Candidate Questionnaire from the Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalists

It is important that constituents know where their Tiny Township candidates and future mayor and councillors stand on given issues before they are elected.

Our club has members in all of our area municipalities. This questionnaire is being sent to candidates for the councils in Midland, Penetanguishene, Tiny, Tay and Georgian Bay Townships

Yours truly,

Susan Hirst Bob Codd Ken MacDonald

President/MPFN Vice President/MPFN Program Director/MPFN

No response was received from the following candidates: (Deputy Mayor) Steve Saltsman (Councillor) Dave Brunelle, Ema Canadic, Stephen McNamara. Anna Aggio, a candidate for councilor, did give a courtesy reply indicating that due to family emergencies she was unable to form a response before the deadline.

**1.      Could you give an example or two from your personal or public life of something you have done in an effort to mitigate climate change and/or protect the environment?**

Responses:

Candidates for Mayor

David Evans: *In 2016, I purchased a neighbouring property that is largely still in a natural state. I intend to keep this property as it is so my grandchildren can see what my grandparents did when they first came to Tiny. I received my degree in Forest Engineering from the University of Toronto. Perhaps not surprisingly, I have a strong interest in promoting native Ontario plant and tree species. Ontario native plant species are drought tolerant and thrive in local conditions and need less water, care, and reliance on pesticides. Native plants will grow best in your yard if planted in the same conditions where they thrive in nature. In practice, I manage my property using seedlings cultivated from the same lot. I would be very interested in developing awareness and providing opportunities for Tiny’s residents to utilize plants that are best adapted to local environmental conditions. In addition, native species are integral in supporting local ecosystems. Creating healthy, sustainable ecosystems will ensure the health of our environment in the future.*

Tony Mintoff: *While on Council, I supported the adoption of Tiny’s Climate Action Plan and have joined other volunteers in harvesting invasive species from the Lafontaine Beach shoreline. I also spearheaded the installation of water meters in Wyevale as a means to preserve and conserve the consumption of water. My involvement in trying to have a moratorium on gravel extraction and washing at French’s Hill is well documented.*

Candidates for Deputy Mayor

John Bryant: *Landscaping. My family and I have done volunteer work within our neighbourhood to remove invasive species such as Phragmites and planted native grasses to stabilize the sand dunes and shoreline. The landscape at home contains a good number of pollinator plants and native fruiting shrubs for bees and birds.*

Sean Miskimins: *Removed Spotted Knapweed in Lafontaine Beach this year; have gone to more green practices in my home including LED lights all on timers, a Smart Thermostat (I'm usually in the top 90% of savings in my area), participated in No Mow May for the last 4 years.*

Candidates for Councillor

Mario Galluzzo: *In my personal and business life I instituted a solar panel upgrade program to reduce our reliance on Ontario Hydro. My belief is that improvements toward green energy alternatives done by the many are more effective than massive farms that damage our lands.*

Kelly Helowka:  *As a retired RCMP officer, I was in charge of a team that investigated and successfully prosecuted an individual who was trying to smuggle pressure transducers into Canada and then into Iran to enrich uranium into weapons grade. I also planted hundreds of trees as a Boy Scout.*

Erik Schomann: *I have been active in local elections at the federal and provincial levels in the past having won the Green Party nomination for candidacy in Simcoe North in 2019. I have used these platforms consistently to champion the purest water known to science discovered in the recharge area under French's Hill, currently under threat from gravel extraction. In the 2020 federal election, I facilitated a rally for the water attended by all the major parties including the Greens, the NDP, the Liberals and the People's Party. The Conservative candidate at the time was not able to attend but he later sponsored the recent petition to the House of Commons that I assisted in drafting to involve the federal government in the water's protection. Having collected several thousand signatures from across Canada, Simcoe North MP Adam Chambers will be presenting said petition to Parliament in the coming weeks.*

David Sparrock: *Twelve years ago, I worked with volunteers and behind-the-scenes at Site 41 to stop the dump site from being built in Tiny marshes.*

Steffen Walma: *In the past 8 years on council, I have pushed for green initiatives in Tiny. Electrifying our fleet is now part of our replacement policy and will not only combat emissions but has saved significant dollars in fuel for the municipality. I am also the council member that initiated our participation in the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Partners in Climate Protection (PCP) program. This program has had the township inventory our GHG production (as a corporation) and create a sustainability plan to reduce that number by 63% over 10 years (started in 2018).*

