and Alderney Gate pedway revitalization project.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi-year budgeting should be continued. Multi-year allows for planning regarding sourcing funds and logistics. It also speeds up project execution and completion.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I will directly work with the residents of my district by establishing a District 3 Residents Association Committee. Each neighbourhood will be encouraged to establish its own residents' association. Each association would elect or appoint two representatives that will be involved in regular meetings. These meetings would allow the associations to bring their specific community concerns to light so they could be addressed at that point in time or escalated to a council presentation by the councillor. All minutes from these meetings will be made public online to ensure transparency and community support.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

The council's biggest focus over the next four years should be debt management. This can be actioned by adjusting addressing a series of debt solution options, for example limiting municipal spending, modernizing to create more efficient infrastructure, and merging services wisely.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended. Halifax has the third highest commercial property taxes in Canada. Lowering the rate would help to inspire new commercial investments, expand our commercial tax base, and attract more businesses. These initiatives will create the potential to offset expected revenue losses resulting from the lowered tax rate.

DISTRICT 4

Ryan Burris

Why are you running for councillor?

I think the city needs a younger fresh perspective that will take a stand on tough issues like saying no to cash instead of no to affordable housing. With the pandemic as a community we need each other more than ever. We would benefit greatly with more places like a splash pad, community gardens to bring everyone together young and old. I have the energy and the drive to bring a strong voice.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan to stand behind my words and not falter at the first sign of pressure or kick back. Not everyone will be happy, but we make decisions based on the whole not the individual or small groups.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

We need to focus on boosting our local economies and continue to buy local as much as possible, keeping municipal taxes at current levels or below. Look at postponing municipal infrastructure projects that could stand to wait. Most importantly planning for the long-term projects and revitalization in our municipality and communities. Spending during the current pandemic is going to be a major issue, keeping taxes at current levels, deferring payments when needed, planning for post pandemic spending. When I talk about the up coming election please understand that the future planning and spending needs to address whether we spend now or spend later we still need a great plan for the years to come. This can be achieved with prioritizing essential projects and deferring whenever possible. The long-term planning part, we all have a lot of amenities, improvements and changes we would like to see happen. Some projects will happen soon, some in a few years and some in 10 years and some not at all.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

With change we are not very open at times and need to reduce the amount of red tap and obstacles for new and existing businesses.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

All the relevant data available should be represented in reports, physical and visual.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

We can't force people to get involved but we can make it easier from everyone to be a part of the process and have a voice on decisions in their communities.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Reducing red tape and applying more pressure from the top and hold managers and supervision more accountable for themselves and their staff.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Everyone should and needs to be included regardless of race, culture, or ethnicity as a city we can strive for more inclusiveness and diversity in our policy's, hiring and work culture. Everyone deserves an opportunity regardless of who they are. This change in mind set in work culture starts now.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

We need a clear path forward into pandemic and post pandemic life. I want to see more affordable housing, long-term plans started for revitalization projects such as Cole Harbour Place. Traffic calming and more enforcement. Better programs for seniors, recreation, and youth. Deferral of nonessential major projects and long-term planning.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Changes to allow backyard suits and secondary units. I am very interested in affordable housing and tiny living.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi-year should continue.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

Everyone has a voice and I make myself available to anyone for discussion via e-mail or phone or in person. Engagement during and post pandemic is key, its not as easy as it once was.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

HOUSING is number one we can't grow or sustain without more, youth and senior's well-being and fair affordable access to recreation.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, our commercial tax system needs to be amended to create a fair system for all business, small to giant companies to help our business sector excel during and post pandemic.

Darryl Johnson

Why are you running for councillor?

I have always had in the back of my mind I'd like to join the political arena but personally the timing wasn't right, until now. With the present social climate, I knew it was time. What better way to help my community, give each a voice at the table, be a leader and champion our community.

I want to make a difference from the inside out rather than the outside in.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan on being a leader for all voices in our community. I've always been placed in leadership roles from a very young age and have spoke out and have been an advocate for our community and youth.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

As we continue our recovery, we must ensure we promote and support local. Also help small business financially and through training to reinvent if need, in order to manage the restrictions of COVID.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Promoting Halifax as the hub of the Maritimes and business as usual only safer and better post COVID. Offer incentive programs to travel, stay and explore the beauty and diversity of Halifax.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

All data collected from the diverse community would ensure inclusive feedback allowing educated decisions to be reached.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

By engaging the community via virtually, surveys, engaging in conversation, maintaining a open door policy and being available to my community, via phone, email or face to face.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Timelines and target dates need to be set up and followed. Prioritize according to urgency and minimize items tabled at meetings.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

The only way to accomplish diverse reports and projects is to have a diverse council and inclusive feedback and collaboration is possible when multi-modal methods.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priorities for the four years are to represent all communities at the table and to actively listen to our residents and be their voice. Things I've been hearing continuously are , reduction of speed in school and residential areas, sidewalks, programs and services for our youth and seniors , direct bus routes linking downtown , roundabouts for Forest Hill Pkwy to be considered, bike lanes and traffic lights at dangerous intersections. Ensuring safety in our communities has to be highest priority, so the budget needs to reflect this.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I am excited to engage in the homelessness project, affordable housing and the systemic racism within our police service and racism within our communities.

Jerome Lagmay

I promise to work with provincial counterpart for increased funding on supplemental rent. Feeding program - I will propose to feed low income single parent in District 4. Propose equalized school supplies cost - elementary level. Food giving - Giving extra food for the people in the food bank in District 4, especially in extreme times of need. Summer jobs for high school students and for the people who need extra income in the hospitality industry.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Address traffic lights, and traffic pattern issues in our community. Propose to recruit mobile crime watchers with corresponding honoraria. Support Police Officers using body cameras, for the safety of both civilians and police officers. Security in school zones, CCTV cameras. Speed bumps in school zones. Additional bike lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks. Road fixes and emergency fixes like potholes.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES: Teacher appreciation events. First Responder appreciation events. Free Urban Farming training for all who are interested. PWD(Person With Disability) BBQ Festival in District 4. Cole Harbour - Westphal Multicultural food festival and night market.

SPORTS: Propose extra money allowance for the Provincial, Olympic and Paralympic candidates.

John Stewart

Why are you running for councillor?

I have lived in Cole Harbour for 33 years. I have been an educator, a volunteer captain with the fire department and have worked with community groups such as Diabetes Canada and the Muscular Dystrophy Association Canada. People would often ask for help when they had problems, I may not have always known how to solve the problem but my experiences and the relationships I have developed over the years meant I know how to find a solution. As an educator I love making sure people know how to solve their problems. I see being councillor as a way to continue work toward solutions for the people of Cole Harbour Westphal.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I feel that over the years I have already developed into a leader in my community. I spent 24 years with the Fire Department where my role grew from being a firefighter to being the Captain for all volunteers in Stations 17 & 18. I have been a member of the Firefighters Association and have taken on many roles on the executive from serving as Chairperson of many committees to my current role as Auditor, and Bylaws chairperson and Vice President. I have also served as a Coach and advisor of many youth groups and teams. Coaching Volleyball, Table Tennis and Curling, group leader for European Travel groups and providing free trips to students unable to make the trip without assistance. I feel the best way to be a leader is to get involved and meet people, work with people and most importantly trust and empower people to step up. A leader works with people and for people.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

A buy local program will be needed to encourage people to support our local business and this must be done at the municipal level and the private citizen level. If we do not support our local businesses then we cannot expect them to be here when we come out the other side of this COVID-19 pandemic. We also need to have bridging loans available for businesses to be able to get through their problem times as they arise. These need to be easily available and offer opportunities to keep staff on hand so they are available after the COVID-19 pandemic is over.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

The best "open for Business" strategy is to be accepting of all people and all businesses. We need to support all local businesses, we need to support Black owned Businesses,, we need to support Indigenous owned businesses, we need to support LGBTQIA2 owned businesses, we need to support all locally owned businesses. This can be done by the Municipality have a scoring system for tenders that favours these businesses. This can be done by have campaigns encouraging citizens to support local businesses.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

All the data used to make decisions should be as accurate and current as possible. We have a strong staff that has access to the most current information we can collect, and it needs to be provided in as timely a manner as possible.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

The best way to ensure people participate in feedback sessions is to have well advertised, timely sessions and to ensure that the information provided is listened to. No one will attend or participate if the advice given is completely ignored.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Reports must be requested with appropriate deadlines. Information that is required quickly must be requested of properly staffed departments.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

We cannot rely on diverse communities coming to us to provide feedback, we need to go to them to request feedback. The next step is when we go to them, we need to listen and be willing to change based on the feedback we receive. Once communities realize their opinion counts, they will be willing to come to us and provide it.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My biggest priority is to look after the people in HRM. They need to have safe affordable places to live, they need to have places to work and play and they need to have ways to move between these places. I plan on achieving this by making all decisions with these goals in mind, making it so that our business community recognizes that the way to make the best profits is by looking after their workforce and clients. Happy workers and clients mean businesses will succeed and successful businesses fuel our entire economy.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

There are too many to list but HaliFacts 2050 is probably the one that I feel showcases the city as a forward-thinking community that is acting locally with a global mindset. It also shows that a government can act with the best interests of current and future citizens in mind.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I believe that year to year budgets are very responsive to short term needs, but multi year projects are necessary to address large projects and prevent starting many projects and abandoning them when a new idea appears. I would like to see long term projects continue to be budgeted over many years, but we need a component of every budget to be done yearly to react to current needs as they arise.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I have continued the work of our previous councillor by attending community events, making myself available to community members, and hope to have a couple of events each year to meet with interested community members.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

I have already stated "My biggest priority is to look after the people in HRM. They need to have safe affordable places to live, they need to have places to work and play and they need to have ways to move between these places." I hope that Council agrees with me and makes this their focus as well.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I would like to continue working towards tax reform to try to ensure that we make our tax system such that it is fair to taxpayers while ensuring we are able to offer the services we need.

DISTRICT 6

Tony Mancini

Why are you running for councillor?

I have a tremendous sense of pride for our community and I have been active in several community organizations and boards throughout my 25 years of living in Dartmouth. I entered municipal politics in 2016 taking my passion for the community to a new level and working hard to improve the quality of life for the residents of District 6. I have chosen to run in this upcoming election because, although I feel I have accomplished much in the past four years, there is more work to be done. I would like to build on the previous accomplishments and continue the work that I have started in areas such as community growth, environmental sustainability, safe communities, and healthy active living.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

The past four years has provided several opportunities to demonstrate my leadership abilities, especially during my time as Deputy Mayor. In my year as Deputy Mayor, the Mayor was away for two challenging crises in HRM. The first was the horrific Barho family fire in Spryfield when 7 beautiful young lives were lost. I organized a community vigil in the Parade Square and organized a community funeral at the Cunard Centre. This involved working with many groups such as the Mosque, HRM staff, private businesses etc. The second crisis was Hurricane Dorion. Together with the Emergency Measures Office and Divisional Chief Erica Fleck, I took on the municipal leadership role during this crisis. I represented the municipality at Provincial press conferences, attended daily hurricane briefings, and served as the communication link to council members.

In addition, I continue to show leadership every day in my work as Councillor within my community. I am responsive to the distinct needs of each community within District 6. This may include working with the business community in Burnside or on Main St., developing relationships with different agencies and non-profit groups in Dartmouth North or being accessible to the many residents and acting upon their many concerns and prioritizing those concerns for action.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

We need to continue to work with organizations such as Discover Halifax, the Halifax Partnerships, the Halifax Chamber and our many Business Improvement Districts to pursue innovative ways to support the businesses and tourism community. We need to continue initiatives such as expanding the patios onto our streets and waiving associated patio fees. We need to advocate to the Province for a reduction in business property taxes. We can promote buying local and start with our own procurement of products and services. We need to continue to move forward HRM capital projects such as the Cogswell Interchange and streetscaping on Spring Garden Road.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

We need to continue supporting programs such as Discover Halifax's 'Rediscover Halifax' and supporting the Halifax Partnership's goal of getting back to our long-term growth plan.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Council has initiated improvements in staff reports by requesting the application of both a social lens and an environmental lens for report data and analysis. Highlighting specific operating cost implications of decisions affecting budget would improve transparency and decision making.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

We need to expand beyond our traditional mail out, newspaper and social media notifications to increase awareness when we are seeking feedback. We need to do more pop ups where residents gather, expand mail outs and advertising and engage with our thousands of students. We need to go where our residents are located and use a variety of communication techniques that are accessible to everyone. As much as possible, information should be distributed using plain language and presented in languages other than English.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Our reports get bogged down in our legal department. We need to redirect legal to stop rewriting reports and simply determine the level of risk to each report. Allow the authors of the reports to rewrite when necessary.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Our reports go through many lenses i.e. risk, environment etc. Councillors Smith's motion of a 'Social Lens' provides an improvement in the process of acquiring data for staff reports. As mentioned in question six, inclusive feedback and collaboration can be improved by communicating with residents using modes of communication that are accessible to everyone as well as encouraging more pop up information sessions held at places where large groups of people gather i.e. libraries, rec centres, universities, churches, mosques etc.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Protecting the health of our Dartmouth Lakes
Making transit more reliable in Burnside, Dartmouth Crossing and across Dartmouth
Continue to implement practices and projects which will promote environmental sustainability
Improve our Access-A-Bus Service
Work with police & community to re-imagine HRP & RCMP police services
Increase resources & funding for Traffic Calming programs
Implement action items from the Wortley report & Cornwallis Task Force
Helping businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Argyle Street Scaping, Daylighting in Sullivan's Pond, Ellenville Run in Woodlawn, the protection wilderness areas like Blue Mountain Birch Cove and the Backlands of Purcells Cove, the Dartmouth North Outdoor Library, Declaration of a Climate Emergency, HaliFact 2050, Green Network Plan, Integrated Mobility Plan, proposed rapid transit network.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi-year budgeting should continue if year two of the plan still has the flexibility to adjust.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

Continue to facilitate townhall meetings, to be available either virtually or in-person when appropriate when residents gather, to work closely with BIDs, community organizations, to always be open for conversation and to push out information to residents and businesses via a variety of social media platforms and newsletters.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Assisting businesses through COVID-19
Protecting the environment
Investing into our rapid transit network plan and HaliFact 2050 plan
Increasing funding and resources for traffic calming
Supporting and following through on the Halifax Partnership and HRM plan for long term growth
Working with the community and HRP/RCMP to reimagine how we do policing in HRM

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Improving the application of commercial taxes is a complex process and does not adhere well to a one-size-fits-all approach. Reducing the general tax rate is a fair approach benefiting businesses of all size. In addition, having taxes based on a three year rolling average can improve predictability for many businesses and is part of a Council recommendations going forward.

Ibrahim Manna

Transportation traffic issues continue in HRM. What is your plan to improve transportation issues in and out of the city core? I would like to see that subway system working to out of city and would like to see a third bridge to easy traffic . Also, would like to attract business development into downtown Dartmouth so we don't have to go to Halifax and that can easy the transportation. Each of you has said you want to encounter the community at large to incorporate diversity into your decision making. Can you say, today, are you willing to walk (or ride) in the Pride parade? Are you willing to display the transgender flag in your office on that commemorative day? Diversity is one of things I like with I am immigrant and I own a construction company that I hired all from different backgrounds my company had the opportunity to hire all types of people at end of day we are all one. Pride parade I attended few of them in the past few years

Will you meet with people of Mi'kmawgia to help in resolving historical disagreements? I would love to meet more mikmawgia people as I allready have spoken to lots and also have friends I would like to make sure everything is being dealt with their community to be involved in issues and solve all the problems that they are facing from living employment social services also the food security as a whole community For me summer I pike with family friends and if its in winter I will ride most of time or car share

DISTRICT 7

Craig Roy

Why are you running for councillor?

I'm running for councillor because I am not satisfied with the way things are shaping, and rather than sit back and moan, I prefer to do something about it.

