

MONO FRED NIX CANDIDATE FOR COUNCIL

MONO MULMUR CITIZENS' COALITION SEPT. 16, 2018 QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL CANDIDATES

1. Why are you running for office? What vision for our community drives your participation in municipal politics? What do you think you can contribute to our municipality?

I am running because I enjoy the interaction I have with my community and I think I can contribute to the health of Mono by being on Council. My vision for Mono is in accord with its 2011-2015 strategic plan. "The Town of Mono will be a safe, sustainable municipality where the new Economy, our Environment, our Community and our Natural Heritage can flourish in harmony."

2. Do you subscribe to the theory that increased residential development will reduce the tax burden on residents, and if so what would you do to encourage such development in our community? What about other types of development: industrial, commercial, etc.?

No I do not subscribe to that theory. I am not about to encourage any development (residential, commercial, industrial, gravel pits) in Mono beyond what is already either in development or in accord with the zoning in our official plan. Very approx., there is one 35-37 house residential development in the works and two relatively small areas zoned commercial or light industrial that will probably see development over the next decade. As we have met our targets under the Provincial Places to Grow Act, I am quite content to leave it at that. The only other development I would support is some modest "in-filling" in a few of our hamlets and such things as the addition of granny flats to existing lots.

To expand on one point: our current population is estimated to be 9,681 people. Our Official Plan projects a population of 9,770 by 2031. The point is that we are not anticipating, or planning for, any further growth in Mono.

3. What would be your approach to maintaining municipal services while keeping taxes stable?

My approach would be the same as it has been for the last eight years. We have seen some small tax increases (although the actual tax rate has fallen – 17% since I was elected in 2010). We never allow new tax revenue to increase by more than the rate of inflation. It would be nice if we could even go lower, but the pressures on us are quite fierce. Currently, we have the lowest tax rate in Dufferin County and I intend to keep it that way.

4. Aggregate mining is a major industry in Dufferin County, including in our communities. How would you propose to limit the expansion of aggregate mining?

The ugly truth is that it is difficult to beat the Aggregate Resources Act, but I voted against the Greenwood application and I fully support the Protect Mono people in their battle against this approx. 400 acre pit. As a councillor, I also worked with my fellow councillors to stop St Mary's Cement from renewing its license on the 5 Side Road to mine below the water table, We (Mono and surrounding communities) have done our share in supplying the GTA with gravel. It is time to stop the development of any new major pits in this area.

5. We live in "Headwaters" communities and ground water is our most important resource. What steps do you feel the council should take to ensure the protection of our water?

Given my stance on development in question #2 above, I doubt that Mono has much more to do. Under the Clean Water Act we have had the conservation authorities map all of our vulnerable aquifers and all of our significant recharge areas. We fought the application to allow the St Mary's Cement gravel pit on the 5 Side Road to continue mining gravel by going below the water table. We won that battle. We have a small committee (Headwater Streams Committee) that is actively involved in projects that improve the health of surface water flows (I am a co-founder of this committee). We have three conservation authorities (Nottawasaga, Toronto Region and Credit) that are actively involved in work that improves water quality. One of the principles in our Official Plan is "the preservation, protection, improvement or restoration of ground and surface water features, hydrogeological functions, and fish habitat . . ." Also, we are actively managing all the threats (to our municipal wells) identified when our Source Water Protection plans were developed by the conservation authorities. And in terms of the specific "water quantity" threat that applies to the wells we have in the Amabel (Guelph-Amabel) aquifer there is a pending agreement between Mono and three neighboring municipalities that requires us to monitor and, if necessary, re-evaluate future risks. Mono has agreed to this agreement as has Orangeville. We wait for two other municipalities to get on board. Finally, as forest cover is a great way to protect and enhance surface water -- and ultimately ground water -- it might be noted that 41% of Mono is now tree-covered and we actively plant trees on municipal property and encourage residents to plant more trees on their properties.

Having said all of the above (ie, that I don't think there is much more for Mono to do), there is one area that is a small concern: in some of our municipal wells, sodium levels are increasing. The levels are fairly small -- about 52-to-55 mg/L -- so are not a real problem. However this level is higher than many municipal drinking water system (a Federal report says the average for 122 municipalities is 5.6 mg/L) . Of more concern, the levels in one of Mono's wells is increasing by a small amount every year. I cannot point the figure at any particular cause for these increasing sodium levels but common sense says it has something to do with the salt we put on our roads, the salt we spread on our driveways and walkways and the large amounts of salt put on parking lots of some of retail outlets. We (Mono plus neighbouring municipalities) may have to do something about this in the future.

