

2018 Municipal Election

Candidate Responses

To Chamber Member's Questions

We asked, they responded...

Earlier this month, we asked our members for feedback on what questions they had for their candidates related specifically to business issues. We synthesized these into five main questions covering the themes of: Economic Development, Year-round Prosperity, Housing, Internet and Cell Connectivity, and the Environment.

We posed these questions to all candidates running in the 2018 Municipal Election from each of the four municipalities in Haliburton County. Responses had to be less than 100 words, and would be posted as they were received with no edits. Any responses that exceed the 100-mark were truncated, as indicated by //.

Please see the following document for the candidate responses to each of the five questions posed by the Chamber.

No Response from...

Office:	Candidate Name
Mayor:	Murray Fearrey
Ward 1:	Nancy Wood-Roberts
Ward 2:	David McKay Mike Stinson
Ward 3:	Cindy Baumhour Tammy Donaldson
Ward 5:	Walt McKechnie

2018 Municipal Election

Candidate Responses

To Chamber Member's Questions

Q1

This year, the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce has initiated the #buycloseby project to enhance local business prosperity. In terms of economic development and business and community prosperity, what are your two main priorities for overall improvement on a short- and long-term basis?

Mayor	Andrea Roberts	I love the “buy close by” initiative, a catchy name and logo. In the short term, I would continue the Economic Development committee at Dysart and try to get representatives from the Chamber, HCDC and the BIA to serve on the committee. That way there would be good communication and support for the different initiatives we are all doing. For more long-term planning, Dysart will be doing a review of their zoning by-law, so I would hope we have good input from The Chamber to ensure we are supporting business and permitting appropriate uses to grow and develop business.
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Casey	As Deputy Mayor I would recommend that we make a <u>REAL AND SOLID COMMITMENT</u> to improving our local economy so that businesses and residents alike can realize the benefits in the form of more jobs, better wages, more disposable income and expanded government services. Our Economic Development Committees mandate should be advocates and ambassadors to assist new business in settling here by helping navigate the municipal process and identifying resources. Our Industrial Park is zoned to accommodate many types of businesses and therefore it is time to open the second phase with the proper services and infrastructure in place.
	Patrick Kennedy	Create and promote a "business positive" atmosphere within Haliburton County by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating a registry of Haliburton County companies looking to divest within 5-10 years o Creating a program that provides incentives for those companies to hire and train young entrepreneurs. - Investigate the possibility of creating a Community Economic Development Investment Fund program to create a local pool of capital for investment The availability of reliable cost efficient high speed internet service is the single largest influence on our future. We need to be prepared to expand and support additional coverage as needed.
Ward 1	Bram Lebo	In the short term, I look forward to working with the chamber on municipal and local public sector procurement policies that favour local businesses, so when tax dollars are spent we get a positive, ripple effect in our economy. When evaluating procurement options, we need to account for the broader benefits gained from supporting local businesses: jobs, accountability, responsiveness. In the long term, I will work to improve the quantity and quality of our housing stock, which is a pre-condition to economic growth. The housing shortage is keeping young people from moving here, and forcing seniors (i.e. customers) out.

