

## Personal Statement of Qualifications and Interest for the Position of Councillor

Christopher (Chris) John Carrier

The Town of Collingwood has been my home for approximately 44-1/2 years. I was one of the many lucky ones who had an opportunity to raise a family and earn a livelihood in my adopted hometown.

I served on Collingwood Council for four consecutive terms, from 1998 to 2010 as both a Councillor and as Mayor. I understand the responsibility entrusted to each of you as elected officials by our community. During my 13 years as an elected official, I learned a lot from the Staff from the various departments within the Town. I can fully appreciate the amount of time required to thoroughly prepare for Committee and Council meetings.

During my period of elected service many local governments faced significantly reduced funding from our traditional partner, the Province of Ontario, and local government was tasked to do more with less upper tier government funding. The infrastructure deficit was clearly a challenge to be solved locally. The four councils I served on I believed met this challenge by hiring the necessary experts to work with our inhouse professional staff to provide the best options to resolve this funding crisis. The public information sessions and open houses provided opportunities to tweak implementation of these new methods of funding our local services.

I have learned that listening is a much better political skill than any oratory prowess.

We moved to Current Value Assessment for property taxes to ensure all property owners were treated equitably when it came to their share of the overall tax apportionment required to fund the services provided by our Town. Further we removed both water and wastewater services from the tax assessment method to a user fee method of paying for this essential service once again making larger water users pay their fair share of these two services. Re-investment in water, sewer and storm water systems was funded through water and waste-water surcharges. While change is often controversial it has led to a self-funding system that serves still serves the needs of our growing community.

Vision 2020 was a community exercise that was at first scary for a lot of us. Our community was facing the realities of the changing economy from 1986 and onwards from a less industrial focused to a more consumption-based economy. Our part-time population was growing significantly and was changing the demographics of our community. The leisure, tourism and knowledge focused businesses were leading growth, but could they be sustainable? That is a challenge that has faced every council including this one. The community engagement provided me the opportunity to meet and listen to so many different views from people that I in my regular course of business would have never met. A lot of these people taught me to re-evaluate my starting positions on issues. To be a better listener, to challenge myself to research and understand alternate viewpoints. To weigh the various needs and to try my best to make the right decision for our community.

Looking at a shortlist of issues that were championed by community leaders or colleagues around the table that I am still proud to have supported in a small way or in a larger role includes; a Smoke Free By-law, A Pesticides Free By-law, a new comprehensive Zoning By-law, a new Official Plan, significant efforts to protect and preserve the Silver Creek Wetlands, the downtown Heritage District, tens of

millions of dollars of new non-residential growth, the resolution of the western node commercial development, new employment growth and so much more. It bears stating to you that accountability and transparency are not new issues, they have always been issues for local government. During the years I served, my colleagues were able to draft and approve the first Code of Conduct and we also approved a written record of in-camera meetings be kept.

Each of you are aware through your single term or multiple terms of elected public service that the decision-making process is not always an easy one. I understand that as well. I am very familiar with the governance model, the code of conduct, the Municipal Act, the Planning Act, the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act and certainly not last nor least the Community Based Strategic Plan 2020-2023. I have kept up to date with provincial legislation that our province has enacted since I left office in 2010. I am somewhat nerdy that way. Like you, I respect the professionalism and dedication to service of Staff though there have been many changes since I left office.

This Council's efforts to heal the wounds caused by the actions of others that led to the Judicial Inquiry is admirable and it was necessary. Trust in our local institutions is paramount in moving our community forward no matter the decision before Council. In the new social media world decisions are often unfairly criticized and characterized. It highlights the necessity to continue to combat disinformation and misinformation with the facts. During my time in elected public service, I worked with people whom I mostly respected and admired. I did not always agree with them but if the system of decision making was thorough and fair, the outcome was the right one. I have watched and listened to many of your decisions during the last 3 plus years. As a citizen I am quite pleased that the process of decision making is more transparent than in years past. Your efforts to be more consultative especially during the pandemic is something to be proud of and an example for other communities to follow. I would be honoured to serve alongside you and to work with you to bring about the best decisions possible for our community in these last months of the 2018-2022 Council term. I will bring to the Collingwood Council table, 13 years of experience in honest, ethical decision making and a commitment to be thorough in my research and review of matters on the agenda.

Respectfully Submitted

Chris Carrier