



Michel for McKellar

Forward thinking leadership

www.michel4mckellar.com

Vote for Michel Richard on October 24

Answers to Ratepayers' Questions via MLCA

The Manitouwabing Lake Community Association (MLCA) was kind enough to solicit questions from our ratepayers and assemble them into categories. My answers to those questions are below. Beneath my answers, I have provided the notes from my presentation for those who were unable to attend the All-Candidates Meeting on September 17.

- Building Size
- Dark Sky-Friendly Initiatives
- Team Approach
- Council Dysfunction
- Fireworks
- Lake Health
- McKellar Market
- Public Access to Lakes
- Sound System Improvements
- Short-Term Rentals
- Tax Increases
- Transparency and Communication
- Wellness Centre (Parry Sound Pool Project)

Building Size

The choice of building size is as individual as the people who build them. Building code and site planning regulations exist that stipulate certain aspects of new-build residences. I believe these are adequate.

Answers continued, 2/...

Dark Sky-Friendly Initiatives

I am a firm believer in property rights. However, there are circumstances where the actions of a property owner can infringe or impair the rights or enjoyment of neighbouring property owners. This is the reason we establish bylaws. I would support any initiative to restrict the operation of artificial lighting that creates unnecessary or excessive light pollution.

Team Approach

I believe that the prescription for successful municipal governance is for individual taxpayers to vote independent candidates into office. It is then Council's responsibility to operate as I describe below.

Council Dysfunction

I don't believe it serves any good purpose to comment on the previous Council. If elected, I will use my leadership skills to ensure council functions at an optimal level: respectful, purposeful, and productive. I cannot speak for others who may be elected – taxpayers should expect all of us to come to the table informed on the issues, with an open-mind and an inclusive attitude.

If elected, I will work with anyone who is elected. I recognize there will be differing opinions and ideas, and I believe this is a critical part of the democratic process. I will listen to everyone with an open mind, including the other Council members, Township staff and ratepayers. It is my objective that the next Council will always work towards well-informed, sound and equitable decisions. Please click [HERE](#) to read my published platform on how Council should work together.

Fireworks

Yes, I would support a bylaw to ban all privately-initiated fireworks displays.

Lake Health

Personally, I've learned to reduce the manicured portion of my shoreline and lawn areas. I've planted more indigenous plants and trees and I've removed the

Answers continued, 3/...

boat launch railway system that was in place when I moved here. I hope to keep learning from our Lake Stewardship and Environmental Committee about other strategies to help preserve and improve the quality of our lakes.

Each level of government has their own defined responsibilities to protect the environment. McKellar Township must fulfill its role wherever possible, and I am committed to doing this at every opportunity.

McKellar Market

The McKellar Summer Market has just experienced another successful season. The location at Minerva Park offers the ability for visitors to drive, walk or boat to a scenic location. It is close to our retail activity and municipal docks. The Market has become an important part of the McKellar identity and it is my hope it will continue for many years. With the highway parking safety concerns addressed this summer, I see no reason to relocate the Market.

Public Access to Lakes

I am in full agreement that the Township has an obligation to maintain access to lakes within our jurisdiction. The planning, construction and maintenance of boat launches is a municipal responsibility. Each boat launch must be considered individually and the impact of the site selection, the design and surrounding properties are all elements that must be considered.

Sound System Improvements

I am committed to doing everything possible to improve the sound quality of our meetings. As Mayor, I would put forward a motion to address the failings of our current sound system with the following measures:

- Install acoustic panels on the walls of the Council Chamber.
- I would ask staff to establish a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the supply of microphones that are compatible with our equipment.
- Instruct the Town Clerk, the IT Consultant and the Audio-Visual Consultant to prepare a joint report on the potential remedies and a timeline to resolve the issues relating to the closed captioning, the transcript reports and the cause of intermittent service.

Answers continued, 4/...