Gibb Wishart: *I have encouraged the Twp. to purchase electric vehicles, I have gone off-grid at my cottage with a 4-kilowatt solar system - we heat our home in Tiny with dead standing hard word which from a methane-producing standpoint is considered carbon neutral.*

**2.      How high among the concerns of an elected Municipal Official would you place Climate Change mitigation? Could you briefly describe policies and actions you would like to see enacted for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in Tiny Township?**

Responses:

Candidates for Mayor

David Evans: *Climate change is an indisputable fact, and the effects are evident in many forms. 84% of people believe that climate change is a priority issue that requires mitigation action immediately (LCCAP, 2018). We must act now with a goal of net zero emissions. In Tiny, 87% of our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are generated by the community. Some of the community initiatives I will champion include:*

*• Education. Inform the public of the harm due to GHG and how to improve*

*• Support the local food economy. Reduce food freight with direct sales*

*• Promote benefits of native species plants and trees.*

*• Promote the “No Mow” program to reduce GHG and benefit pollinators*

*• Promote benefits of trees in home, community, rural, and forest environments*

*• Public transit – Currently Tiny has limited access to Linx or neighbouring municipality’s public transit. New options for Tiny to reduce transportation GHG emissions and options for people without access to vehicles.*

*On a corporate level, 75% of our GHG are Fleet related. As such electrifying the fleet would be a priority. Additionally, ensuring our planning and building departments incorporate net zero energy practices in all new home construction.*

Tony Mintoff: *Very high, and I referenced Tiny’s adoption of a Climate Action Plan which needs to be reviewed and updated due to some of the impacts of the COVID pandemic amongst other things.*

Candidates for Deputy Mayor

John Bryant: *Climate change is an issue in the forefront that has been discussed at the council table. It is certainly one issue that will be a focus for generations to come. Mitigation measures are just starting as we come to grips with the reality and magnitude of the problem facing our planet.*

* *Address and implement targets as outlined in Tiny’s Local Climate and Action Plan.*
* *I have supported the Township purchasing electrical vehicles when fleet replacements are done.*
* *I would like to see a greater emphasis on “naturalization“ of public parks and reduce the amount of gas used for grass cutting/ trimming .*
* *In the upcoming term, I plan to have a Tree Cutting Bylaw enacted to prevent clear cutting and subsequent erosion. A tree inventory and preservation plan should be approved prior to any site alterations being undertaken. Trees are the lungs of the planet.*
* *Support the County of Simcoe Recycling efforts and reduce waste.*
* *Pressure the Provincial and Federal Government to establish and meet “SMART” goals in cutting greenhouse gas emissions within Canada and promote on the international stage.*
* *Continue to support a strong trail system so people can walk or bike within the community, cutting fuel use and resulting in a healthier community. These measures will reduce the drain on our health care system and subsequent energy costs that go with it.*
* *Support for a continued partnership with the Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) to protect and sustain the environmental features within Tiny Township.*

Sean Miskimins: *Making our fleet more green, Tree Cutting By-Law, dark sky policy, move all Township lighting to LED.*

Candidates for Councillor

Mario Galluzzo: *There is one major issue that the township needs to address immediately which is disposal of septic waste. Currently the waste is spread on farmers fields as fertilizer which has many harmful side effects including contaminating ground water.  The other option is to haul it to Midland for disposal which is expensive and not very welcome as they would rather cater to their own residents first. There was a proposal submitted to the township for an eco friendly waste management system that could service all of Tiny. The council of the day rejected the proposal I believe this was done without foresight and the residents are feeling the effects today as it is becoming more and more difficult to dispose of septic waste every year. From a GHG perspective the township should encourage a solar retro fit program with Ontario Hydro to encourage existing homes can upgrade to solar or wind. For new home construction it should a requirement to install solar panels the results on a collective basis can decrease GHG emissions. We can collectively reduce GHG emissions without the need to have massive solar farms that harm our natural environment.*

Kelly Helowka: *Fairly high, for sure top six or seven. I would enhance programs that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and use renewable energy via solar panel systems and wind turbines.*

Erik Schomann: *A considerable part of the mandates to reduce greenhouse gases falls on to the municipal government and Tiny has its own Climate Action Plan to reduce corporate GHG emissions by 30% and residential by 6% by 2030. The problem with the current plan is that it is based on population projections for 2030 that, because of the increase in full-time residents in Tiny during COVID, shows we have already surpassed that projection according to the 2021 census. This means the Plan needs to be reworked so more robust measures can be taken in order to still hit the intended targets by 2030. This would be one of my primary goals upon earning a seat at Tiny Council in the wake of this year's election.*

