

Chamber questionnaire 2018

From Mandy Martin,
Cramahe Twp. mayoral candidate 2018

1. Section 224 of the Municipal Act:

- (a) to represent the public and to consider the well-being and interests of the municipality;
- (b) to develop and evaluate the policies and programs of the municipality;
- (c) to determine which services the municipality provides;
- (d) to ensure that administrative policies, practices and procedures and controllership policies, practices and procedures are in place to implement the decisions of council;
- (d.1) to ensure the accountability and transparency of the operations of the municipality, including the activities of the senior management of the municipality;
- (e) to maintain the financial integrity of the municipality; and
- (f) to carry out the duties of council under this or any other Act.”

2. (Should that read “significance”?)

Economic development the process in which an economy grows or changes and becomes more advanced, especially when both economic and social conditions are improved.

Done properly, money comes into, in this case, the municipality to fund programs and projects. But note: economic growth is just on aspect of economic development. I worked for 3.5 years as an international journalist investigating and reporting on tourism as an economic growth contributor to economic development. I know the difference.

3. Each council member brings strengths and insights the electorate wants at the table. First, we as a council meet to set priorities. Then we determine our course of inclusive action.

4. Cramahe is sadly lacking in an established, dependable Human Resources capability. This needs to be addressed. There can be no meaningful “retention” or “hiring” measures until this is dealt with.

5. You say there are no staff members with an economic development portfolio. See Number 4.

6. The biggest issue is lack of credibility, followed by lack of integrity and respect.

7. Through regular communication.

8. See number 4 and 5.

9. I alone do not set out the municipality's plan for the future. That is the responsibility of the five-person council.

10. Because I mean it. Because I have the knowledge, experience and commitment.



BRIGHTON - CRAMAHE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

PO Box 880 Brighton, ON K0K 1H0
Tel: 613.475.2775 Email: info@brightoncramahechamber.ca

Questions for 2018 Municipal Council Candidates

****You are asked to respond to these questions in writing by August 31, 2018.**

MARC COOMBS

1) *What is a council member's role in the municipality?*

- The role of the Mayor and council members is clearly defined in the Municipal Act. On very simple terms it is to set policy & procedures for staff to carry them out. The Mayor's role consists of acting as Chief Executive Officer for the municipality, chairing Council meetings, providing leadership to Council, representing the municipality at official functions as well as acting as the representative of the municipality within and outside the municipality. The Mayor also has a leadership role to play in "enhancing the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality and its residents."
- I also see the role of Mayor as being one who has a long term vision for the community and helps set strategic plans in place with the cooperation and input from Council & the community.
- Provide ethical leadership whilst making sure Council behaves in an ethical and transparent manner, dealing with those in the community with full integrity in an open & honest manner.
- Provide a focus on the economic development and well-being of the municipality & be fully aware of & ready to act upon opportunities that may present themselves.

2) Explain your understanding of economic development and describe the significant to our community.

- Economic Development is increasing the economic activity in the community. This creates jobs, increases taxes collected & improves quality of life and the health & well-being of our community. However, there are many facets to economic development. It's not only working to increase activity in agricultural, industrial, commercial & residential sectors, but also you need to take into mind tourism, cultural and recreational pursuits that all have a part to play in a well-rounded strategy.
- In 2016 I initiated a Mayors Taskforce to develop an Economic Development Strategic Plan. Working with a wonderful cross section of residents and with valuable community input we developed a Plan that was adopted by Council with over 70 action items.
- Economic Development is incredibly significant for our community. During my first term on Council (1998-2000) I was Cramahe's EcDev rep on several county wide initiatives & committees. I also chaired the Apple Route Committee from 1998-2007, working with dozens of small businesses across Northumberland and in Cramahe to help increase their profile and business. I have continued to be involved in EcDev initiatives for the past 20 years including being a council coordinator for Northumberland County Council economic development for the past 12 years.

3) If elected, how will you foster greater levels of cooperation within council?

- I believe that the new Council should start off with training on:
 - Roles & Responsibilities of Council
 - Code of Conduct & role of Integrity Commissioner
 - Council-Staff Roles & Relationships
 - Then we should work collectively with staff on developing a set of goals for us to achieve & agree on how they will be achieved. I believe by starting the term working together on ideas & expectations that we all agree are important to the community there should be a greater level of cooperation.

4) How could staff retention be enhanced? What would you do to attract employees?

- The municipal sector is undergoing a severe shortage of staff across Canada. As older staff retires there is a critical shortage of skilled municipal staff. This makes competition for staff acute & puts an upward pressure on salaries. As a small municipality we face several challenges: we often don't have the depth to have more than one person in a specific role so when they leave there is often no

“deputy” or “assistant manager” to step up to fill that role and our modest budget just doesn’t allow for us to be able to compete salary wise with larger municipalities. Faced with these realities, in order to retain staff we need to set the example of always promoting from within wherever possible, making sure our employees receive applicable training so they can do their job more efficiently, recognize special achievements when they take place & always value & respect the work they do.

- To attract employees we need to be seen as a progressive & innovative municipality that offers opportunities for growth & where employee’s contributions will be recognized. Employees of a small municipality will be involved in a much larger array of activities & responsibilities and have more opportunities to show initiative than in larger municipalities which can be attractive to job seekers.