I'm running for councillor because as great as our community is, our community needs work. Halifax is evolving, but I believe our community has a long way to go, and I want to have a helping hand guiding the next generation in continuing to have a great and progressive Halifax. District 7 needs a new voice, let me be that voice.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

Being an entrepreneur for nearly a decade, I spent a good chunk of my time recruiting, encouraging, training, mentoring, and supporting others to become leaders. I strongly believe that a community leader take responsibility for the well-being and improvement of their communities. Developing leadership is a way you can have a legacy behind you – people who will continue to advance your cause and your goals after you have left the scene.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Covid-19 has put a spin on things, this pandemic came with a lot of uncertainty. Many businesses were forced to temporarily shut their doors, while some businesses were forced to downsize, and some of them have had to close all together. I am fortunate enough to live in the heart of my district and have been able to support many local businesses on their opening day/night. Make your presence known and supporting with things such as purchases of gift cards, or ordering take out and when retail stores opened up slowly with social distancing protocols, I was out shopping. Supporting businesses comes in all forms, even if it is liking and sharing a business on social media so they can gain more positive exposure.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I read somewhere and I fully agree with this statement – “Good business culture requires transparency, accountability, authenticity, inclusivity, generosity and empathy”. You need to have a good set of core values, establishing strong core values is the starting point for creating an open culture. Knowing actions speak louder than words. You must show diversity and inclusion for those you work with. Diverse teams operating with respect for one another are usually the most innovative and successful teams. These are all the key elements that I will bring to council, if elected this fall to ensure an open for business culture in Halifax.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

This is a tough one for me, due to the fact I am not currently in council, I am not privy to know how these things are conducted.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I personally feel as though you start off with a complete transparency and share results with stakeholders, whether it be online or by way of advertisements. You have to identify your target communities/audience, perhaps by having them involved either in person, or simply designing a questionnaire on what community members see as their most pressing priorities. Then hold meetings, and other public gatherings to show local support/participation.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council’s asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Speeding processes are not always a good thing, as this is where errors occur. However, I will ensure to always bring items, core or not, to the forefront of each meeting for follow up, to get a status of and share results as swiftly as I can, so that the people know that their voices are being heard.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Diversity is important to me, as I want to ensure that everyone’s voice is heard, so if council is not filled with diverse members, or there are no diverse voices being heard, I would recommend that we have feedback and collaboration from communities or organizations where there are diverse voices.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Right now, the biggest priorities for me is to bring my platform of affordable housing, better transit options, policing, sustainability, improving infrastructure. Meeting the needs of our community with safety streets, parks, parking and designated bus & bike lanes, attracting more diversity within our community, promoting small businesses and Industries, honoring our history while innovating for the future and supporting the arts sector to council. These are the priorities of my community. I plan to achieve them by always having them at the forefront of all that I do, and not letting up on a topic until I see action and satisfaction.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

The projects that I am proud of is the active transportation (AT) – bikeway and multi-use trail, and enhancing transit hubs, while the population that drive bikes is small now, with more active transportation lanes available, this will allow more bike enthusiasts to bike to work, opposed to driving. This option allows for easier access and flow to other areas and communities without the need to congest traffic. This is also safer for bike users.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Personally, I think year-to-year budgets are best as priorities always change, however, with that being said, planning for the future is not that easy when you are only focused on the current year finances, you tend to lose budgeting for the year ahead, with budget planning you need to look at variables and what might happen in the year ahead.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I have been engaged with my district since day one, I have been posting videos and asking for people to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns they have, this method will not change, if I am elected in October. I want my district to know that I have complete transparency with them and that I am here for them. My only interest is putting their interests first.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Due to the current situations, I personally feel that housing, earning a living wage, and policing are the biggest focuses we should look at, however, there are so many more such as taxes, urban sustainability/growth, etc... I believe housing will be an ongoing issue for a while until more inventory is built and that people are able to afford where they live. Earning a living wage, will need to take some serious looking into, as everything in price keeps rising, and bill paying is no longer being achieved, it is ruining people's credit, but if wages increase, that means everything will increase ten-fold in order for businesses to be able to afford paying employee wages. This is a tricky solution that will need to be examined. Policing can be something looked at, and personally I don't think that it will not take four years to fix.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Owning two businesses, one of them being a commercial retail business, I can say that business taxes for small businesses is high, too high. Having tax fairness would have made my business have more of a cash flow and less undue stress. So yes, I believe that this tax reform should be seriously looked at and evaluated to help small businesses. Large businesses/corporations with larger profits should not benefit from this tax reform. There needs to be an assurance that a small business will not go under because of high taxes. After all Halifax has a lot of small businesses and if they cannot survive, Halifax will not survive. Having this issue raised in council until an achievable solution is had and found will be my mission, if elected.

Jennifer Powley

Why are you running for councilor?

I decided to run for council after I read HalifACT2050 and found it to be insufficient. I want an account of the carbon emissions in all proposed projects, both upfront emissions and those due to construction, to be identified in staff reports as a percentage of HRM's yearly carbon budget. I have an extensive platform that touches on housing, land use, taxes, social equity, arts and culture, community input and transparency. I'm not anti-development, I'm pro-climate. If a developer can figure out how to build without concrete, glass, and steel or figure out how to reuse a building - I'm all for it. I know we have a limited carbon budget and we must live within that for our children and our children's children. Our future will not look like our past.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I am not the typical candidate. I have a severe physical disability, but over 30% of Haligonians also have some form of disability. It is time we were considered as the powerful and able group that we are. I think showing myself as able and accountable, as well as committed to learning, makes me a leader. I have led in the past when I was the president of Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia for 5 years and I am on the board of numerous organizations. I am not a member of the 2SLGBTQI+ Community but I feel that if anyone is being discriminated against no one is equal. We are all implicated in the problem so we all must be part of the solution.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Nova Scotia is a low wage economy. The median income for a Nova Scotian family is \$60,000 a year. That does not leave much disposable income after taxes, benefits, rent, utilities, and food. I believe we need to pay employees a Living Wage— which in Halifax is \$21.80 per hour. This means that working people will have more money available. This can provide opportunities for local businesses. Affordable housing is a priority for my campaign, and I will follow through with that. My plan is to make transit free. I want to reduce the number of cars on our roads. The savings of not owning a car will in turn increase the amount of cash in people’s wallets. I am proposing more walkable communities, which will offer greater opportunities for business, as it has been proven that people are more willing to stop and explore local businesses if they are on foot.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I will work with the business commissions to ensure that the voices of community business operators are heard. I know that red tape is a concern for all businesspeople; I will work to reduce it where I can. Businesses not only have to attract customers, but they also need to ensure they have staff who are ready and able to help those potential customers. I have committed to making transit free, and I want to help public transit be a much more attractive option for people to use. This will include making more public transit available, including accessible options. This will help get people walking and rolling on the streets, where they can support local businesses as workers and customers.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I think data from real community consultations is under sourced and underutilized in HRM. HRMs consultations often seem like they are done simply to check a box or provide information about decisions that have already been made somewhere behind the scenes. Councilors are supposed to represent their constituents, and they can’t do that job without really wanting to hear what the people have to say.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I think HRM needs to go to the public where they are for feedback on proposed developments and direction on what developments are needed. I look at the new Halifax Central Library and at how well the public communication influenced that decision. The public was asked what they would like and now we have a wonderful space for the community. I have committed to having monthly input sessions where a variety of perspectives can be voiced. I would extend the invitation to the business commissions. I feel they are integral to knowing what is important to the community.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council’s asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I agree, staff reports seem to take an inordinate amount of time to complete. I would want to investigate why this is. Do the staff really need to write all the reports that they do? Can council give more direction to staff about what paths to pursue when trying to achieve a certain outcome? This might streamline the reporting process. I would like to propose that all staff reports have a six-month time limit. If that is not enough time, then staff must apply to take longer. If a developer has to apply for an extension for breaking ground, so should staff, but council probably has a role to play, too.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I believe inclusive feedback is critical to having things done well. I plan to develop an Advisory Committee for my District and would propose that all councilors be expected to do the same. We could then ask staff to attend two Advisory Committee meetings per month in the different districts as part of their responsibilities. That way, HRM staff would hear different perspectives to include in their reports. Collaborations are trickier to mandate, as they are based on mutual

benefit after wrestling with a concept, but they are possible. You need to begin with mutual respect. Both partners need to understand that they are both required to give a little and take a little.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

The biggest priority is dealing with the climate crisis. I propose that HRM require net-zero buildings starting immediately. I want HRM to develop a carbon budget. Each proposal before council should state how much carbon it would use as a percentage of the total budget, with this information independently verified. Materials such as concrete, steel and glass as well as emissions produced during construction, will need to be accounted for. Halifax will need to account for the emissions cost of the new Friendship Centre, the proposed new Victoria General, and the parkade at the Halifax Infirmary. Accounting for these emissions will allow Halifax to stay within its carbon target and allow for informed decision-making about the development the city can afford. I want to make transit free. We need a way to get private vehicles off the road.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I think changing the bylaws to allow backyard suites across the municipality is exciting, if they are actual houses for city residents, and not short-term rentals. However, there was no mention in the back-yard suites bylaw for affordable or accessible suites. If that is left up to individual landlords, we will not see much happening to make affordable housing a reality.

I think that HRM should start up an Office of Non-Market Housing that can provide a handful of design ideas that are affordable to build, eco-friendly and accessible, and can be personalized by the homeowner. That would be a great place to start.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I think multi-year budgets give us a chance to plan, but I think the flexibility of reviewing the budget yearly is important.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I have an open-door policy and my email is available. I realize that having my email isn't enough if you are not on the digital bandwagon. I also make my phone number available and I commit to having an assistant available to help with communication. I plan to have meetings once a month of an advisory committee that brings leaders from various sectors of the community together. I would love to have an advisor from the chamber, or one of the business commissions.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Getting affordable housing and dealing with the climate crisis.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I will need the wisdom of the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Commissions to advise me on that. I know HRM needs to check on how we are assessing the value of a business. Business properties are often under-assessed. We also need to set categories of tax rates in industrial and business sectors. I have talked to Paul McKinnon at the Downtown Business Commission, and he has told me about the new legislation the province has enacted to allow this to happen, so the commercial properties in business parks don't have an advantage over commercial businesses downtown. I have not had the privilege of being intimately involved with the commercial tax system, but I am open to learning.

Why are you running for councillor?

As Councillor for the last 8 years I've advocated for progressive ideas and delivered proven results, and we can see that change in the districts streets, parks, transit, biking and walking, libraries, as well as in arts and culture investments. There are three critical areas to focus on over the next four years, which are essential to our continued success as a municipality: We need to ensure that our municipality is a place where residents are economically secure and hopeful while ensuring equity and access for all. Residents of Halifax are demanding more action to green the municipality and respond to the global climate emergency. Finally, Halifax needs to invest in the proposed rapid transit network and changes to how we move people from place to place.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

After eight years, I think Chamber members have come to know what to expect from me as the area Councillor. I work hard to communicate with residents in an honest and unfiltered manner, and to be there whenever they need the support. I'm responsive in a crisis, and I'm known for leading systematic, municipality wide change that has real and lasting impacts.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Wherever HRM can help businesses, like the free patio program, or downtown street closures on Argyle and Bedford Row, that will need to continue next year. Long term payment plans for arrears on taxes will continue for the next couple years. Council has approved the Halifax Partnership COVID recovery plan in spring 2020, and we are working in support of that plan. We will continue to work closely with the BIDs, the Chamber and other business organizations to identify problems and act on opportunities to help wherever possible. In addition, Nova Scotia's municipalities will continue to work with the Province to assess what kind of targeted tax and business relief might be made available for the hardest hit businesses in the hospitality and tourism sectors, though as Chamber members know, unless there is legislative change provincially, municipalities cannot provide the targeted tax relief that we have asked the Province to enable.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Halifax must continue its award-winning red tape reduction efforts, while working with Halifax Partnership to develop a new five-year Economic Strategy for a post-pandemic recovery, business-friendly Halifax, helping the sector rebound from the immense blow it faced due to COVID-19.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Most reports have a lot of data, especially mobility reports. On the budget side, clearer understanding of the increased operating cost to the municipality when new facilities are commissioned, especially early in the decision-making processes and as a part of the multi-year budget process. Additionally, the cost to service new development and different costs associated with different patterns of development need to be highlighted. Accessibility and environmental impacts need to be meaningfully measured and described.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

It is always challenging to get people to invest time in the development of plans and strategies, but that is where we need their input most! It makes little sense to have the regional plan set out grand and needed changes in development and mobility, and then have engagements on the local impacts of those decisions years later where the neighbourhood or street is frustrated about the frame or direction that they can't influence – it was set in the larger plan.

So we need to continue to communicate how important these large strategic plans are to our quality of life, economic growth, and environmental goals, and have a plan where we succeed in hearing from a wide range of residents, representative of our large geography, diverse population, and across broad range of incomes and interests.

When that level of engagement is achieved, Council can then better defend the local impacts. An example is the transit engagement touched over 25,000 people, it was one of the largest HRM has ever done, and while some people were disappointed with the outcomes and program changes, I feel the engagement clearly showed what an overwhelming majority of residents wanted from transit, so it has gone ahead.

It comes down to strong communication and education about what the downstream impacts are, and also that no plan is going to please everyone, and that does not mean, in any way, that the engagement was not good enough.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

It is a two-way street – Councillors need to make fewer, broader requests that are more impactful and not fill the report centre with time consuming but small ball one offs. We have to ensure that we are providing adequate resources for staff to get the work done - if we double the number of report requests and staff resources remain the same, of course speed of response suffers. But we also need to direct the CAO to be clear with us about what is needed to get reports faster, and how long reports might take, and have a hard look at what reports can be removed to clear space for others.

One of the things I've been doing the last few years is helping other Councillors write motions or amend motions to be more effective, and to use them to amend existing report requests rather than create a whole new request. If we are able to better articulate "this is the strategic direction, these are the outcomes we want to explore" then there should be far fewer smaller, locally focused or politically motivated motions.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I have made sure to build and strengthen relationships with the diverse members of our community, to listen and provide advice and guidance as needed. With many other councillors we constantly working to ensure that staff engage with all parts of our community, both with our assistance and through our Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

HRM has been expanding the resources and role of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, which is now a direct report to HRM's Chief Administrative Officer, and this is a good step. Council needs to ensure our expectations are clear and the resources are available to make sure we are able to guarantee that all public processes have considered how to ensure inclusive feedback and that the engagement process delivers on those promises.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Empowering residents- We need to ensure that our municipality is a place where residents are economically secure and hopeful while ensuring equity and access for all. HRM will continue to address the recommendations in the 2014 Roundtable Report on Violence and Public Safety in HRM (Clairmont Report) and the 2019 Halifax Nova Scotia Street Checks (Wortley) report, and to meaningfully address anti-Black racism and all forms of discrimination in our community, and especially through review and changes to the operations of the municipality. Everyone in HRM must be able access safe, reliable, and affordable housing. In order to do this effectively, I will continue to advocate for the legislative change required to give HRM the power it needs to be an effective champion of affordable housing.

Green Halifax - It is essential that we continue to prioritize climate change and environmental stewardship to ensure the municipality remains a leader, while also protecting our communities from the effects of climate change in the years to come. Regional Council approved the HalifACT 2050: Acting on Climate Together climate action plan in June 2020, and now Council and residents must dig deep to find the resources and funding to do our part. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives gave the plan a glowing review in their article "A Climate Plan That Actually Meets the Crisis: Halifax Leads the Way." As a community, we must embrace our commitment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050 by improving building efficiency and electrifying transit among other measures.

Connected Halifax- To successfully transform mobility in the region (and meet our green goals and carbon budget), we need to follow through on three transformative plans, changing how we get around with the Integrated Mobility Plan 2017, the walking and cycling network outlined in Making Connections: 2014-19 Halifax Active Transportation Priorities Plan, and the recently adopted Rapid Transit Plan 2020 to bring more ferries and bus rapid transit to Halifax before the end of a decade. This transformation must always be framed with the corner for accessibility. We will include accessibility impact in staff reports, provincial support for more wheelchair-accessible taxis, and support for a diverse, representative, accessible, municipal workplace.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Projects like Argyle and the North Park roundabouts, or less dramatic changes like the South Park bike lanes show how important municipal investments are to making a human scale, inviting, attractive city. We sell Halifax in large part on the quality of life, and projects like this are critical to protecting and improving that value proposition.

In the next year we will see several long sought after projects start, things I've fought long and hard for: Spring Garden streetscape, completion of the Lower Water/Hollis protected bike lane, and the long anticipated start of the Cogswell District project.

When you look at all the mobility projects going on in 3-4 years, you should be able to walk or bike on a protected bike lane from Burnside to Downtown, from Downtown to Second Lake in Sackville via Bedford, or from Dalhousie to the Chain of Lakes Trail. Transformation is everywhere, and it is very exciting.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi-year budgets should be here to stay, though the COVID crisis has shown that they are not binding, they are projected budgets. Council is not binding its hands when it passes a multiyear budget, and things can and do change, but major projects are often multi-year buildouts, so it is important that Council has a multi-year budget process so it can see the operational and capital cost impacts not just in the coming year, but in the future.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I'll keep doing what I've done these eight years. I post daily agendas on social media, my calendar is online on my website for all to see, I send out a print newsletter to all residents like clockwork twice a year, spring and fall, and in the last term I sent out 104 newsletters, 36 of them cononavirus related, and posted 45 blog posts. I attend community meetings and hope to bring back participatory budgeting subject to COVID restrictions. In addition to regularly scheduled events, if a crisis happens, I hop on my bike or in a cab and I am there in 15 minutes to see how I can help. I stand by my record.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

We need to get Halifax launched, the rapid transit system under construction, and ensure we work to address systemic racism and make sure no one is left behind as the city changes and the pace of change accelerates, all while managing the economic impact of COVID as best we can and supporting businesses and employment as the economy restarts.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I support moving forward with the proposed Commercial Tax and Small Business: Five Zones with Tiers Options that was presented to Council Sept 1, 2020. I asked that it be debated at the next meeting of Community Planning Economic Development standing committee, which will take place prior to next years budget.

Shawn Cleary

Why are you running for councillor?

