

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

JOHN CREELMAN – CANDIDATE FOR MONO DEPUTY MAYOR

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 for Deputy Mayor because I want to continue making a difference to our community. That has been my commitment for the past 30 years. My previous experience on both Mono and Dufferin County councils prepares me to tackle a host of issues. These include gravel mining, Internet service, by-law issues and enforcement, policing that addresses our speeding road safety crisis and responsible, accountable local government to name but a few.

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.?

Absolutely not. For one thing, I do not believe Development Charges totally off-set the cost of development. For another, the cost of development is always a moving target, usually upward. Also, various items covered by development charges are discounted if deemed to be of benefit to existing development. These discounts are arbitrary. Finally, some things aren't ever covered by Development Charges.

We have areas that are currently zoned industrial and commercial. There are still opportunities to attract appropriate commercial and industrial businesses but we also need to pinpoint the sort of home-based or micro-businesses we want to encourage in Mono. We must do more to ensure they establish here and expedite approvals necessary to make it happens. This will require municipal effort and business supports such as reliable high speed Internet.

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

This requires delivering those services more efficiently, looking at service sharing with other municipalities and making sure that we go through a rigorous process in reviewing budgets, adding services and hiring new staff. I deal with some of my ideas regarding this in my website at johncreelman.com under 'controlling taxes and managing smarter'.

In terms of keeping taxes stable, I do not subscribe to the all too common view that government is entitled to a routine annual 'cost of living' tax or budget increase. Any increase of any kind needs to be justified and explained. Any changes in budget or services need community input.

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?

First, Mono needs to be resolute in its opposition to the Greenwood application and going forward, any other applications that may come forward. Second, we need to ensure MTO and other commenting agencies stick to their own design principles and criteria. I cannot imagine how our roads can accommodate the volume of truck traffic expected from the Greenwood operation without seriously compromising safety and road standards intended to insure proper and safe flow of traffic.

Second, I think Mono needs to take a hard look at the fee it charges to process aggregate applications. Clearly it's now well below even simple 'cost recovery' given the complexity of these kinds of applications and should be much higher. Making an application for costs after the fact is often ineffective.

Finally, this is both a local and provincial battle. Having been on Council when other applications were made and as a former member of the Association of Ontario Municipalities Board, I know how to fight and argue for Mono's interest at both the local and provincial level.

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?

As the co-author of a 30 year old report that coined the terms 'headwaters' and articulated all that it meant to this community, I am alive to this challenge. When last on Council, we adopted a billing scheme for those on municipal water services that rewarded conservation, one of only 5% of Canadian municipalities to do so at the time.

In 1998 I raised the alarm that MOE had absolutely no idea how many water taking permits were issued or active. The Walkerton tragedy spawned a variety of good source water protection initiatives and rules but while progress has been made, so much more work needs to be done. We all live above one aquifer and must bear this in mind in all planning decisions and those of our neighbours.

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

First, you need a good enforceable by-law. Second, we need an enforcement strategy. I think the noise and other by-laws need to be reviewed and possibly re-written. We need an enforcement strategy that involves an approach to investigation, warnings as appropriate and a willingness to lay charges when needed. To the best of my knowledge, there have been no charges under Mono's Noise By law or at least any successful prosecutions.

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?

I'd start with a good enforceable fill by-law. A number of Mono citizens have worked on one but it currently sits unaddressed by Council. Again, we need to make decisions regarding enforcement. For example, will by-laws continue to be triggered by compliant only? Will we have our own enforcement official or share this resource with other Dufferin municipalities?

Finally, at some point MOE must be engaged if contaminated fill is suspected.

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?

We need a completely new website. The Internet should be the easiest means for Mono residents to interact with their Town and elected representatives. Mono's website should be an easy to use, intuitive repository of all information about the Town and its services. While there is an enormous amount of information on this site, it has simply been cobbled together over the years without regard for clean design and usability.

The latest user stats for Mono's site show a *decline* in key use indicators even though the introduction of Facebook and Twitter by the Town should be driving usage up. We simply need to start from scratch.

I hope Council will review its current committee structure, mandates and reporting obligations. Moreover we absolutely need to inject fresh blood onto our advisory committees. This should be one of the new Council's first orders of business.

I am absolutely in favour of actual Council meetings in all parts of Mono. We first did this during my term as Mayor in the late 1990's. I will support setting aside time for discussion of neighbourhood issues suggested by residents of the area where the meetings are held as well as an open approach to citizen participation during all parts of such meetings.

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?

The Code of Conduct is relatively new to municipal councils and possibly it's time to be reviewed with citizen involvement. In my experience, Mono has not had the problems of decorum that plague other municipalities.

All Councils need to guard against the possibility (often temptation) to discuss items *in camera* that should be addressed in open session. Fortunately there are now safeguards against this but as Deputy Mayor, I will also be alive to this issue when participating in Mono and Dufferin County meetings.

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?

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not directly elected to County Council. They sit on County committees and Council by virtue of their positions on a local council. As such, they have an obligation to discuss County issues with their local community and council and seek advice and direction when necessary.

I made a point of doing this when I served on both councils and indeed found it quite powerful to state at County that I was speaking with the authority of Mono Council.

Will there be occasions when County and local tier municipal interests conflict? Possibly but rarely. If there are, County Councillors should be under an obligation to raise the possibility at local council and explain their actions and votes at the County level. Dufferin County should never be independent from the wishes and objectives of ratepayers and its individual local municipalities. I will find it easy to vote Mono's interest at the County table.