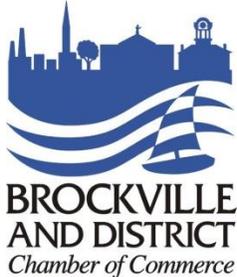




**Responses from Joy Sterritt
2018 Candidate for Brockville Municipal Council**



To the Brockville and District Chamber of Commerce

Re: All Candidates Questionnaire

I would like to thank the Chamber of Commerce for assisting with the 2018 Municipal Election and for their efforts in ensuring that candidate information has been made available to the public on its Website and for providing a means by which the public will be able to meet with candidates in an open forum.

1. If someone came to you with a proposal to build a new piece of public infrastructure in our city, how would you evaluate whether the project was worth implementing?

Answer: My answer to this question generally treats public infrastructure (sewer, water, buildings, roads, and power supplies) the same way as I would evaluate any development proposal.

If someone came forward with a proposal for a new piece of public infrastructure such an apartment building or commercial business and this type of infrastructure was supported by the City of Brockville's Official Plan and related Zoning By-laws (including noise, set-back, height and signage By-laws, etc.), which present pre-established guidelines and policy that the city has adopted, I would most likely be fully supportive of the project. If however a proposal came forward that was not supported by the city's Official Plan and By-laws, and other Guideline documents, my position would be that it would need much further consideration by Council and the public through open debate at Council and open forum meetings to get public input in determining whether allowances outside of those that have pre-established should be considered and/or apply. Typically, Official Plans and Zoning By-laws are vetted through a considerable public review process and adherence to the results of that review process need to be adhered to and respected with the upmost regard.

In some cases, infrastructure proposals that are brought forward, that do not immediately align with the city's pre-established allowances should be considered. This situation is something that most municipalities in Ontario and elsewhere deal with on a regular basis. Sometimes proposals come forward that request allowances of Council on height restrictions, water consumptions or setbacks, etc., all outside of those that a municipality had previously decided upon. For example, the Tall Ships proposal presented a dilemma for Brockville City Council, in that there were requests for concessions submitted to allow for height increases to the building that were considerably controversial. At the time of the proposal Brockville had a height restriction of waterfront buildings of eight storeys. Due to anticipated new tax increases expected from the Tall Ships and the added numbers of new residents that were expected to be attracted to this development, etc., Council decided to allow a number of concessions for the Tall Ships development that were considered to be 'trade-offs' including allowing the building to have additional storeys outside of the existing eight storey limit.

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Sometimes infrastructure proposals are presented that require other types of concessions outside of normal planning guidelines for any given municipality. An infrastructure development may request special consideration for water consumption/intake, waste water treatment or property setbacks as examples, that can be accommodated in terms of 'trade-offs', but most often a municipality is going to be wary of going in this direction without a full overview that includes due public input. Full overview may include having independent assessments or reports (i.e. a hydrogeological or environment assessment, etc.) completed to better determine benefits versus impacts. In some instances, municipalities can accept that some trade-offs will bring more employment to an area, will revitalize a downtown or increase the tax base, etc. if allowed and they can live with that. The important thing is that a process of full public disclosure must be followed to gain input from those that may be directly affected and also to allow input from others that may not be directly affected but have a vested interest in the matter because of the overall social, public health, environmental impacts or other impacts of concern on the municipality as a whole. In this situation, full public disclosure must be based on a true principle of "open" disclosure, honest evaluations of pros versus cons of any proposal and a full justification why a decision was made one way or the other.

It is recognized that there are situations that can occur where the objections of some residents to a development are balanced with the advantages that the development may bring to residents of municipality as a whole for the greater public good (i.e. a proposal to provide increased residential density to provide for the shortfall of a particular stock). These types of situations usually generate much criticism, tension and animosity. Due process according the Municipal Act and the Planning Act, and other Legislation (i.e. the Environmental Protection Act) and corresponding Regulations, and provincial policy and guidelines must always be followed where there is the prospect of concessions being considered in terms of any development.

If at the end of the day an infrastructure proposal meets the guiding principles of the Official Plan and municipal Zoning By-laws with or without necessary amendments to either, and has the support of the residents and council, it is likely an added advantage to the municipality overall and worth implementing.