I want to make Halifax more financially and environmentally sustainable. I want to our city to be more transparent and accountable. I want to ensure we are creating safe, healthy, vibrant, resilient, and inclusive communities.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

As the Councillor for District 9 for the last four years, I have been privileged to get to know our neighbourhoods and communities. I've learned to listen, to understand, and to support the priorities of those who want to make their neighbourhoods better, and to make our city better. I brought Participatory Budgeting to District 9, so residents could decide how to spend their district capital funding. I've built relationships with residents and advocates to help amplify their voices.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I have brought ideas to our staff and to Council to ensure the city provides support to individual businesses, to our Business Improvement Districts, and to our larger business community. We've implemented the COVID-19 Mobility Response that gives people space for walking and businesses space for queuing and loading. I've helped businesses use sidewalks, streets, and municipal land to expand and operate their businesses with additional physical distancing.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

We will continue to partner with organizations, universities, other levels of government to help businesses start and grow here. We will continue to reduce unnecessary red tape. We will continue to reduce the proportion of taxes that come from the commercial sector and I will push to reform commercial property taxes to help small and medium sized local businesses.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

The evidence, data, and its source(s) would completely depend on the issue being discussed. There is no one single answer to this question.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Halifax is definitely getting better at obtaining feedback from residents but still, too often, we hear the same voices on many issues. The city needs to do a better job of reaching into communities whose voices are not often (or ever) heard. We can utilize more targeted engagement methods and employ technology to truly democratize decision-making on important issues.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Under the HRM Charter and municipal policy, reports are required to provide the research and advice necessary to make evidence-based decisions. The speed of report writing depends on the complexity of the issue and the resources available to prepare the information. In areas that are a high priority for Council, it is necessary to ensure the appropriate level of resources are applied to those priority reports.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

It's important to apply appropriate "lenses" to the issues that come before Council. Engaging the right stakeholder groups, advisory committees, and individual residents must be considered at the beginning of any program or project. This would be critical to planning the necessary feedback and collaboration.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Making Halifax more financially and environmentally sustainable with smarter land use planning. Implementing the HalifACT2050 climate action plan. Electrifying our bus fleet. Making our streets safer by getting more dedicated bus lanes, bike lanes, local street bikeways, and active transportation paths, sidewalks, and crosswalks built by implementing our Integrated Mobility Plan. Making our city fairer and more inclusive, restructuring police services, and building affordable housing.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I'm proud that we protected 379 acres in the Purcell's Cove Backlands with the creation of the Shaw Wilderness Park. I'm proud that we've prioritized transit and active transportation with the installation of dedicated bus lanes and protected bike lanes. I'm proud that all new initiatives from the city have to go through the "red-tape lense" to ensure we're not making it tougher to do business in Halifax.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi-year budgets are beneficial for Council, residents, and businesses. They provide more transparency and certainty about the direction of city spending and priorities. They also provide an anchor and framework for future spending parameters.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I brought Participatory Budgeting to District 9, which allows residents to have a direct say in how district capital funds are spent in their community. I have used social media on many occasions to solicit direct feedback on issues coming to Council. I will also be bringing in community issue forums to allow District 9 residents to initiate policy discussions for presentation at Council and Standing Committees.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

In the very near-term, Council will need to provide appropriate supports for individuals and businesses to help them weather this COVID-19 crisis. Council needs to ensure the climate action plan is implemented and that our transportation system becomes more sustainable.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Halifax's commercial property tax system does need reform. First, it needs to continue to decline as a proportion of overall taxes collected. We should try to more closely tie the cost of services to the taxes paid. We should reduce the tax burden for businesses that locate in more efficient and sustainable areas of the city. We should try to help small and medium-sized local businesses that employ greater numbers of our workforce.

Stephen Foster

Why are you running for councillor?

Two reasons. First, because I love Halifax, and I love the Halifax West/Armdale region. I think we've been blessed with a spectacular city, and it's our duty to make sure we pass on an even better one to the next generation. To me, it would be an honour to play a role on council in that effort to create a better future for Halifax. And second, because I think I can bring a unique perspective to council. With a PhD in physics, I look at a lot of things through a scientific lens, and I want to push for a more scientific, evidence-based mindset on council. To me that means listening to good arguments, always paying attention to what the evidence is saying, and being willing to change your mind when others make good points.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I believe being a leader is ultimately about balancing two conflicting responsibilities: on the one hand, having the courage to push for what you believe in, in the face of strong opposition. And on the other hand, having the humility to accept that you might be wrong, and to change your mind in the face of strong evidence. I see lots of people talk about the importance of that first responsibility, but I don't see many people even mention the second. I think they're equally important, and I plan to be a leader by treating both responsibilities with the seriousness they deserve.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

When it comes to direct financial relief, obviously the provincial and federal governments are in a better position to help our local businesses. But that doesn't mean that the city has no role to play here. We need to be open to creative new affordances - things like the loosening of patio restrictions, or allowing our parks to be used in new and unconventional ways. And we also need to be flexible when it comes to things like deferring corporate tax payments - a business that goes under won't be providing any tax revenue at all for the city in the future.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Probably the single biggest thing council can do is continue and expand upon its current efforts to cut red tape. Clearly, we need regulations, and we can't compromise on health, safety, or the environment. But the current set of regulations we have goes well beyond that, to the point of choking off businesses. And most importantly, the burden of those regulations falls disproportionately on small businesses. When faced with a long list of complex and convoluted rules to follow, a large corporation can afford to hire the army of lawyers and administrative staff that are needed to ensure compliance with those rules. Small businesses often can't. We need to identify and cut unnecessary regulations, and make sure that complying with the regulations that we do keep is as simple and straightforward as possible.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

This is something I'd be in a better position to comment on after spending some time on council. For now I'll just say that, as someone with a PhD in a data-intensive field, I know first-hand the importance of having good data and using it well, and I'd want to make sure that staff is making the most of the data that's available to it.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Clearly we need to do better with outreach here. During my time canvassing I've talked to many people who hadn't even heard about the public hearings for the secondary suite issue and weren't aware that the motion had in fact already passed. Beyond outreach, though, I think the public needs to trust that their feedback makes a difference before we'll start seeing more engagement. Too often the perception is that council is simply "going through the motions" when holding public hearings, and that they will vote how they were going to vote no matter what. If we can convince the public that their participation might change some minds, then I think there'll be lots of people lining up to make their voices heard.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

The number one thing to do is start requesting fewer staff reports. It's always going to be easy for council to fall back on requesting a staff report as a "safe" or "compromise" option when considering difficult decisions. But we need to keep in mind that staff reports aren't free - they use up time, money, and resources, and the more reports we request, the longer

each one will take.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Obviously a huge range of initiatives are needed here, but to be specific, I think mentorship programs offer one of the best tools available to us when it comes to promoting diversity. The way structural inequality and structural racism often play out in practice is that people from privileged backgrounds are born into well-connected (and often nepotistic) networks, whereas people from marginalized backgrounds are left on the outside looking in. Proper mentorship can go a long way towards bridging that gap, and I intend to push for more mentorship programs wherever I can if elected.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My biggest priorities are dealing with the affordable housing crisis (we have a shortage of housing, and we need to be facilitating more of the kind of development that we want), rebuilding trust between the police and our marginalized communities (we need different recruitment strategies, better training, and more accountability for the police), and working towards a greener Halifax (we need to be preserving our green spaces, continuing the push to switch our transit system over to electric buses, rolling out a network of charging stations for electric vehicles, and mandating net-zero emissions for new buildings). We also need to make sure that we do our best to guide the city through its recovery from COVID-19 in a financially responsible way.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I'm excited to engage in a mix of the big and the small. I'm looking forward to turning ambitious initiatives like the Rapid Transit Strategy and HaliFACT 2050 into a reality. But I also can't wait to work with residents on smaller, more local issues, like the Williams Lake dam. Things like that are a huge part of what a councillor does day-to-day, and it's often where you can make the most difference in improving the daily lives of your constituents.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I think financial planning always has to involve a mix of the short and the long term. Right now I think we're probably erring too much on the short-term side of things, and it would be good to have more five or even ten year plans. But if 2020 has taught us anything, it's that no matter how well-laid our long-term plans are, they'll always have to be adjusted in the short-term when they run up against reality.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I think listening to and engaging with the people of your district is pretty much the primary responsibility of a councillor, and it's unacceptable not to live up to that responsibility. I can promise you that as a councillor I will always be reachable, responsive, open, and transparent. I intend to follow in the footsteps of councillors like Sam Austin, who I think has done an exemplary job of demonstrating how to be a representative who truly represents his constituents.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Our focus has to be on affordable housing and guiding the city through it's recovery from COVID-19. They're the biggest issues facing our city.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, I think there's room for improvement here. I'd love to see tax averaging implemented, to reduce the year-to-year volatility businesses face in their tax payments. Of course, as of now HRM doesn't have the power to introduce tax averaging, but I'm prepared to fight to get the province to grant us that power. I also think regional tax rates have a lot of promise as a tool for building a more fair and equitable tax policy, and for shaping the future growth of our city. As a councillor I intend to put a lot of time into researching how best to use that tool.

DISTRICT 10

Andrew Curran

Why are you running for councillor?

My name is Andrew Curran and I am a candidate for District 10 Councillor in the 2020 HRM Municipal Election happening this October. I am currently employed with Halifax Public Libraries and love my career in Information Technology. I am running for councillor because there are many issues in our community that need to be addressed. Issues that include affordable housing; speeding and road safety; a lack of HRM recreational programming in District 10, especially for seniors, youth and families; public transportation; the environment, COVID and business; plus, many more. If elected, representing you will be my full-time job. You might know me as a long-time resident, a community advocate, volunteer, or you might remember that I also ran in the 2016 HRM Election and came very close to winning. I am a 2020 HRM Volunteer Award Recipient. 2020 has been a year like no other. Our area is evolving at a fast pace. Serving in my community is in my heart. I am someone who cares about people and what I can do to help with issues. I want to help foster our pride in our community. To achieve this, we need a councillor who cares and is dedicated.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

My plan is to be part of every aspect of life in my community, my city and to be a resource for residents, business, groups, and organizations.

This means, I will talk and listen to residents, bring their concerns to council, advocate on their behalf, continue serving on community boards and committees to stay connected to the residents of District 10

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I plan on supporting our business by "thinking outside the box" and working with businesses to find out solutions. Some ideas I have are:

Restaurants

- Encourage curb-side pic up and outdoor dining
- Advocate to extending patio time into the cooler season; being creative by using outdoor heaters, serving warm drinks, etc.

Office

- Encourage working a split work schedule where employees can work from home and in office during the week. Currently, only 25% of the work force are back to work in downtown. Bringing more employees back to work will help support the local food industry.
- Take guidance from our local and national health authorities, and the advice from the World Health Organization

BUY LOCAL!

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Businesses of all sizes thrive on population growth and prosperity. I will do everything I can to encourage businesses to locate in Halifax and to my district. This will include reducing “red tape” for businesses in Halifax and supporting home and small businesses, especially during these times of COVID. In these times, it is imperative that we support local businesses.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

data should be sourced from the collaborative results of diverse working groups and business improvements districts / associations.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I will ensure greater community participation by creating a district 10 Public Advisory Council (PAC), made up of residents from each community in District 10, where on a regular basis, issues can be officially recorded, and updates given. I would promote engagement sessions through social media, radio and word of mouth.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council’s asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Streamline the process. I will speed up the process by completing background research into my concerns before requesting a report. Some requests do not need a “Staff Report” but instead, need “action”. For example, the “Wortley Report on street checks” - A report was already completed. We don't need a second or third report. It's time for action.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

In the staff reports, I will ensure inclusive feedback and collaboration by bringing the diverse working groups together that represent HRM. These would include Diversity & Inclusion / African Nova Scotian Integration Office AIO Halifax, Indigenous, Newcomers, LGBTQ2S, Etc., for feedback and collaboration.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priorities for the next four years are:

- Create a Public Advisory Council for District 10
- Create an affordable housing plan
- Advocate for an HRM Community Centre to bring back HRM recreation programs to District 10! This was taken away and currently does not exist in our district.
- Reduce speeding – Work with the province to advocate on reducing speed limits to 40 km maximum speed on residential streets.

- Advocate to eliminate systemic racism practices within HRM. Working in collaboration with ANSAIO (African NS Affairs Integration Office).
- Improve Infrastructure to support a walkable community, road safety and growing development in District 10
- Environment – Create an “Urban Wilderness Parks Committee” to help support the future creation of Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lake (BMBCL) Regional Park.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

- Halifax Public Libraries – is one of the best things that has ever happened for residents of HRM.
- The purchase of land for Blue Mountain Birch Cove Lakes (BMBCL)
- The creation of the HalifACT 2050- acting on climate change together, HRM’s long range environment plan to reduce emissions to zero within 30 years.
- Pilot electric busses

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I support both. Multi-year for long range projects, but due to COVID, we currently need to focus on a year-to-year budget.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

My plan is to be part of every aspect of life in my community, my city and to be a resource for residents, business, groups and organizations. This means, I will talk and listen to residents, bring their concerns to council, advocate on their behalf, continue serving on community boards and committees to stay connected to the residents of District 10.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Affordable Housing – Everyone needs a home live in.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, I believe the commercial tax system needs to be amended. I believe it is time for an objective review of the whole commercial tax system. Downtown business has been getting a raw deal for years; both an assessment process and the rates charge. To have a vibrant downtown and a regional center, it is important that businesses are taxed fairly, competitively, and consistently. They also need appropriate service levels and support.

Renee Field

Why are you running for councillor?

I’m passionate about this district and want to unleash District 10’s full potential. For over twenty years, I’ve been working behind the scenes as a volunteer and have created positive change in the district and now is the time for me to step forward. I’ve created, led and organized a number of community initiatives, from developing school and community playgrounds, bringing a Syrian family to Canada to live in Fairview, working with city staff to address traffic challenges in Rockingham, that I feel my over two decades of experience years and my strong voice for the residents will continue to have positive impacts throughout the district. I have a proven track record of engaging residents and plan to make District 10 the best place to live, work, shop and play.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

Citizen engagement is key. Beside posting to social media, I plan to be accessible in a timely manner to answer residents' questions or to address issues. As part of that, I will create a monthly newsletter and plan to hold monthly town hall meetings so I'm accountable, as a Councillor, to the people I represent. I also plan to create a Volunteer Citizen Advisory Group, made up of people from different neighborhoods throughout the district and meet quarterly to discuss specific issues related to their community.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

A shop local incentive program to encourage residents to spend their dollars locally will benefit residents and the businesses. I also think the city needs to closely look at its procurement process. If the city could allocate 30% of tendering to small or medium sized businesses, this would go a long way to helping boost the economy.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

One of my main goals is to better connect the local business community with the residents. I want to entice businesses to open shop in District 10 and to do that we need to make it welcoming and accessible for the creative industries and entrepreneurs. I want to utilize city staff to conduct business surveys i.e.: average rent in an area, how much parking space is available, commercial tax rate, highlighting business incentive programs while showing the positive attributes of opening a business in District 10 with a nearby library, a multi-use Canada Games Centre, a 5-km Mainland Linear Trail, a nearby Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Park, bi-lingual schools and more. I want to create an on-line business directory of all the businesses in District 10. I want to encourage the city to partner with businesses to help offset costs for signage upgrade programs, façade improvements, graffiti removal, landscaping programs and business training programs.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I feel comparison data with other cities in Canada or abroad is useful to get us thinking a bit more "out of the box". How businesses flourish in other cities on a global scale is key. What makes a company want to think about re-locating to a city, and what can Halifax best offer to entice more businesses to call us home are critical. I also feel it would be useful to have a business entrepreneur committee present to Council at least twice a year so Council can directly hear the effects and challenges of starting, owning and operating a business in HRM.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

As a journalist by trade, public engagement and feedback is essential. I want an open and accessible Council and believe it's in the best interests of HRM to set a limit on the number of closed public meetings.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I don't feel qualified at this time to answer this question as I don't know the speed in which reports are currently created but would imagine it would depend on the complexity of the ask presented to staff. A councillor should also have a duty to clearly articulate what the report should cover.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Excellent question. I feel the time has come for the city to survey their own departments, and the business sector within HRM, to determine how diverse the workforce truly is. Once a baseline has been established, the city needs to work to work with marginalized groups to find ways to increase that ratio.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

A moratorium on any HRM tax increases for a minimum of two years is essential to help our residents and businesses during these pandemic years. My plan is to put a motion forward to Council to immediately implement this action.

We need to address traffic calming measures in many neighbourhoods throughout District 10. I want the city department managers in engineering, planning, transit and traffic to meet with residents, so residents can hear what city staff have to say and staff can hear directly from the residents the impact of the increased volume of traffic in a community. This communication is currently lacking, and many residents have ideas that perhaps staff might not have considered.

We need to create affordable and accessible housing options. We can do this in a number of ways and one is to empower Community Council and develop a ten-year strategy. The city needs to work with the Province and non-profit housing providers to address the affordable and accessible housing issue currently affecting our most vulnerable. The Affordable Housing Work Plan the city adopted in 2018 does not work. The plan does not require any monitoring or follow any reporting protocols. The city needs to track the housing need and measure meaningful results on a yearly basis.

