

FRANK NIGHTINGALE



- *Farmer*
- *Professional Engineer*
- *Business Consultant*

The Right Expertise for Norfolk Now!

Biography

Frank Nightingale is a farmer, professional engineer and business consultant. He was raised and currently resides on the family farm in Waterford. He graduated from Waterford District High School (Ontario Scholar) and received bachelor and masters degrees in engineering and business (magna cum laude) from the universities of Waterloo, Laval (Quebec City) and Western Ontario (London). Since graduation he pursued a diversified career of more than 30 years in the private sector in public infrastructure development, energy, electric power and agriculture, working in 9 municipalities in Ontario, 10 provinces and 45 countries.

As a seasoned project manager he has led many diverse teams of professional and trade staff over his career. He has broad planning experience in project definition, engineering, construction and operations, as well as project management, economic evaluations, financial analysis, policy formulation, strategic planning, marketing and business development.

His early work experience included farming, can worker and design engineer (American Can), technology researcher (Laval University), project engineer (Esso) and economist (Shell corporate planning). In the mid 1970's he joined a large international engineering consulting company providing expertise around the globe in capital project development, utility management, strategic planning and policy formulation and implementation. He was policy advisor/strategic planner to the Minister of Energy, Thailand from 1990-1993.

Frank came back to Ontario with his family in 1994 as a member of the management team on phase 1 of the Highway 407ETR project in Toronto - Canada's largest public-private partnership. He also returned to his roots as a farmer and applied his technical and business background to develop applications of new technologies in agriculture. He is a pioneer in the development of drip irrigation systems to field crops in Norfolk and is currently an independent consultant working on developing new business ventures in the agriculture sector.

As a professional technical writer, he has helped area farmers develop proposals and business plans for assistance funding for a number of ventures including an agri-tourism adventure park, a large scale conversion to organic farming, development of high tunnel crop shelters and a agriculture export/import venture in the Caribbean.

He has three children, daughters Meagan (16) and Erica (14) who are attending Holy Trinity High School and son Tyler (9), attending St. Bernard's elementary. He spends his spare time at events with his children and restoring classic cars as a hobby. Frank is an accomplished race car driver, scuba diver, alpine skier, travels and enjoys the outdoor life that is ample in Norfolk. This past summer he operated a retail fruit and vegetable outlet with his children in the Simcoe/Port Dover area - a life skills learning experience for all.

Why I have decided to run for the office of Mayor?

I started attending council meetings last fall and over the past year became very interested in learning about our government process, our issues and the way they were being dealt with by council. I saw council and administration struggling with a number of problems across our county ranging from the collapse of our farming based economy, our failure to diversify and attract industry, decaying downtown areas and infrastructure, costly restructuring, downloading of provincial programs, skyrocketing costs of operations, rising taxes and “ad hoc” or reactive planning of new developments.

With my diverse background and professional skills, I believe that I make a valuable contribution to Norfolk’s future by bringing expertise to help find solutions to many of our economic, fiscal, social and growth problems and get Norfolk to be progressive again: to develop much needed economic growth, to strategically plan for our future; to re-vitalize our communities; and, to create desperately needed jobs. I have particular experience applying business concepts to implementing projects and operating public services as well as in public-private partnerships to increase efficiency, speed up schedule and reduce costs while protecting the public good.

The opportunity also gives me a chance to give back to the community some of the many benefits that I have received over my career years. I start my campaign knowing the responsibilities and duties of the mayor’s office and the structure and organization of our municipal government. Equally important, I understand resident’s concerns and issues and the need for our community for change.