5) *In light of the fact that the municipality does not have staff with an economic development portfolio, how would you address the gap in services?*

- To continue to be successful I would continue to use a team approach that includes myself, our CAO & Planner, our Economic Development Committee, the Northumberland County Economic Development department along with partners such as the Chamber of Commerce. Contracting out specific activities like we have done with tourism with the Chamber has made good use of our limited resources. A strong Economic Development Committee will take the lead in the roll out of the Economic Development Strategic Plan that was passed in 2017. Also, a downtown business association would provide a much needed cohesive voice for downtown businesses that would help drive a coordinated effort to help promote the downtown.

6) *What is the biggest issue facing the municipality and how would you tackle it?*

- The biggest issue is the impending wave of growth that has already started. This will affect the municipality in many ways. As a corporation we need to ensure we have policies & procedures in place in order to handle the various inquiries & development opportunities that we will receive. We have ensured our development charges are structured so development pays for development and doesn’t come from your tax dollars. We need to ensure we have appropriate staffing to handle the volume of work whether it is in receiving planning applications or conducting building inspections. We will need to address our growing infrastructure requirements.
- Staff are well aware of the challenges we face and the new Council will have to make sure plans are in place to handle this work. We have already put into place

back up support for our building official and we have built a strong relationship with our planning consultants so they can step in seamlessly to help when required. One of the positives of our new CAO is his background in water/wastewater which I always thought would be key for us going forward as that will be our largest investment. We have undertaken an inflow/infiltration study on our wastewater system and are in the process of putting the repair work out for tender. That will allow us to regain the capacity at the Wastewater plant that was lost to pipe breaks and inflows through improperly sealed manholes. We also need to start looking out past the ten year horizon and anticipate both the infrastructure & land we'll need.

7) *How do you plan to involve residents in the decision making process in our municipality?*

- I believe the first step is making sure the residents are aware of what is happening in the community. I have heard from many that they are less informed now that the newspapers have slowly been closed & seem to have less coverage than they did previously.
- We will start using digital tools such as social media and our new website debuting this fall to get the word out to the wider world about what is happening in Cramahe as well as to inform and greatly enhance two-way communication between our residents and the municipality.
- I also feel that a quarterly newsletter mailed to each home may help. We will need to try different methods to communicate with residents and constantly monitor how successful they are to ensure we are much more effective.
- Based on the above, we should be able to set up ways that residents can have their concerns heard in a way that will help inform Council to make better decisions. This could be through on-line polls for example.
- I attend dozens of local events yearly and meet with residents on a regular basis both formally & informally. I try to make sure I am listening to different groups of people so I can get varied outlooks & opinions. I think this balance also helps me take the pulse of how the electorate feel about certain issues.

8) What would you do to retain and attract businesses to our municipality?

- Ensure there are strong supports for existing business. We need to be supportive of the activities of Northumberland County's Business & Entrepreneurship Centre as well as the Brighton Cramahe Chamber of Commerce. As well, local Council needs to visibly support local business and make them feel welcome in our community. Through the Economic Development Strategic Plan many of the retail & commercial businesses were surveyed. We did a formal survey of the industry some time ago and it is time to revisit that.
- We need to follow through on the action items in the Economic Development Strategic Plan as many of these will benefit existing business.
- To attract business we need to several things. Some are:
 - Have an attractive & informative website
 - Informed staff that can answer inquiries promptly
 - Leverage network of personal connections & work with Northumberland County and the feds/province
 - Have appropriately zoned & serviced land

9) What is your plan for the municipality over the next 4 years?

- Continued Growth. The key to keeping your property tax increases low is attracting commercial, industrial & residential investment into Cramahe Township. This will also provide much needed jobs. We need to support this by investing wisely in building out our infrastructure capacity.
- Improving Roads. In the twelve years I have been Mayor of Cramahe we have invested well over \$10 million in road construction compared with just \$1.5m in the previous six years. We need to continue to focus on this as well as an aggressive ditching & road maintenance program.
- Communication. I believe it is imperative that we focus on communication & customer service. As print media slowly disappears, residents tell me they are having trouble staying up to date with what is happening in Cramahe. It is important that we look for new ways to get the word out as well as enhance two way communications between our residents and the municipality in a timely manner.

10) Why should people vote for you?

- When I first ran for Council in 1997 my goals were to support agriculture, promote economic development, and keep tax increases low by spending frugally but also investing wisely in our infrastructure to support future development. After twenty years, my goals are much the same, and I am immensely proud of where our community is today.
- I have an impressive track record of attracting investment into our community, both public & private. This has increased our tax base, provided jobs and enhanced our quality of life.
- I have rolled up my sleeves and gotten engaged with issues outside of Council in order to provide leadership & help the community.

When the School Board threatened to close both our rural schools and bus our children out of the township to Brighton, I worked with local parents and concerned citizens and met with our MPP, School Board administration and trustees and eventually was able to have a new \$5m school built in our municipality for our rural children. This has been a huge boon to our community and attracted young families into Cramahe.

When the Apple Blossom Tyme Festival planned to fold due to nobody willing to chair the event, I stepped up and offered to be Chair. I gathered a group of key people and we kept the Festival alive and now a new generation of dedicated community volunteers has continued to keep it going and it's more successful than ever.

- I am actively involved in the community with service groups, attend & work, and in some cases, oversee many local events.
- I am very approachable and sincerely concerned about the residents and health of our community. Others have described me as having: "stable and progressive leadership" and "reliable, strong, steady leadership!"

Please let us know if you prefer to receive this questionnaire electronically and a copy will be emailed.