

Questions for Norfolk Mayor Candidates

Please feel free to type your answers below the questions!

Response from: Dennis Travale, Norfolk Mayoral Candidate

- What, in your view, are the major issues affecting the community?
 1. The lack of both a short and long range strategic plan for Norfolk. This planning will bring efficiencies and effectiveness in program delivery, and save money through spending wisely. A strategic plan is also required to guide us through the tough economic times envisioned with the decline in the agricultural sector (especially tobacco) and while we grow the other sectors to diversify our economy.
 2. Economic development, especially in the industrial and commercial sectors. This will bring jobs and generate the wealth required to sustain future development and offset residential taxation. Such growth will also give employment options to those in the declining sectors (e.g. agriculture where many are already reliant on off-farm income);
 3. Build infrastructure capacity (e.g. water/sewer, road link to 400 series, communications, improved health services (more doctors)), to allow existing business to grow and to welcome new business;
- What are the key economic, social, environmental concerns, in the municipality?

In addition to the above answer, Norfolk needs a sustainable, diversified economy. There are health and social issues that affect us (e.g. high rates of cancer and respiratory diseases; high rate of drug use and dependency, stress and other mental health issues). The environmental concerns are similar to those of Oxford, Haldimand, Essex, Brant, etc., and focus on reliable sources of clean drinking water, good quality air, to mention just a few.

- Where will you look for advice on agricultural issues or any issue that could affect agriculture?

I will look for advice from all sectors and at all levels (local, provincial and Federal). A well rounded and holistic view will serve to improve the decision making process.

- What plans do you have for building the local farm and business base?

The strategic plan I have in mind for Norfolk is one where all sectors of the economy are provided with an environment where existing business can flourish. This includes more flexible zoning (as much as Norfolk does and can control it), ensuring the needed supportive resources (water, power, roads, sewage, health care, etc) are readily available.

- What are the implications of non-farm rural development in productive agricultural areas?

Norfolk needs the support of the farmers to ensure that, where it is desirable to locate industry, commerce, tourism or other such development in a rural setting – especially where agriculture such as tobacco growing is coming to an end – then such development can proceed. If a farmer or group of farmers wants to organize into a cooperative venture, whether agricultural based or other, then that should be given serious consideration.

- How would you propose to consult with the farm community in the development or review of the Official Plan or zoning by-laws?

Norfolk's Official Plan is currently in Toronto for review by the Provincial government. It is my view that ALL sectors of our community/economy must be involved through group and general consultative means.

- Do you recognize that a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) or Nutrient Management Strategy (NMS) necessary for a Building Permit application refers to an NMP and NMS as defined by the NMA Regulations, not the municipality?

Yes!

- What role do you think a municipality should play within the current regulatory regime on pesticide safety?

A municipality must be part of the process that regulates such use. These chemicals have no boundaries and have the ability to affect all sectors of the population through air borne transmission, land application or infiltration into the source water.

- Are you willing to support a by-law to provide a reduction or refund of taxes that are unduly burdensome to a taxpayer?

I support tax reduction and control whether it is income taxes, land taxes, business taxes, provincial and federal taxes, indirect taxes (such as fees, permit costs, etc).

- How would you ensure inclusion of value-added farm enterprises in their economic development plan?

I am a strong promoter of “value added – at the gate” enterprises and would like to convince Council to ensure that there is flexibility in the zoning process (through the Official Plan) to allow such things to occur within an agriculturally zoned property.

- Do you know if development charges apply to agricultural structures in this municipality? If development charges do apply, describe how you would support standardizing the application of development charges to prevent inequitable treatment.

Yes, such charges do exist and are set by Council to bring about equitable treatment.

- What priority do you assign water resource protection for the municipality?

This is a high priority. Norfolk must protect all of its sources of drinking water, for both urban and rural dwellers. However, there are limits to what a municipality can do and these limits are imposed by the provincial government through legislation – most recently the Clean Water Act which has received third reading in the Legislature.

- What level of financial support should be available to farmers who are required through a Risk Management Plan to incur capital costs, and/or management costs, and/or ongoing maintenance costs to protect a municipal drinking water supply?

The provincial government has set out the rules and regulations and a Clean Water Act has received third reading. Any costs directly related to meeting those demands should be reimbursed by the Province.

- How will you site future municipal water supplies? The future level of protection may make it undesirable to offer land to sell for this purpose, how will this be overcome?

All current and future possible sources for municipal water supplies must be identified, mapped and flagged as such. Following that exercise and working with the appropriate governing bodies and affected property owners, possible solutions would be identified.

- How would you allocate water at times of shortages? What priority will farm practices such as watering livestock and irrigating crops be given in the allocation of water, at times of shortages?

Norfolk can only control the use of water where it is sourced from a treatment plant. Should such a severe shortage occur generally across the municipality, the senior levels of government will not doubt intervene.