Short-Term Rentals

It is my opinion that a total ban on short-term rentals would not withstand a serious legal challenge. As previously mentioned, I believe in property rights so long as the actions or activities of that property owner, or guests, do not intrude or limit enjoyment of neighboring properties. There is an existing committee dealing with this issue, and I am hopeful they will deliver a report with recommendations that Council can consider. I personally believe a licensing system provides an equitable solution for those on either side of this issue. Please click [HERE](#) to read my published platform on short-term rentals.

Tax Increases

Council is responsible for overseeing the financial activity of the Township. To that end, Council must work closely with staff to ensure the annual budget addresses the needs of the Asset Management Plan. Council should also ensure reserves are established and maintained to deal with the deviations caused by unexpected events. Budget items should be scrutinized and examined to ensure that the expenditures represent fair market value and are prioritized to reflect current and future requirements.

Transparency and Communication

If elected, I would propose that Council meetings be held twice monthly. I would like one of those meetings to be a Committee of the Whole, which allows for more interaction between Council and the public. I would propose that the Township website could be more interactive and provide a quicker response from Council members to questions from the public. I would also expect Council to adhere to the strict application of the Municipal Act which dictates that virtually all Council business must be conducted in public. However, the public should be aware there are specific instances outlined in the Act regarding which Council business should be discussed privately.

Wellness Centre (Parry Sound Pool Project)

My platform clearly states that I do not support this project. I don't support it because of the unknown, and likely high, costs to build it. Aside from two

Answers continued, 5/...

swimming pools, the complex would include a gymnasium, an indoor running track, meeting rooms, workout areas, etc. Meanwhile, there are existing facilities in Parry Sound that are under-utilized because of a lack of programming:

- The Bobby Orr Community Centre has a hall and meeting rooms that are rarely used. From April to September, when the ice surface is removed, the Centre's floor is under-utilized.
- The existing YMCA building also lacks programming to attract the wide range of community members who might actually use the facility.
- The Stockey Centre presents opportunities for more community engagement.
- Kinsmen Centennial Park, with its beautiful baseball and soccer fields, ice rink and children's playground area, is also under-utilized.

If these facilities are not being fully used, why are we building more? Please click [HERE](#) to read my published platform on this project.

* * *

If anyone has any other questions they would like me to answer, please click [HERE](#) or email me at info@michel4mckellar.com.

* * *

Following are the notes for my presentation at the All-Candidates Meeting at the McKellar Community Centre:

Address to the Ratepayers

All-Candidates Meeting, hosted by MLCA

September 17, 2012

Good morning fellow candidates, and to you the taxpayers of McKellar Township both here, and on Zoom. My thanks to Steve McDonnell, President of the MLCA, and our moderator Paul Trudelle for making today possible. I am honored to introduce myself and to tell you about my election platform.

Address to the Ratepayers continued, 6/...

My name is Michel Richard, or Mike to many. I have lived here as a permanent resident for 12 years after retiring from the University of Toronto as Director of Design and Construction Management. I was a seasonal resident here for several years prior.

In my professional life I've held multiple positions of responsibility with a solid track record of leadership and achievement. For example, when Grade 13 was eliminated, U of T faced a 'Double Cohort' of students, which meant there would be double the number of first-year students on campus. I was asked to establish a new department to build facilities that would accommodate this unprecedented influx of students. These new facilities included teaching, research and student spaces. A key part of my job was to ensure my team worked together and got the job done under a tight deadline. The end results were universally praised, and this is one of my proudest achievements.

I've been asked many times why I decided to run for Mayor. I don't have previous experience on Council, but I've been attending Council meetings for several years now, and I haven't liked what I've seen.

We have witnessed a dysfunctional Council with elected members resigning in the midst of turmoil, delays in responding to critical issues and a high turnover in Township staff. I'm running for Mayor because I have the management experience and leadership skills to move the Council and Township staff forward in a positive and focused manner.

If elected, I will ensure the business of Council, and how Council interacts with the public, staff, and other municipalities, is conducted in a professional and courteous manner. I will ensure Council discussions are informed, open-minded and inclusive.

My campaign platform is summarized on the MLCA website, and it's posted in more detail on my own website, michel4mckellar.com.