David Sparrock: *Climate Change mitigation is a concern of mine and I will work with Tiny Township and provincial and federal leaders to enact policies for cutting greenhouse gas emissions in Tiny Township.*

Steffen Walma: *With significant changes to weather events, climate change mitigation is high on the priority list. I believe this is a double edged sword. We must both start building/ replacing infrastructure in preparation for the 500 year storm vs the standard 100 year storm as well as change policy and invest in climate change mitigation. I would like to ban hardscaping to help with flood mitigation and ensure proper groundwater recharge and invest further into fleet electrification and installation of charging stations in the municipality to encourage further use of plug in hybrid electric vehicles. I also want to implement portions of the transportation master plan to make Tiny roads more bike friendly, further encouraging less use of fossil fuels.*

Gibb Wishart: *It is very hard to lead if you set no example - again I encourage staff to buy electric or even combination gas/electric vehicles. I have also tried to discourage aerial spraying that I consider environmentally unfriendly*

**3.      Are you aware of and in support of The Simcoe County Municipal Comprehensive Review - DRAFT Climate Change Strategy of October 2021?  Would you support the recommendation of the Review: that municipalities should prepare standalone climate change action plans?**

Responses:

Candidates for Mayor

David Evans: *I believe municipal governments have a key role in both mitigating and adapting to climate change. According to Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA); “Local governments influence up to have of Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions through land use management and planning”. Tiny has the knowledge and expertise to create successful solutions that are aligned with local requirements.*

Tony Mintoff: *Yes, I would support all reasonably attainable climate change goals and as mentioned earlier, Tiny has already adopted a climate change policy and action plan.*

Candidates for Deputy Mayor

John Bryant: *Yes, I am familiar with strategy focussed on the refinements to the provincial natural heritage system; refinements to the provincial agricultural land base; growth management; employment; climate change; and watershed management.*

*I support municipalities preparing standalone climate change action plans provided they are done by qualified professionals and the terms of reference of such studies is common for all municipalities. When we start coming together it is best to have a co-ordinated and united front. In this case, I understand the SSEA developed a “Local Climate Change Action Plan” for the Township of Tiny and for our neighbours, the Township of Tay. Good! The environment has no boundaries.*

Sean Miskimins: *Yes, we need a Municipal one and it should be reviewed on an Annual basis and reporting out to the public on our Green commitments.*

Candidates for Councillor

Mario Galluzzo: *I will need to review before commenting further but would support a made in Tiny action plan.*

Kelly Helowka:  *I am aware of this document, and yes I would support a standalone action plan.*

Erik Schomann: *I am aware of this and fully support it.*

David Sparrock: *Yes, I would support The Simcoe County Municipal Comprehensive Review. We have surpassed the population projection for 2030 already, and so we must revisit the plan and make adjustments as needed. I would support stand-alone preparations, however working with the Simcoe County and the Provincial government would be the best way forward.*

Gibb Wishart: *I am not opposed to stand-alone plans - but the ministries are very in favor of collaborative efforts by two or more and you are likely to get some assistive funding if you show that you are working together with neighbouring communities.*

Steffen Walma: *Yes I am aware of the MCR and I would support a stand alone climate action plans. As I mentioned before, via the PCP programs at FCM, Tiny has already started this process. This document could be used a starting point and we can flesh the details into actionable items for this a future councils.*

**4.      Without protective policies our natural spaces will be under constant threat to urbanization.  Where do you stand on Greenbelt protection and its expansion to Simcoe County? Are you concerned with the increasing use of Provincial Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) to circumvent municipal planning processes and environmental protections.**

Responses:

Candidates for Mayor

David Evans*: I do not have any information on the Greenbelt protection and expansion. I am not currently in government. As such, any opinion I could provide is not worth consideration. I would be happy to discuss this once I am fully briefed. I am strongly opposed to using MZO’s to circumvent local planning requirements for non-essential construction. Worldwide shortages of water, land, and energy combined with the increased demand from population and economic growth are forecasted to create a global food shortage around 2050. (The World Counts, 2022). The threat is real, and we must protect agricultural lands in Tiny.*