As a former planner with the Grand River Conservation Authority, the City of Cambridge and in working as a planner in private consulting, with an Masters Degree in Rural Planning and Development, I am fully aware of the planning process in Ontario and how it is governed. I am also fully aware of the provincial guidance around planning that is included in the Municipal Act, the Planning Act and Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). In my latest employment with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry working as a Supervisor in the Kemptville District Office, I oversaw ministry planners who were responsible for municipal planning-related decisions throughout a large area of south-eastern Ontario. I would look to bring my talent and expertise forward in terms of addressing decisions on any new infrastructure that was being proposed in the City of Brockville.

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2. Brockville needs to get on track financially while at the same time needs to move strategically to improve its offer to its citizens and tourists. What experience do you bring to the table that demonstrates your leadership in fiscal responsibility as well as strategic success?

Answer: I have significant educational background at the University level in statistical analysis. During University I assisted in the day-to-day office management of two separate medical offices on a part-time basis. I also dealt with OHIP submissions and paybacks, and performed banking duties as required.

I have been involved in provincial funding programs involving managing municipal grant programs offered to municipalities for waste management initiatives including upgrades to waste management sites including landfills and transfer stations (provincial Waste Management Improvement Program (WMIP) and Financial Assistance Program (FAP)).

I have extensive major project experience involving the managing of a budget in excess of \$1M. In this case I managed all of the waste management programs for the Region of Waterloo including recycling, composting, Household Hazardous Waste Day programs and the associated contract management for seven municipalities located in the Region.

I have worked on many Requests for Proposals (RFPs) throughout my career, including a multi-million dollar RFP for the clean-up of abandoned provincial tire sites.

I have worked on and presented budgets to Councils and to senior government officials for review and approval. I am familiar with the municipal zero-based budgeting process.

In my capacity as a manager for many of my career positions I have been responsible for the management of both unionized and salaried staff, and the associated program delivery and budgetary responsibilities that went along with those positions.

I have managed government infrastructure, which included 12 government-owned dams, in my position with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry with the Kemptville District office.

I am statistically and financially astute and am very capable of understanding and dealing with complex financing and budgeting issues and processes. Any financial initiatives that I have been involved in have been well-managed, shown responsible fiscal restraint, and have followed typical accounting and reporting principles.

3. How do we attract and retain Young Professionals in Brockville?

Answer: To attract and retain young professionals, Brockville needs make sure that we have employment opportunities that will keep young professionals in the city, but also supports the lifestyle that they are seeking for themselves and their families. It is likely that most of our young professionals have gone to school elsewhere, outside of Brockville and have relocated to do so for a number of years. This relocation has most likely taken them to major cities – Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto and Waterloo, etc. or to other counties – the U.S and Europe, where there are

enhanced social, cultural and economic opportunities not always currently found in a smaller city like Brockville. These enhanced opportunities most often include larger and more significant libraries, museums, art galleries, shopping and night-life opportunities that are limited or absent in Brockville.

Although most of our mature residents would find the city's lifestyle quite adequate for their needs, younger professional adults would find the city to a greater degree lacking in what they need to bring them back once they have lived away. Former residents do tend to return to Brockville once their children have grown and they retire but have not lived here during their working life. As with many small towns, younger residents can hardly wait to get away.

Many young professionals are generating higher incomes and above the average for that of Brockville. If they are married and both have professional jobs, their combined income is even greater. They are likely wanting to have a lifestyle that reflects their hard-earned income and therefore are looking for somewhere other than Brockville to settle down. Many professionals may also choose to be closer to where other friends from college and university are settling, and that is likely to be closer to larger urban centres. If partners are both professional, they may be looking to locate where they both can obtain jobs and earn higher than average incomes. Again, the likelihood for that opportunity to occur is going to be in a more growing urban area.

Our shopping establishments lack the trendy merchandise, including clothes, shoes, electronics, furniture, make-up, etc. that is found in larger centres. Restaurants and coffee shops that exist satisfy more of an older age population and if they do exist they are limited in number and do not offer a great choice for the younger generation. The younger generation likes to have a variety of stores to choose from to purchase various consumer goods. Missing also is close proximity to popular and young professional shopping stores like IKEA, Chapters, Cosco and Hudson's Bay, etc. which means a great deal when a professional is making a decision to locate and/or raise a family.

