

Meet your Ward B Candidates, potentially serving you for the next four years

Allen Edwards, Acclaimed, District and Township Councillor, Ward A

Response: “I will leave questions to the candidates who need to be elected.”

About Responses from Township Councillor Candidates, Ward B

October 8: Please know that we have not yet formatted these responses and you should not hold anything against the candidates for how they are formatted as they have a lot on their plates (and so do we at the Chamber). Responses are listed alphabetically by last name.

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JAMIE DAVEY www.jdavey.ca

1) HOUSING & TALENT

- a) *According to the Ontario government's goal of 1.5 million new homes within 10 years, Muskoka is short 4,400 homes already and within 10 years that increases to 6,700. What are you planning to do or think could be done in Muskoka Lakes to help close the gap?*

I think a good first step is to ensure that the planning and development processing timelines that the municipality is responsible for are met under the Planning Act and Building Code Act. We need to ensure proper staff levels are in place to meet the timelines.

Furthermore, we need an Official Plan and corresponding implementing zoning bylaw that allows for flexibility in development. Development shouldn't be tied up in needless planning processes for months or years for small responsible residential developments. For clarity, higher-risk development should proceed cautiously with appropriate environmental studies, whereas low-risk development should proceed quickly within the regular process.

b) Do you have a vision of how this council could be led to attend to the issue of staff and housing availability as equally as it pays attention to waterfront properties?

Yes. I think we need to focus on housing as a key and core issue. I think the new Official Plan as it is proposed to be passed this Oct 2022 at Council does not address the needs of the community. The policy directions for the Official plan should be reviewed based on the housing supply challenges that have unfolded in the Muskoka region post pandemic.

c) If elected, will you encourage affordable housing in both urban and rural areas, or will you feel obligated to respond to associations such as MLA/FriendsofMuskoka that appear to be against such development in your decision making?

I would encourage affordable housing everywhere in our community. I think that it is important that there is a mix of housing throughout the community – Importantly, I would note this is also stated in the Provincial Policy Statement.

d) What would you do to help Council and staff bring talent and skilled workers to Muskoka Lakes?

I think the challenge to bring talent to the area is mostly driven by the fact that there are no housing options here. Muskoka is a great place to live and work. Generally, the jobs here do not pay as much as those in larger municipalities but that is often offset with the Muskoka region being such a great place to live.

However, given the costs to rent or purchase a home in the region are so high, talent and skilled workers are going elsewhere where personal economics make more sense. Fixing the housing problem, is the first and most important step to attracting talent and skilled workers to the area and would be my top priority.

e) Does the Official Plan include a Directive to develop municipal incentives to build off water attainable housing in Muskoka Lakes (attainable housing is considered housing affordable for the working class)? If not, why not or why do you think it isn't there?

In the new Official Plan that is currently being rushed and target to be passed at the Oct 2022 Council meeting does not appear to address incentives for building off water attainable housing.

Here is the planning agenda where the current copy of the Official Plan can be found see B4 and L7:

<https://muskokalakes.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingInformation.aspx?Org=Cal&Id=1622>

I think housing has not been properly addressed as we don't have the Official Plan policy directions right. Those are the directions that tell the planning consulting firm what changes need to be made to the current official plan. Furthermore, I don't believe there has been enough community consultation / engagement in developing this plan. We need to take a step back, reflect on the changes to the community, especially post pandemic, and incorporate proper community needs into the Official plan.

2) DOING BUSINESS IN MUSKOKA LAKES(Conditions for Business and Sector Specific Questions)

a) How should Township plan to help small business through the looming recession, and how are you planning to stay accountable on those promises?

I think we need to help small businesses by cutting red-tape associated with planning and development processes.

b) What is your position on development restrictions versus economic vitality?

I think we need a balanced and flexible approach to development. Where planning processes are required for development or land use changes supporting businesses, we need to ensure these process are expedient and low cost. This will ensure economic vitality.

c) When can we start to lobby ride share services like Uber to operate here? The question noted these are major drivers of local travel and hospitality.

I would be in support of lobbying ride share service to operate here. Perhaps this could be initiated as a joint project with the Chamber of Commerce.

d) Muskoka Lakes is revising its Official Plan. Presently the lower floor of a boathouse can only be used for boats and related items. Do you support, or not support, residential use (bedrooms, recreation, etc) in this space? Please be specific about the use you support, and why?

I support the lower floor of boathouses to be used for boats and related items but also a place to lounge and get out of the sun.

e) If the lakes continue to have blue/green algae blooms, our livelihood will be affected. Do you have a plan for the monitoring of old septic beds?

I think we should take a risk based approach to monitoring septic beds - those that are high risk should be inspected more frequently. This program can be adjusted by the building department on an on-going basis to continually improve it.

f) How will you encourage new business when there are staff shortages and most of the businesses in town are presently real estate offices?

In my view the staff shortages are a result of the underlying housing issue. People don't want to come and work in an area where the rents and cost of housing is astronomical. We need to focus on housing first, then we can look at ways to further diversify the businesses seen in the community.

g) In this question, the person asking suggests that the lack of affordable housing is tied to short-term rentals. They ask: What action(s) would you support the Township take to address this situation....and....Do you support a minimum 30 day stay for short term rentals?

Generally, I believe that short-term rentals are mostly waterfront properties targeting tourism over short terms periods (ie a weekend or week rental period). I'd like to review the data on this assumption, but based on that I would not support a minimum 30 day stay as it would have a negative impact on tourism and I also believe that these waterfront rentals would generally not be affordable in comparison to rentals in the rural and community areas. I do not believe they are taking away from long term affordable community housing.

