

2SLGBTQIA+ Questionnaire for Waterloo Region Municipal Candidates

Name: Jenn Pfenning

Email Address: jenn4wilmot@gmail.com



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

No

What role are you running for?

Mayor, Wilmot 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?

While many of the obvious barriers and discriminatory behaviours have been reduced in society, there are still many people who believe that being 2SLGBTQIA+ is a choice. The violence and discrimination against members of the community is hidden, secretive, and largely denied by many. During this term of Council I brought the motion to raise the Pride flag for the month of June. It passed unanimously and we have flown the flag for 3 years now. That is largely a symbolic gesture, however important. Since I am not a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+, I rely on feedback from people (including friends and family members) who are. As Mayor, I will actively seek input and consult with members of the community to create events and policies that move beyond symbolism toward true equity.

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

Yes

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?

As leaders, we model what the community is about. I will work to take on hard conversations so that vulnerable members of our community don't have to do it themselves. From an operational perspective, all township policies and programs must be reviewed with a lens of equity to ensure they do not intentionally or inadvertently create vulnerabilities or inequity.

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

The overarching response to all of it is to address the current issues, while investing in, and building upstream interventions to ensure the future generations don't continue to face the same challenges and systemic barriers. Identifying and addressing system inequities and discriminatory policies is a particular area of responsibility for every level of government. Some of the ways we can do that are working to make public spaces safe and inclusive, developing programming that supports 2SLGBTQIA+ youth intentionally, and ensuring services and supports at all levels do not have inherent barriers to the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

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

Yes

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 will bring a motion to ask that staff consult with the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community on establishing a Pride event to be held in the township. I will also solicit identification of what types of issues the local 2SLGBTQIA+ community members are experiencing as a starting point to begin addressing systemic barriers.

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?

Making sure children feel ok to be themselves means ensuring that they can see themselves reflected in lessons and reading materials available to them.