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Ward 2	Larry Clarke	For the short term, Council needs to support a community education program to promote the economic benefits of purchasing products and services locally. In addition, Council needs to work with the Chamber to initiate a survey on products or services that are not available locally, or may be needed with growth of our senior or young family population. Longer term initiatives involve a joint effort of business and the Township to promote local occupations and business opportunities at our schools, and engage in consultation with colleges and universities to develop skills and certification with-in our community.
Ward 4	John Smith	<p>Help businesses in West Guilford take better advantage of traffic volumes visiting Haliburton Forest (over 100,000 visitors annually) and Camp Medeba (hundreds of campers plus parents every week) along with thousands of seasonal residents travelling to cottages.</p> <p>Work with the Chamber to identify reasons to give more visitors to the area reasons to travel into Haliburton village. Ribfest proved people will visit Haliburton village and spend substantial money. We should make changes to next summer's Ribfest to ensure our local economy gains a greater share of the spending and, longer term, develop more locally driven initiatives.</p>
	Aaron Walker	Skills gaps remain the primary obstacle for small business to grow and maintain their revenue base. Connecting with young people through the Chamber, High School, Fleming Crew, Sirch, OYAP and Apprenticeship Board we can connect youth willing to learn with the opportunity to develop skills and trades; if every employer had their staff at capacity we would experience an exponential gain in quality jobs and business growth, this is relevant both short and long term.
Ward 5	Glenn Scott	<p>My recommendation is to update the Economic Development Strategy (created in May 2016), by setting up a working group comprised of council members, civic leaders, and other interested parties. The working group should develop a plan with an updated Vision, Values, Strategies and Actions.</p> <p>The plan should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of the "Why Haliburton" Story • Undertaking in-depth research and analysis of the labour force • Researching of what has been successful in other communities • Elimination of perceived and actual road blocks for new companies • Establishment of a report card to monitor and track economic development

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To Chamber Member's Questions

Q2

The Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce wants to see every business prosperous year-round. If elected, what will your contributions be to support a healthy economy on a year-round basis, particularly in the off-season?

Mayor	Andrea Roberts	We have a few events and festivals in the shoulder seasons now that bring people to town so I would continue to support these. We will always have a busier summer than the other 3 seasons but what I'm seeing is the fall and winter are becoming very popular too. I chair the Cultural resource committee and the premise of the Cultural plan is that it is an economic tool. Create a place that is vibrant and culturally rich and people will want to live, work and play here. I will continue to support that plan. Many businesses are seasonal//
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Casey	Our community needs to grow in numbers and diversity. We don't necessarily need Big Box stores nor large franchises but we do need jobs for our residents. All of us want our community to thrive. As Deputy mayor I would advocate for our Municipality to be more open, welcoming and proactive not only in ensuring our environment and esthetics are protected, but also encouraging to those that are willing to invest in our community and create jobs. Innovative businesses should be supportive in every way that a municipality can.
	Patrick Kennedy	Local government needs to take the lead with local business organizations to create a positive business environment by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a Business Park model serviced with fibre optic high speed. (I believe Algonquin Highlands is actively working on this concept) - Expanding the current Industrial Park in Dysart - Developing a series of monthly workshops geared to providing information and assistance on a variety of topics to small business with a focus on year round sustainability. Current Small Business Week workshops attendance numbers demonstrates the need for more
Ward 1	Bram Lebo	While tourism is an important part of our economy, it cannot be the only part of our economy because it tends towards weather dependence, seasonality, unsustainable practices and low wages. I'd like to see council work with the Chamber and HCDC in a task force to attract small, higher-wage businesses to our area, starting with those owned by our existing cottager population. At the same time, my focus will be on housing, particularly in-town, to create a year-round community and customer base and generate synergies from locating people near shops and services.

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Ward 2	Larry Clarke	<p>Dysart et al has a number of events in the off season to engage our resident population and also draw tourists. We need to work with our local businesses, hospitality operators and County Tourism to promote short stay vacations and the many fall and winter activities this area has to offer.</p> <p>There is also opportunity for smaller community events that engage our growing, and year round senior's population. A recreation centre with space for business and community collaborative events will help to keep our spending local.</p>
Ward 4	John Smith	<p>Given our lakes and climate tourism will always be seasonal to some degree. We can reduce the pronounced nature of that seasonality by identifying and implementing changes that make Haliburton village more than a cluster of generally small retailers that have little to offer that can't be found/bought elsewhere. The compelling reason to frequently visit local businesses must be clearer. Although our local government can help communicate your messages it is not government's job to develop the business strategy for privately owned businesses. Once you have a clear and compelling message our local government should help support and promote it.</p>
	Aaron Walker	<p>Seasonality to our economic Development is a result of our tourism based economy. Promoting and celebrating the culture of winter would enhance our revenue base (although still tourism based). Through enhancing internet connectivity we can incrementally develop a knowledge based economy and create new business opportunities that do not rely on weather patterns.</p>
Ward 5	Glenn Scott	<p>The key to year-round prosperity is attracting and keeping young adults and young families in our community along with the availability of year-round employment opportunities.</p> <p>Key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Space – Creation of community space • Housing – Supply of affordable housing • Technology – People will move to communities with reliable, affordable cellular and internet services • Jobs – Continued focus on building new jobs in Haliburton. We must push for trades training to be included in the area.