6. What are your plans to manage the ongoing problem of noise pollution in our community?

This is a difficult question. We have a very tough noise bylaw (81 pages long) that dates back to 2004. In my first term of office (2010-2014) I sat on a subcommittee that tried to improve this bylaw but I have to admit those efforts did not result in any changes. Currently, our noise bylaw sits in the office of our lawyer awaiting suggestions on how we might improve it. As I understand the problem with our current bylaw, it is its enforceability that is in question. We have never laid a charge under this 2004 bylaw. The next Council will have to deal with this issue.

One other point about our noise bylaw. It is very strict (no electrical amplified noise after 5:00 pm) but we do allow for people to apply for exemptions. Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) did apply for exemptions in the summer of 2018 for a number of events they were having at Island Lake. We granted the exemption with conditions (the number of decibels that could be heard at the property line). CVC has been terrific in the way they have monitored and reported on these events and I commend them for being such a responsible landowner.

7. The dumping of contaminated landfill is an increasingly serious problem for our area. What will be your approach to addressing the fill dumping issue?

We fought and won our battle to stop a resident from developing a commercial landfill site in Mono (whether or not the landfill was going to be contaminated). We have a very good fill bylaw -- Site Alteration & Fill Bylaw 2014-31 -- and we are currently working on some improvements. I hope this new bylaw can be approved before the term of this current council is finished.

Whether or not a municipality can control the importation of unwanted fill, the issue of it being contaminated is another subject. If fill were brought into a municipality and if it were contaminated, the Provincial Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change would become the lead actor.

8. How do you propose to increase citizen engagement and participation in council business? How can the council improve transparency? Will you support continuing with regularly scheduled town hall meetings? Do you support the creation of and full support for effective council committees (eg: clear mandates, regular reports to and interaction with council, etc.)? What other forums for transparency and citizen involvement do you foresee?

The last two councils in Mono have worked very hard to increase citizen engagement and participation. We have put a lot of effort into our web site and have a full time employee whose sole job is to maintain it. We have email lists that citizens can join to keep abreast of the latest news. Although I am a novice at social media, I know staff are actively engaged in

using this to let people know what we are doing. We publish newsletters -- three in 2018. These are mailed out to all residents. We hold Town Hall meetings -- only one this year because we thought a fall meeting would interfere with the election campaign. We publish "Council Highlights" which are available on our website plus I notice the latest one is on one Facebook page. All of our council meetings, and the meetings of our committees, are open to the public. We rarely go in camera and when we do it is under the strictest guidelines (actually, under Provincial law). All agenda and minutes of our council meetings and the meetings of our committees are posted on our web site. I support all of these efforts and of course I support anything that would further citizen engagement, participation and more transparency.

9. Our communities have Codes of Conduct which aim to ensure dignity and respect for participants in the municipal government process. What do you feel could be done to improve the current Code of Conduct?

Mono's Code of Conduct was passed as a bylaw in 2016. It is comprehensive covering everything from the way we must behave in Council to how we deal with residents and other parties. I have not thought of any changes that could improve this code but am open to any reasonable suggestions.

10. For Mayor and Deputy Mayor candidates: you will be our representative on County Council. Will your actions on County Council be directed by the instructions of your local council? What will you do when county needs and priorities conflict with your municipality?

Although you have directed this question to the candidates for Mayor and Deputy Mayor, as a lowly Councillor, let me also address it. The practice in Mono is that we, as a Council, do not direct our representatives on County Council, or any of the Boards on which councillors sit, nor do we direct councillors who sit on committees. So, for example, I sit on the Board of the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority as I have for close to 29 years. Years ago when Council appointed me to the NVCA as a citizen rep., it was my practice to appear before Mono Council to seek direction as to how I should vote on NVCA budgets. However, once I was elected to Mono Council in 2010, I ceased this practice. How I vote on the NVCA budget or any motion before the NVCA Board is my decision and my decision alone. (Council can always un-appoint me if they disagree with my decisions.) However, after saying all of this, I should note that the current Mono Council is very collaborative. If a councillor feels strongly about something that is happening at County Council or the NVCA (or any other Board), I know the representatives on those bodies would listen and likely be persuaded.