Priorities:

- Give rural issues a higher profile at council by representing the majority of our taxpayers who live on farms, hamlets and small towns.
- Stabilize and re-develop our agriculture sector in liaison with provincial and federal governments.
- Diversify our economy and create jobs through aggressive policies and action plans to pursue new businesses and economic growth and providing the required infrastructure to encourage and support development.
- Promote energy efficiency, conservation, waste reduction and protection of our eco-systems through development of renewable energy and bio-fuel sources from agriculture and supporting programs such as ALUS (Alternative Land Use Services).
- Increase the health of our residents by supporting initiatives such as large scale organic farming and long term healthy lifestyle programs.
- Ensure sustainable development and quality of life through addressing all environmental, social, gender and family issues and concerns.
- Develop a strong business approach to running our county getting the best value for each tax dollar, spending only what can be afforded and keeping taxes low.
- Build upon the current mayor’s foundation of unity, accessibility, transparency and integrity of Norfolk county.

Norfolk Federation of Agriculture

Questions for Norfolk Mayor Candidates

What, in your view, are the major issues affecting the community?

- Economic and community decline resulting from the collapse of our agriculture sector (in particular tobacco and oilseeds and cash crops) and our failure to diversify and attract new industry and business. We have a shortage of good paying skilled jobs and very few career opportunities for our youth. Contributions to our tax base by industry has declined putting more of the tax burden on the residential and farm taxpayer. There are insufficient funds to keep our downtowns and community areas in good shape and to provide for new infrastructure to attract new industry and business.
- High costs of county operation and corresponding ever increasing property taxes. due to inefficient operations and provincial downloading of programs and services. Development charges for large scale new residential construction also does not cover the full costs of providing services by the county and a significant part of the burden to provide new infrastructure for development is borne by existing taxpayers. High property taxes are adversely affecting our fixed and low income taxpayers.
- “Reactive” rather than “strategic” approvals of major developments by council without consideration of long term impacts. This issue has become a problem in particular in Port Dover and Port Rowan. With the large number of retired people moving into the area from the larger urban centres, our infrastructure is now overtaxed as well as our medical and health facilities.

What are the key economic, social, environmental concerns, in the municipality?

Key Economic Concerns:

- economic decline associated with the decline in agriculture, in particular tobacco and its supporting businesses;
- failure of past administrations to attract industry and diversify the economic base;
- lack of skilled and high paying jobs;
- dwindling contributions to our tax base by industry;
- high operating costs and rising taxes;
- lack of funds to upgrade infrastructure required to attract industry.

Key Social Concerns:

- financial burden of high property taxes on fixed and low income taxpayers;
- decaying downtowns and increased crime in rundown areas;
- no employment to keep our youth in Norfolk;

- declining proportion of rural and farm population and implications for rural school closures and high cost of services in small population areas;
- poor representation of rural and farm issues at council partially caused by county restructuring;
- increased pressure on our health and medical facilities due to the high influx of new retired residents that have come to Norfolk.

Key Environmental Concerns:

- protection of municipal water supplies and the implications of the Clean Water Act on farm operations located near municipal wells and intakes;
- the need to upgrade our lagoon sewage systems to full treatment plants;
- air pollution from coal fired power plants in the Ohio Valley and to some extent at Nanticoke;
- high concentration of pesticides in our air, water and food;

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

- federal organizations including the CFA, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada;
- Ontario agriculture organizations including the NFA, OFA, OMAFRA and the University of Guelph (Department of Agriculture);
- some 33 Ontario agriculture association organizations (e.g. Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Association, Ontario Ginseng Growers Association, Ontario Flue-Cured Tobacco Growers Marketing Board etc);
- government organizations with stakeholder interests in agriculture (e.g. Ministry of the Environment, Long Point Region Conservation Authority);
- private sector businesses associated or servicing the agriculture sector;
- farmers themselves.

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

Agriculture has been the main contributor to the economy of Norfolk; however, the proportion to the total economy has been steadily declining. Tobacco farming, a once prosperous industry, is on the way out with continuous government pressures to stamp out cigarette smoking for health reasons. Although tourism appears to be rapidly growing, revenues generated are small compared to agriculture. Norfolk also has not been successful to diversify and expand its industrial and business base either because our leaders didn't want to in the past or was not willing to invest in the infrastructure required to bring in and keep industry here in Norfolk.

