

Municipal Election 2018



The Chamber of Commerce is supplying responses to four questions that we sent out to candidates so that you can get a better feel for their vision and platform. We sent out questions 1 and 2 on Tuesday and Wednesday. (Today) we have the third question. Tomorrow, October 12, we will have the fourth (and final) via our regular member email correspondence. It's a great opportunity for you to find out how candidates stand on business issues

Question Three

Summarize your position on maintaining a balance between environmental sustainability and economic development. How would you be willing to accept views that don't align with your views?

Smithers Mayoral Candidate Question Responses



Taylor Bachrach... The fact that Smithers is home to so many diverse perspectives can be a great strength. When it comes to development, it's important that we as local leaders seek to understand contrasting views and the values that underpin them. I believe we must also be open to refining or even changing our own views based on new information or new ways of seeing issues. We have an opportunity to move beyond viewing sustainability and economic development as opposites that need to be balanced against each other. Instead, these two concepts can – and I believe should – be aligned and mutually beneficial.



Randy Bell... In Canada we have some of the best practices in world on sustainability and we should continue to innovate in this. However, we are witnessing a provincial and national drive to shut down our energy and resource sectors. This not based on facts or the will of the people, but on ideological and special interests. Smithers needs to encourage our industry to develop sustainable business practices and products. This does not mean we give a green light to everything, but a red-light to anything resource and energy is a mistake. Our current governments are taking on new debt in the 10's of billions and spending taxes that won't be collected for generations. This is irresponsible and unaffordable. Locally we should not be taking the same approach to spending.



Smithers Councillor Candidate Question Responses



Gladys Atrill... Depending on what the environmental issue is there may not be a balance. Is our drinking water at risk or the rivers that support our salmon? I consider views different than mine because alternate views are necessary as one moves toward decision-making. With any economic development proposal, costs and benefits must be weighed. It is relatively simple to measure the dollars. It is more complex to measure the value of clean water, flowing rivers and healthy communities. Economy and environment are not separate as we saw with the loss of Atlantic Cod. That was both an environmental and economic disaster.



Colin Bateman... Smithers is very unique in its balance with recreational areas and business opportunities. We need to work on ways to be open for business but also keep in mind that we have business that we need to protect. Our doors should be open to the discussion however we need to be aware of our existing environment. Running a medium-sized business in Smithers for the past 10 years has given me insight into what it takes run a business in our town. The Aspen has always used recyclable products and we strongly believe in keeping it local wherever possible. From my time on the Chamber I have gained a strong knowledge of working within a group to achieve positive results. In my BV Soccer role, we convinced the town to make Chandler field a priority. With my role on the Smithers Tourism board I have been fortunate to see Smithers from all aspects of recreational perspectives and how the environment could be affected by the wrong decision or regulations, Putting all of these together gives me a very rounded way of looking at our town, one that if elected will help me work with the rest of council to achieve economic and environmental success while maintaining balance.



Lorne Benson... Carbon taxation is another example of escalated taxation which, by design, adds to the cost of living. This is especially an issue in rural northern Canada where transportation and heating costs, for example, add to the cost of operations and for accessing our natural resources. Municipalities receive “gas tax” grants to offset carbon taxation; however these grants come with conditions. The funds can only be applied to carbon reduction initiatives. Council need to creatively address infrastructural objectives by using these funds within prescribed guidelines.



Phil Briennesse... The troubling part I find is that somehow we look at environmental sustainability as being in opposition to economic development. Many countries and industries have shown it is not an either or scenario. Our region relies on industries such as forestry and mining exploration. I think many companies are learning that being environmentally sustainable, engaging in proper consultation with first nations, and doing it right leads to better projects. Some economic development relies on our environment. Tourism dollars and the number of people moving to Smithers because of the quality of life and affordability increases every year.



Greg Brown... My priority is to make environmental sustainability compatible with economic development. I use a framework of community economic development and seek shared values that work for our community. When tensions arise between different world views I support the use of good process to take conversations from talking about positions to talking about values; and from shared values to an action plan. Processes like these take more time, but in the end the community will get more robust outcomes for the present and the future.



John Buikema... Environmental Sustainability vs. Economic Development: So much in life is about balance, and I believe this is also true when looking at Environmental Sustainability vs. Economic Development. When environmental concerns are given too much emphasis, economic growth seems impossible. When economic development trumps the need to care for water, land, and air, then there will be a price to pay. Rather than either of these extremes, I believe that these two must exist in delicate balance. When dealing with those who don't see it this way, it is crucial that one listens and one shows respect!



Tim Sharp... I believe we should all be good stewards of the environment and think that we should look for ways to do so with little or no extra cost when it comes to economic development. I would look into grants for such projects. As I stated in question one I would seek the input from all people including those whose view point doesn't align with mine.



Casda Thomas... Our residents highly value our natural environment and many chose to make/keep Smithers home, in part, because of our outdoor opportunities. I don't believe that environmental sustainability and economic development are always mutually exclusive. In fact, they can be intertwined, as is the case of our tourism economy. I am not opposed to all development, nor do I believe in development at any cost. I believe in representing our community's diverse views and making decisions with the community in mind, even if my personal beliefs differ from those of the majority. Community engagement is key when polarizing issues present themselves.



Frank Wray... A workable balance definitely must be struck between environmental sustainability and economic development. Heavily favoring one over the other (either way)

would be irresponsible. As always, I would seek to work with those whose views don't align with mine. My responsibility as a councillor is to represent all viewpoints, and to work together to find workable solutions. The new Pinnacle Pellet plant is a great example that shows that the two concerns do not have to be mutually exclusive.

 **Ryan Zapisocki**... Economic development is key for us to maintain our quality of life. I think it is very important to keep environmental sustainability at the forefront of all our economic development, as we have a responsibility to our future generations to have the same quality of life we enjoy. I have always accepted views that don't align with mine, and treated them as a learning experience. I believe in the freedoms that allow us all to have our own views, and with open minds we can get together to achieve great things in a democratic fashion.

Telkwa Mayoral Candidate Question Responses

Question Three

Summarize your position on maintaining a balance between environmental sustainability and economic development. How would you be willing to accept views that don't align with your views?

 **Brad Layton**... Environmental sustainability and economic development are co-dependent. Without one the other is in peril. I have been involved in land use decisions for my entire adult life and have truly come to believe this. If you ignore the environmental side and just go after the economic benefits you will compromise the economy with environmental issues that will eventually shut it down and have major costs to our health and well-being. Protect everything fully and you will have a population of poor people that will eventually want to develop at any cost to get out of poverty. A balance is the only way to be sustainable.

 **John McDivitt** N/A

Regional District Candidate Question Responses

Question Three

Summarize your position on maintaining a balance between environmental sustainability and economic development. How would you be willing to accept views that don't align with your views?



Mark Fisher... Economics once meant negotiating unlimited wants and limited resources. Factors of production were land, labour, capital (capital the physical product of land and labour). I feel that we need to come back to those concepts. If we value all factors of production equally and adhered to full cost accounting (consider external impacts) then economic activity would increase. Part 2 - I am an entrepreneur with certain beliefs but must operate within a current system. I accept things that do not align but champion those that use a triple bottom line philosophy (financially accountability, socially responsibility, environmentally sustainable).



Leah Germain I will have a focus on responsible resource and recreational development to ensure our water, dirt and lifestyles will continue to provide for us and our future generations. Ensuring the jobs created are economically viable and family sustainable without sacrificing our health and safety. I encourage open discussions so the decision made are informed and evaluated.