**Questions for 2026 Municipal Council Candidates**

## Jamie Ferguson
## Ward 2 Candidate

- **What is your vision for Port Hope at the end of the next four-year Council term?**

I envision Port Hope as having a plan in place for the future in four years. Many answers will have been answered around our relationship with OPG and clear asks and expectations from the Municipality will have been set.

A focus for Port Hope will be on it's role as a customer service business with that perspective being modelled from council. I hope that a customer service culture will be embedded in each department including successful implementation of a 'ticket' system so that resident queries can be tracked and managed appropriately.

- **What do you believe are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing Port Hope's economy?**

I think that major projects such as the potential New Nuclear at Wesleyville present both great opportunities and great challenges to the economy. The opportunity is, of course, for jobs, tax revenue and new development in the community. At the same time there are numerous challenges such as the infrastructure costs and responsible growth planning.

Other opportunities in Port Hope's economy include the development of a cohesive tourism plan which takes into account the entire community include the rural and natural areas and the communities role within the larger county.

Challenges include the current lack of industrial tax base in the community which results in a large residential tax burden. This is countered by the potential opportunities of new major projects which present the potential of a massive tax infusion into the area.

- **What role should the Municipality play in supporting existing businesses and attracting new investment?**

The Municipality should be expected to work with existing business of all sizes and locations to promote the community. Economic development is an important role for municipal government and Port Hope has many businesses in the area which could use the boost that a thriving economic development team can offer. Existing business also needs the day to day support of ensuring that basic services are provided included equitable access to waste management, roads maintenance and storm water management.

Working with new investment to the area is also a key role for municipal government. The Municipality has an opportunity to enact a shift in culture to enable new business to build in Port Hope. The planning and building departments should be working within a customer first model to find ways to work with entrepreneurs who have unique ideas and find ways that these can be successfully implemented in safe and productive ways.

- **How should Port Hope accommodate growth while preserving the qualities that make the community distinctive?**

Port Hope is well known for it's historic downtown and respect and preservation of historical buildings. As the community grows there is opportunity to look to our neighbouring communities which have implemented policy which includes streetscape expectations which reflect the aesthetics of the neighbourhood.

There is also opportunity to look to the broader community where policy has encouraged inclusion of historical facades, when appropriate, while incorporating new, modern, environmentally responsible buildings.

- **What municipal services, infrastructure or policies are most important to a healthy business environment?**

I do believe that the focus of the municipality should start with getting the basics right: safe, maintained roads, snow clearing and waste management. These basic needs are important to business to ensure that traffic can flow, agricultural equipment can be transported and business can function day to day.

At a broader level municipal policy has a responsibility to take into account the position of all business, both urban, rural and agricultural and to consider the different effects that those policies have on the different types of businesses. The planning and building departments are very important especially as businesses work to grow and develop in the community. Bringing a customer focused lens to the planning and building department to work with business owners in a productive way goes a long way to build a healthy business environment.

- **How would you ensure that the needs of businesses across the entire municipality, including the downtown, rural area and home-based businesses, are considered in Council decisions?**

As a rural business owner in Port Hope I think I bring the lens which is needed to guide Council in taking the perspective of fellow business owners into account. Strong business associations like the BIA and the Chamber also bring the perspective of business owners forward. I feel that council has a responsibility to listen to the both the individual businesses and the associations to ensure that their perspectives are taken into account.

- **What changes, if any, would you support to make Port Hope's planning, building and development processes more efficient and predictable?**

While I do support that there is a need to implement a culture-shift towards a more efficient and predictable process environment in the planning and building departments I think that it is important to define the role of a council member in municipal council. Ultimately individual department directors report to the CAO and the CAO reports to council. Council does act as the employer to the CAO and through that relationship can provide a level of expectation, policy and guidance.

I do endorse a 'customer-first' approach within all departments and a specific shift to this especially within the building and planning departments. There needs to be a 'how can we help' or 'let's work towards a solution' approach versus a 'no' approach. This approach can be championed from council through the CAO and department directors. Council can act, to a certain degree, as a liaison, to ensure that productive conversations are facilitated where possible.