*h) A survey of Muskoka Lakes residents in 2018 showed 70 percent of them supported allowing legal cannabis sales. At the time, Council decided to take a wait and see position. Today we're the only township in the entire riding that still doesn't allow this...and in the recent term, all but one Councillor voted against cannabis retail. **For candidates who are campaigning to return:** Why are you stopping a legal business from setting up here.... For all candidates; Today, would you vote to allow or disallow legal cannabis stores in Muskoka Lakes? If you would vote against, what is your reasoning for doing so?*

I would support cannabis stores in Muskoka Lakes. This is regulated provincially and the municipality should not weight in on regulation here.

- i) *COVID made it hard for the public to engage with the Township planning department, which slowed my business from getting open. What can Council do to improve or speed up such service for businesses?*

I think COVID and the pandemic helped to bring some transparency to the planning processes at the township. For example, planning and committee of adjustment meeting are live-streamed, recorded and the public can participate easily remotely. To improve the speed of planning processes, I think we have to measure the current processing timelines and ensure they are in compliance with provincial standards. I would encourage staff to continue to find ways to make meetings and the processes easier for constituents.

3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION

- a) *What do you think should be in a 5-year plan to accelerate economic growth throughout the region?*

I think that housing is the key issue that I've addressed in other questions. Other key initiatives we should focus on are incentives that support the establishment and growth of year round businesses.

- b) *The Township collaborates with many organizations for the betterment of the community. The Chamber is one of them. If elected, what's your vision for collaboration with the Chamber during your term?*

I see the Chamber as a key partner in providing insight to council from the business community. At any time, I would encourage the Chamber to make presentations to council / committees on any information, problem or issue. These would be publically discussed and any helpful actions be taken by Council.

- c) *There are 6 municipalities but none to call that represents Muskoka overall. If a business wants to start up somewhere in Muskoka.... Who do they call? What would you do to solve this problem?*

I would say this is a challenge and also for the Chambers that are partly split up this way too. Given our current two-tiered municipal governance structure, it would probably be best to tackle this at the district level. Perhaps a working group could be established to incorporate the local Chamber of Commerce from each area and the local municipal

staff from each area. Then, a business inquiry comes in at the district level, a coordinator at the district level engages the appropriate representatives applicable from each area.

d) What has the present Economic Development policy of Muskoka Lakes done for our business community, and what would you change in a Township Economic Development program going forward?

I'd like to hear more from the Chamber on what Economic Development policy has done or should do going forward in the township.

e) As a business member of the chamber, I'm frustrated by a lack of communication between Council and the chamber. The councillor appointed to the Chamber Board recuses whenever chamber issues are brought to council. Can you suggest a better way to improve council and business relations going forward?

I think this is a disappointing situation from what I'm hearing. I would be in favor of bringing all Chamber issues / concerns to council or committee and discuss them openly in public and working to find a solution.

f) Our bylaws are the backbone of our municipality. While many new bylaws have been introduced, and more are coming, what are you going to do to ensure these bylaws are enforced?

To ensure enforceability of our bylaws, they need to be clear so people can understand them, reasonable so that people will respect them, and enforceable so that people will be held accountable for their actions.

g) While The township has gone from one bylaw officer to two-and-a-half recently, there is still no one on duty from noon Friday and over the weekend when most noise, fireworks, and short term rental issues occur. What will you do to ensure that complaints are effectively followed up and violators caught?

My current understanding is that bylaw infractions can be reported by phone or via the website at any time. It would be interesting to see the data on what calls / complaints are coming in on the weekend as indicated in the question.

From there, depending on the demand, perhaps a shift schedule could be implemented so that bylaw officers work a Tuesday to Saturday shift and another Sunday to Thursday shift to ensure some type of weekend coverage.

4) EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SEASONALITY

a) How would you improve the staff situation for summer businesses that rely on seasonal staff?

I think promoting larger businesses to have on-site staff housing will ease some of the demand on summer staff housing. Also, planning flexibility for staff housing for rooming houses or secondary suites would help improve the situation.

b) One questioner commented... The election campaign has been made ugly by the Friends of Muskoka/MLA. If elected, how will you address what some see as an 'abuse of power' by associations and how can you ensure that all Muskoka Lakes residents are represented in future votes?

I'd be in favor of a lobby registry as the current Mayor has proposed. No one group should have a greater say over decision making in the community. Furthermore, I believe all decision making should be public and transparent.

c) What would you do to increase tourism in the shoulder and winter months in Muskoka Lakes?

To increase tourism in the shoulder and winter months, I would look to partner with businesses and organizations to create more activities or festivals that support a year-round presence. Perhaps, we can better utilize our community centres and arenas promoting skating, snowshoeing, hockey, ice fishing, snowmobiling etc. I'd be open to working with the Chamber on ways to best incentivize year-round business development.

d) Would you encourage employers to pay a living wage for Muskoka and the area?

Yes. I would encourage all employers to pay a living wage. Based on the current housing and rental market it would be interesting to see what the number (living wage) would be.

e) The draft Official Plan doesn't say much about off water planning. Shouldn't our large off water area be part of an overall plan for the Township? Your thoughts please?

Yes. The Official Plan is the key document to community planning. It should focus on all areas other areas such as rural and community zones. In my view, we should focus development around the best return on municipal assets (ie roads, water, sewer and services). **(Jamie Davey responses end)**

SUSAN MAZAN susanmazan.ca

HOUSING & TALENT

There is a national housing crisis which will require policies and incentives at all levels of government. Specific to the Township of Muskoka Lakes' ability to spur development, council has undertaken a few initiatives and I will continue to explore other options.

