

Brighton

Brighton Council Candidate

Municipal
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How would you characterize the amount of growth in Brighton and what specifics steps should be taken to manage the future?

Growth is slow and steady. While it appears to be drastically accelerated over the last number of years, statistically speaking it has slowed to less than projected. The housing affordability crisis has left us with large infrastructure projects that have been budgeted with future growth in mind, so we will need to be exceptionally diligent in keeping an eye on their status and resulting tax impacts. With my background in real estate, I do not see the More Homes Built Faster Act. Having a significant impact on increasing housing stock, nor an increase in a diversity of housing stock. We received a report earlier on in this term where affordable housing for a family in Brighton was set at a price of just over \$300,000. That price still does not buy you a livable home in Brighton, that doesn't need tens of thousands of dollars of upgrades and renovations.

What role do you see Brighton council playing social issues such as poverty, homelessness and mental health/addiction within the community? Explain with specifics.

These areas are not under Brighton's mandate, and our official role would be to support services through the County, however, this Council has felt pressure to step in in new ways that will hopefully assist in various areas. Brighton participates in compensating incoming family physicians as a way to incentivize them to relocate to our area, helping to fill a service gap in primary health care within our community. Brighton has also purchased land on which we intend to increase access to attainable and affordable housing under various ownership models, and purpose built rental housing. Via our Grants and Aid Program, we are supporting our nonprofit Partners in the community who do a lot of boots-on-the-ground work. We at Council can be strong community voices in our calls for the Province to properly fund Health Care and Housing.

Name one or more specific actions you would take to address voter's concerns related to community safety?

We are incredibly fortunate to live, work, and play in a safe community. Our roads are on a schedule for rehabilitation and replacement, our municipal buildings are constantly being upgraded for accessibility, and we have very low criminal activity. Speeding is a common complaint throughout our Municipality, and I do support low tolerance enforcement by our OPP. Traffic calming measures are one way that we can help to make our streets safer. Be it adding stop signs, establishing traffic islands, speed humps, traffic light timing, or targeting radar enforcement through school zones, all are tools that can be used, and I support the use of some or all of them.

How would you address the creation of affordable housing, giving three specific items you would introduce during your term on council? How many units would you want to see created by the end of your term?

I believe strongly in this outgoing Council's efforts to ensure the creation of new housing units that are attainable and affordable in our community with our Land Banking program and the purchase of 25+ acres of land at the eastern edge of the Built Boundary. I eagerly await the information that will come back to us from Urban Strategies, and expect to see that our direction was properly taken and followed. Understanding that there needs to be sufficient market price housing in order to assist in offsetting our targets, I would hope to see 25% of the total units in this development be outside of the market housing model as a minimum. Suitable rental units, condominium units, cooperative housing along with flexible borrowing options, all in a variety of built forms would be an exciting path forward for Brightonians.

In terms of timelines, despite the impression that housing is flooding our community at record rates, building statistics show a marked decline in new starts, so assigning a firm number to this development, and also including traditional developments, prevents any sort of accurate forecasting.

How would you implement the More Homes Built Faster Act locally. giving two examples?

In the case where an existing homeowner wishes to convert a portion of the home in to a separate dwelling unit, the Municipality could establish a fast-tracking program that would include a simple checklist of legislatively required criteria for qualification. This increases new housing units without any new development of land.

New housing is not simply about new housing, but also about identifying where there are roadblocks such as lack of available land, development charges, servicing, and zoning, further emphasizing that we continue to align growth with infrastructure while maintaining the long term viability of rural areas.

What are your views on Strong Mayor powers and their use?

I do not support Strong Mayor powers and their use. They bypass the democratic systems and checks already in place.

What specific steps would you take to support local business?

While the Municipality has an Economic Development department, I hear time and time again, that promotion of Brighton business occurs mainly for the benefit of businesses located within the small core of the urban area itself, and mostly for businesses that sell physical goods/products. This focus on the retail sector leaves the professional services, specialized services, and non traditional businesses feeling left behind. I would encourage expansion and diversification of the Economic Development Committee, and support the creation of one or more new BIAs to reflect new areas of growth in the Municipality as well as under represented O/O and small businesses.

What are your plans to support recreational facilities and parks?

The past Council has undertaken a major change in requiring development to include parkland in every project. I was happy to support this.

