

1. How will you help support the business community and reduce red tape in your municipality?

When we took office as a council in 2017, we quickly declared that we were open for business. In the past four years we have worked closely with the Chamber to grow business in our Town and to reduce red tape. We offer a tax credit to all members and I see that continuing. However, if after 4 years we still have red tape interfering with business growth and we have not explored all the ways in which the Town can support the Chamber, then one of the first items on the agenda of the new Council should be a meeting with the Chamber executive to start identifying their needs early and acting upon them.

2. As we continue to see the impacts of the pandemic, what can the municipality do to help businesses recover and grow.

This pandemic was something that few of us were prepared for – Town and Chamber members alike. As this prolonged period continues, we need to prepare ourselves for what we are being told will become a new normal.

Buying on line has become a serious detriment to economic growth, not only in our Town but in the entire region. The Town needs to partner with the Chamber to vigorously promote buying local to support the retail sector in our community.

In the past four years we have maintained a tax freeze on residential and commercial properties. This needs to be front and center on the new Council's mind as they prepare the 2022 budget.

Regularly we are invited to celebrate the grand opening of a new business in our Town. We are pleased to announce that to date, this year, we have seen positive commercial growth. Unfortunately, Council is regularly asked to make a tax adjustment for businesses no longer operating in our Town. We need to do a better job of reaching out to businesses in financial difficulty to determine if we can help in any way. For instance, a deferral of taxes may make just enough difference to get a business through a tough period and allow them to continue to operate.

3. What are you, as an elected official going to do to help attract investors and new businesses to the area?

The Town of Conception Bay South currently has a robust tax incentive policy to attract new business. Also, for the past several years we have been promoting an aggressive resident attraction strategy. The assumption here is that residential growth will encourage commercial growth. We need to continue with these strategies and expand them to include potential international clients.

To go hand in hand with the resident attraction strategy, we need to develop a more directed commercial attraction strategy.

Unlike most of our surrounding neighbors, we have a commercial port facility in Long Pond. In recent months we have seen the importance of that facility highlighted. We need to continue to promote our port both from a commercial and recreational perspective.

The business-driven improvement area in the east end of town has proven to be a tremendous success. We see improved aesthetics around businesses. We have a more walkable business district and an area specifically identified as a business core. This concept should be replicated in the west end of town. As a councillor I would be prepared to work with businesses in the west end to do just that.

4. If elected, what specific infrastructure changes, policies or strategies would you propose implementing to mitigate the impacts of climate change in the next four years.

The Town's impact on global warming manifests itself mostly in the heating systems of our buildings and our vehicle fleet. Our buildings range in age from decades old through to the new construction underway for our library. All our old buildings must be retrofitted to bring them as close to current standards as possible. Our three newer buildings – Town Hall, Stadium, Fire Hall were built to the best environmental standards of a decade ago. They now need to be reviewed with the intent to bring them up to date. Our new library is being built with 21st century efficiency in mind.

Our vehicle fleet is fueled by gasoline or diesel. We must start to incorporate vehicles into our fleet that use alternate energy sources.

In recent years we installed charging stations for electric vehicles at two Town facilities. We need to expand this to more of our buildings.

When we first introduced curbside recycling, we did a good job of promoting it. Over time, however, the number of families recycling has eroded. Today we have some 20-30 percent of our residents recycling regularly. We need to do a reintroduction of our program in order to increase that percentage of uptake.

Town staff are inherently familiar with environmental issues as they apply to specific departments. However, we need a staff person with the appropriate training and experience whose role is to view all aspects of Town activities through an environmental lens.

5. What value do you see in supporting an active Chamber of Commerce for the area?

Private enterprise by its very nature and definition has to be competitive to exist. It is what creates better service. It is what creates better products. However, in order for a successful business environment to exist in a given area these competing enterprises must practice a degree of cooperation. One of the roles of a chamber of commerce is to facilitate that cooperation.

Business communities for decades have recognized the importance of strong Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce. A strong Chamber of Commerce in Conception Bay South is invaluable to economic growth. It provides mentorship and synergy that businesses who try to go it alone miss out on. The Town must continue to work with the Chamber in this mutually beneficial relationship.