For example, within the draft OP, there are policies allowing for pre-zoning of housing developments in appropriate locations, and to allow for the waiving of fees (i.e permits and site plans). Through the recently endorsed CIP, the Community Improvement Plan Private Sector Incentive Program creates three different funding stream opportunities for appropriate developments; fee rebate, constructions grants and tax increment grants. Community awareness of these programs is set to launch this fall. Through the attainable housing committee there are funds available for fee rebates for different fees (i.e. planning, building).

The goal of the above initiatives is to reduce red tape and timing, and to provide financial support for appropriate developments. The next term of council will want to assess the uptake of these programs and continue to support these and other initiatives.

According to the Ontario government's goal of 1.5 million new homes within 10 years, Muskoka is short 4,400 homes already and within 10 years that increases to 6,700. What are you planning to do or think could be done in Muskoka Lakes to help close the gap?

Please see above.

Do you have a vision of how this council could be led to attend to the issue of staff and housing availability as equally as it pays attention to waterfront properties?

Committee structures separated attainable housing from economic development, while housing is identified as a core driver in the economic development strategy.

A Township of Muskoka Lakes working group, similar to the one formed for Broadband could be formed to help bring a TML perspective in a more coordinated way to work with other levels of government.

If elected, will you encourage affordable housing in both urban and rural areas, or will you feel obligated to respond to associations such as MLA/FriendsofMuskoka that appear to be against such development in your decision making?

I believe that it is better to work collaboratively to achieve goals and I do so by listening to all perspectives.

What would you do to help Council and staff bring talent and skilled workers to Muskoka Lakes?

I would continue to work with key stakeholder organizations.

Does the Official Plan include a Directive to develop municipal incentives to build off water attainable housing in Muskoka Lakes (attainable housing is considered housing affordable for the working class)? If not, why not or why do you think it isn't there?

Please see above.

DOING BUSINESS IN MUSKOKA LAKES (Conditions for Business and Sector Specific Questions)

How should Township plan to help small business through the looming recession, and how are you planning to stay accountable on those promises?

I believe continued understanding and engagement of the challenges is important. The Chamber of Commerce has been an important voice for the community through COVID, and I believe it will continue to do so. Where the Township is able to support (i.e. support for restaurant patios) it would be important to do so.

What is your position on development restrictions versus economic vitality?

The construction industry is an important part of the economy. I believe I would need more information to respond to this further.

When can we start to lobby ride share services like Uber to operate here? The question noted these are major drivers of local travel and hospitality.

I think this is an interesting idea to explore. Transportation in Muskoka Lakes is going to require creative thinking and ideas. It is important for residents, employees and visitors alike.

Muskoka Lakes is revising its Official Plan. Presently the lower floor of a boathouse can only be used for boats and related items. Do you support, or not support, residential use (bedrooms, recreation, etc) in this space? Please be specific about the use you support, and why?

I support the policy to allow limited amount of recreation space in the lower floor of a boathouse.

If the lakes continue to have blue/green algae blooms, our livelihood will be affected. Do you have a plan for the monitoring of old septic beds?

The septic re-inspection program is in place to mitigate the impacts of failing sewage systems and for protection of the watershed. Staff are currently creating a database with ratings for every septic in the township. Early reports showed 40 percent were in a high risk category. With this data, it will help guide the inspection program. Costs incurred by property owners to improve systems will vary depending upon the state of their septic system. Costs to manage the program and options on how to do so are yet to be determined.

How will you encourage new business when there are staff shortages and most of the businesses in town are presently real estate offices?

TML's economic development strategy was developed with significant input from the Chamber. Different priorities were established, with one of those initiatives being the Community Improvement Plan (CIP). Some smaller

initiatives were implemented this past year (closing of Locke Street, Muskoka Moments chairs etc) and funds set aside to support public and private improvement projects. This program has just begun, but one interesting element is working with the District, Township and Local businesses to improve pedestrian access. Information is available on EngageMuskokaLakes on the Township website.

Staff shortages are an ongoing issue in many areas, and will require input/action from all Stakeholders.

In this question, the person asking suggests that the lack of affordable housing is tied to short-term rentals. They ask: What action(s) would you support the Township take to address this situation....and....Do you support a minimum 30 day stay for short term rentals?

TML council recently directed staff to re-open the STR discussion and provide options to help address the issues. The next term of council will be discussing this topic in the winter/spring. Many other communities are addressing STR's in different ways acknowledging that the unique characteristics of a municipality might require a different approach. As to the minimum 30 day stay, I will wait for staff's report, but I don't think that timing could work effectively in TML as so many cottagers have a history of renting their properties.

*A survey of Muskoka Lakes residents in 2018 showed 70 percent of them supported allowing legal cannabis sales. At the time, Council decided to take a wait and see position. Today we're the only township in the entire riding that still doesn't allow this...and in the recent term, all but one Councillor voted against cannabis retail. **For candidates who are campaigning to return:** Why are you stopping a legal business from setting up here.... For all candidates; Today, would you vote to allow or disallow legal cannabis stores in Muskoka Lakes? If you would vote against, what is your reasoning for doing so?*

I am in Ward B which does not include a large urban centre, but many small communities. There was strong opposition within my Ward to allowing cannabis stores.

COVID made it hard for the public to engage with the Township planning department, which slowed my business from getting open. What can Council do to improve or speed up such service for businesses?

COVID created a very difficult situation as the volume of work, combined with remote working made the planning process slower. That said, the processes will continue to be reviewed in the next term of council to ensure most effective and efficient way of delivering the service. Technology will be an interesting way to improve planning as a whole, an example being the recently launched building permit map.

3) ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION

What do you think should be in a 5-year plan to accelerate economic growth throughout the region?

I think we need to continue to follow the economic development strategy. One very important topic that has not been discussed is the importance of broadband access for all – this is a critical part of a vibrant economy.