We need to create better Alternative Transit options. This means walking and bike lanes which have real barriers separating them from vehicular traffic, more carpooling incentive programs, more ferries connecting Bedford to Downtown Halifax and let's look at the CN line to develop a fast-track corridor to connect from beyond Bedford to Downtown Halifax. We also need better Transit routes for sub-urban communities – it should not take over an hour to take a bus from Kearney Lake to the downtown core, when the drive averages 20 minutes by car. That is not incentive for transit use.

I support the plans outlined in HalifACT 2050, but we need to provide more options for citizens, increase our green footprint with the investment in more parks, sport fields, playgrounds, wilderness areas, and hiking trails. We can do this by investing in community engagement and accessing federal programs and by working with non-profit organizations.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I am most proud of HalifACT 2050 and the Integrated Mobility Plan as they are looking to set a future vision for our city and I believe strongly we have to set 10 to 30-year goals.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I believe multi-year budgets should continue because this helps to create more robust long-term planning for a city, by aligning the budget to the successful completion of priorities for the community we can best plan.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

The creation of a Volunteer Citizen Advisory Group, made up of people from different neighbourhoods throughout the district who meet quarterly to discuss specific issues related to their community will help to foster and engage residents throughout District 10. Hosting a monthly town hall meeting, either on-line or in-person once these pandemic years are resolved, holds me, as a Councillor, accountable to the residents.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Addressing traffic issues and traffic calming measures. We need a better way to connect commuters coming into the municipality from the provincial highways, to city streets as connector arteries to the downtown core.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, the commercial tax system needs to be amended. Implement Commercial tax reform without raising taxes on the commercial sector is key, especially now with the crisis of the pandemic. One way of achieving this is tax rate averaging, to help with consistency and clarity for a business.

Kyle Morton

Why are you running for councillor?

I'm running because I want to fix underlying issues in Halifax that have been left for too long, and which I believe will continue to receive more words than actions. I'm thinking of housing, which has reached a crisis because of slow moving bureaucratic processes preventing the housing supply from being expanded quickly enough for our population growth, or our transit which is also under increasing strain from a fast growing population. I'm not running so I can be a councillor; I'm running so I can get things done.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I want to facilitate people. We have no lack of good people and good ideas in district 10, and I want to help keep people and local organizations informed, involved, and connected so that we can benefit from all the great things working together brings.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

The municipality has very limited fiscal firepower compared to the Federal government or even the Province, so we need to take targeted measures to best use our finite resources. For example, extending commercial tax deadlines to businesses that need it, and continuing to spend on select infrastructure projects to bolster the local economy are the sorts of actions I would like to take that will have a disproportionate benefit compared to their cost.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I'd like to reduce unnecessary red tape and work with local organisations like the Halifax Partnership and indeed the Halifax Chamber of Commerce to continually develop and implement good ideas that fit our most current business needs. In addition, I would like to support a fair and competitive commercial tax rate to benefit businesses in Halifax. Finally, I want to take steps like addressing the housing crisis to help make Halifax attractive to skilled professionals, students, and immigrants, so we have a vibrant and talented workforce.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Ultimately what data should be utilized will be dependent on the situation. I think it's vital that we use as much quality data as possible in our decision making, and the municipality should keep expanding the amount of data it collects, as well as making it public whenever feasible. I'd also like to bulk up the resources available for applying data science to municipal affairs.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I want to communicate with the community. A lot of lack of participation stems from a lack of knowledge about what's going on in one way or another. At the municipal level this also leads to a lot of apathy. I plan to spread information about current affairs to increase engagement. I'll do this through newsletters and social media, but most importantly, I will continue to canvass if elected so I can discuss issues with people face-to-face.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I'm doubtful that any simple steps can be taken that will drastically cut down on the time reports take, though I certainly share the concern and would be very interested in any such ideas if they were brought to me. What I can do though is focus on good prioritization. Not all staff reports are of equal value and when we have limited resources like time, it's key that we focus on what's most important, and what we can do quickly.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I want to make sure we have a diverse team that is highly capable of looking at issues from a huge array of perspectives so we can have a more complete picture in our reports and projects. I think reaching out to a diverse set of local community groups and looking for their input and participation will also be helpful. Finally, I think it's about designing good questions. Systemic discrimination can occur without any explicit racist feelings just because the way decisions may affect underrepresented people is just not actively considered. So, it's important we try to consider a wide range of potential repercussions of our actions and ask questions accordingly.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My top priority is the housing market. My other main strategic priorities include improving the transit system, particularly in more suburban areas, repairing relations between the police and our local communities through outreach and oversight, preserving green spaces and acting on environmental issues, and making sure we have good investment on our public infrastructure. I also have recorded all the hundreds of issues I've heard from people I've spoken with and I intend to look into all of them to see what, if anything, can be done. Not all of them can be fixed, but they all deserve to be heard.

Broadly speaking I intend to achieve my strategic goals by a few means. Setting deadlines and building measures for transparency and accountability. Compromising to overcome barriers. Cooperating with local organisations, other levels of government, and fellow councillors. I can't do anything alone, but there's enough consensus about most issues to get a lot done. Much of my job will be about facilitation and putting on a little pressure to make sure things progress and deadlines don't start slipping. Having the input and involvement of people in my district will also be invaluable, which is why I intend to keep canvassing if I'm elected.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I'm excited to engage with all the current projects if I'm elected. The Cogswell redevelopment project comes to mind because it seems like the kind of project that may help boost the local economy during our current recession.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I think multi-year budgets are useful so long as you recognize it's very difficult to predict more than about a year or so ahead at best, and projections only measure trends that are liable to change. In light of the current pandemic it may make more sense to make budgets year-to-year since affairs are so unpredictable, but in general I think multi-year budgets are worth the additional effort.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved? Currently I'm going door to door and collecting all the issues I hear into a list, which has hundreds of points already. If I'm elected, I will be going over each issue and seeing what, if anything, can be done, and following up whenever possible. As a councillor I will continue to go directly to people to hear about local issues by canvassing, and I will always be sure to keep track of issues sent my way, whether by phone, email, or social media.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Housing. Most of our economic threats and opportunities are closely tied to the housing market and it is absolutely essential that we put an end to the current housing crisis as soon as possible.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I think there's always room for improvement and taking steps like averaging tax increases over several years to avoid sudden jumps would be good as a start. However, during the current pandemic, I don't think reforming the commercial tax system is the best way we can support our businesses because I suspect it would be highly time-consuming for relatively few short-term benefits. It's something that I would like to work on, but not at the expense of anything more urgent. With all that said, I am in favour of reducing commercial tax rates. It's only the structure of the tax system that I don't want to touch right away. I would also like to ensure that the commercial tax system is as simple as possible so as to reduce the administrative burden on businesses and the municipality itself when the time for those reforms comes, which I would support in a year or two.

Mohammad Ehsan

Why are you running for councillor?

As a proud District 10 resident, I consider the community to be my extended family. Staying engaged and helping people around us, especially our seniors is what we should do naturally. While being involved with different community and non-government organizations in the district I am a firm believer in better politics and public service to the community. Appreciating my active involvement and my collaborative results driven outcomes, many residents asked me to run in this election. Understanding that as a councillor I will have a more direct impact for the betterment of my community, I decided to put my name on the ballot to be Councillor for District 10.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

For me leadership is about being proactive and solving problems. We need to look ahead and not be satisfied with things as they currently stand. I like to combine the analytical side of vision creation with my passion of being involved while listening and understanding the local needs in District 10 to create meaningful solutions.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

It is an unsettling time right now for businesses and individuals in my District 10 and all the other communities in Canada and around the world. We need to do everything possible to minimize the impact and see economic recovery as soon as possible and we need to respond to evolving challenges with practical workable solutions. For me collaboration is key between the local business community and all levels of governments to identify necessary actions to support businesses in responding to the economic impact of COVID-19. HRM Council, service organizations and business leaders all have roles that will continue to evolve. Finding and communicating city initiatives that reduce burden on business and bring new ideas forward by reaching out to local businesses to find out what they need and let them know what is available to help them out as they have to readjust how they do business in order to stay relevant. Technology and a social media presence are strong allies for businesses during these COVID-19 times and many need to be educated on how best to reinvent their business plans to succeed in this new reality.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

A mass media campaign, especially using social media, that effectively engages our citizens to feel safe and comfortable while encouraging them to be out and about in a responsible manner supporting our local businesses. I am, and will be once elected as councillor, a strong presence in District 10. Personally, I will be going to our local businesses daily and will be in

thoughtful conversations with the constituents and business leaders to make sure we doing what is needed to keep a healthy vibrant community.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

As a councillor, I would like to see more involvement of stakeholder inputs in decision making cycles. Those affected by public policies should have active opportunities for participation in the policy process to make sure we have trusting relationship with each other. That's also the way to ensure that accountability and transparency are at the forefront.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I will be available to the constituents of District 10 and will hold regular town hall meetings in every neighborhood of the district. While we all face broad based district-wide challenges, we also have specific neighborhood related issues. So, neighborhood town hall meeting is the answer. Furthermore, I am going to form District 10 Advisory Committee made of residents representing different neighborhoods as well as business, non-profit and community organization representatives. I will also have an online presence where constituents can reach out to me if they are not comfortable coming out to public meetings but prefer something more private. I will also be doing polls regularly on different issues that constituents discuss with me. People are having thoughtful discussions with me from every corner of the district and I will continue to encourage this and to listen and hear what people are saying.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

We must always remember we work for the constituents of our districts and HRM in general. They expect and deserve decisive action and should not have to wait indefinitely for solutions because it is being studied. I am all about efficient time sensitive solutions and will work with my colleagues on the council and the support staff to be ensure we move quickly and professionally to solve problems in a timely manner.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

As a board member, I sit on Halifax Regional Police's Diversity Working Group (PDWG). For ensuring inclusive feedback and collaboration, I would like to see something like the PDWG in our regional council.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

I have had many thoughtful conversations with people from all corners of District 10 and several issues keep being raised over and over again.

One thing is truly clear. District 10 must adapt to recent growth. We must have the community infrastructure, including schools, to support future developments.

Safe and accessible streets and sidewalks are urgently needed. Our growing district faces problems with speeding, congestion and accessibility.

More public transit options are desperately needed. What takes 10 minutes by car should not take 2 hours by bus. There are too many gaps in our transit service and this needs to be addressed immediately. To encourage usage, public transit must be more efficient.

Seniors need our help and support and I am proposing an affordable bus pass and expansion of the seniors' property tax rebate by up to 12.5%

We must preserve our parks and playgrounds. The importance of Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes cannot be stressed enough. It is also crucial that community recreation centres are affordable (i.e. The Canada Games Centre).

Together, we will find solutions sensitive to the diverse needs of each neighbourhood.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

There are many municipal projects I am excited about. HRM's focus on active transportation, integrity mobility plan is something that are important to me. I would like the HRM to have much more coherent strategic plan for Blue Mountain Birch Cove Wilderness Area proposed regional park. In particular, I am looking forward to effective implementation of HalifAct2050 policy document.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Multi year budgets are good in the sense of long-term planning and looking to the future. However one can't lose sight of the fact that things can change in the short term extremely quickly so one has to be prepared to re-evaluate regularly to make sure immediate needs are being met and that staying the course is the most effective and efficient plan.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I will be available to the constituents of District 10 and I plan on holding regular town hall meetings (either virtual and/or in person depending on the recommendations from NS Health), as well as having online options for communications as some people to prefer to have more private correspondence rather than public meetings. There will also be regular polls done by me online on issues people speak to me about.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Along with the issues I raised in question 9 council needs to focus on working with our local businesses so they are able to reinvent themselves to stay viable in this new reality so that we can have a strong economy .

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

The only recommendation that went forward was to average commercial tax bills that increase more than 5 % over a 3-year period to allow people time to adjust. Averaging applies to all business small and large. While I need to look at this in more detail once I'm elected as councillor for District 10 it appears this doesn't go far enough, and it needs much more in order to have any real positive impact. Some of the other proposals, like the tiered assessment rates along with creation of 5 new commercial zones, could also overly complicate the tax system. So, in theory I do think it needs to be amended and will certainly look at it further.

Kathryn Morse

Why are you running for councillor?

I am running for District 10 councillor because I'm a proud Haligonian and I want to make Halifax an even better city to live in. I believe I have the knowledge, experience, and professional skills to be the best representative for Fairview, Clayton Park and Rockingham. My campaign is about improving liveability, affordability and sustainability in HRM—and improving the quality of life for residents. I also think being a councillor would be an interesting job!

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I am working hard to get elected so I can bring my education and 30 years of professional experience to the role of councillor. My qualifications include a 4-year degree in environmental planning, a strong foundation for the many planning-related issues that councillors need to review and make decisions about. I have experience working in government, and with budgets and stakeholder groups, as the former assistant to the Nova Scotia Minister of Finance and Nova Scotia Minister of Health (2009-13). Having worked as a reporter for CBC Halifax for 12 years, I understand the issues in our community from many diverse perspectives. More recently I worked in conservation, on the Nature Conservancy of Canada team that helped establish the 379-acre Shaw Wilderness Park in Halifax. I know my district and

I'm rooted here: I grew up in Clayton Park, attended Halifax West High School, and still live in the older part of Clayton Park with my husband, teenaged daughter, and our extended family. All of the candidates in District 10 will have a steep learning curve if elected. I believe with my planning degree and media and government experience; the curve would be less steep for me.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community. How do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Even though HRM has escaped some of the worst of the pandemic's health impacts, the municipality has still been hit very hard by its economic impacts. HRM's businesses are a key employer and economic driver for the province and the region. I believe governments need to find ways to help the business community during this time of great uncertainty. I support fairer taxes for small business and consideration of rolling assessment averaging to increase predictability and help in post-Covid recovery and beyond. I support using buy local procurement where possible to support local businesses. I support careful spending by HRM including reviewing and potentially deferring all major non-essential capital expenditures to reduce expenditures and debt. I also support HRM working with Ottawa and the Province to secure loans and cost share infrastructure investments.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I understand the importance of the partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia to modernize regulations and reduce red tape for businesses in HRM. On council, I will work with the Advisory Panel for the Joint Project for Regulatory Modernization for continued progress. I support council providing more budget transparency, streamlining routine processes, and implementing a new digital/online PLC process (Permit, Licensing and Compliance) among other measures.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Staff and council could use projected expenses as well as budgeted expenses to increase transparency and accountability.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

I feel public advocacy and stakeholder groups have made and continue to make a huge positive contribution to the municipality. It's where some of the most innovative ideas come from. As councillor I would reach out to community partners and stakeholders well in advance to engage participation, using traditional and social media, and old-fashioned phone calls. I would proactively meet key stakeholders, and even go door to door to solicit feedback if a specific neighbourhood was in line to be impacted by a pending change. I think it's important to engage in good-faith public engagement, which to me means providing detailed background documents in advance of public consultations, posting documents and public comments online for transparency and confidence in the process, and following through by implementing stakeholder recommendations that are reasonable, cost-effective and have the widest benefits.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

It's important that council has clear and realistic priorities and reduces its demands on staff to ones that are manageable and can be delivered in a reasonable time frame.

How will you ensure not only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

In some situations, the onus is on council and councillors to reach out to diverse communities and stakeholder groups to invite and include their perspectives and build trust in the process. For example, if I was involved in decisions involving implementation of the Wortley report recommendations for policing, I would ensure the advocacy groups that made submissions to the Wortley report, such as the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission and DPAD Coalition (African Nova Scotian Decade for People of African Descent), are notified and engaged well in advance of decisions so their input can be fully considered. I would apply the same principle to other diversity groups.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priority is getting elected—and I’ve been working at it full-time for the past 3 months, including knocking on more than 3000 doors. If elected my priorities for the next four years are to make progress on affordable housing and climate change adaptation. I will work collaboratively with fellow councillors, community partners, and other levels of government on these goals, which overlap and reinforce each other, and provide a foundation for economic growth and immigration. For example, by building new energy efficient housing, HRM could provide much-needed affordable homes while addressing climate resilience. By conserving wilderness around HRM like Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes, council can help store carbon, cool the city, and create a permanent recreation area for residents and visitors. By purchasing electric buses, HRM can make progress on climate goals while enhancing an important public service. By designing more mixed-use communities on the “15-minute city” model HRM can make neighbourhoods more attractive and liveable, while reducing reliance on cars. Briefly, the “15-minute city” model advocated by C40 Cities involves building mixed use housing and new developments that include workplaces, public services, and businesses like restaurants and stores, so neighbourhoods can be more self-sufficient and people can get more of the things they need closer to home. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-15/mayors-tout-the-15-minute-city-as-covid-recovery>

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I’m proud that Halifax is tackling climate change and excited to work on the HalifACT 2050 report recommendations because I feel progress on the climate could create new jobs, position the city well for the future, attract immigration and talent to the city, and, done properly, could improve the quality of life for residents. We need to build a significant number of new energy efficient apartments and homes—that way we could address the climate AND the urgent need for affordable housing at the same time. I would be excited to work on the recommendations of the Wortley report. I feel it’s vital to achieve progress on addressing bias and racism in our community in order to address historic wrongs and build social trust for the future.