2018 Municipal Election

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To Chamber Member's Questions

Q3

The feedback from member organizations of the Haliburton Highlands Chamber of Commerce is that many businesses across the County are struggling with staff shortages, and that affordable housing is a significant barrier to bringing additional skilled workers to the area to fill these shortages. How will you address housing affordability and availability in this area, if elected?

Mayor	Andrea Roberts	As I said, we will be updating Dysart Zoning by-law so it's important to have second units permitted, as well as duplexes and multiple residential units. I want to work with HSAD to encourage a residence for the college. If that could happen it would free up other rental units in the area. The same goes for building seniors' units, homes and other apartments will come on the market if we can do that.
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Casey	Affordable is the operative word. It matters not whether it is for seniors, families or working singles. I would like to work towards finding investors to develop smaller homes with one floor, a couple of bed rooms, maybe 1000sf or less in size. These units could be owned or rented. In addition, as Deputy Mayor I would work toward finding investors that would be willing to build apartments suitable for temporary occupancy on a monthly basis. I feel the answer is possibly in public/private partnerships.
	Patrick Kennedy	Recommend the creation of a task force consisting of a variety of community leaders with a background in construction, development, finance and specialty housing initiatives, and that Dysart: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with the task force and the provincial/federal government as may be required for funding or other support. - Work with developers to streamline the building permit application process - Reduce/eliminate development fees for projects that address identified shortages - Examine municipal property for public-private partnership opportunities - Their challenge will be to address one or more of the identified housing shortages in the community for new development.
Ward 1	Bram Lebo	I'm advocating for a Community Development Organization that (a) does the research to determine how many housing units, of what type and at what price levels, we'll need for the next 30 years; (b) works with town staff to find suitable, in-town locations (e.g. infill); (c) organizes financing through grants, municipal bonds, and private funding; (d) tenders out design and construction in accordance with our priorities for affordability and unit types/sizes; (e) supervises the process; (f) ensures the town is paid back as the housing is built and turned over to the public.

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Ward 2	Larry Clarke	As a township, we need to identify available properties in our village areas that would be suitable for housing. This needs to be supported by a review of our bylaws to allow for homes with rental suites, smaller style homes, and multiple unit homes. Support for smaller homes in the village areas will reduce the price point for accommodation for students, young families and seniors and also issues related to transportation for access to shopping and services.
Ward 4	John Smith	As outlined on my website, www.johnsmith4ward4.ca , the need for increased rental housing is critical. Almost all young people start out renting an apartment for a few years. Details of the "Housing Summit" concept I believe will get those apartments built are on my website. My approach is based on removing the roadblocks which currently stand in the way of developers, builders, investors and property managers who are happy to build housing - and earn a reasonable profit. Today those investments are being made in communities which decide to facilitate growth in such building rather than leaving roadblocks in place.
	Aaron Walker	Inclusionary Zoning is a tool that should be included in the next Official Plan, Encouraging or Mandating that affordable housing is included in new developments. In Haliburton our subsidized housing is umbrella by the City of Kawartha Lakes Housing Authority; we should involve them in our discussions to ascertain how they can assist us in our current shortage.
Ward 5	Glenn Scott	<p>I support the creation of a working group of developers, civic leaders and council members to create a roadmap and bring it to Council for adoption.</p> <p>The roadmap needs to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process for engaging potential developers • A review of municipal property with emphasis on making the available property attractive to providers of affordable housing. • A review of the municipal fee structure and streamlining the municipal building permit and application process • A communication plan to include active communication with the Haliburton County Development Corporation that Haliburton is interested in collaborating with developers and building partnerships. Research regarding other successful affordable//