As part of the TML broadband working group, I believe that continuing advocacy and partnership with different stakeholders will be an important initiative in the next term of council. The Provincial Government recently announced results of a reverse auction, releasing money for providers to work towards the goal of 50/10 broadband connectivity for every household by 2025. It will be very important to bring a TML perspective to ensure all residents and businesses, including those in the more rural settings, are included in plans. Details are anticipated in the coming months.

The Township collaborates with many organizations for the betterment of the community. The Chamber is one of them. If elected, what's your vision for collaboration with the Chamber during your term?

I believe the Chamber plays an important role and should continue to be a valued partner of the Township.

There are 6 municipalities but none to call that represents Muskoka overall. If a business wants to start up somewhere in Muskoka.... Who do they call? What would you do to solve this problem?

That's an interesting question. I would recommend contact the District of Muskoka and asking for their input.

What has the present Economic Development policy of Muskoka Lakes done for our business community, and what would you change in a Township Economic Development program going forward?

For most of this term, economic development was a shared role with communications. At least three of those years TML was also managing in a crisis which put significant demands on this role. Some of the bigger initiatives as mentioned above were the completion of the CIP and the formation of a Broadband Working Committee. I would continue exploring other working groups or committees for other areas such as housing.

As a business member of the chamber, I'm frustrated by a lack of communication between Council and the chamber. The councillor appointed to the Chamber Board recuses whenever chamber issues are brought to council. Can you suggest a better way to improve council and business relations going forward?

The Chamber is a valued partner. Improving communications between the two should be a priority. If the current arrangement is not working, a new approach should be considered.

While The township has gone from one bylaw officer to two-and-a-half recently, there is still no one on duty from noon Friday and over the weekend when most noise, fireworks, and short term rental issues occur. What will you do to ensure that complaints are effectively followed up and violators caught?

During the summer, there is by law enforcement on weekends. Council will need to continue working with by law enforcement to ensure they have enough staff, and the appropriate tools to enforce issues.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SEASONALITY

How would you improve the staff situation for summer businesses that rely on seasonal staff?

This is a significant issue which will require ongoing collaboration with many stakeholders.

One questioner commented... The election campaign has been made ugly by the Friends of Muskoka/MLA. If elected, how will you address what some see as an 'abuse of power' by associations and how can you ensure that all Muskoka Lakes residents are represented in future votes?

It is important that all perspectives are heard and I encourage people to voice their concerns, and/or delegate to council.

What would you do to increase tourism in the shoulder and winter months in Muskoka Lakes?

This is an interesting opportunity which was amplified during COVID. The Township role is to create the conditions to support these and other economic opportunities. Two small examples highlighted in recent years was the importance of having year round municipal washrooms (there were none able to be open during COVID), and opening trails for winter use, including the golf course. The recreation master plan connects recreation with economic opportunity. The Chamber is an important partner in these and other initiatives.

Would you encourage employers to pay a living wage for Muskoka and the area?
Yes.

The draft Official Plan doesn't say much about off water planning. Shouldn't our large off water area be part of an overall plan for the Township? Your thoughts please?

I believe I would need specific examples to comment thoughtfully. There is no questions that the water side planning is a significant part of council and public discussion. That said, I have encouraged as much dialogue as possible for the urban and rural areas, and there were a number of councillors and members of the public who provided important perspectives in off water planning matters.

(Susan Mazan responses end)

GORD ROBERTS

HOUSING & TALENT

According to the Ontario government's goal of 1.5 million new homes within 10 years, Muskoka is short 4,400 homes already and within 10 years that increases to 6,700. What are you planning to do or think could be done in Muskoka Lakes to help close the gap?

Council needs to address this significant issue on every occasion possible. There is no point to have new homes that people can't afford. And if we don't have good economic development, there will not be people with money to buy them.

Do you have a vision of how this council could be led to attend to the issue of staff and housing availability as equally as it pays attention to waterfront properties?

Where feasibly, I will encourage the new Council to put affordable housing as an important issue for all areas of the Township. It's a complex subject as you are aware and it needs attention by the Council.

If elected, will you encourage affordable housing in both urban and rural areas, or will you feel obligated to respond to associations such as MLA/FriendsofMuskoka that appear to be against such development in your decision making?

If re-elected I will encourage, where feasible, affordable housing in both urban and rural areas.

What would you do to help Council and staff bring talent and skilled workers to Muskoka Lakes?

I think that if we do a good job in promoting economic development as set out in the existing Township 2020 Economic Development Strategy, the likelihood of appropriate staff moving to Muskoka Lakes will increase. Please see also my answer to question 3 a).

Does the Official Plan include a Directive to develop municipal incentives to build off water attainable housing in Muskoka Lakes (attainable housing is considered housing affordable for the working class)? If not, why not or why do you think it isn't there?

I believe that the Township should encourage the building of affordable housing anywhere and not be restricted to on water or off water.

The answer to the question pertaining to attainable/affordable housing can be found in the draft Official Plan dated September 22, 2022. For the convenience of the individual asking this question, below I have provided the OP sections that refer to attainable/affordable housing.