I’m proud that Halifax has taken steps to protect Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes. This could be an amazing park and long-term natural asset for Halifax. Having worked in conservation, I know how exciting it is when land is actually fully conserved and protected.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I believe multi-year budgets should continue. They can promote transparency and accountability and may provide more predictability for council and community partners as HRM recovers from the pandemic.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I plan to be responsive to residents, partner groups, and stakeholders and work with new and established advisory groups to ensure open and timely communication with council. I believe in collaboration, hearing all perspectives and being pragmatic about solutions that are for the greater good.

What do you believe should be council’s biggest focus over the next four years?

A strong recovery from Covid, including progress on building new affordable, accessible, and energy-efficient housing in HRM. Housing provides the foundation for our community. By investing in housing, HRM could create good jobs, retain, and attract young people, tackle poverty, kick-start the local economy and make progress on climate resilience and sustainability.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform. Do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I believe tax reform is more urgently needed due to the economic hit from Covid-19. I agree that businesses need a fair and workable commercial tax structure that provides more predictability and helps them get back on their feet. I would be in favour of council initiating a transparent process of consulting business and stakeholder groups like the Chamber, CFIB and Union of NS Municipalities before bringing in any tax changes. Ideally consultations would happen before the end of January 2021, as part of the pre-budget process.

DISTRICT 11

Pete Rose

Why are you running for councillor?

Answer: I believe in community. I have been a resident of Ketch Harbour for 16 years. I am running to be the councillor for District 11 - Spryfield - Sambro Loop - Prospect Road- because I want to make a difference and improve the health of our communities and our citizens. I've literally rolled up my sleeves for my neighbors. As an active volunteer and regular blood donor, I've always been willing to do my part in my community. I am a dad with two young children who I want to ensure have a healthy and prosperous community to reside in. I have learned that to make a difference you need to be part of the change. I want to make things better for my kids, so I am ready to roll up my sleeves and put my skills and experience to work for every member of District 11.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

Answer: A successful community requires leadership in a variety of different ways and with a strong mix of people. I believe that leaders step forward when there is a need and I have been one who steps forward whenever and wherever I am needed. I believe that the best way to be a leader is to lead by example. I am always here to work hard and to help people. I believe in our communities and that together we can really make a difference. I will continue to step forward and work hard for every member of District 11 whether at the council or out in our communities.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Answer: COVID-19 has been an unprecedented time in our world; a novel virus with a pandemic and public health measures have been important to control the virus spread. To comprehensively respond to support our businesses, I would want to gather input from the businesses and look across the various sectors to theme and understand what assets each has and what needs are remaining. We are all going to require adaption to live with this virus, work and exist in different ways and follow the public health guidelines. It is important to amplify and share opportunities (grants, solutions, resources). Every business is different so I don't believe that there is one specific approach that would work best for every business.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Answer: The coronavirus has created significant challenges for our business culture; it has also exposed significant innovation and resiliency in our businesses. Throughout the pandemic and reopening, the promotion of support local has resonated with Nova Scotians. Short term, we need to continue to support local, while recognizing there are many in our community who do not have the same wages, income and resources previous to the pandemic. Halifax Regional Municipality has a lot of positive success stories to share; promoting these stories, championing the highlights, and looking for continued opportunities to create successful conditions will be key. Promoting the provincial and federal incentives that draw companies to HRM to grow and expand. We need to sustain and keep our living conditions strong and healthy.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Answer: As a Regional Councillor, I would need to be orientated to the processes for staff reports and council sessions. From following council, public hearings, and community council, I feel there needs to be clarity on the engagement policy for HRM Council to ensure that engagement is meaningful and authentic. I would like to learn more about the Social Policy Framework and how this lens will be applied to staff reports and council decision making. I recognize the staff reports do not all look the same and there may be the opportunity for consistency in framing these reports. Ensuring adequate data, health information and community demographics is a strong and important part of the background is key.

It would be good to be able to get more timely updates on staff reports including the various statuses. Some of these items might already be happening but they are not visible from the outside looking in.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Answer: Working directly with our existing community groups and communities in general will help bolster our community involvement and participation in these sessions. I believe that our residents need to know that their voice truly is important and that their thoughts and opinions on the way that we shape our communities needs to be heard. The more that we show what we have listened to and how we have listened to the community voices the more that I believe people will get involved and voice their thoughts. We need to be ok with hearing diverse opinions and creating conditions for people to share and be engaged. COVID-19 has changed the processes for in person and open community gathering for 2020 and into 2021. We will need to be innovative and rely on natural community leaders to help share the opportunities for public engagement and feedback.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Answer: As a Regional Councillor, I would need to be orientated to the processes for staff reports and council sessions. In order to give a complete answer for this question I want to further understand the requirements placed on staff, the expectations and the priority setting in the preparation of these reports. There could be a way to remove barriers that we place on staff so that reports are easier for them to produce which in turn will speed up the process. Industrial engineers who support process improvements may also be an untapped resource for supporting process changes.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Answer: HRM has an office of diversity and inclusion/African Nova Scotian Affairs Integration Office that provides leadership, policy advice, professional development, and expertise. I would want to consult with this team to ensure that we are maximizing their opportunity to support diversity. We need to create safe and inclusive spaces for residents to share their experiences, feel heard and notice change. I believe trust is built through participation. Trust is a key condition for creating safety. Through community meetings and being present in our communities I will work closely with every group in our district to make sure that everyone's voice is represented. I promise to always be open for feedback and listening.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Answer: My main priority for the next 4 years is to make sure that we are fiscally responsible with how we understand, allocate, create and invest the money for our budget. The full effects of COVID-19 will continue to evolve. There have been difficult decisions made by council to date and there will be more in the months and years ahead. I believe I have strong budgeting and financial management skills to evaluate the wants and needs as put forward from each district and make sure that the priority needs are looked after first. With my background and skills from my years as a Construction Project Manager and my passion for our communities I know that I am uniquely qualified to make a positive impact on council.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Answer: HRM has had a tremendously successful Regional Council and staff team to lead the municipality over the past few years. Their Strategic Priorities plan is a solid document that reflects areas of focus and results. Continuing with this product to improve clarity, reduce inefficiencies and streamline communications is key. I am excited of the work coming out of the Transportation Standing Committee and the Audit and Finance Standing Committee that will strengthen our communities and our processes. The Integrated Mobility Plan and the work on the Centre Plan will create conditions to improve our community for the years ahead. I want to further understand the District 11 Capital investments to see what the trend for investment over the past ten years has been and to learn where this can expand. The Halifax and West Community Council is another area that I want to learn more about and understand the experiences and opportunities that can grow in the years ahead. The work of the Social Policy Framework to improve the daily lives of our citizens to ensure food security, transportation, access, and supports is important. I am excited about the role HRM has played with improving food access through initiatives like the Mobile Food Market. The investments in trails, active transportation

and access to low cost recreation opportunities is something that HRM should be proud of. I am looking forward to hearing from residents where they want increased engagement and looking for opportunities to expand on this.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Answer: We need to ensure we are following the best advice and direction that is aligned with the Halifax Charter for HRM to guide our finance and budget structures. I believe we need to have a combination of both year-to-year budgets and multi-year budgets to administer in our municipality. There are projects that we need to undertake that can require more of a capital investment than would fit within one year. The nature of some projects requires more time to complete than 1 year. Budgets need to show vision and agility to our residents.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

Answer: As a resident of district 11 for 16 years, I am an active citizen in our community. I intend to engage existing community groups from across the district and work with the community councils. I would like to explore an Advisory Committee for the District. Another way to ensure that I am engaged with the district would be to hold round table discussions and community meetings on a regular basis so that I can receive input from members of the community. I am comfortable using video, learning social media and engaging residents where it makes the most sense for them.

What do you believe should be council's biggest focus over the next four years?

Answer: All municipalities and communities are going to have challenges over the next few years as we continue through the COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest focus needs to include a look at how we invest our money. Before we propose any sort of increase to taxes or cuts to services, I believe that we need to look inwards on the way we spend our money to find savings and efficiencies first. These savings and efficiencies would go a long way to help us get through the effects of COVID-19 and minimize the impacts on our citizens.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Answer: I would need to gather more information on the topic of our existing commercial tax system before I could give an appropriate response to this question. I am committed to working with the businesses in our district as well as HRM ensure that we help our business community be successful.

Kristen Hollery

Why are you running for councillor?

I want to help the residents of District 11 solve their problems. I help them now in the job I have, but everything I do is only short term for the most part. I want to make permanent changes for the residents of District 11! I am a skilled problem solver and team player who is motivated by the results I see every day when people work together for the common good. Municipal government is the perfect fit for me as I have been bridging communities and bringing positive change to individuals and institutions for decades. I will proudly serve with competence, kindness, and integrity.y.is

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I will work hard to bring food initiatives to District 11 and we will eliminate hunger in our community one and for all.

I will lead the effort to bring all levels of government together to improve simple, affordable, and sustainable housing to those who need it

District 11 needs improvements to transportation, internet, cell coverage, and community facilities. I will lobby hard for action on these infrastructures need that are of the utmost importance to all our residents.

I firmly believe that each decision we consider at HRM Regional Council must be examined through the lens of the healthy environment that will sustain us for generations to come. Is

the perfect fit for someone whose vision of bridging c

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, and we need to support small business in HRM during these turbulent times. That means clearing roadblocks to allow new business start-ups and current businesses the ability to pivot their services, creating outdoor dining and meeting spaces, allowing for park and curbside pick up to create easy access for residents to access businesses. Freezing tax increases until COVID harm has been mitigated. Investing in creating online access to HRM services, providing access cafes/community spaces for low-income individuals to access online services, to vote and have a voice in our community.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Ensuring an 'Open for Business' culture in HRM starts with a robust, communication platform that illustrates what businesses are doing in HRM, profiling their successes. Too much media centers on large events and ignores the many small successes that occur daily in our communities. Focusing on good news stories, allowing them to be submitted and shared. Word of mouth is a huge driver of business and with many isolated we need to find ways to connect and encourage buy local events and co-ops. We do not need to rely so heavily on imported goods and services. We need to drive innovation, work with our youth and seniors on how to create daily positive change.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Staff reports and data collection slows and halts opportunity. Balance must be struck, and we need to implement temporary changes in our community and measure their outcomes. Too much talk and debate create nothing. It frustrates the public. Consultants are not needed at all stages. Residents know what the issues are; they live and struggle daily with them. HRM needs to focus on a few areas and improve them fully as opposed to sprinkling solutions here and there. Reaching for low hanging fruit is not enough. Data on the health, age and income, poverty rates needs to factor into where we focus our resources.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Being in the community and meeting residents where they are. Online submission of requests and pilot projects needs to be available to residents who cannot make it to public information sessions. Groups of residents need to be connected to each other virtually to tackle issues in their communities. There is untapped knowledge and a frustrated, apathetic voter base in HRM. When less than 30% of residents vote in municipal elections it is evident why the HRM has limited success in becoming greener, improving transit, education, and services.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Limit the number of asks and reports. Prioritize the list, and do not add any new asks until current asks for data have been delivered. Progress cannot be made if we never reach the end of the list. Focus and direction is needed, and council needs to focus on the issues that are common across all regions first.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Diversity and inclusive feedback begin with meeting residents where they are. Creating problem solving teams with the sole task of finding solutions and the autonomy to pilot change will lead to a balanced HRM. Residents need to know they

have a voice and that their voice matters, and it is being heard and acted upon. Hiding behind bureaucracy and off camera session deepens distrust and apathy. We need to be better in order to do better.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

Food Security, Affordable Housing, Urban & Rural Infrastructure, Sustainability and Resident Engagement are my priorities. As outlined above my approach will be simpler as many of our issues and progress has been overcomplicated. Like-minded groups across HRM can solve our issues and make our community a model for others rather than us trying to chase other city models. We are unique as our residents and we created our issues and we need to solve them together as we do in individually in our daily lives.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

Green space expansion, active lifestyle projects, water and sewage improvements, ride share, smaller transit buses and vans, community gardens, library renewals, business incentives, resident engagement.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I prefer multi-year budgets. It is time consuming to constantly prepare budgets and this time can be spent working on programs and issues that address the needs of the communities HRM serves.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I would like to hold community events and give people time to be able to air any concerns that they may have at the same time as celebrating the great communities that make up District 11. I will be accessible through email, phone and by social media so that people may be able to contact anytime day or night.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Food security, affordable housing and clean water should be the biggest focus! At least one of these affects all districts in HRM and therefore most residents. Food and water are a fundamental human right and we are in an affordable housing crisis, so we need to prioritize these issues and ensure all residents are housed safely and no one goes hungry!

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I do believe the commercial tax reform will need to be amended at some point, but I think the Municipality really needs to focus on the current needs that have arisen because of Covid -19.

Hannah Munday

I grew up on the South Shore but like so many moved to the city for school and work. I love Halifax and have never regretted my decision to stay here, but I see where we need to make changes so that District 11 and the city as a whole can provide equality of opportunity for all our citizens. I have lived here as a university student, a small business owner, a commuter, a parent and a caregiver for a senior citizen. That broad perspective gives me a unique perspective. I'm running for every frustrated commuter sitting in stop-and-go traffic thinking there must be a better way. I'm running for every family that wants to take swimming lessons or learn a new skill but struggles with access and inclusion. I'm running for seniors who need to make connections in our communities so that in times of crisis like COVID-19 they have a support network in place to help. I'm running for folks who need accessible affordable housing, practical transit solutions, hiking & biking trails and well-maintained playgrounds. I'm running because I want everyone in District 11 to feel engaged and invested in our place within the greater framework of Halifax.

District 11 is one of the largest electoral districts and lacks a sense of cohesiveness and identity. When canvassing, many residents are unaware of the district boundaries and surprised at where the lines are drawn. As councillor, I want to bring together all the communities of District 11 so we can move forward with common purpose. I will be producing a monthly newsletter-style update with information about council business, community events, volunteer opportunities and issues shared by residents across the district.

Residents need to have enough financial security to continue buying & supporting local. We need to implement the proposed Living Wage policy for city sub-contractors – employees who earn a living wage have better mental and physical health outcomes and have disposable income to spend in the community. Addressing pressing issues with affordable housing will also have an impact on the local business community. Finally, the economy recovery plan prepared by the Halifax Partnership emphasizes the importance of seeking national and international investment opportunities, and this will be key as we move forward. We already are attracting interest from the film industry because we've flattened our curve; our success with following Public Health orders is a real benefit and attraction that we should be touting.

Halifax council has passed some plans and policies in this past year that promise exciting possibilities for future growth. The social procurement policy and HaliFACT2050 both demonstrate that Halifax is embracing innovation, inclusivity and long-term strategies for a happier, healthier populace and a greener city. Around the world, more and more companies are seeking investment opportunities that demonstrate a commitment to these values. By showing that we truly are willing to "be bold", we can attract investment and interest in our city.

Demographic information is something we need to be paying more attention to during planning discussions. We need to have a clearer picture of the makeup of our communities (and how that makeup is changing) in order to best meet their needs both now and in the future. We also need to reach out to Mi'kmaq, Black and newcomer communities to make sure their voices are heard and their needs addressed.

The community engagement process is a bit of mystery to folks who've never participated. In my regular updates to the district (see Q2) I will provide not only the dates & times of community engagement sessions, but also a basic explanation of what the process involves and how best to prepare for one.

While I agree that council does ask for a lot of staff reports, I don't think there is any benefit to rushing decisions without adequate information being made available to all councillors. I would be open to hearing suggestions from city staff about how to better manage resources for staff reports but placing limits on this doesn't sit well with me. Bad information means bad decisions.

City staff and council need to make the effort to reach out to racialized and marginalized communities. Making connections with community groups, non-profit organizations and advocacy groups will be key to making sure their perspective is heard. Building bonds of trust will take time, but it is critical to our collective success.

I want to see improvements in transportation, accessible recreation, environmental sustainability and community growth. We need to take a hard look at how we plan for population growth, identifying and addressing infrastructure gaps before they become critical – so I intend to press hard on bringing improved transit access to District 11. We have the HaliFACT2050 plan in hand, passed unanimously: we need to move on the action items so we can meet our goals. Increased cooperation between councillors will matter. Those that represent the peninsula / downtown core and those representing the suburban and rural areas of the municipality need to work together to improve quality of life for all citizens; "a rising tide lifts all boats", as the saying goes. I want to work collaboratively with my fellow councillors to get things done that will benefit my District 11, but also the city as a whole.

The Integrated Mobility Plan has real potential to make traveling around the city by bus or bike much more practical and I'm excited to see it finally finished. The demolition of the Cogswell interchange is delayed now due to COVID-19 budget contractions, but it will happen, and that will do much to improve the look and feel of Halifax downtown. The recent purchase of additional land for the Blue Mountain-Birch Cove Lakes Wilderness Park is a decision I heartily supported and I look forward to engaging with this and other projects designed to protect our green spaces and make them more accessible to our residents.

Year-to-year budgets don't allow for long-term planning. Multi-year budgets are preferable.