2018 Municipal Election Candidate Responses To Chamber Member's Questions

Q4

Businesses across the Highlands are dealing with a lack of service options with regards to internet and cell connectivity, with dead-zones and high-cost options being the norm in much of our County. This can be counter-productive to business success. If elected, what will you do to enhance internet and cell service availability across the County?

Mayor	Andrea Roberts	The county is the lead on this and we are lucky to have the CAO, Mike Rutter, as co-chair of EORN. The cell gap analysis will be available soon and we need to lobby for reducing these gaps. Without reliable, affordable internet and cell service we won't have the growth of business that we could. Dysart has encouraged fibre in the village and provides free internet in Head Lake park. The county provides free Wi-Fi in the libraries as well.
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Casey	Through the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) connectivity is improving. Haliburton County has invested \$505,000 which in turn spurred an \$11,000,000 investment by private enterprise to improve our internet and cell phone services. The County has approved a \$40,000 contribution for a broadband gap analysis. This analysis will show how much it will cost to bring fibre to everyone's home in Haliburton County and hopefully giving us at least 50Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload speeds. As a member of County Council, I will support the EORN initiatives in continuing its efforts to fill our internet and cell phone void.
	Patrick Kennedy	Many studies have detailed the benefits to improving quality of life in rural areas by having high speed internet available. The County and the Eastern Ontario Regional Network will increase internet and cell coverage in the County soon. We need to be prepared to expand and support additional coverage as needed. I will recommend that a team be assembled now with a background in business, internet and cell experience to review and recommend options (including municipal broadband solutions) to enhance local coverage in time to work with the installation of enhanced service as we may receive through the EORN program.
Ward 1	Bram Lebo	It seems our current strategy – waiting for private sector companies and EORN – is not working. It's time to stop relying on them and solve this ourselves. I am in favour of looking into a municipal internet service. Haliburton Village itself can be covered quickly and at low cost using a series of wireless repeaters. Part of the problem is that our councils don't have the knowledge and expertise to properly evaluate our options. As a first step, I would consult some of the many experts in our own community and have them help us devise a made-in-Haliburton solution.

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Ward 2	Larry Clarke	There has been a recent survey to identify areas in the County that still do not have access to internet or cell connectivity. The issue appears to be developing some urgency or time frame to complete roll-out of this communications infrastructure. As a Township and County, we must detail the numbers and service requirements by area, prioritize the needs, and meet with Government Departments and vendors to secure a commitment and time line for installation.
Ward 4	John Smith	<p>Internet and cell services are provided by private sector businesses looking for profit opportunities. With funding provided by the Eastern Ontario Regional Network we can accelerate the required investments.</p> <p>We can ensure Haliburton is seen as an important and attractive area to invest by featuring and leveraging the hundreds of thousands of visitors that come here every year. Our local government should be facilitating a process by which visitors can collectively provide feedback regarding their dissatisfaction with the Internet and cell services available in selected areas of the County. This organized approach can get our message to key decision makers.</p>
	Aaron Walker	The CRTC has announced that they are rolling out \$750,000,000 in 2019 to address this issue with the criteria for availability to be announced shortly, in addition to this Connect to Innovate has earmarked \$500,000,000 towards rural internet connectivity. Both organizations are putting cash on the table to implement development, I would begin with consulting with them and moving it forward at a County level.
Ward 5	Glenn Scott	<p>Internet and cellular services are important to everyone today. They are necessary services for communication, education, economic transactions, research, local and global information, and entertainment etc. Most importantly, these services allow residents to work remotely or operate home based businesses promoting more economic opportunities within the Community. Our children require these services to compete for opportunities in the digital age.</p> <p>The best solution is to leverage and upgrade the existing Bell telephone network. Federal, Provincial and Municipal pressure needs to be placed on telecommunications companies to upgrade their aging infrastructure.</p>

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Q5

Haliburton County is an area that is rich in natural beauty and resources – our clean waters and pristine wildlands are integral to our economy and to the success of many of our member organizations. If elected, how do you propose to maintain a balance between economic development and environmental sustainability?