Since the beginning of my campaign, I've made it clear that I'm against the Parry Sound Recreation Centre as it is currently proposed. In my experience, when the cost estimates are revised to reflect the current inflationary economic conditions, we will see the final cost substantially higher than the original forecast. If elected,

[Address to the Ratepayers continued, 7/...](#)

I will work with the other mayors from the region to find reasonable and cost-effective solutions to this issue. For example, if Parry Sound's currently under-utilized facilities were better used with more programming, the scope of the new build could be reduced to fill in only where needs remain.

As I've been talking with McKellar residents during the past few months, the issue of short-term rentals has been raised repeatedly. The key concerns are, of course, noise – the party houses – but also things like septic capacity, fire safety issues, parking, garbage, etc.

I believe in property rights, but I also believe that the rights of neighbours must be respected. If elected, I will encourage the committee currently looking into short-term rentals to quickly bring forward recommendations that Council can act upon. Personally, I would like to see a licencing system brought into place. Such a system could address the long list of concerns that have been raised from both sides. I will gauge Council's success when we land on a solution that everyone can live with – one that will bring a level of harmony to this polarizing issue that has been left festering and unresolved for far too long.

Last year, McKellar Township closed the main municipal boat launch on Lake Manitouwabing with no public consultation. As everyone knows, there was a large public outcry. The Township's CAO suddenly left, two councillors resigned, and at the end of it all, the boat launch was eventually reopened. That said, there are issues related to all the municipal boat launches, and yet nothing was done over the past year. If elected, I will urge Council and staff to examine all municipal boat launches with the aim of ensuring that they continue to serve the community and are safe for everyone's use.

There are, of course, many other issues facing the Township, but my time is limited today. I'm referring to the environmental health of our lakes and shorelines, the assumption of roads, the maintenance of our township infrastructure, and the overall financial health of the Township. This last issue is important because we need to spend tax dollars wisely, ensure the good health of our infrastructure, and keep an adequate contingency in reserve for needs that we can't anticipate.

The MLCA has provided three questions in advance that they would like all of us to address, so before I close, I will answer those now:

I commented earlier on staff. On turnover - there is no doubt Township staff have worked through trying times in recent years. There have been staff shortages plus inconsistent direction from Council. This has to stop for the good of us all. If elected, I would work closely with the Town Clerk to ensure all Township positions are appropriately filled. I would let staff know their work is valued and that they will be supported. Last, I would establish agreed upon communication channels to provide a healthy three-way flow of information between Council, staff, and you the taxpayers.

On timely solutions - I have already addressed a number of these:

- The short-term rental committee is active, so I don't see why Council couldn't act soon.
- The boat launch committee was never formed, so Council will need time to research any upgrades or relocations that are deemed necessary.
- The process for assuming roads is well established, but the Roads Standards Report requires approval and critically, funding for road upgrades and summer and winter maintenance must be identified. We have approximately 142 km of roads in the Township. As of the latest Roads Report, 39 km of roads do not receive any municipal service, of which 30 km of those are private roads. Unassumed roads are municipally owned roads that have not been upgraded.
- A common theme among all the outstanding issues is that previous Councils have allowed them to linger for far too long. If elected, I would set out clear expectations and direction, and work through a schedule and budget for these important priorities.

The third question - *What would I consider to be my most important achievements at the end of the four-year term?* I would like to see McKellar Council as an open and effective body representing the interests of all taxpayers, while working cooperatively with the neighboring municipalities in our region. I would also like to see a group of staff who are strong, organized, and effective in meeting the needs of our community. In other words, at the end of four years, I would hope that my legacy is an organization that works effectively and continues to work effectively for years to come.

Address to the Taxpayers continued, 9/...

As I said a few moments ago, you can learn more about me at my website, michel4mckellar.com. You can send me a message or question from the website, and I will be happy to get back to you.

I thank the MLCA for organizing this event, and I thank you, the voters, for taking the time to inform yourself about this important election. I assure you, I'm willing to work with anyone you see fit to elect to Council. Thank you, and I hope I can count on your support.

* * *