B4 HOUSING OBJECTIVES

Obtaining attainable housing for year-round residents is a challenge in the Township. The housing objectives in this section establish the basis for future land use planning decisions affecting the provision of housing. In this regard, it is the objective of this Plan to meet current and future housing needs by:

- a) Ensuring that an adequate supply of land and housing choices are available for present and future residents of all ages, abilities, incomes and household sizes, and is located in areas near jobs, and essential goods and services;
- b) Maintaining at all times the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years through **residential intensification** and **redevelopment** within the Urban Centres and, if necessary, lands which are **designated and available** for residential development to meet projected requirements of current and future residents, in consideration of the projections and in accordance with the applicable targets contained in this Plan;
- c) Maintaining at all times land in conjunction with servicing capacity sufficient to provide at least a three-year supply of residential units available through lands suitably zoned to facilitate **residential intensification** and **redevelopment**, and land in draft approved and registered plans/descriptions in consideration of the projections and in accordance

with the applicable targets contained within this Plan;

- d) Assisting in the achievement of **residential intensification** and attainable housing by encouraging opportunities for mixed-use development in appropriate locations;
- e) Permitting the development of additional dwelling units in appropriate locations;
- f) Encouraging the use of surplus public lands for attainable housing only if the site is appropriate for such a use and located where the use would be compatible with adjacent uses;
- g) Encouraging the development of seniors housing, including residential and institutional retirement homes;
- h) Recognizing the need for housing for seasonal employees involved in the tourism and construction industries; and,
- i) Encouraging the provision of alternative forms of housing for **special needs** groups including housing for persons with disabilities such as physical, sensory or mental health disabilities, and housing for older persons and transitional housing.PART H - RURAL AREA LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

H1 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this Plan to:

- a) recognize the **rural area** as generally comprised of a mix of resource-related activities, limited low density residential uses, and other small scale or space- extensive developments;
- b) Preserve the character of the **rural area** and large tracts of undeveloped lands for environmental protection, to limit human intrusion into interior

habitat and wilderness areas and for aesthetic purposes;

- c) limit **development** to avoid fragmentation of forests and **natural heritage features and areas** and related **ecological functions**, to limit impacts on the accessibility or viability of renewable and non-renewable resources, and to discourage strip development that detracts from the rural function and character;
- d) To retain and enhance the visual integrity of the natural landscape and to preserve the rural character of the Township;
- e) encourage the establishment of sustainable and diversified tourism opportunities;
- f) Promote the development of commercial, recreational and industrial uses that are appropriate for the **rural area** and are sustainable on **individual on-site sewage** and **individual on-site water services**;
- g) Promote a diverse, innovative and strong rural economy by enhancing the area's capacity to contribute to the economy of the Township through the provision of goods and services, including agricultural, arts and cultural products, the sustainable management or use of resources, and tourism;
- h) encourage the establishment and retention of contracting and service businesses that support the second home industry and the seasonal population;
- i) Promote a diverse, innovative and economically strong creative economy by enhancing its capacity to contribute to the economy of the Township; and,
- j) Provide for limited year-round residential uses,

including attainable housing, on lands that are not constrained or protected for their resource or natural heritage value in relation to the amount of year-round residential growth to occur within Urban Centres and Community Areas.

- k) Direct residential uses to areas that will not require the extension of municipal and District services.

PART I - URBAN CENTRE LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

I1 OBJECTIVES AND EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNITY LIVING

I1.1 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this Plan to:

- a) Support the efficient use of land and **infrastructure** in Urban Centres to meet the needs of present and future residents and businesses;
- b) Support increases in density in new development areas to maximize the use of **infrastructure** and minimize the amount of land required for new development, provided the character of each of the Urban Centres is respected;
- c) Support and foster the unique characteristics of the Urban Centres by ensuring that new development:
 - i) Reflects the existing small town character of the two Urban Centres;
 - ii) Is compatible with the surrounding built environment;
 - iii) Protects existing neighbourhoods and subdivisions; and,
- d) Conserves **cultural heritage landscapes** and **built heritage resources**;
- e) Ensure that an adequate supply of land and

housing choices are available in the Urban Centres for present and future residents of all ages, abilities, incomes and household sizes;

- f) Require a high standard of design for all new development and redevelopment, to foster a sense of pride and belonging among residents, contribute to the overall desirability and quality of place of Muskoka Lakes, create gateways, landmarks, and focal points, and bring people and activities together.
- g) Support development that combines commercial, residential and other land uses to facilitate the more efficient use of urban land and the establishment of a pedestrian environment;
- h) encourage commercial development that will provide the fullest range of goods and services possible, at appropriate locations, to meet the needs of residents, employees and businesses;
- i) Provide for more live-work opportunities by promoting residential uses in proximity to compatible forms of development, employment uses, institutional uses, recreational facilities and parks;
- j) Promote a variety of complementary and compatible land uses including attainable housing, **special needs** and transitional housing, community facilities, schools, small- scale commercial uses and recreational open space areas; and
- k) encourage the establishment and maintenance of a system of public open spaces, parkland, and recreational facilities that meets the needs of present and future residents.

I4.7 MIXED USE

I4.7.1 PERMITTED USES

Lands designated as Mixed Use Areas are intended to provide

opportunities for affordable housing, **intensification**, and commercial activities in proximity to the core commercial area. The following uses are permitted on lands designated Mixed Use as shown on Schedules B1 and B2.

- a) All forms of residential dwellings except single detached and semi-detached dwellings;
- b) Automotive and marine sales and service establishments;
- c) Bed and breakfast establishments;
- d) Business offices;
- e) Clinics and health care facilities;
- f) Entertainment establishments;
- g) EV charging stations;
- h) Garden centres;
- i) Hotels and motels,
- j) Long term care facilities and retirement homes;
- k) Marina, docking and associated storage facilities;
- l) Open space uses;
- m) Personal service uses;
- n) Places of worship and other institutional uses;
- o) Private and commercial schools;
- p) Public service facilities;
- q) Recreational facilities (sports and fitness centres);
- r) Recreational vehicle centres;
- s) Restaurants;
- t) Retail and service commercial uses; and,
- u) **Special needs** housing and rooming houses.