Mayor	Andrea Roberts	We can definitely have both, in fact if we don't make protecting our environment a priority we won't have much of an economy. Dealing with waste management is front and centre for Dysart. We also need to deal with our septage. As the septic inspection program rolls out and awareness of healthy septic systems increases, we need places for the haulers to spread. I think there is a desire within our area that we want to grow and see businesses thrive but not at the expense of our environment.
Deputy Mayor	Dennis Casey	The current environmental regulations are very strict and it takes a very a determined developer to work his/her way through them. The majority of these regulations are set primarily by the Province to protect our most important assets, our environment and our natural surroundings. As a Deputy Mayor and County Councillor I would work along side staff to help a developer in satisfying the many hurdles put in front of him/her.
	Patrick Kennedy	Sustainable development seeks to make the competing goals of economic growth and environmental protection compatible without additional impacts on the environment. The Municipality follows provincial guidelines and regulations when considering land use changes. Any applications to change are subject to Dysart planning department review and approval, followed by a peer review by the County Planner. Dysart and the County have new by-laws and programs intended to enhance the protection of our lakes. I am supportive of efforts whether formally or as a standard approach to assessing environmental impacts to evaluate the effectiveness of current adaptation policies and adjust as needed
Ward 1	Bram Lebo	I will insist we operate as a council according to our values. If we truly believe in protecting our environment, we must enforce our by-laws e.g. septic safety and shoreline preservation. Sometimes, we're going to have to say no to certain activities – if we don't, and sell out our values whenever an opportunity to make money comes along, then we can't really say we have any values, can we? A healthy environment is our strongest economic driver. Thinking ahead, we can focus on the many, many types of economic activities that are consistent with a healthy environment.

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Ward 2	Larry Clarke	<p>The County and Townships must take an active role in educating both residents and business on environmental stewardship and responsibilities. Our local business can support education through messaging and sponsorship, and Townships must strengthen bylaws and enforcement to promote natural shorelines, waste management and effective septic systems.</p> <p>As this is an issue for all four Townships, a role at the County level to develop education materials and bylaw guidelines is critical. This must be supported by staff responsibility and enforcement at the Townships.</p>
Ward 4	John Smith	<p>The central theme of my campaign has been the need to do more to keep our lakes and forests clean and healthy because without them there will be no local economy. Today we are not doing enough to protect these precious natural assets. Global climate change means the risks are only increasing.</p> <p>Any economic development which compromises the health of our lakes and forests must be set aside and redesigned to eliminate the requested compromises. Our local government must do more to educate property owners and businesses on the steps they can take to help protect these natural assets.</p>
	Aaron Walker	<p>Through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities there is a program called Partners for Climate Protection, over 350 Municipalities are currently involved. The PCP delivers capacity building activities to support members in reducing local GHG emissions and offers up to \$120,000 for new or existing staff addressing these issues; this would be a great first step. The next step is to ensure that future development fits within the framework of our value system of environmental sustainability.</p>
Ward 5	Glenn Scott	<p>I am an advocate for our environment. It is an important factor in making Haliburton what it is. As the President of the Haliburton Lake Cottagers' Association, I understand the importance of naturalized shorelines, healthy septic systems, wetlands, etc, Dysart and the County have done wonderful work to ensure the environment is given top priority.</p> <p>Sitting on Council, I will ensure that every economic development conversation includes a discussion about the impact on the environment and that necessary steps have been taken to minimize or eliminate the environmental impact.</p>