This next term, Council will have to contemplate the renovation or replacement of our current recreational facilities at King Edward Park, and what that looks like. Central to that discussion will be weighing the needs and wants of this community, and ensuring that whatever the outcome is properly represents a cradle to grave mentality versus specialized activities that do not serve the widest segments of Brighton's population. Costing will be the primary factor of what this project will look like and when it will be implemented, and we will need to do some longer range planning to ensure that we are appropriately managing this community's funds appropriately for this next term and beyond. I plan to be a voice of reason and bring my long range planning experience to these discussions, ensuring that investments made are appropriately allocated.

What is a reasonable municipal tax rate or increase? How would you achieve this, giving specific budget areas or line items?

In the best of all worlds, there would be a zero percent tax increase. We have, however, seen the cost of materials, and operations as a whole, increasing dramatically since the beginning of the pandemic in 2020.

I do not like to see tax increases at the five percent mark, and I do think that there are things that can be done within the walls of our municipal building that can result in better management of funds. One area in particular, is the life cycle of our fleet. As an example, the replacement of pickup trucks on a schedule vs when they need replacing is a simplistic way to manage our assets. I am no stranger to these activities and this exact kind of asset management having managed a multi million dollar operation in the marine industry with specialized equipment, large, medium and small equipment, and numerous fleet vehicles.

This, of course, is only one piece of the pie, but an example of one way to manage spending.

We are likely looking at a new reality where 'just keeping up' puts us in the 3-4% range annually.

What is a reasonable increase to the OPP budget? Give specific services or line items you would adjust to reach this goal?

The Municipality has no say, without addressing service levels, when it comes to the OPP budget. More services equals more dollars, and likewise less services.

Name four new initiatives you plan to implement over your term to improve the quality of life for everyone in the municipality?

I think this really comes down to the vision that we have as a Council for the next four years.

In looking back at the last term and with the benefit of having been part of those discussions and decisions, I can say that this Municipality did have a lot of catching up to do, and as such, this Council spent a lot of money in attempting to bring our workforce and resulting service levels to a contemporary standard. We have also spent a lot of effort and funds on some incredibly large financial commitments.

Looking forward to this next term, I truly hope that there is talent for analyzing numbers and to following up on questions when we see vagueness in reporting. We cannot afford to misstep.

I suppose what I'm trying to impart on the reader is that there are some major initiatives that have just begun, and I do not see room for new groundbreaking projects in the budget. The wider financial landscape is also not favourable.

I do want to continue my work on our Rural Advisory Committee. I am a rural resident myself and a relatively new owner of livestock in rural Cramahe Township, and am interested and excited to continue learning more about and representing the voices of rural residents and our Agricultural sector, and ensuring their voices are heard on the Council table. I believe that our agricultural community has been at the fringe of consideration, if not left out of discussions entirely. I would like to create more opportunities for engagement with that sector of our Municipality.

How are you uniquely qualified to be elected to council that no one else can provide, but also giving at least one guilty pleasure?

I have nearly 20 years of progressive experience with the Toronto Port Authority, beginning with boots on the ground operations, and ultimately resulting in the position of Operations Manager for Ontario's second largest marina operation. Within that role, I was responsible for departmental oversight of finance and capital/operations budgets, human resources, collective agreement, and operational functions including short and long term planning and asset management - land, people, and equipment all in service to the people and to the public. A municipality is not that much different.

That being said, Council does not work on the operations side, it directs through policy per legislation. My experience does, however, give me a real life understanding of what is happening outside of those council chambers, but within the municipal building and boundaries.

Additionally I now have four years of working with my colleagues on and off Council. We do not always agree and I do expect that they do not always appreciate my questions, but I do believe they have a respect for me and what I continuously try to accomplish in that room, which is a clear understanding of what we are doing and why we are doing it. I am deeply connected within the community as a result of my extensive and varied volunteering experiences, and that deep connection brings a holistic approach to all of the decisions that I have made these last 4 years.

I am also a Full Time Realtor who both lives in Brighton, but also has the good fortune to have a standalone office building across from the Library where I host non-profits, events, and where an informal safe space hub has evolved through the last 3 years. I work with real estate clients, mostly from Brighton and immediate surroundings, and engage informally with all who wander in. I genuinely care for our Brighton residents and am regularly called upon for all sorts of random things, because people know that I am a wealth of information, a strong community connector, and all around kind person who puts service to the community first.

With respect to a guilty pleasure, I think one thing that most people do not know about me is that I have a weakness and appreciation for K-Dramas. In this very topsy-turvy world that we are living through right now it is easy to sink into a simpler time and place where goodness and love always wins -even if it's across centuries.

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