I covered much of this above in Q2, but I will add here that I will have an active presence in the district. I engage with residents on social media and will continue to do so. I will answer emails and phone calls in a timely fashion. I want people to feel they can come to me with their questions and concerns.

Council needs to help Halifax recover from the effects of COVID-19. As discussed above, we have an opportunity here to showcase our city as a safe, progressive, sustainable, and forward-thinking place to live and work. The new council needs to work collaboratively to move projects forward and reach out to marginalized communities to gain their perspective on issues facing our city. If we demonstrate our resiliency in the wake of COVID-19, we will improve the quality of life for all.

Halifax needs commercial tax reform to address issues of fairness for businesses across the city. Requested changes to municipal taxation powers have limited the ability of the city to address these issues. After examining the pros and cons of various taxation proposals, I'd like to see further study given to regional rates as a way to encourage business growth appropriate to the needs of businesses in different areas of the municipality.

Stephen Chafe

Why are you running for Councillor?

Because I believe my unique combination of skills and experience is needed right now on Council, especially with difficult issues the Municipality will have to face in the next four years.

There is also a certain duty we all have to stand up when needed and do the job if you know you are the best choice for the role. This is one of those cases. It is not just a job to me, but about doing the right thing for my Community. These days I am mainly what is called an "Analyst". I am also a trained "Civic Planner". A combination that is rare. Both are requirements for the job. A desire to use those skills to help people and help my community – is a crucial motivation. I have worked directly for the City Administration. Which makes a big difference in understanding many of the systems and departments that are broken and need to be sorted out. This would not be my first-time providing solutions to the City of Halifax on complex problems in this regard. Finding sensible Economic plans that help city workers still keep their jobs, will be front and center. This will take "out of the box" kind of innovative solutions, which I am used to finding for clients. My working experience comes from a Businesses Administration, Engineering, and Tech background. I have also worked in Healthcare, Telecom, Government, and City Planning over the last forty years. I am good at what I do, and my soft skills would be necessary at this role as a Councillor. I have also done decades worth of volunteer work to back up my professional work. Which means I have a deep understanding of many social issues affecting us as a society. In recent years I have stepped back from a lot of those roles, but I have been involved with many things – from Emergency Management to Food Security projects, from running volunteer based Farmers Markets to Addictions Prevention, and even regional Tourism and Economic development.

The coming few years will be a social, economic, and logistical challenge for our Municipality. They will need Councillors like me who deeply understand Macro and Micro-level economics, social problems, and can put together "Real Deal" style Business Case solutions as easily as I can find Innovative ways to solve all manner of challenges.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

First off by addressing many of the community needs I have solutions for. Some of this based on conversations I have had at the doors with many constituents already. Some of it based on problems I have run into through my volunteer work. Affordable housing being one of those first priorities. By setting up better direct communications with constituents going forward through a new online Interactive Democracy Platform. Also, by trying to better bring together the various volunteer organizations and business groups in our community, to help find “think tank” style answers to some of our more pending problems. Putting together a disaster response package for the Businesses and NGO's effected by the Covid Pandemic being an early goal. In addition to this I hope to foster more small business CEED level growth, through obtaining funding from Provincial and Federal counterparts. Improving the scale of our workforce here through more locally taught evening and weekend adult education programs. More childcare programs that are local, allowing both parents and single parents to pursue incomes or expanded education opportunities more easily. Most importantly, reduced tax packages for small brick and mortar businesses (Covid Relief Plan). Also, the creation of a local Small Business incubation center. From small Software Development to Trades, from Crafter's and Clothing workers, to home healthcare or home teaching opportunities – all from a shared virtual or physical space. Even if all it does is rent small offices or provide professional office front services. Plus combining local Commercial kitchen space to produce early stage products for the domestic and national Grocery markets.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

As soon as I get elected, I plan to push Council to use the new Multi-Tier Tax rules to implement a Property Tax rescue package for small and medium sized businesses. This will look at allowing for a greatly reduced Property Tax for Landlords, if they agree to sign a contract to pass that saving directly on to their Business and Retail tenants. Commercial property tax rates are already high in this City, and if the Municipality has to take a one to two year haircut on Tax payments in order to allow brick and mortar businesses to be more able to keep their doors open for public Consumer and Commercial Business opportunity – then lets do it, and do it quickly.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

That will be a difficult issue around the planet, given the recent Pandemic event. Having a Covid Economic Rescue plan that helps shift small business options to affordable rental locations in our District, along with helping these businesses to move into the Virtual Internet Marketing presence as well more easily – for home delivery of goods or to reach customers around the world. Setting up a Small Business Incubator project for CEED businesses would be another step. There will be a lot of unemployed people the next couple of years. We need to give them opportunities to try new small business ideas that may be successful right here in HRM, or be successful on the global scale.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

More data input from non-governmental sources (along with presentations of their ideas directly to Council or Committees) would be a good start. There is less of a opportunity to hear directly from a wider collection of private industry players. That leads to ill-informed decision being supported. Council needs to hear from all of those peoples, and not just through the filtered lens of City staff. The entire Uber debate and its impact on the Taxi and Limo business is a perfect example of this. Rather than put the local Taxi businesses on the ropes, the Municipality and Province could have rolled out their own Uber style system – run by a non-profit Administration model. That way all the profits go to the local government coffers, and not into some US Corporate giants bank account. This option was never presented to the City Council. Why? lack of vision perhaps?

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Using an Interactive Democracy system within my own District. Hopefully, it will be one of those things that lead by example. The hope is to be able to use this same system across the Municipality, to allow more direct communication options between Council and the people (and the businesses they run or depend on). Setting up a monthly or bi-monthly meeting of all the volunteer organizations in the District, to allow for more communications and networking also seems to be a good step to take. I would probably seek to have the Spryfield Business Commission host more meetings that include businesses from the surrounding Districts as well – to build strength and allegiances on more a regional level.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

It would depend on the nature of the ask, and the report itself. There needs to be more RFI style Request for Information asks to put out to the business and non-profit sectors on some of these growth style proposals. Package all the replies with the official report, both as open information resources and as non-reviewed responses from the business and citizen community. No more sanitizing of reports through in-house resources alone, or lengthy review and repackaging of that third-party information. We need better informed politicians, and this is the way to both speed up the process and get that larger information package in front of all the decision makers in one shot. Not all reports can be treated in this manner. There are reasons of confidentiality as well as sensitive financial discussions that still will have to go through the normal channels. However, the slow speed at which this often happens does raise the question of why the City does not have more internal resources and SME Subject Matter Experts on staff then it does. I would push for more funding within the capital budget to fund more working groups within HRM that can handle investigation and planning more directly – as well as more quickly.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

See above answer.

Allowing direct input from outside public agencies will make sure more than just City Planning voices alone are heard. Some of that is done now, especially through Committees. However, we need to be more open on how the contribution of information or "other peoples plans" may be the better choice. HRM staff's current aversion to letting outside agencies (particularly volunteer agencies) help the city improve some processes and services – has got to stop. The attitudes are setting some administration efforts back twenty years or more.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

The first three priorities out of the Election gate will be the COVID Economic Rescue Plan, Affordable Indexing, and Transit improvements.

See my list of Platform items attached to this email, on my cut card that I hand out. I am currently the only Candidate in my area with that level of detail on some of the issues in question. I plan to not just bring ideas to the Council Table, but also fully defined solutions and fight for the implementation of them. You can also find greater details on these Platform issues on my website. I have delved far more deeply into solutions and the packages needed to finance them, on that web page. There are a few sections not filled out, as I am still waiting on data from the City to be able to finish those particular outlines. I will soon be adding more updates to the website in the coming week, whether I can get the data through official sources or through separate research.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engaged with.

I would like to see each of the items on my Platform list competed within the four-year window.

In the first two years – I would be most driven to deal with sealing a deal between the three levels of government to move ahead quickly on Affordable Housing initiatives and to get some of the Food Security Initiatives and the Volunteer Merit Program up and running. Also, to see protections in place to help cushion the blow from the Pandemic, and to see the Speeding

Enforcement issue, the extended Adult Education options model, Library Funding, Small Business Incubator Program and the Greenhouse and Food Security issues take front and center.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

Year-to-year is preferable. Multi-Year costs for projects should be limited to a small percentage of the overall budget. Plus, they should be limited to the 4 year term of any general Council.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I am already engaging with community members through a lot of One-on-One conversations. I also plan to reach a wider audience through have a regular online presence and open-door policy for conversations as much as my schedule may allow. See my earlier comments on Interactive Democracy. I will be giving my constituents the power to be heard, to overrule my Council votes if enough people mandate such, and to remove me if necessary – should they not be happy with my job. If by Year two it is allowed – I would like to see some Town Hall style meetings where people can show up to bring up general concerns.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

The next two years will be about recovery from the Pandemic. That will be the biggest impact, and without a solution – few other projects and changes will get to see the light of day.

Year One will have to take a focus on where we can save money or introduce more efficient ways of doing things without also having some massive Austerity program. Take a long look at bringing in a four-day work week for non-essential City employees and suspend some major expenditure and infrastructure projects at least to the middle of Year Two.

Hopefully, we can take some steps to identify a needed expansion to the Halifax Police Department around a Mental Health special case division. The Year Two budget should be mostly focused on innovative Economic Recovery if the Pandemic threat continues. Small business CEED funding may have to become a serious investment. The Municipality may even have to take a hard look at kickstarting its own new version of a Domestic Economy on the micro-level. That would be a harder discussion. If that kind of step protects the people over the next five years, then any Major Recession would force us to do this. Better we look at voluntary options that can be put in place first. If the province refuses to sit down and make a deal on how to share solving the Affordable Housing and Commercial Rent issues over the next four years – then the City needs to focus on a variety of creative programs that allow the Municipality to launch some programs on their own. Starting off some Green Projects like the Solar Thermal Program, Greenhouse Initiative, and even the Park Upgrades – to create temporary Trades employment opportunity is the next step. Some Food Security initiatives and the introduction of the Community Merit Program for Volunteers will also give people a reason to get up in the morning. If the unemployment numbers at the end of Year One continue to be a problem, then we need to look at also expanding Adult Education Options, Small Farm Zoning, and a reforming of the Municipal Service model. A Recession running into Year Three will be a nightmare, and the potential exists for such. We need to have a Plan-C for that. Any and all leading projects into that year would have to focus on helping people survive the hard times. NOT be about appeasing more development or fancy projects like Stadiums or Art Galleries.

By Year Three, there will be no way to avoid this need. If the Macro-Economic numbers stay on course, then both unemployment rates and homeless numbers will be insanely high. Fixing this may have to the Provincial and Federal governments

I suspect we will have to take this Year by Year over this next term, due to the major Macro-Economic changes the world is on the verge of having to deal with. That global Recession means we need to focus on our own Domestic Economy first, as much as possible. By Year Two – if we can create the small business and service infrastructure to get us through the hard times, then we can look at some capital projects that add to our Quality of Life options. By then we should be used to the idea of a leaner government.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes – in fact using this to help create Tax Rebate corridors in different areas of the city will be crucial to the Covid Recovery plan that I have in mind. The goal (as mentioned earlier) it to give Landlords and Retail clients the means to keep their doors open or keep the bank at bay. If we suffer a major expected hit to the Commercial Sector, then the Municipality must have a Plan-B ready to launch. Even if this means radical ideas like taxing Commercial Clients as

Residential properties for a few years, or reducing the Property Tax on Commercial properties – of which there may be a glut of empty commercial buildings as Corporations close down their shops, abandon malls and office buildings, and leave behind a lot of abandoned properties.

Jim Hoskins

Why are you running for councillor?

I'm running for councillor to have the ability to bring the concerns of District 11 residents forward and make sure they have a seat at the table. I want to be a factor in the decision-making process to shape the future of District 11 and the Halifax Regional Municipality.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan to be a leader in the community by developing a network of community contacts through social media, meetings in small groups (as defined by Covid-19 guidelines), and a communication network. Through these, I'd emphasize transparency and accountability of not only myself, but all stakeholders in the HRM government. Community leadership starts by involving the residents of the area and empowering them to be active participants in their system.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I plan to support our business community by supporting a tax rate which lessens the stress on businesses during this crisis. I'd also like to look at regulations that don't restrict permits for new ideas coming from the small business community in general.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I would ensure an open for business culture by looking into changing certain bylaws to accommodate new types of business historically not permitted in certain locations in HRM. New and diverse businesses in our municipality would help create this culture and bring new vibrancy to the municipality.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I believe we need to better look at how data is analyzed at present and incorporate a wider use of technology to allow reports to be more timely, accessible, and understandable. Councillors also need more meetings than are held at present to address the issues.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

We will need to continue to leverage technology and new ideas as we try to ensure public engagement during Covid-19. Online engagement sessions may help with community participation as people can tune in from wherever is convenient for them. I also believe the personal accessibility of a councillor plays a large role in community participation. I intend to be as accessible as possible for the residents of District 11 and will encourage greater participation from our community.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I think we can better leverage technology to help increase the effectiveness of the process. Depending on the workload and demands, it may also be necessary to hire more staff – financial implications considered, of course. I'd also like to see more Council meetings than one every two weeks as it stands now.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

A diverse staff is a good start. As well, making sure all stakeholders are consulted to create a well-rounded view of issues and proposals would help make sure feedback and collaboration is diverse. I would work hard to identify further lapses in the system and take action to offer solutions.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

There are lots of things that I would like to look at in the next four years if elected, but priorities are to meet with stakeholder groups, push for tax changes in small business during Covid-19, address the homeless issue and look into public safety concerns.

The first two listed priorities are self-explanatory as to the "how." I'd like to focus on ongoing open and accessible conversations with stakeholders of current and proposed projects to ensure people feel they have a voice in decision-making. I'd also champion a temporary tax reduction for small business at the council table to help alleviate some of the stresses from Covid-19.

The issues of homelessness and public safety are a bit more nuanced. Homelessness can be partially addressed through more affordable housing and amenities. On this front, I would like to look at land use in HRM, as well as explore the idea of a regional housing director and municipal housing fund.

As for public safety, two things concern me right now: speeding in District 11 and parts of our current policing system. To address the speeding, I would like to see the use of new tools, such as photo-radar, and increased enforcement in problem areas to deter speeders.

For the other issue of our current policing system, I'd like to see improvements in accountability by overhauling the Board of Police Commissioners and the oversight process. I'd also like to see action taken to address discrimination and repair the current relations between the Halifax Regional Police and racialized communities. I believe my prior experience in policing and accountability can help me make progress on these issues.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

The HalifACT 2050 project and our emphasis on seawall fortification for the future are great projects looking at moving forward to address and mitigate the effects of climate change. I would be excited to get the chance to engage with these if elected.

I would also be excited to get to bring my experience and ideas forward to address issues in our policing system. As mentioned above, I'd like to see issues of accountability and discrimination addressed. With my experience working in the Halifax Regional Police, especially my time in internal accountability, I would be in a great position to propose and contribute to projects focused on these issues.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

In regular times, multi-year budgets are fine; however, given the extraordinary circumstances of Covid-19 and the difficulties of planning that come with that, I think year-to-year budgets would be preferable. I don't think anyone is able to predict where we will be in six months, let alone two years from now.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

Again, I believe technology and Councillor accessibility will be important here. Councillors need to be accessible to residents through multiple channels. Digital tools like social media and email along with more traditional tools like calls and in-person meetings need to be a focus so residents feel that they can easily engage with their Councillor.

On top of being committed to being accessible through these tools to residents, I would like to eventually establish a Councillor's office in the district where residents can bring their concerns and have direct access to the Councillor.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

Obviously, the large immediate priority is recovering from Covid-19. As we see other Canadian cities entering a second wave, we need to be prepared to deal for the possibility that we may see another as well. This means being prepared both from a public health standpoint and a financial standpoint.

Outside of Covid-19, homelessness should be a large focus of Council over the next four years. Addressing the root causes of this issue, including affordable housing and addiction services, is important to building a better municipality for everyone.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes, I believe the commercial tax reform should be part of the Covid-19 recovery and I'm open to all evidence-based solutions. Again, any amendments need to be fair, particularly for small businesses, and encourage entrepreneurs to start and run new businesses. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy and offer diversity and vibrancy. We need to be careful that we're not disadvantaging these small businesses with whatever changes are made.

DISTRICT 12

Eric Jury

Why are you running for councillor?

With the pandemic I realized we need someone that is business driven as economic recovery is going to be this new council's (one of many issues), that they will be facing. Mental health, increased substance abuse and economical social wellbeing and perceived racism are issues faced by all levels of government in North America.

The current councilor in my district is driven on environmental issues and although an important issue, there are more pressing issues effecting us all now and I didn't know his take on the issues above and didn't like his platform to date so I decided to run against him.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan on holding lots of community engagement forms via online, in person, and townhalls to engage the unheard and disengaged voting members of district 12. By listening and giving hope to the district 12 community, I would like to help our community get the chance to help rebuild our economy. I foresee our district will become one of the newest "high" income area of the city and with additional educational programs and support to get people back to work; this will only help to continue to build our community into another highly desired area to reside in.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I plan on looking out for the business community to help ensure we allow for all possible suggestions to help allow our businesses to survive. By limiting the involvement of government influence and allowing the businesses the ability to make changes that help them strive and ensure that past and future policies will not limit them from potential growth opportunities.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

We need to ensure that officials and others know the "economic engine" of the business community within the city; is helping us, get through the pandemic.

