

thescope's

2013 ST. JOHN'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Bernard Davis, Ward 4 candidate

Please describe yourself in a few words.

My wife Sebrina (Cooper) and I are lifelong residents of St. John's. I received my early education at St. Patrick's Hall School and Brother Rice High School, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Commerce (Co-Op) degree from Memorial University in 2002. I have been a committed volunteer for the majority of my life and enjoy giving back to the programs that make this city such a great place to live.

What is your present occupation?

I have been employed by the C.L.B. for the past 9 years as the organizations Executive Director.

Why are you running in this election?

I believe that my education and background in business and volunteer experience would be an asset. I am willing to work hard on behalf of the residents of Ward 4 and believe that open and honest communication is of paramount importance.

What should be the city's top three priorities?

City Infrastructure

Council has to focus on improving basic services, and getting the job done quickly and efficiently. We need long-term results, not band-aid solutions.

Prudent Financial Management

Providing citizens with the highest level of services at the lowest possible cost has to be a top priority.

Traffic

The major problem that I have been hearing each and every time from residents is the fact that traffic is a daily impact on their lives. My first order of business is to lobby the provincial government and our own City Council to expand the school zones and ensure that there is better enforcement to protect our school children.

What has been the present council's biggest blunder?

The current council has made many good decisions over the past four years but I would have to say they could improve on the transparency and communication with the residents. There seems to be a disconnect between the citizens and the councillors on some of the issues and because of this the residents feel left out of the decision making process.

What has been the present council's biggest achievement?

I really like the long term budgeting approach that this council has taken. When it comes to the financial matters of this municipality planning need to be of a long-term nature and this approach is something I support.

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

I do not know all the candidates running in the election on a personal level but I am certain that the residents of St. John`s will do their research and elect a City council that has the best interest of our City in mind. If elected, I would be honoured to serve with any of these individuals.

Opinions & Issues

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

Heritage building regulations (Rate 10)

It is important to ensure that we maintain the heritage of our City. Identifying, preserving and marketing these buildings would be a priority of mine. There are so many locations within our fine city and we should take every opportunity to maintain these pieces of our culture.

City support for the arts (Rate 10)

Increase funding for festivals and ensure that additional revenues are developed through partnerships from all levels of governments as well as the corporate community. It is important to ensure that we maintain the high quality of our performing arts as it is a tourist attraction and an important part of our heritage.

Downtown parking (Rate 10)

Downtown faces parking challenges that must be overcome. A permanent park and ride (Metrobus) service would free up more space and allow more people to experience this area of our city.

Public transit (Rate 10)

We must ensure that the system continues to improve in order to take public transit to the next level. More investment is needed and I believe that we must lobby the Provincial Government to contribute more. With increased funding our transit system can grow to better fit the needs and requirements of our residents.

Urban density (Rate 10)

We must ensure that we reduce urban sprawl as it is much more costly for the Municipality to provide services to a greater dispersed area.

Full-time council positions (Rate 5)

I do not see this as a big issue. It is important to make sure that individuals are encouraged to run for these positions without having to leave a current position. It would be a costly venture for the municipality to pay councillors more money and would most likely discourage people from seeking office.

Amalgamation (Rate 10)

Regionalization is an important issue to our community. St. John's is currently providing the majority of the services for the entire region. I believe other regions need to pay a fair share to ensure St. John's residents are not burdened with paying a higher percentage for these services.

Height restriction for buildings (Rate 10)

The city has bylaws in place that determine the maximum height of buildings. However I feel that these bylaws are currently serving as guidelines. If the bylaw does not accurately reflect the current economic climate for our city then they should be changed. For example, in some parts of our city the building height may not have the same impact as it would in another area. It is important that the city council develops a plan.

Sidewalk snow clearing (Rate 10)

Ideally all sidewalks should be cleared but realistically the costs to provide this service is prohibitive. I feel it is important that school zones are fully cleared to ensure the safety of our youth. In addition, at least one side of main roads should be cleared to ensure all residents can move about our city safely, especially our seniors. We pride ourselves on being an active and healthy city and in order to achieve this we must make every effort to open up as many sidewalks as we can.

Affordable housing (Rate 10)

I would lobby the province and the federal government to work together to bring forward options to help address the growing shortage of affordable housing available in St. John's. With a growing population and increased economic growth, low income individuals and families are finding it more difficult to afford housing. The price of buying a new house or renting an apartment continues to rise which is resulting in people having to choose between housing costs and other needs such as food. We require partnerships between all levels of government and developers to make sure affordable housing options are available for residents.