15.4.5 RANGE OF HOUSING

- a) A range of types of housing is permitted and encouraged. A minimum of 15% of the units shall be attainable as defined by the District of Muskoka.
- b) Maximum unit sizes may be imposed in an implementing zoning by-law.

PART J - COMMUNITY AREA LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

J1 OBJECTIVES

It is the objective of this Plan to:

- a) recognize the role of Community Areas as service nodes for the Rural and Waterfront Areas;
- b) To maintain and enhance the distinctive character, identity and rich heritage of the Community Areas;
- c) To promote the efficient use of existing and planned **infrastructure** and **public service facilities**;
- d) To encourage the development of small-scale commercial uses that support the local residents and the general area;
- e) To provide opportunities for small-scale and home based employment uses to provide jobs for local residents, and which are appropriate in a Community Area;
- f) To promote the diversification of the economic base through the provision of goods and services, including value-added products and the sustainable management or use of resources that are appropriate for Community Areas;
- g) To encourage the development of attainable housing, where such housing can be appropriately

serviced; and,

- h) To provide opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including the leveraging of historical, cultural and natural assets.

J2 GENERAL POLICIES

- a) Permitted uses within the Community Areas shall be subject to meeting servicing and other requirements as set out in this Plan. In general, growth in Community Areas shall be limited to infill and minor rounding out of existing development including attainable housing and shall be restricted to uses that are sustainable on individual on-site sewage services and individual on-site water services. Where more than three lots are proposed, Council may require the completion of a Settlement Capability Study to confirm that existing and proposed private services can continue to operate in a sustainable manner without concern for cross-contamination.
- b) All new **development** shall be appropriate to the **infrastructure** which is planned or available, to avoid the need for unjustified and/or uneconomical expansion of this **infrastructure** and/or the provision of municipal water and sewer services.
- c) New development shall be compatible with the existing uses and scale of the uses and built form within the Community Area and the natural environment. For each community it is important to recognize the distinct character and to ensure that future development is compatible with and enhances the existing character to foster a sense of place in each Community..
- d) New developments that assist Community Areas to become more complete including providing a greater range of goods and services, **housing options** including

attainable housing and local employment shall be encouraged.

- e) The Township shall encourage new development and redevelopment of buildings in the Community Areas in a manner which is consistent with the existing architectural style and by using natural exterior finishes and facades, and avoiding materials such as concrete block.

J4.3.2 DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

- a) The implementing Zoning By-law shall establish lot area and lot frontage requirements.
- b) Institutional uses shall be of a scale to service the Community and surrounding **rural areas**.
- c) Institutional uses of an industrial nature such as works yards shall be buffered from **sensitive land uses** in accordance with this Plan.
- d) The Township encourages the multi-use of institutional uses wherever possible.
- e) Redevelopment of Community Institutional uses for affordable housing shall not require an amendment to this Plan.

L1.2 MUNICIPAL SEWAGE SERVICES AND MUNICIPAL WATER SERVICES

- a) **Municipal sewage services** and **municipal water services** are the preferred form of servicing for Urban Centres. **Intensification** and **redevelopment** within Urban Centres on existing **municipal sewage services**, stormwater services and **municipal water services**

should be promoted, wherever feasible.

- b) For each Urban Centre, the Urban Service Area inclusive of Full Service, Single Service and Future Service Areas is shown on Appendices B1 and B2.
- c) Special development projects that benefit the community and are in the public interest, such as social or **affordable** housing, community, education or public medical facilities (e.g., hospital) which are proposed in the Future Service Area and require the extension of **municipal sewage services** and/or **municipal water services** may be considered in accordance with the District of Muskoka Official Plan.
- d) It is the intent of this Plan that Single and Future Service Areas shall ultimately be provided with full municipal services over time. Until that occurs, **individual on-site sewage services, individual on-site water services** or **partial services** may be permitted to allow for infilling and minor rounding out of existing development in accordance with the policies of this Plan provided that site conditions are suitable for the long-term provision of such services with no **negative impacts**.
- e) The extension of **municipal sewage services** and/or **municipal water services** beyond the boundary of an Urban Centre may only be considered by Amendment to this Plan and the District Official Plan to:
 - i) address failed private **individual on-site sewage services, individual on-site water services** and/or public health concerns;
 - ii) Facilitate installation for works that have been determined to be in the public interest; or
 - iii) Support the development of needed large-scale **public service facilities**, such as hospitals, but only if other options are determined too not be

%feasible.

- f) Where municipal services are required to service a vacant land or common element condominium description and where such services will provide service to more than one lot, unit or parcel of tied land, they shall be owned, operated and maintained by the District of Muskoka.

L6 TOWNSHIP ROADS AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTA TION

This section applies to Township roads and the local active transportation network. Policies on District roads are included in the District of Muskoka Official Plan.

L6.1 OBJECTIVES

-It is the objective of this Plan to:

- a) Ensure that Township roads continue to be effective corridors for the movement of people and goods in and throughout the Township;
- b) Promote cycling and walking as energy efficient, affordable and accessible forms of travel;
- c) Ensure that appropriate right-of-way widths for all existing and proposed Township roads are provided in accordance with the Planning Act;
- d) Ensure that the number of entrances onto the Township road system are kept to a minimum and that only those entrances that comply with standards established by the Township are permitted;

- e) encourage the use of alternative development standards for roads, where appropriate;
- f) encourage the development of a walking and cycling trail system that is accessible to the public utilizing trails, paths, streets and other public open spaces;
- g) Support the protection of existing rail lines, promote and protect local rail heritage, and encourage the protection of abandoned railway rights-of-way for public uses such as trails and cycling paths; and,
- h) encourage the establishment of complete streets to plan, design, and maintain streets so they are safe for all users of all ages and abilities and accommodate all anticipated users, including pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