Tony Mintoff: *I support the efforts of the Greenbelt Coalition and would like to see greenbelt protection expanded in Simcoe County. I also believe that MZOs have been very increasingly used to deny due process and public consultation in support of the developers, and to the detriment of our environment generally.*

Candidates for Deputy Mayor

John Bryant: *I support Greenbelt protection as it pertains to Simcoe County. I feel the province is not safeguarding Tiny Township’s interests given Provincial projects like the Bradford Bypass, or approving the extraction of gravel and potential contamination of a significant local aquifer on Frenches Hill (Teeton Pit). I support the ongoing efforts of the Simcoe County Greenbelt Coalition.*

*Yes, I am concerned with the increasing use of Provincial Minister’s Zoning Orders (MZOs) to circumvent municipal planning processes and environmental protections. MZO’s should only be used as it was intended to help fast track special projects that are critical to the benefit of the community e.g., hospitals.*

*Recently a MZO was requested for a commercial golf course development in Tiny. Fortunately, the application was withdrawn as Council and local residents were vehemently opposed. Tiny has a bigger voice than its name suggests!*

Sean Miskimins*:  MZO's should not be used other than in emergency situations as outlined in the legislation. Too many times it is being misused and it needs to stop. We need to protect our greenbelts, aquifers and put the environment over development. This needs to be our guiding decision making process.*

Candidates for Councillor

Mario Galluzzo: *I am totally against (MZO) as it is an insult to municipal and community planning. There is no merit in for profit organization over the protection of the environment and our communities.*

Kelly Helowka: *I believe in Greenbelt protection and support it’s expansion into Simcoe County. I am very concerned with this new trend and do not support it at all. Municipal planning processes and environmental protections were put in place for a reason.*

Erik Schomann: *MZOs have been in existence since 1995 and since the current administration came to power in 2018, they have applied more MZOs than the entire period before the election of Doug Ford. It is obvious to anyone watching that these emergency measures are being misused. In Canada, a major function of the judiciary body is to keep the legislative body in check. Consultations with legal experts have provided the advice that, though costly to challenge, the courts could overrule MZOs if it is found they are being used beyond their intended function. I think, given the possible areas I can see MZOs being employed in the future that that fight would probably be worth having and set a precedence as warning to end the misuse of these emergency measures.*

David Sparrock: *Tiny Township has been designated a Greenbelt protected area in the Simcoe County Plan. According to that plan, we will not be subject to the threat of urbanization. I am concerned about the Provincial Minister’s MZOs. We are going to make sure that MZOs are more stringently reviewed and we will not tolerate any degradation to our environmental protections.*

Steffen Walma: *Protection of agricultural lands and green space is essential to Tiny. This must be a priority for this and future councils. As the green belt designation is provincially controlled  I would suggest our efforts would be better invested in concepts like the Georgian Bay GeoPark (sustainable tourism, sustainable development, community resilience, education and knowledge building, conservation and protection).    Regarding MZO’s, I get concerned over developers trying to use them to circumvent the public process. I do believe, however, that they are a valuable tool when used for which they are intended. Too often have I seen responsible projects geared towards the creation of affordable homes stopped by ‘NIMBY’ attitudes. I believe in environmental protection and housing the homeless (this includes the entire spectrum from rapid housing to affordable home ownership). Sometimes an MZO can be a valuable tool to get something important like housing* *or long term care done fast and without “politics/nimbyism”*

Gibb Wishart: *The expansion of greenbelt is not a problem as long as it does not interfere with the farmers - In Tiny we are not designated as a growth zone by either the County or the Province the only thing I hope for is the allowance of more affordable housing in our villages. MZO's are generally used for projects that are large and would take a long time to go through the normal local planning process.*

**5. Degradation of wetlands, quarrying for aggregate, air pollution, pollution of Lake Simcoe, Severn Sound and Georgian Bay, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, protection of endangered species, loss of biodiversity, control of invasive species are all significant problems.  Which of these issues is most urgent and which would you work on if elected?**

Responses:

Candidates for Mayor

David Evans: *If elected, what are my top three priorities?*

*1. Implementation of Tiny’s new short-term rental bylaw*

*2. Creating low, middle, and multi-generational housing availability in Tiny*

*3. Infrastructure planning incorporating climate change mitigation strategies*

Tony Mintoff: *Quarrying for aggregate at French’s Hill is my primary focus currently as it is threatening the pristine waters of the recharge area for the Alliston Aquifer.*

