

thescope's

2013 ST. JOHN'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Andrew Harvey, Ward 2 candidate

Please describe yourself in a few words.

I have worked in affordable housing for 6 years now and have worked in the field of mental health and addictions for 10 years now in various capacities. I have a degree in Social Work and a degree in History. I like the outdoors, picking and growing things I can eat, playing hockey, municipal politics, folk art, and most of all talking to people.

What is your present occupation?

I coordinate a Home Share program that matches 50+ Homeowners and post-secondary students. I also do relief work with Choices for Youth in the Lilly Building (supportive housing). I have also been known to write, art, and liveblog for money.

Why are you running in this election?

Since running for Ward 2 in the 2009 election I have been to over 100 council meetings. At these meetings I have seen a great deal I think needs to change with how our city is run and ultimately the type of city we are growing into. I am running for council because I think I can do a better job of representing the people of Ward 2. If elected I would take a far more active role in soliciting the opinion of my constituents. I want to put the represent back in representative democracy.

What should be the city's top three priorities?

1. Fixing the development process - People need to be involved in the process earlier and in more meaningful ways. We also need to have a set of rules that we can all agree on that will help us grow into a city we all want to see. When exceptions are made as

frequently as they have been in the last 4 years it undermines the rules in place and is unfair to developers who choose to follow them.

2. Community Development – Following #1, we need to have organized communities to help us determine what their needs and priorities are. This can help us work more proactively to ensure appropriate zoning and development in our city.

3. Transportation Equity – People need to be able to get around the city, whether they walk, bike, wheel, drive or bus. This means we need to do a better job of keeping the roads and sidewalks clear, make public transportation accessible, and continue to grow into a city that is accessible for

What has been the present council's biggest blunder?

Failing to review the Municipal Plan after 5 years as the plan stated was to happen. The municipal plan is a guiding document that needs to be reviewed to ensure that it reflects the ever-changing conditions in St. John's. As it stands the city failed to review the current municipal plan within the 10 years it is supposed to be in effect for. If the plan had been reviewed earlier we could have more proactive zoning and regulations that would have brought more vision to the exceptional growth we have seen in

What has been the present council's biggest achievement?

Taking a leadership role in affordable housing. The city has recognized that it needs to be at the table to help coordinate all levels of government, the private sector and community groups to develop more affordable housing. The establishment of a mayor's advisory committee on affordable housing and the hiring of an affordable housing coordinator have been steps in the right direction.

What other candidates running in this election do you think you would work best with?

I pride myself on being able to get along with anyone, so I think that I would be able to work effectively with any combination of people on council. The only person I have experience working with is Dave Lane, through Happy City. I would be happy to have the opportunity to continue to work with Dave on council. I also feel that we desperately need the voice of more women on council.

Please rate the importance of each subject on a scale of 0 to 10, and then add your comments.

Heritage building regulations

8 – The current regulations have proved inadequate to maintain the historic character and scale of some of out most important neighborhoods (QV and the Battery in particular). We need to develop a set of guidelines that allows developments which we all want to see

and restricts developments which are out of the scale or character for the heritage area they are in.

City support for the arts

8 – The city continues to be supportive to artists in St. John's, but more can always be done. I think that there are ways we can be creative with our public works budgets to produce more public art and display the sizeable collection the city possesses for the public. I also think that in areas in which we regularly have graffiti on city walls we should pay once to have a mural out there rather then pay 10 times to have the wall cleaned.

Downtown parking

8 – The parking problem downtown is often characterized as a lack of parking. We also have a problem with too many cars downtown. In 2 recent examples, the city has paid private developers nearly $20k per public parking space they put into their existing development. I feel that by investing some of our parking reserve fund ($ set aside from parking tickets, meters, etc.) in traffic diversion programs we could prevent more then one car from coming downtown in the first place for $20k. This could be programs to encourage cycling, carpooling, and improving public transportation.

Public Transportation

9 - The city needs to begin to implement the recommendation of the recent review of Metrobus. This includes realigning routes to serve the people we know are using the bus and developing park-and-ride services.

Urban Density

7- The denser we are able to make our city the cheaper it is to service, the easier it is to implement public transportation, and people have a smaller carbon footprint. We need to find ways to encourage density in areas that it makes sense to do so. I think that we need to continue to identify locations where bonus height makes sense and zone these areas appropriately.

Full-time council positions

1 - It seems that the current system of part-time councillors works well. Currently councillors get $36,600/year, which is more then many people make working full-time. Until the point where the expectations of the position would require a full-time commitment, part-time positions are appropriate.

6 – **Amalgamation** absolutely makes sense from St. John's perspective but will be a tough sell to the surrounding area. Currently we co-operate on many levels such as water and waster management. The regionalization of other services such as public

transportation may be the back door to some of the benefits of amalgamation without the political battle.

Height restriction for buildings

8 – As stated under density, we need to identify areas in which bonus height can be afforded developers without unduly interfering with views, etc. of the surrounding area. I think that if we have rules and zoning in place that allows it in certain areas then we should be able to strictly apply the rules for areas which are not designated for bonus height.

Sidewalk snow clearing

9 – Transportation Equity is one of the main planks of my campaign platform. In the winter we must provide a safe way for people to move about the city not just if they own a car. We should implement a by-law similar to Halifax requiring individuals to clear snow from in front of their houses, and the city should be responsible for all other areas to ensure sidewalks are clear. Accommodations would need to be made to assist individuals living on streets where there is nowhere to put the snow.

Affordable housing

10 – I have rated this issue the most important one on this list because I feel it is the most important issue to address right now. We are in the middle of an economic boom that is shaping the type of city we will be in 100 years. Affordable housing speaks to good planning, good development regulations and good zoning. If we are doing these things we are building a city that we can all live and flourish in. The city should require 1 in 10 units in new developments be affordable. Building affordable housing can also be profitable for the developer involved. The city is also able to work with developers as partners in the process, reducing or eliminating permit fees, granting bonus density for a development to allow affordable units, and many other exciting programs designed to promote affordable housing that are working across Canada.