L7 HOUSING

L7.1 Attainable HOUSING

- a) attainable housing is defined as:
 - i) Adequate in condition, requiring no major repairs;
 - ii) Appropriate in size for the makeup of the household;
 - iii) affordable as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement, by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and/or through District of Muskoka affordable housing programs; and
 - iv) Accessible both physically for the individuals living in the house and located in areas where common services, amenities, transportation, and employment opportunities are available.
- b) As part of ensuring attainable housing is available, the Township supports the provision of housing which is affordable to **low and moderate-income households**. In this regard, the overall target is

25% of new residential dwelling units to be attainable as defined in this Plan. This target is intended to apply on aggregate across the Township, but not necessarily to each individual site-specific **development** proposal. Though attainable housing is encouraged in all land use designations, Urban Centres and Community Areas provide the most appropriate locations to meet the criteria of attainability listed above.

- c) Creative and innovative approaches to the provision of attainable housing may also be considered, including alternative development standards and forms of housing, provided that other objectives of this Plan can be achieved.
- d) The Township, when implementing this Plan through an update of the Zoning By-law, shall identify the standards that may be impediments to the development of attainable housing and make a determination on whether they should be changed to support more attainable housing.
- e) Lands within the Urban Centres shall be pre-zoned to permit **intensification** and infill where appropriate and priority **intensification** areas shall be identified.
- f) Surplus Township-owned land and/or buildings should be considered for the provision of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including attainable housing.

N6 COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS

A Community Improvement Plan has already been adopted for Port Carling and Bala. The Township may identify a future Community Improvement Plan Area in consideration of the following objectives:

- a) To encourage the efficient provision and maintenance of physical **infrastructure** including stormwater management, **public service facilities** to serve present and future needs on a local scale;
- b) To promote opportunities for economic development and community investment- readiness and job creation;
- c) To promote diversification of the economic base and employment opportunities in **rural areas** through goods and services, including agricultural, arts and cultural products and the sustainable management or use of resources;
- d) To provide opportunities for sustainable and diversified tourism, including leveraging historical, cultural, and natural assets;
- e) To assist in the provision of an appropriate range and mix of housing types and densities, including attainable housing, required to meet projected requirements of current and future residents of the Township, including the provision of attainable housing;
- f) To retain and provide for the expansion of existing businesses;
- g) To ensure the maintenance and renewal of older housing stock;
- h) To foster redevelopment, reuse and/or maintenance of existing brownfield sites
- i) and/or current industrial sites;
- j) To maintain and, where possible, enhance the vitality and viability of the Urban Centres and Community Areas;
- k) To encourage a sense of place and community, by promoting well-designed built form and cultural planning, and by conserving features that help define

character, including **built heritage resources** and **cultural heritage landscapes**;

- l) To provide opportunities to support local food production, and promoting the sustainability of agri-food and agri-product businesses;
- m) To promote energy efficiency and sound environmental design; and
- n) To provide for **infrastructure** or building improvements to address or mitigate the impacts of climate change.

N15.5 DEFINITIONS

A number of terms in this Plan are defined if they are shown in **bold** and these definitions are below.

Housing options: means a range of housing types such as, but not limited to single- detached, semi-detached, rowhouses, townhouses, stacked townhouses, multiplexes, additional residential units, tiny homes, multi- residential buildings. The term can also refer to a variety of housing arrangements and forms such as, but not limited to life lease housing, co- ownership housing, co-operative housing, community land trusts, land lease community homes, **affordable** housing, housing for people with **special needs**, and housing related to employment, institutional or educational uses.

DOING BUSINESS IN MUSKOKA LAKES (Conditions for Business and Sector Specific Questions)

How should Township plan to help small business through the looming recession, and how are you planning to stay accountable on those promises?

Obviously there are no easy answers to these two important questions. I suspect that there are multiple things that could be actioned by the new council to help small businesses thrive. If I am re-elected, I will meet with a selected group of peers to exploration ideas.

What is your position on development restrictions versus economic vitality?

I am a huge fan of responsible economic development in the Township. My caveats to any development is 1) that they will not negatively impact the quality of Muskoka's Water, and 2) that any development must be done responsibly, mindful of their impact on the well-being of other people and organizations in Muskoka.

When can we start to lobby ride share services like Uber to operate here? The question noted these are major drivers of local travel and hospitality.

I am not against legitimate cost effective and feasible ride share services from operating in the Township. Such services could help alleviate some of the transportation issues facing workers and might aid in the expansion of affordable housing in the Township.

Muskoka Lakes is revising its Official Plan. Presently the lower floor of a boathouse can only be used for boats and related items. Do you support, or not support, residential use (bedrooms, recreation, etc) in this space? Please be specific about the use you support, and why?

As implied in the name, a Boat House is a place to store boats. For environmental and tranquility reasons, I do not support the use of the lower level of a boat house for much more than storage of boats and related items.

If the lakes continue to have blue/green algae blooms, our livelihood will be affected. Do you have a plan for the monitoring of old septic beds?

I am committed to preserving the quality of the water in Muskoka because I understand the well-being of everyone living and working here is clearly dependent on it. To me, Water Quality is not just an environmental issue but a fundamental factor in Muskoka's economic success or failure. If water quality deteriorates so does tourism, business development, property values, local job opportunities and personal incomes.

It is likely that private septic's are only a small contributing factor of blue/green algae blooms. The current Council and Staff have defined and are implementing in 2023 the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program that will monitor, 10 years or older, septic systems that are abutting a navigable waterbody where a water quality indicator has not been confirmed in accordance with the policies of the Muskoka Official Plan.

How will you encourage new business when there are staff shortages and most of the businesses in town are presently real estate offices?

