

2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

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Do you identify as a member of a 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

No

What role are you running for?

Councillor for Ward 1 in Woolwich Township

What do you believe are the most critical issues for the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community? If elected, how would you work with the local community to address these issues?

I truthfully don't know the most critical issues for the community which I think is part of the problem. Most people don't know. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with and learn from members of that community. I want to address some of the root causes of social problems in our community and beyond. The cause usually comes from a lack of understanding of other people. Differences present opportunities for learning about the world around us with new ideas and richer living experiences. I am proposing a program where we can exchange ideas on living, techniques for solving common problems, and insights into seeing others as just doing what we all do...make it from day to day taking care of our families and enjoying life. Communication and sharing create a common purpose and language for going forward together. People need to see a future, not a dismal drudgery. They need to have opportunities to generate income sufficient to provide for their loved ones. To achieve these goals we need to provide good education, good housing, good economic opportunity, and foster feelings of respect for each other. One person, alone, cannot achieve all this but one person can make an impact by proposing and creating social programs that involve current agencies, programs, and businesses. Together we can create change.

Have you ever participated in 2SLGBTQIA+ Cultural Competency Training?

No. I have not had the opportunity. I would certainly be open to participating in such a program. I want to be a part of the solutions and not just complain without the ability to effect changes. I'm running for Council because I care about Elmira and I want us as a community to move forward together; in other words, to expand and prepare for the future without losing what we value. We are a more diverse community than some people think, and we want to be seen as inclusive and welcoming to all, not in spite of differences but because a diversity of experiences, identities and backgrounds leads to learning about the world and new ideas and ways of doing things, making a richer living experience for all of us.

Systemic homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia are still prevalent in our community, resulting in significant socioeconomic disparities within 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. If elected, how will you combat homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia?

Please refer to answers above.

If elected, how would you address the ongoing issues of homelessness and mental health, especially as they disproportionately affect members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community?

I will be open to all who want to discuss areas of concern. There are homeless encampments in this area and I would like to meet with those individuals to gain information on what assistance they need and why they are not receiving that assistance. There are others in the community whose voices are not heard. I want to reach out to them and try to address their needs and desires. There are businesses in the area which can and should be a part of the solutions. I know we should be able to find some common ground on which to build our community.

Do you agree with the statement that "trans rights are human rights, and must be protected as such?"

Of course I agree with that statement. We are all just trying to make it in this life finding happiness where we can while protecting and providing for our loved ones the best we can. Every person has a right to be true to themselves and be given the opportunity to live life to the fullest.

What is one motion would you bring to council that you think will improve the lives of specifically queer people, racialized individuals and/or marginalized residents and why?

I hope I will be able to bring some more good employment opportunities to our township and I want to build at least one or two social programs that will benefit an underserved population in our community. I believe that the companies which are already located in Elmira/Woolwich can and should be a part of the solutions.

When thinking about our schools, do you agree that 2SLGBTQIA+ representation in books and lessons is critical at all grade levels? How would you support 2SLGBTQIA+ students in schools?

This is not a new question/concern. Just about every group of people who share a common identity have "fought this fight". Blacks, Hispanics, Indigenous, Asian, Irish, etc. have had to work for recognition as individuals who have a need to see the potential in members of their identity. They/we need to see each other in positions as parents, leaders, professionals, artists, astronauts, in all areas so that we can imagine opportunities as we grow. Children are always looking for who they can be and in which profession they can excel. Books, movies, leadership positions, and every aspect of life should be open to all students. Helping the people of Woolwich will be consistently in front of my mind, and I will keep asking how new initiatives or changes will make their lives better. I have been involved in improving lives for 60+ years. My life has been in education and non-profit agencies. Both areas require support in order to implement ideas for the good of the whole. I recognize that I would be one of six people on Council. I am used to discussion and compromise to move an organization forward. I know those experiences will assist me in helping others support the positions that I will represent for residents of Woolwich Township.