

thescope's
2013 ST. JOHN'S MUNICIPAL ELECTION CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Sheilagh O'Leary, Mayoral Candidate

Please describe yourself in a few words.

I am an open, expressive and passionate person who believes in equality, and a high standard of health and living.

What is your present occupation?

I have been an elected at large city councillor for the past four years and an established art photographer who has run a business for over 25 years.

Why are you running in this election?

I am running for mayor of St. John's because I know I can help create positive, progressive change through strong leadership, networking and team building.

What should be the city's top three priorities?

Smart, balanced planning which encourages responsible city growth in a respectful manner with the residents and its natural environment; development of a more functional and regionally integrated transit system; and the proliferation of safe, healthy, and walkable neighbourhoods, fostering affordable living and amenities.

What has been the present council's biggest blunder?

Lack of transparency, leadership and a cohesive team.

What has been the present council's biggest achievement?

Recycling program/waste diversion.

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

I would like to work with councillors who are open-minded, engaged and have practical ideas on how to advance the city for its residents and businesses. In a quarter-century of volunteer work, I have demonstrated my ability to work with all kinds of people. As long as council members are enthusiastic and open to looking at innovative ideas, I will enjoy working with them.

Opinions & Issues

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

Heritage building regulations 9

As North America's oldest city, our built and cultural heritage is an asset to our lives, defines who we are as a people, increases economic benefits and needs to be supported.

City support for the arts 9

As an artist and a cultural producer for over 25 years, I know a dynamic cultural community fosters quality of life and is a significant, economic driver.

Downtown parking 10

It is absolutely essential to devise a plan that reduces downtown traffic, a re-design of the main downtown streets, park & ride programs and enhanced transit are some immediate tasks at hand.

Public transit 10

With growing urban sprawl and commuters moving from neighbouring municipalities, regional cooperation and action is essential to education, implementation and support of a system that serves the public.

Urban density 9

Urban density reduces infrastructure costs and when properly planned, can provide quality living. It is key that any planning supports our downtown heritage zone and existing mixed-use neighbourhoods.

Full-time council positions 6

St. John's has grown exponentially and I believe it is time to look at full time positions, while modifying wards so it can remain cost-effective.

Amalgamation 5

This is off the table for now. The City looked at the feasibility of amalgamation, and the immediate need and desire is for more regional cooperation. The province must play a part in this process.

Height restriction for buildings 8

Over the past four years. I have heard loud and clear from neighbourhood associations, businesses and citizens the importance of heritage preservation. This feeds into the first question on heritage building regulations. The downtown core and areas like the Outer Battery need protection and enhancement. Quidi Vidi Village also needs a comprehensive plan.

Sidewalk snow clearing 8

It's time to take a look at foot traffic in our city and guarantee that our routes correlate to use. We need to improve service to main routes, school zones and zones surrounding seniors' complexes for safer commuting.

Affordable housing 10

It is absolutely essential that in this exploding economy, we make affordable housing a priority. Developing good relationships with builders who foster affordable housing projects is a great start. Less bureaucracy and red tape at the city will lead to better cooperation.