I believe that agriculture will continue to be the main economic activity in Norfolk for a number of years. Norfolk has the most productive lands for agriculture in Canada as well as a very favourable climate for growing quality crops. Our farmers know how to grow crops well and have been innovative in adopting new technologies, but for the most part, need to develop more skills to market and sell their crops.

My priorities would be to:

- stabilize and re-vitalize the agriculture sector in liaison with senior government;
- continue to work with farmers to develop new ventures that would create jobs in our community. We need to develop partnerships with value added producers and processors. I have been actively working with farmers to develop a number of projects including: an agri-tourism adventure park, a large scale conversion of major tracts of Norfolk's light tobacco sands land to large scale organic farming; growing crops with drip irrigations and high tunnel shelter techniques; and, a venture to export/import produce from/to the Caribbean.
- support the establishment of the Agriculture Food Innovation Centre as a means of developing new and expanded markets for horticulture products in Norfolk;
- support development and use of new technologies and innovation in the agriculture centre through applied research programs and/or incentives with senior government input to get farmers to apply them;
- establish a "grown in Norfolk/buy in Norfolk" policy to motivate local food retailers to sell and residents to buy only Norfolk grown produce in season. Norfolk produce, when grown and packed properly, is of a higher order of quality, nutrient value and freshness compared to other sources and can be traced back to the farm of origin;
- stop local retailers from discounting Ontario and local grown produce and/or selling as lost leaders below cost which tends to destroy wholesale prices to local farmers;
- expand the agri-tourism industry and promotions to attract outsiders to the area;
- support large scale organic farming and biofuels produced from agriculture;
- work with tourism and economic development to explore future opportunities for the agriculture sector in Norfolk; and
- establish a proper farmers market to showcase all products grown in Norfolk. To me the former American Can building in Simcoe would be an ideal location to develop such a venture.

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

To be efficient and sustainable, generally farming requires large tracks of continuous land with suitable buffer areas from other land uses that may be allowed under the municipal development plan. Non-farm uses of land that are within or close to lands designated for

agriculture, can negatively impact on the ability of surrounding agriculture operations to expand, introduce new agriculture activities or even operate at all.

Although farmers may be protected in some instances from non-farm nuisances under “right-to-farm” legislation, in practise, the farmer tends to be the one who loses out when complaints such as noise, dust, smell, spray drift are registered by neighbours to municipal bylaw officers. The more frequent that residential and commercial developments are located near or in agriculture land tracts, the greater the incidences of complaints against farm operations. The “he-who-is-here-first” rule does not seem to apply in the real world.

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

Municipal official plans, zoning bylaws and plans for growth can significantly affect the future of agriculture operations and the ability to diversify or develop on farm businesses. Generally public meetings with farm stakeholders are the most common form of getting input from the farm community. These meetings would be most productive if carried out at a time in the season or week when a farm family can free itself from its business to be able to attend meetings.

Consultation with the local farm organizations such as the NFA prior to public meetings would an effective means of fleshing out issues and viewpoints prior to a general assembly meeting. The local farm groups are in a position to voice opinions on behalf of all their members.

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?

Ontario’s new Nutrient Management Act and Regulations apply to a large number of farms in the province and supercede all municipal bylaws that deal with the same subject. Norfolk no longer enforces its own bylaws on the same subject with the new act.

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

Pesticide safety with respect to agriculture is well regulated and managed at the provincial and federal levels and in my opinion does not require further regulation at the municipal level. However there may be instances where farmers may be negligent in ensuring public safety in the application and use of pesticides and in these cases the municipality should be involved to ensure compliance to municipal bylaws which ensure public health and protection from hazards as well as the right to peaceful existence.

I believe that municipalities should be involved in determining and regulating the use of pesticides at residential and community facilities such as schools and parks where there are potential health related hazards through exposure. These are not covered at the senior government level.

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

The municipality and council have the power to consider and implement tax refunds that might be determined to be unduly burdensome on the taxpayer. In the agriculture sector, a value added facility may be overtaxed if: it is used only seasonally or a part of the year; it is taxed as full commercial rates (rather than reduced farm rate if used for agriculture); or if the operation is not operating with good financial health. These instances should be looked into on a case by case basis and would need to be considered by all members of council as well as by the administration to determine the financial impact as well as the requirement of the rest of the taxpayers to make up any shortfall in funds.