Their survival should be front and center on this new council's mind. When suggesting policies, that could limit our economic recovery, as a council we need to be mindful of this and if we are to survive as a city, this needs to be considered.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Real data and real feedback from the actual business community at the street level needs to be heard at council meeting. Council needs to hear firsthand of policies and their effects on the businesses that effected by "new or old" HRM policies. Council needs to listen and really hear the effects they are having on the business community and listen to these people and the business communities "purposed" changes to help ensure the HRM city's, recovery.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

As a councillor for the city, we need to engage the business community on many fronts such as: Getting out and talking to the business community, understanding the different issues that they are facing during the pandemic and beyond. Getting them into council chambers, holding townhalls for real feedback from the community are things this new councils can do. No longer is it ok, for councillors to hide away and not listen to the community voice. This new Council needs to have many information sessions with the business community on plans on how to help them. We need to listen to the business communities to hear their questions and concerns and provide logical quick results, to allow for effective changes. This will help the community get thought this pandemic and recover.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Moving to have motions heard and voted on within a two-cycle council meeting is something I believe, so that we hear the motions at one meeting and vote on it at the next.

We need to have the new council members understand time is essential and more critical than ever before.

The once luxury of a "wait and see approach to get experienced" is over, at all levels of government.

This new council need to be full of experienced "doers" elected to power, for a quick result (now more than ever), thereby ensuring real effective business policies are implemented, right away to stop the economic bleeding.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I want to hear from as many business members and their struggles within the community during this pandemic. I will ensure a wide range of townhalls, community feedback, and community polling along with community discussions are held. This will allow for total inclusion of all voices within my district.

If you own a business and want to provide input on the pandemic recovery solutions, my door is open to everyone with suggestions. It will take all of us to get through this pandemic, which is a once in a lifetime event for many.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

I will need to see the cities projected budget figures for 2021. I expect they are bad and that they will need serious discussions and new solutions, to get through.

Council will need to find new revenue streams to offset critical issues such as Economical and Social crisis issues, thereby ensuring communities do not breakdown in the coming years.

I have some ideas, such as increasing fines for offences within the city for speeding and small infractions. Using these additional fines increases to help rebuild safety and security for the city.

Council needs to promote business development to help small businesses recover. This new council will need to provide for additional education programs around small business creation and business start-ups through ISANS and NSCC.

We have one of the best cities in Canada and should promote living here as a safe and clean choice compared to other cities.

Tax reductions on first year startups should be on this new councils mind, so that these "New" businesses can focus on building or rebuilding (in some cases) their brand for the first two years and after the third year council can re-adjust the tax structure.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I feel we need to have the convention center running at its full potential, to help restore the downtown core and promote the city across Canada, as this is a project that was completed at a large cost to HRM and was currently unused before and especially after the pandemic.

The new City council should be promoting the world trade and convention center at every chance possible; all large events should be held there to increase revenue in the city and in the downtown core.

Events once held in larger cities should be invited to come to Halifax, as a safe and friendly city that still holds dear, our love of people and do not look at others as walking Covid infections.

I would like to see the land by the Bayer lake hospital be used for the new CFL stadium and thereby allow for the economic off spins such as hotels and restaurants, along with new subdivisions and community halls for the staff of the hospital.

This would also allow new doctors and nurses to "return" home, to a great area to work and play in and for others to return from "away" to retire close to a health care provider and to help build more community spirit.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I feel year to year is a better approach for now, as the unknown with Covid 19, is just to great right now and we need a free thinking "with lots of flexibility" financial Dept. the ability and need to be able to change and adapt to changing situations quickly will be important as economic influences from the pandemic can change.

Everyone in all governments will need to be flexible like never and the days of "council created a budget, and it is in now set in stone" are gone!

We need a financial dept that can change and revise their budgets on the fly, to cover unexpected costs that may occur from his pandemic.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I want to have district 12 monthly townhalls for registered "respectful" voting members. This will NOT be an abuse form for the community, it will be monitored virtually and if you are disrespecting anyone online you will be disconnected until the next meeting.

I want real feedback from my voting members, as a lot of them, within my riding have great ideas that should be heard. As a registered voter in district 12, if you are respectful and meet the time limit criteria, your voice will be heard.

If motions are presented, we will have a virtual online poll at the end of each townhall that allows for the majority voice for the motion to be voted on by the community before I bring them to council.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

The economic and social welfare of the citizens of this city is critical and job one. We need people to have safety, housing, education, employment and spiritually in their lives to allow for continued growth of this city.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I would need to see the past ideas; I am currently not in favor of raising any taxes, as we are already taxed very high in HRM and this will not help the recovery efforts. That said a reduction in taxes is not likely either because of mounting debts and/or additional rising HRM costs in this pandemic which would limit that. I would possibly agree to a reallocation of some taxes no longer required because of Covid, moved to other nontaxed items, now in high demand because of Covid.

Tim Elms

Why are you running for councillor?

I've grown tired of politicians who focus on elections instead of solutions, claiming they have done 'so much' for us but with little actual results. I want to hold this position accountable. My experience with policy & procurement for Atlantic Canadian Rural Municipalities, has me questioning: "why we see such little return from our high taxes?"

We need to elect a transparent & knowledgeable candidate who will include the provincial government in discussions to deliver traffic calming solutions & safe accessible recreation for both our facilities & common space which will help support our local businesses.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

Our community needs a councillor who will not "sit this one out" when neighbours voice concerns but who communicates transparently & effectively for the greater good. Finding realistic solutions to senior care, accessible recreation, job security, & the middle ground between development & protecting our accessible resources, all needs to be top of mind for the District #13 councillor role. In addition to my MBA from Saint Mary's, I currently work in policy & procurement for rural municipalities associations across Atlantic Canada. I have a strong sense of empathy & strive for transparency when making sound researched decisions to find middle ground. This position requires the councilor to build and retain relationships, & having connections to some current re-offering council members, as well as provincial leaders, which is imperative to getting results for district #13.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

In district #13, we need to have commons spaces that support local businesses. In addition, having traffic calming solutions, accessible recreation will help keep our community active & sustainable. We need an adopt a sidewalk programs for associations and businesses that shows these entities are here to build a better and safer community. Better recreational facilities and accessible recreation including to our parks will keep our spending local as well as create local jobs. Finding realistic solutions to senior care, accessible recreation, job security, & the middle ground between development & protecting our accessible resources, all needs to be top of mind for the District #13 councilor role

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Buying local is at the heart of everything we do in NS. Common spaces that support local businesses keeps our community active & sustainable & will help to create jobs. We need to invest in our community by making it pedestrian friendly, with traffic calming solutions, accessible recreation so it easier for our population to keep their spending in District #13. We need to keep the slogan “build it like you live here” top of mind in terms of developments that build as if they turn their backs on the very areas that they are established in. If you make it comfortable for people to shop local, then their spending will go to help support the businesses that surround them.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I think we need to focus on the impact a policy decision will have for all HRM and not only one specific area, so too any ramifications and impact a decision will have on all of HRM residents, broken down by district. Focusing on full circle -more complete -pros and cons, in any given issue will help paint a clearer picture for execution.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Engagement can only be facilitated with having open communication and being available to answer questions. Having our collective voices heard & actioning our diversified needs will continue to be a challenge. Our community needs a councillor who will not “*sit this one out*” when neighbours voice concerns but communicates transparently & effectively for the greater good. Finding realistic solutions to senior care, accessible recreation, job security, & the middle ground between development & protecting our accessible resources, all needs to be top of mind for the District #13 councillor role.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council’s asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

By setting realistic deadlines and timelines to ensure that the process is moving in the right direction that is needed. By continuing communicating between staff with regular updates and by helping with research will help with the process and expediting the time.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

We need to work closely with a committee and task force to acknowledges/discuss the challenges facing our diversified communities, both in transparent and accountable manner. We need on-going training for all levels of government to help reduce bias and improve cultural competency, as well as promote internal diversity.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

With fostering working relationships between the different levels of government, while focusing on traffic calming solutions, accessible recreation & common spaces that will support local businesses, will help keep our community active & sustainable. Our district has not seen much from our tax dollars, and we need to address concerns like enhancing recreational facilities and creating accessible recreation so that our spending remains local as well as creates local employment. Realistic solutions to senior care, job security, & finding the middle ground between development & protecting our accessible resources, all needs to be top of mind as the councilor for district #13.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

The ability for our HRM to enlist in Co-operative Procurement trade programs to help save taxpayers money. It’s very exciting time for us to have regulated trade programs to make sure things are done transparently and effectively. On a personal/community level, I am very proud of the updated recreational tennis/pickle ball courts in Haliburton and the community mural recently accomplished that is getting a lot of positive feedback. What started out as a mural for our neighbourhood has turned into a gift with a message that we are Stronger together, and that is beyond beautiful. I think more community developed projects like this would go a long way for district #13.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

We need a mix of both multi year and YOY just like we have in the Private Sector. Long term project necessitates budgets being multiple years, but we need review line by line our yearly spend in order to handle the smaller tasks.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

By continuing webinars, transparent discussions and making myself available. I have to say, my favourite part about campaigning, is the canvassing. The door knocking and getting in front of people and listening to their concerns can't be beat. I wish I had all the time to meet and discuss with all 20,000 of the electors but that will take more time. This position requires the councilor to build and retain relationships, & having connections to some current re-offering council members, as well as provincial leaders, which I do, is imperative to getting results for district #13.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

We need to find the balance between protecting the environment and fielding our rapid growth which needs sustainable development solutions. We need traffic calming and traffic safety, accessible recreation and common spaces. Affordable housing, especially for seniors, is a "ticking time bomb" and we need to make sure we have solutions in place to manage this. As we head into a 2021 that is ripe for recession, we need to find ways to limit our expenses, and transit debt will be a huge concern. In terms of Transit debt (est. +\$20 million) we need to come up with out-of-the box solutions, such as opening rural routes and purchasing greener transit fleet which will help us use our budgets effectively.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

HRM property values are driven by real estate which is ever increasing in price. Both small and medium business owners, are having to pay more to be in downtown Halifax but the prices are going up in the rural areas as well. We need to work closely with the provincial government to cut the small and mediums size businesses a break whether it be switching to a three- or four-year assessment cycle or basing commercial taxes on a property's total frontage or a building's square footage. We need to keep the discussion alive as there are a lot of variables where an answer cannot be 'knee jerked'.

Tom Arnold

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

First and foremost we have to support local business. People need to realize if you keep buying all your motorcycle parts on Amazon at some point there will be no local shops left to install those parts. HRM could offer property tax breaks were applicable and develop a support system/small grant program to help businesses weather the storm.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Communication between HRM and residents via councillors is something we've been lacking in some districts. Councillors must be more accessible. I believe there should be quarterly town hall style meetings in each district to give residents an opportunity to engage their councillors and officials.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

HRM is a very large and diverse Municipality. A Main street business in Hubbards or Sheet Harbour is much different than a main street business in Dartmouth. They have different needs, challenges and don't all have access to the same services. I believe a revenue-based tax rate would be a good option and would give business a fair opportunity.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

Business culture matters now more than ever in these uncertain times. An open business culture encourages people to share ideas, embraces diversity and provides inclusion. Establishing core values including trust and transparency having actions speak louder than words, breaking down barriers and providing equal opportunity is a good platform for an open for business culture

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

Communication is the key. Engaging the community, listening to their challenges and needs and working with them to achieve goals will improve relationships and build great rapport moving forward.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

Direction, realistic timelines, follow up and accountability to start. As some items are more important and or time sensitive priorities have to be set.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

The following are my priorities set by conversations with residents of district 13. I plan to set realistic goals and work with HRM staff and my community to achieve these goals.

Affordable housing.

Traffic calming measures.

Improving Transportation.

Improve communication between HRM and residents.

Protecting our environment.

Iain Taylor

Why are you running for councillor?

I am running for Councillor because I believe there is a need for new ideas, new faces and new voices at City Hall. Between the global COVID-19 pandemic, the financial crisis that has been left in its wake, and the looming challenges of climate change, this year has exposed many flaws in the ways we currently understand municipal government. These crises have disrupted our lives and our institutions at a fundamental level, and to effectively deal with them we need to change the ways we approach issues. Going forward we need our municipal officials to be working closely with the businesses in our communities, as well as other levels of government to find a new way forward through these obstacles. Not only have I established myself as an expert in my field, but I am also a proven leader, with the educational background needed to succeed at City Hall. I am running for Councillor in District 13 because I believe I am the perfect candidate to help build that new path forward for our communities and our families.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I lead through actively communicating with, and listening to, my team. It's important that people be comfortable sharing any concerns they have, in order to actively address those problems. This is a lesson I have learned from my many years in the hospitality industry, and it is the same way I will lead in my community. It is important that the Councillors foster mutual respect with constituents, and that we don't ask our communities to endure any sorts of hardships that we would not experience ourselves.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

We have relatively little insight into how specifically this virus will impact us in the months and years to come, and there's no singular adjustment to be made that will work for all of the different industries and businesses in HRM. Hospitality and tourism are two of the most dramatically affected industries, and I'm sure the repercussions of this virus will worsen for these industries as we leave summer and they start to fall back into their slower seasons. Having talked to RANS and industry leaders Bill Pratt (ChefInspired), and Joe McInnis (Legendary Hospitality), the number one thing they have asked for is rent relief going forward. With 33,000 people in HRM being employed in hospitality (12% of our workforce), this is a critical industry we need to support. I'm committed to ongoing consultation with members and representatives of many different industries to target support where and when it will help the most.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

The strength of our economy is directly linked to the health of our population, so while incrementally relieving restrictions can be frustrating to some businesses, it will leave us in a stronger position in the long run. An open for business culture in Halifax will rely on high consumer confidence. Nova Scotia and HRM have done a terrific job so far in establishing a strong response to the pandemic, which is the envy of the rest of the country. Through the Chamber of Commerce and the establishing of the Nova Scotia Business and Labour Coalition, Halifax has been able to create a safe and strong response. In order to ensure Halifax maintains an open for business culture it will be paramount for businesses and citizens to not get complacent with the restrictions we have in place. I am in favour of a controlled easing of further restrictions based on the medical advice provided by government health officials. While reduced capacity hurts our hospitality industry, we have started to see the emergence of other industries that are flourishing as a direct result of the Atlantic bubble remaining in place. Most notably the booming construction industry, and the re-emergence of the film and television industries who are choosing Atlantic Canada as their destination due to the strong response to COVID-19.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

I think reports need to include more community involvement in decision making. More public consultation is required to make sure not only the voices of a small minority are being heard.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

Establishing a strong link with leaders in the community alongside the Office of Diversity and Inclusion to ensure all voices are being heard. Active community engagement is something I plan on making a priority from being the candidate newest to District 13. Being new to the area allows me a rare opportunity to approach community issues with a fresh set of eyes, and I have already begun to establish meaningful, long-term relationships in my community this way.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I think better communication between council and the chamber can be improved upon. Through managing councilors' priorities and setting expectations I think we can speed the process up.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I think the Office of Diversity and Inclusion will be a key resource in ensuring reports and projects will have inclusive and diverse feedback and collaboration. Along with strong, clear communication within the community, and managing expectations, these two things will allow for more inclusive feedback and collaboration.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priorities for the next four years will be to introduce policies that can help rebound our economy in a way that accelerates our progress in the HalifACT climate action plan, while doing so in a safe COVID-19 world. I would achieve this through collaborating with other councilors, industry experts, EAC, and other levels of government. Another area I would make a priority would be to work with our hospitality industry to ensure that when we emerge on the other side of the pandemic this industry along with our tourism is able to bounce back stronger than ever. In order to achieve this I would work with the RANS, industry leaders, local area business commissions (specifically the Downtown Business Commission), and the other levels of government.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I was especially proud of the municipality last year when they moved to declare a climate emergency, and the development of the HalifACT action plan. This is the area I am most excited to engage with, and even commit to stronger goals which could result in an economic boom for the city. We have a rare opportunity in taking this approach due to the impacts of COVID-19 on industries that will struggle for the foreseeable future. Through investing in areas like retrofitting buildings which account for 70% of emissions, we can promote our construction industry, and develop a strong long term climate resilient municipality

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

With the economic fall out we have seen as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the continued uncertainty with what the impacts will be from accelerated climate change, I think it would be preferable to move to a year to year budget. This would allow city hall the flexibility to respond to an increasingly volatile global environment.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

As someone who is relatively new to the area this is an especially important issue that I have the advantage of not assuming I already know all the problems that exist in my district, and can approach it with a fresh set of eyes. I have already spent a substantial amount of time talking to people, listening to their issues in the district, and going directly to those areas of concern to see how I would approach them if elected. I would continue to have complete open dialogue with anyone in the district, particularly those who disagree with my approaches to reassure them that their voice was still being heard. If elected I would open dialogue with the other 9 candidates trying to get elected in district 13 this year, they all clearly have a base of support, many from different areas in the community. Using them as a conduit to the broader voice of the community will help ensure that their voices are heard and their issues resolved.