Our housing stock is not necessarily suitable for young professionals who are often looking for up-scale, modern townhouses or multi-unit buildings or single-family dwellings located in trendy neighbourhoods with easy access to the upscale amenities that they are looking for. Many of our city apartments like the Executive or the Four Winds, or townhouse developments like Country Club Estates are occupied by retirees and seniors that would make a younger professional and their family feel isolated and not in their element.

Many existing residents and those moving into Brockville claim that the city is growing into a 'retirement destination' and that messaging is permeating far and wide. Brockville needs to make sure that we are doing everything to turn that messaging around. To retain its vibrancy, Brockville needs to make sure that the message getting out is one that claims it is a forward thinking, progressive city that welcomes all age groups

Brockville certainly does have a tremendous amount going for it in terms of its location along the banks of the St. Lawrence, in its environmental amenities, in its events and sports opportunities, however, there are missing pieces that are not keeping young up-and-coming professionals here or bringing them back. There is evidence that Brockville has been experiencing an outward migration of the professionals that it did have, as former manufacturing businesses and companies like Proctor and Gamble close their facilities in the city.

It will take some positive action on the part of Council and the various associations, and economic initiatives like the St. Lawrence Economic Development Commission and to bring new and attractive employment opportunities to the area that will keep up-and-coming young professionals in Brockville as well as attract new ones that will make Brockville their home. Hopefully in the days ahead Brockville will attract more of the housing, shopping and cultural amenities that this age/income group demands. There looks to be some positive movement in the creation of new stores in Brockville's north end. There is talk of a new distillery going in downtown that will certainly attract a younger age group.

At an update meeting of the St. Lawrence Economic Development Commission on September 25th, there was much positive news about the potential for new employment opportunities moving into this part of eastern Ontario, which could attract and keep young professionals in the area.

It will take a complex combination of new employment opportunities, diverse amenities, shopping opportunities and cultural attractions, etc. to attract and retain young professionals going forward. It is not an unsurmountable task. I would look forward to being part of the energy behind all efforts to help carry out this task.

4. What are your 3 main priorities for Economic development and what key steps will you take to bring your vision to a reality.

Answer:

- 1) Continue to fully understand what our honest possibilities and limitations are with regard to enhanced economic development opportunities for our city and eastern Ontario overall. Work with our own Director of Economic Development to understand what the current economic climate is telling us and get up to speed on other initiatives and other departments, organizations, committees, including the provincial and federal government and what they are doing to maintain and stimulate economic growth in eastern Ontario. Continue to support the work of the new St. Lawrence Corridor Economic Development Commission, the Eastern Ontario's Mayors' Caucus (EOMC) and the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC), the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy and the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council to enhance industry and business growth and in turn to attract new employment opportunities in our area.
- 2) Try to work to underplay the concept that Brockville is a retirement city. I hear this over and over from city residents and while I am out campaigning. People have been saying that the city has been recognized as a retirement city for the last 20 years. We need to make a concentrated effort to dispel this, as this information is being picked up across Ontario and amongst investors and others, who are not wanting to come to a city with only an increasing elderly population. Yes, Brockville is an aging community as are many other in the province, but I would like to work hard to sell Brockville **as a vibrant, forward thinking, engaging community with open-minded approaches to business development, job creation, downtown development, the enhancement of our tourist industry, etc. We need to instill an 'Open for Business' mentality that transcends the idea that we are moving more towards a retirement economy/mentality.**

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- 3) Continue to work with our small and medium size business communities and make sure that we as a city are delivering where possible on their needs. Medium and small businesses are the building blocks of the future for the economy of eastern Ontario and we need to make sure that we are keeping the businesses that we have and are attracting those we do not as we are not going to be attracting large-scale manufacturing businesses going forward. Similarly work with our Downtown Business Association and sit on their committee to show interest, concern and a commitment to working with them. I have been told that the DBIA has not had regular interest on their committee or attendance by a Council member for a long time. I would like to instill the best working relationship we can with our DBIA businesses. I would like to see a similar committee structure set up for businesses outside of our downtown area.