Staff shortage is a significant concern across Ontario. The question to answer and solve is why workers are no longer wanting or needing to work. I am a strong proponent of encouraging new business start-ups. The reason there are so many real estate offices is because of need, supply and demand. I recognize that staff shortage is a major issue that needs to be addressed at all levels of governments.

In this question, the person asking suggests that the lack of affordable housing is tied to short-term rentals. They ask: What action(s) would you support the Township take to address this situation....and....Do you support a minimum 30 day stay for short term rentals?

I don't think that the lack of affordable housing is tied short term rentals. The lack of affordable housing is a major and complex issue facing all areas in Ontario. I am fully supportive of the Township taking aggressive action together with the District, the Province, the Federal government, businesses and organizations such as the Chamber to solve this problem in the short and long term.

*A survey of Muskoka Lakes residents in 2018 showed 70 percent of them supported allowing legal cannabis sales. At the time, Council decided to take a wait and see position. Today we're the only township in the entire riding that still doesn't allow this...and in the recent term, all but one Councillor voted against cannabis retail. **For candidates who are campaigning to return:** Why are you stopping a legal business from setting up here.... For all candidates; Today, would you vote to allow or disallow legal cannabis stores in Muskoka Lakes? If you would vote against, what is your reasoning for doing so?*

In 2019, I was the only Councilor that voted to support cannabis retail and one of two that supported this motion in June 2021. I would do so again.

COVID made it hard for the public to engage with the Township planning department, which slowed my business from getting open. What can Council do to improve or speed up such service for businesses?

With COVID largely behind us I hope, Council could look into ways to speed up the service from the planning department. I will meet with the Planning Department to assess if planning processes could be changed to expedite completion of applications.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COLLABORATION

What do you think should be in a 5-year plan to accelerate economic growth throughout the region?

As I note in my answer to question d) below, I would use the existing Township 2020 Economic Development Strategy as a base and explore ways to improve the acceleration of economic growth throughout the region. I would likely seek input from the Chamber, the District and other municipalities as appropriate.

The Township collaborates with many organizations for the betterment of the community. The Chamber is one of them. If elected, what's your vision for collaboration with the Chamber during your term?

If re-elected, I will look into the existing program of collaboration between the Township and The Chamber to see if there are ways to make the collaboration more effective. See also my answer to question e) below.

There are 6 municipalities but none to call that represents Muskoka overall. If a business wants to start up somewhere in Muskoka.... Who do they call? What would you do to solve this problem?

I suggest that if a business wants to start up somewhere in Muskoka, they should begin by calling their local Chamber of Commerce for guidance and assistance.

What has the present Economic Development policy of Muskoka Lakes done for our business community, and what would you change in a Township Economic Development program going forward?

In addressing these two questions, I studied the Townships 2020 Economic Development Strategy. Although there may be areas for improvement in the strategy document, I think that this one has been pretty well thought out. What I commit to do if I am re-elected is the following: a) Ask Township staff to provide Council with an update on the implementation of all the 12 Actions within the 3 Priority Area, and b) where appropriate make changes to the Strategy and/or the Actions.

As a business member of the chamber, I'm frustrated by a lack of communication between Council and the chamber. The councillor appointed to the Chamber Board recuses whenever chamber issues are brought to council. Can you suggest a better way to improve council and business relations going forward?

The choice to recuse or not to recuse is a decision made based on a concern of potential conflict of interest or lack of impartiality. To me, effective two-way communication between the Township Council and the Chamber Board should be a priority for both bodies. I have always stressed the importance of honest and open communication in my business and non-business careers. I will take steps to attempt to improve communication between Council and Chamber Board.

While The township has gone from one bylaw officer to two-and-a-half recently, there is still no one on duty from noon Friday and over the weekend when most noise, fireworks, and short term rental issues occur. What will you do to ensure that complaints are effectively followed up and violators caught?

I agree that there are not enough resources and processes to ensure that the Township By-laws are adhered to. There are number of things that could and should be done including, but not limited to, getting the Zoning By-laws right in the first place; making sure that they are clearly written and the requirements easy to understand; establishing a confidential "hot Line" for reporting violations; developing a comprehensive and ongoing communications program to strengthen the level of awareness of the by-laws.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SEASONALITY

How would you improve the staff situation for summer businesses that rely on seasonal staff?

Obviously this is an important topic. There probably is no one action that would improve the staffing situation for summer businesses. I would use the existing Township 2020 Economic Development Strategy as a base to address this improve topic.

One questioner commented... The election campaign has been made ugly by the Friends of Muskoka/MLA. If elected, how will you address what some see as an 'abuse of power' by associations and how can you ensure that all Muskoka Lakes residents are represented in future votes?

I am steadfast in my ongoing commitment to ensuring that the concerns and ideas of all the voters in the Township are fully understood. The voice of all, not just the few, must be heard. I am not sure that I can ensure that all Muskoka Lakes residents are represented in future votes. BUT I will ensure that I, Gord Roberts, will do whatever I can possibly do to make it as easy as possible for voters to vote.

What would you do to increase tourism in the shoulder and winter months in Muskoka Lakes?

I agree that we should be doing as much as possible to increase tourism in the shoulder and winter months in Muskoka. All significant interest groups need to come together to rethink the current strategy and evolve creative and practical ideas towards increasing the volume of tourists coming to Muskoka in the fall, winter, and spring.

Would you encourage employers to pay a living wage for Muskoka and the area?

Yes

The draft Official Plan doesn't say much about off water planning. Shouldn't our large off water area be part of an overall plan for the Township? Your thoughts please?

Yes. I think that all areas of the township should be part of an overall plan.

{Gord Roberts Responses and All Responses End}