What do you believe should be council's biggest focus over the next four years?

Council's biggest focus over the next four years will undoubtedly revolve around developing continued plans on living with COVID-19, and dealing with the economic fall out it has left. Reduced budgets, and unfamiliar levels of high unemployment in tourism and hospitality will be a major problem that must be addressed. How effectively we are able to respond will dictate how well our economy rebounds and how healthy our municipal budgets will be. Everything else will stem from there.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I believe that our commercial tax system does need to be amended, but it is an issue that is very complicated and difficult to develop a fair and appropriate way forward. Ultimately for every tax dollar that is taken off one business or area, that same dollar will have to be added somewhere else or back onto the taxpayers. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that not every industry has been impacted the same, not every industry operates on the same financial budgets, so it does not make sense that every industry and area should be taxed the same.

DISTRICT 15

Mary Lou LeRoy

I am running because I want to have a voice in the decision making for our community. I want to ensure everything possible is done for the people of Lower Sackville.

I will lead by example. I have always been involved in my community, in various roles.

By working together with the business community and municipal government, to ensure that the plan to go forward considers health and safety first. I will be open to working together to ensure an economic plan of recovery is developed with business and community needs in mind.

A successful Municipality must have a successful economy. It is something that must not be stagnant, but always having new strategies to attract and maintain industry to the area. Council must work together, be on the same page, and have goals that ensure that Halifax is known to be open for business.

I am not familiar with the process of how data is sourced during staff reports and council sessions.

I will advocate for more ways of letting people know about public engagement sessions, to encourage more participation.

Speeding up the process would involve process improvement, determining staff workload, process re engineering. Is it a matter of too much work and not enough staff? Look at workflow simplification, prioritization. I would have to have more information on how the process presently works.

It is necessary for the staff to reflect diversity as a group. Human Resources must have policies and procedures that have diversity as a foundation. There must be inclusive verbiage in mission statements, policies, and procedures. Important to attract the interest of diverse and qualified candidates, then implement diversity, inclusive feedback and collaboration training for all management, staff, Councillors, and Mayor. Again, I am not familiar enough with the present process, or the diversity of staff to know what changes would be necessary.

Priorities are economy, climate, housing, health and safety as it relates to Covid. Important for Council to set goals, work together to achieve good results for the people.

Streetscapes, Climate.

Yes, multi year budgets should continue. Planning requires a picture of what you are working with, where you want to go, and what you need to do to get there. Year to year budgets do not offer that.

Community newsletter, town halls, public engagement surveys, meet with community organizations and business.

Council's biggest focus over next 4 years: Covid recovery. Declining income.

No simple answer. Ongoing reviews are always necessary. Property tax based on valuation is good but not always equitable.

Why are you running for councillor?

I am running for Council to continue some of the projects that have been started and I want to finish. In District 14 that means continuing the work to establish a world class arts centre in Middle Sackville, updating the Regional Plan so it better reflects the community as it is today and using the tools we have at HRM to support community groups that build affordable housing.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I plan to continue using my voice to ensure the needs of the district are communicated at Council but more importantly, listening to residents and businesses to make sure our decisions reflect their concerns.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

As a municipality we may not have the ability to give grants to businesses, but we can create an atmosphere where businesses have a chance to get back on the right footing and thrive once again. Depending on the business, that can take many forms including tax relief, eliminating fees and eliminating red tape to allow a smoother transition to re-opening. A solution won't look the same for every business, so we have to make sure staff have the power to think and act outside the box.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

I can do this by continuing to support efforts that eliminate red tape in our processes. Supporting a streamlined permitting process so business only have to deal with one contact person at HRM instead of several

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

Not sure I understand what is being asked here.....

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

This is a challenge for everyone during Covid but has been a problem for the past few years. The traditional methods of newspaper ads posted 14 days before a public meeting just doesn't work anymore. We have to get to residents where they are...in the community. I'd like to see Community Councils go to a system where meetings are held at community centres/businesses in the district. We do that now for NorthWest Community Council and rotate locations so residents can come to meetings.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

The last couple of years HRM staff have been asked to produce some very heavy and complicated reports (HalifACT 2050...Cogswell.... review of the Regional Plan). We may have to look at expanding our workforce in some of the busier departments to make sure reports are returned to Council for decision sooner.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

With every report, there is information and feedback on several things including Financial Implications.... Environmental Impact.....Community Engagement. I think the time is right to make sure a Diversity lens is used as well. Our Diversity and

Inclusion office should be one of the departments to weigh in on reports before the CAO signs off on them. This may require more staff for our Diversity and Inclusion office.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

No one knows what the next four years looks like. Covid-19 has disrupted life as we know it and shifted our priorities. Our fiscal picture will soon come into focus and it will require an appropriate response. I vow to continue speaking for the residents of District 14 in a responsible and respectful manner.

There are several projects we have started together that I want to finish:

- HalifACT2050 will require strong will on Council to make sure it is properly funded for its ambitious targets.
- Working with community groups, staff and putting pressure on the Province to make sure our roads are as safe as they can be.
- Fighting for much needed changes to our Regional Plan so that the planning documents used in District 14 accurately reflect the community as it is today. This can pave the way for expanded water and transit service.
- Through my role as Police Commissioner ensuring our Police better serve this diverse community through accountability and re-imagining policing.
- Exploring available options for affordable housing and working with community groups to make it happen.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

I'm very proud of HalifACT 2050....our period poverty initiative and our most recent decision on secondary suites.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

I like working with the multi-year budgets. It gives enough of a heads up on our budget pressures yet leaves some wiggle room if priorities change.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I will continue my practice of attending monthly community meetings (we have four community centres and four community associations that have boards with monthly meetings). I also have open office hours once a month where I set up at a local community centre and residents drop in with concerns or just to chat!

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

The biggest focus will be on rebuilding our economy, only better! Small business will need support....tourism will need support and we have to be ready to look at solutions that may not be the usual way we do things.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

Yes....it is long overdue. I don't know what that path forward looks like, but it has to start with the business community telling us what they need to make it work.

Anthony Mrkonjic

I am running for councillor because I have always had a keen interest in politics and a passion for public service. I want to be more involved in the decision-making process that effects our community and I want to bring community collaboration and accountability back to politics. My love for my community combined with my education, work, and volunteer experience makes me a perfect candidate to represent our community on Regional Council.

I plan to be a leader in the community through becoming more fully involved in community organizations. This also includes committing more of my time to volunteer initiatives in our community. In addition, I want to take a more active and collaborative approach as Councillor by more fully involving community members and organizations in the decision and policy making process.

Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on our small businesses and our economy at large. The lockdown, which was originally only supposed to last a few weeks in order to “flatten the curve”, has dragged on for months. And this is even though Nova Scotia has only recorded a dozen or so new cases over the past two months. My question is what is the end goal? Now that we have established the Atlantic bubble, I think it is time we fully reopen our local economy while maintaining reasonable measures to ensure public health.

In addition, as someone who firmly believes in the principles of free market economics, I think that we need to do away with all unnecessary bureaucracy impeding our business community.

I will ensure an open for business culture in Halifax by working to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape effecting local business.

I can not say for certain what data should be better utilized during staff reports and council sessions. I am not currently a member of council and so I am not yet fully familiar with the process.

I will ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions through greater use of social media. I will ensure that my constituents can easily contact me to express their concerns and I will involve them more fully in the decision-making process.

I will speed up the process by taking a more active, hands on approach. There are many problems reported in my district that go through a third party before reaching the Councillor. However, many of these issues can and should be dealt with by the Councillor directly. If elected, I will take a more hands on approach to dealing with these matters, thus expediting the process.

I can ensure more diversity, and inclusive feedback and collaboration in my staff reports by communicating more directly with my constituents. I want to encourage the residents of my district to get more involved in the decision-making process. And I will work to foster an open-door environment where people feel that their ideas, questions, and concerns are welcomed.

My priorities for the next for years include affordable housing, promoting the economic recovery, and making meaningful improvements in my district. Improving access to affordable housing will involve collaborating with city council and community players to encourage the construction of more affordable housing. Promoting the economic recovery will include fostering an open for business culture in HRM and making doing business as easy as possible. Making meaningful improvements in my district will involve listening to feedback from community members and addressing the needs of our community.

I am most excited to engage with the Regional Plan.

I think that 1 year to year budget would be preferable. This would allow HRM to better plan and budget for unforeseen events. Also, four-year budgets are not practical because so much can change over such a long period of time.

I plan to engage with my district through greater transparency and communication. I plan to ensure that their issues are heard and resolved by taking action to address said issues.

Councils biggest focus over the next four years should be tackling the affordable housing crisis and getting our economic growth back on track, to pre-pandemic levels.

I can not give a concrete opinion on commercial tax reform yet as I still need to research and fully understand this topic. However, I can say that I am in favour of any reform that works to simplify the commercial tax and reduce the tax burden for local businesses.

Jay Aaron Roy

Why are you running for councillor?

I'm running because I'm an ideas person, and I have a multitude of strategies for improving my community. I own a small business, Cape and Cowl Comics and Collectibles, and through my business I've created spaces, events and initiatives that focus on community and youth engagement. I lead by example by making my business fully wheelchair accessible. Diverse base of people come through my shop doors everyday, and they confide in me as a local advocate. Their trust in me is what makes me really believe I could be a strong voice for them on city council.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

As a small business owner, I am always open to the public and I have already become a locally recognized leader for youth in my community. The community has felt comfortable for years approaching and seeking my advice on a variety of topics. I receive weekly emails from parents, youth, and families looking for supports and guidance navigating their lives, and always leave our conversations having given them useful strategies and connected them with needed local services to address their concerns.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of Time?

I will advocate to keep small business taxes low and work closely with business owners on individualized plans for recovery. I understand as a small business owner the challenges presented by COVID-19 and the extent to which these challenges look different for each individual business. There needs to be a spectrum of government supports and services available to help businesses pivot and innovate during pandemic times.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

By communicating with our business owners. Engaging and consulting closely with the business sector is the best way to reflect their needs through governance.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council Sessions?

I would like to see more data from the Halifax Regional Police. The data contained in the Wortley report for example has the capacity to inform initiatives for change like the eradication of street checks. At a time when the allocation of police resources is controversial topic, I feel that the HRP should be especially transparent.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback Sessions?

I have led initiatives over the last six years in my district bringing together members of the community and encouraging volunteerism. I am comfortable engaging with members of marginalized communities and will be working to ensure their participation is constant. I am passionate about accessibility in public engagement and believe there are ways to make our

systems work better and reach more people.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

I can only work to keep myself informed and ensure that I'm updated on any publicly available resources and provide my own evidence where necessary by working closely with the community.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I am a strong networker and I'm comfortable asking other people for their input and opinions even when they're not aligned with my own. I think that this goes directly with understanding your community and the interest groups there and knowing when they need to be engaged.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

My priorities are affordable housing, accessible transit, youth engagement and safe communities. I will start by working to establish stronger connections with federal and provincial partners in order to better collaborate to resolve complex housing and other issues. I will work closely with the province to come up with creative solutions for the housing stock we currently have. I will work closely with the community to ensure the housing needs of diverse populations are met and we aim to provide a spectrum of housing solutions that are innovative and sustainable. I will advocate for investments in our transit system that will be put to work for the people who use public transit? I will work closely with community-based organizations to come up with multi-sector collaborative solutions to issues of youth homelessness (this is all in my platform).

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage With?

I am excited to engage with the HalifACT and the Green Network Plan, I know climate issues are very important to voters in Lower Sackville. These plans included a lot of engagement and represent a good first step for the municipality in addressing the climate emergency. I will be working closely with my community to determine what decarbonization will look like and how that will meet our needs specifically.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be Preferable?

I think multi-year budgets should continue; I would expect year-to-year budgets would require a lot of different resources so I'm not sure about the feasibility.

How do you plan to engage with our district and ensure their issues are heard and Resolved?

I am already engaging with my district everyday, through my small business and other community projects like Freedom Kitchen. I will continue to make myself consistently available, both online and with in person office hours to ensure I'm accessible.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

I believe the biggest focus should be affordable housing and transit. A lot of other issues can be fixed when these areas are accounted for.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

I am in favor of exploring new approaches to taxation. I believe residents and businesses should be taxed fairly and receive services that reflect the value of the taxes they pay. I would support tax reforms that make the system fairer but there would have to be a significant level of public engagement prior to any recommendations going forward

Why are you running for councillor?

I have been a strong community supporter for decades. 20 years ago, I was an elected member of the HRSB. Since 2011 I have managed every parade in Sackville (up until being elected). In 2017 I was recognized as the Volunteer of The Year for Sackville. I have continuously given back to the community, and this role allows me to do that in a much more formal and resourceful way.

How do you plan to be a leader in the community?

I have already been a leader, in my role as the president of the Sackville Community Development Association, through the work that I listed above, and by working with nearly every community group in order to get things done. I am well known, and highly regarded, in all the volunteer circles in Sackville.

Covid-19 has had a great impact on our business community, how do you plan on supporting our businesses as we continue to live with the virus for an indefinite period of time?

I see different types of businesses and am working with them differently. For many of them I am working with HRM Council or with the Sackville Business Association to ensure that the market is strong and diverse. We recently brought in ride-hailing, which will allow companies like Uber and Lyft provide healthy competition to the taxi industry in normal times. Since we are in extraordinary times with COVID, however, we will need to amplify the differences and the services that are available. All businesses are suffering to some degree, and so this competition will ensure that companies will step up their services.

How will you ensure an open for business culture in Halifax?

When I was first elected, I spoke with the CAO and stated that I want to see Halifax changed *from* an organization that defaults to saying "no", *to* an organization that defaults to finding ways to *get things done*. We need to be able to shift our mindset to serve the public locally.

What data do you feel should be better sourced or utilized during staff reports and council sessions?

This change, depending on the report that is being produced. In every case we see some good data. We can continue to review the data and the processes, so that we have the right level of data and that it is presented with the right level of objectivity.

How will you ensure greater community participation in public engagement and feedback sessions?

This is difficult. 30 years ago, we could publish an ad in the paper, and everyone would see it. Today nearly nobody reads the paper. Some people get their information through social media. Some people aren't engaged in traditional or social media at all. We must continually reach out and look for new ways to ensure that our message is getting across. Sometimes this means that we experiment with something new, and sometimes it means that we drop a platform that is no longer supported. In any case, we need to find ways to reach as many people as possible.

As well-intentioned as the municipality staff are, we are aware that many of council's asks and reports take a considerable amount of time. What will you do to speed up the process?

This starts with a discussion with the CAO, who is ultimately responsible to Council for the performance of the entire organization. We must ensure that we have found the right balance between writing reports and doing all the other work that the municipality does. Once we've assured ourselves that we have the right balance, we have to confirm that we have the right resources to fulfill the levels of service (including writing reports), and then make adjustments to ensure that any corrections are completed.

How will you ensure not just only diversity in your staff reports and projects, but also inclusive feedback and collaboration?

I have started by assuming that I could listen more. I can learn more by trying to put myself in the position of others and seeing their challenges, and then weighing those against my value systems. In some cases, my value systems have changed to support the new reasoning.

What are your priorities for the next four years? How do you plan on achieving them?

This is a huge list that I'll only touch on here. First Lake testing; sidewalks; crosswalks; everything along the Beaver Bank Connector and Beaver Bank Road; traffic speed controls; improving the housing situation through new apartments, possibly shelters, and education; active transportation; transit and other transportation options; and many others incorporate the functional changes that I'd like to see. This all must be balanced with a balanced budget, so that we provide the services we need, while reducing our debt, and not increasing taxes.

What current municipal projects are you most proud of, or are most excited to engage with?

First Lake testing; crosswalks on Glendale; and the housing crisis.

Do you believe multi-year budgets should continue or would year-to-year budgets be preferable?

There are some situations where a multi-year projection or commitment really helps, and there are some where it doesn't. I think that a multi-year plan makes a lot of sense, but it does have to be tailored for each item.

How do you plan to engage with your district and ensure their issues are heard and resolved?

I'm already doing that through print newsletters, bi-weekly e-newsletters, attending every function that makes sense, spending lots of time in conversations with residents, and having Zoom meetings to solicit feedback before each Council meeting.

What do you believe should be councils biggest focus over the next four years?

We need to control costs while we will provide the required services for our residents and our corporations. This is going to be the single biggest challenge because COVID has had such a big impact on our economy. We need to do all of this while respecting the impact that the health restrictions have had in relation to getting together. The mental health of our residents is suffering. We need to find ways to make all this work together.

The Municipality, prior to Covid-19, was working towards commercial tax reform, do you believe our commercial tax system needs to be amended, and if so, how would you like to do so?

We don't know what our corporate resources are going to look like from one month to the next, but we can see that it will be significantly changed because of the impact of the virus. Many more people are working from home and this leaves much of the commercial space, downtown, empty. This situation needs to stabilize before we can look at reform.