Candidates for Deputy Mayor

John Bryant: *The most critical and urgent issue in Tiny Township is the protection of our pristine ground water / aquifers. Clean water is life-giving, not to treat it with respect is simply irresponsible and life threatening to current and future generations. Pollution reduction in Georgian Bay and Fairlain Lake are high priorities. Also, alterations to the dynamic nature of Tiny Townships’ beaches and shoreline is critical. Frequent Health Unit warnings regarding water safety on our beaches tells me something is terribly wrong. Through the planning and development process, issues and actions affecting the degradation of wetlands, air pollution, fragmentation of wildlife habitat, protection of endangered species, loss of biodiversity and the control of invasive species must be monitored and carefully vetted before any development proposals are approved. Please consult my Facebook page to review my platform priorities.*

<https://www.facebook.com/people/John-Bryant/100083137517022/> *Thank you to the Midland-Penetanguishene Field Naturalists and the work that you do. Thank you for your interest.*

Sean Miskimins: *We need to protect our aquifer on French's Hill. Invasive species are also getting worse, both in terms of the shoreline as well as things like the Ash Borer beetles and now the Maple trees are also at risk. These are the most pressing and there are a lot of other issues that we will need to consider once these can be controlled.*

Candidates for Councillor

Mario Galluzzo: *Protection of our wetland and aquifers is one my highest priorities. Water resources once exhausted or contaminated cannot be easily fixed or replaced. The township should partner with other groups to ensure that these resources are protected from for profit companies.*

Kelly Helowka: *Pollution of Lake Simcoe, Severn Sound and Georgian Bay is the most urgent. However, all of the rest are important but I would work air pollution if elected.*

Erik Schomann: *This is a very difficult question to answer because it's all important. In terms of immediate consequences air pollution, depending on the degree of pollution, is the most important as life ends quickest without breathable air. Then water degradation and pollution of the listed bodies of water, depending of the degree of pollution, because after having breathable air, life collapses without water, destroying habitat; all species become endangered; and biodiversity is a non-starter. Fortunately, the threats to the air and water quality so bad that it would challenge the ability of life to sustain itself is not at issue in Tiny. In Tiny, what is under threat, is the singularly pure water threatened by aggregate extraction. If elected, I would propose a moratorium on expanded operations and even current operations until such time as the current research underway to ascertain the geochemical and hydrogeological forces behind this level of purity are established within 5 years' time. This is what is proposed in the aforementioned petition to the House of Commons.*

David Sparrock*: If elected, my number one priority I would work on is the Simcoe Uplands – CRH Canada Teedon Pit. I believe the Township should aggressively oppose the proposed extension of the Teedon Pit aggregate operation into French’s Hill. This will be catastrophic to the delicate ecosystem and will destroy the water in Alliston Aquifer and surrounding area. I support a moratorium on gravel extraction on the existing site as this is an ecologically sensitive area and the pristine water will be contaminated. This aggregate washing will contaminate the groundwater which is the purest water in Ontario. We stopped Site 41 twelve years ago and we must fight this with the same tenacity and vigilance to protect our water for future generations.*

Steffen Walma: *Tiny Township started Severn Sounds Invasive Species program via the SSEA back in 2016 and it has been a great success. We need to continue this program with our partners as invasive weeds/ animals don’t see municipal borders. Quarrying for aggregate requires our on-going attention. Municipalities do not have the authority to control aggregate operations or where they are sites. We need to continue to advocate to the province for environmental protections built into the aggregate act and the resources to enforce it. MNRF does not have the capacity to inspect all the operations and therefore risks negatively affecting the environment and water. Tiny needs to apply pressure to the province to increase its enforcement and decrease the amount of* *licences issued.*

Gibb Wishart: *WOW a multi-faceted question (i) of course I do not want wetlands destroyed or altered in any way (ii) I also do not want to see any of our water bodies or sources for that matter polluted in any way. (iii) I have always supported efforts to protect wetlands and all the biodiversity that happens there. (iv) in that I cottage on the Georgian Bay up at GoHome Bay my top of the list would be the fabulous wetlands that we have for fish habitat and wildlife migration -Ducks, Geese Locally I would have to support efforts in Tiny marsh and the Wye River. There's more if you care to look at  -*[*https://votewishart.ca/*](https://votewishart.ca/)

Yours truly,

Susan Hirst Bob Codd Ken MacDonald

President/MPFN Vice President/MPFN Program Director/MPFN