5. What actions would you take to improve public safety in Brockville?

Answer: I strongly believe that Brockville is a safe city to live in comparison to other urban centres, however I believe that the following actions could continue to increase the safety of all persons, in all places of the city at all times:

- 1) The creation of an enhanced police/public working group that meets regularly to discuss ways to improve public safety in the city;
- 2) The creation of a police/youth working group that meets regularly to address issues unique to our youth and their struggles with drugs, street violence, gangs, property destruction, abuse, lack of work, lack of activities and amenities in the city that would keep youth occupied and off the street;
- 3) A more reflective police presence especially in key areas of the city such as the downtown and in our parks especially during evening hours. Police on foot or bicycles patrolling the downtown and other areas of the city would be a deterrent to the vandalism, fights and property destruction that has been occurring;
- 4) The installation (or enhanced installation) of security cameras in strategic locations throughout the city;
- 5) A review of existing lighting in parks and other public spaces to ensure that it is adequate and meets modern-day safety requirements;
- 6) An enforced curfew in parks and public places in accordance with city By-laws throughout the year;
- 7) The introduction of a Neighbourhood Watch program that can be instituted in any area of the city;
- 8) A yearly summit of police/Council and the public to discuss inroads that have been made to address public safety in Brockville and a review of statistics that reflect that effort.

6. Currently the city doesn't have Communication Policy – what are your thoughts to insure there is an effective external and internal communication policy in place.

Answer: Brockville definitely needs an effective internal and external Communications Policy as any typical organization requires today and I believe that it would be in Council and the city's best interest if such a policy was developed as soon as possible and during the first year in office

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of the new Council. I would be a strong advocate for the implementation of such a policy document. If at all possible I would like to see this initiative developed 'in-house' and not contracted out to save costs. I would like to see it develop from a 'grass roots' philosophy that is based on the concept of "we built it and we own it".

I would want the development of such a policy to include a well-developed forum for public input that accommodates also the needs of Brockville's 'silent majority' who rarely interact with staff or Council yet have much to say and have many would-be valuable viewpoints to offer. I would like to see the policy adopt an 'all ages' outreach approach that attempts to engage residents of Brockville with varying communication needs and interest. I would like to see a policy that is built on the concept of teaching people of all ages, including most importantly our young and young adult age groups about municipal government, how to communicate with municipal government, how to get more informed about government processes and how to get engaged.

The development of such a policy could include a joint Council/staff and public led process. I would like to see a very complete Terms of Reference be prepared for such an initiative with a definitive time-frame established for its completion. I would recommend that Interim reporting periods be adopted to determine the progress of the initiative. I would like to see a complete review of other municipal communications policies choosing from among them those parts that best suit the needs of Brockville staff, its Council and its constituents going forward.

The policy overall should reflect and respect the needs of all parties - staff, Council and the public.

7. What projects / policies would you champion to help small businesses grow?

Answer: Again work with our small (and medium size) business communities and make sure that we as a city are delivering where possible on their needs. Medium and small businesses are the building blocks of the future for the economy of eastern Ontario and we need to make sure that we are keeping the businesses that we have, and are attracting those we do not have, as we are not going to be attracting large-scale manufacturing businesses going forward. Similarly work with our Downtown Business Improvement Association (DBIA) and sit on their committee to show interest, concern and a commitment in working with them. I have been told that the DBIA has not had regular interest on their committee or attendance by a Council member for a long time. I would like to instill the best working relationship we can with our DBIA businesses. I would like to see a similar committee structure set up for businesses outside of our downtown area as in.

Additional actions and projects that I would champion to help small business grow include:

- Encourage small business owners to continually access our local small business enterprise centre for advice and assistance. The small business enterprise centers can offer small businesses free consultations, internet and computer access for business research and planning, a review of business plans, accountant referral services, guidance on licenses, permits, registrations, regulations and other documents, import and export information,

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mentoring and networking opportunities, and information about new funding opportunities, etc.

- Encourage small business to participate in business workshops, seminars and business networking events to gain knowledge, form relationships, learn new business tactics and formulas
- Encourage small business to write and continually update their business plan to reflect changing tastes, markets and economic climate, etc.
- Encourage small businesses to take on a mentor with experience in starting, expanding or buying a small business

In terms of policy development, Brockville should continue to:

- Review Zoning By-laws to ensure that it is getting it right for the new 'small business economy' and not sticking to antiquated restrictions on development that discourage new and innovative store locations, storefronts and design concepts
- Look for ways to integrate small business setup in new-build developments that facilitate pedestrian-oriented districts
- Adopt policies that ensure that small businesses don't get wiped out by large chain stores
- Facilitate adaptative use of vacant buildings which could be combined with permit-fee waivers