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

Agriculture has been the main contributor to Norfolk's economy in the past and will still be in the near future. However, to be able to survive and compete in a global economy, which Norfolk is subject to, our farm groups must undertake to build partnerships with processors as well as with the retail chain food outlets to ensure supply management and profitability for the grower in the longer term. A key to survival is the marketing and sales of crops with value added, which includes items such as packaging, cool storage, or first stage processing and preserving etc.

Norfolk's new strategic plan defines value added in agriculture as economic development that is of importance to the county. However, zoning by-laws to include such activity as part of normal farm activity have not been defined, in particular, if the reduced farm tax rates (as opposed to commercial rates) that now apply to farm buildings and land, will in fact be applied to new buildings that are used for the value added operations.

There is reasoning that if value added facilities are used to produce product for the Ontario market then on-farm facilities should be taxed at the reduced farm rates at least until the operation becomes a going concern. At that time the reduced tax rate could be reviewed to determine if a factory type commercial operation has been developed to be sustainable throughout the year.

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.

Agriculture structures that do not require the use of water or sewage to be provided by the municipality, are exempt from development charges in Norfolk. However, value added agriculture structures in many instances are taxed at full commercial rates even if these structures may operate as little as 6 weeks a year (e.g. a canning operation). In order to encourage value added agriculture, I would propose the consideration at council that the farm reduced rates be applied for a initial specified start up period until the business gets on its feet.

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

The municipality is directly responsible for ensuring adequate water supplies, ensuring that the water supply is safe, that proper testing is performed at regular intervals, that proper maintenance is carried out on the water supply equipment and facilities and that new facilities are constructed when required to meet community growth.

It is understood that under the Clean Water Act (when passed in legislation), will require municipalities to implement a Source Protection Plan that will be determined by the Conservation Authority. It is understood that staff will need to be employed by the municipality to work with the farmers to develop Risk Management Plans for each property that is near a source for municipal water.

The province through the Clean Water Act that has assigned drinking water resource protection as a priority requirement that will be implemented by the municipality. There does not appear to be any options which can be changed or altered by the municipality.

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?

At the moment there are no provisions in the proposed Clean Water Act to compensate a farmer for any costs incurred to comply with the intentions of the Act in particular the use of his land which may be taken out of normal agriculture service as well as other costs of compliance.

I do not think that the farmer alone should bear this burden on behalf of the entire municipality. The farmer should be compensated for his costs incurred including the opportunity cost of the lost use of his land if so deemed by the municipality.

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?

Norfolk is currently undertaking a water sourcing study to determine the most economic means to obtain future water supplies. All technically feasible alternatives should be examined including such options as drawing from Lake Erie or streams, more wells fed

by ground water and surface water sources, or perhaps purchasing from neighbouring municipalities.

In such a study a full cost benefit analysis should be undertaken including costs to protect the quality and quantity of the water sources. One of the costs for protecting well sources would be compensation to the farmer for the use of his land either through purchase at fair market value or through long term lease if the land is brought out of agriculture service.

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?

There is no question that water for first human life, followed by animal and fisheries life should be given first priority for water consumption at times of shortages. This would be followed by essential agriculture food crops to maintain plant life, then other non-essential crops (e.g. tobacco) and then other vegetation that might otherwise perish. Commercial and industrial uses would have lower priority followed by recreational uses (e.g. golf courses etc).

With respect to management of the uses of the various sources of water supply, it should be remembered that sources of water for irrigation supply must also be protected. To the extent possible, the farmer should take initiatives to store water in ponds in the high water seasons for use in low water seasons and reduce intakes of water from streams during low water periods. Likewise, non - farm users of water should adjust their intake periods at times other than the low water season in the summer when water becomes a critical use for agriculture.

Please feel free to contact Frank at 519-443-6567.