



**2018 Municipal Elections, Candidates' Questionnaire  
Town of Huntsville, Mayor  
Candidates: Scott Aitchison, Peggy Peterson**

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1. Why do you want to be the Town of Huntsville mayor? Highlight work and community experience that has prepared you for this position and the skills you bring to the role.
2. What is your working style? Describe how you work to ensure productive discussion and resolution of issues and how co-workers and colleagues describe your working style.
3. Name three priorities for the Town of Huntsville and how you will address them.
4. How do you or will you balance constituents' interests and staff recommendations?
5. How will you work with the Lake of Bays Association, its members and other community groups?
6. How will you balance economic development and environmental issues?
7. What is your position on more clean energy projects in the Town of Huntsville?
8. Do you support or oppose the as-proposed development of Langmaid's Island into 36 lots, and two mainland parking sites? Why?
9. What is your position on funding for the day-to-day operations of the Town of Huntsville library?
10. What is your position on hospital reform in Muskoka and do you support maintaining hospitals in each of Bracebridge and Huntsville?
11. What area(s) of Town of Huntsville spending do you think is given too much funding? Why?
12. What area(s) of Town of Huntsville spending do you think is given too little funding? Why?
13. What ways would you work to increase affordable housing in the Town of Huntsville?
14. Complete this sentence. Vote for me because ...

Contact Information

1. Why do you want to be the Town of Huntsville mayor? Highlight work and community experience that has prepared you for this position and the skills you bring to the role.

Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
<p>I have served 13 years in elected office as a town and district councillor and four years as Mayor of Huntsville. As Mayor I sought to make the operation of local government more inclusive, to pay down municipal debt, build reserves and invest more money on transportation infrastructure – all of these things have happened and continue to happen. I also have been working to better align services between the local municipalities and the district – this has been a more frustrating process, but if re-elected I am determined to complete this and reduce costs as a result.</p>	<p>The decision to run for the District of Muskoka was one that I made months ago and the decision to run for Mayor has been under consideration for almost as long. The experiences I have had as a resident, as an advocate for Muskoka Small Business and a recognised Water Protector had made it clear to me that changes were needed at all levels of government and Huntsville was at a serious crossroads. The decision to run for Mayor was not finalized until an hour before the deadline of 2 on July 27. I was raised to respect our democracy and our system of election must ensure people have the right to vote for their leaders, so I prepared to let my name stand for Mayor of Huntsville. Our existing two-tier system of government in Muskoka makes it critical for elected officials to sit at both the Municipal table and the District level to be effective. I have worked from the outside of governance on various issues and found a frustrating lack of a genuine effort to support a sustainable resilient community anywhere in Muskoka. I have witnessed some complete failures at the local level and too many incidents that have led to more harm when the people are clearly asking leadership for better care and concern.</p> <p>This experience and my years as the District Manager for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) have prepared me for the position of Mayor and Chair of the Huntsville Council. I will be spending the next three months talking to people about the issues and asking what they want from this next elected council. Individuals and</p>	

	<p>businesses have been frustrated by the fast and furious development that happens far too often in Muskoka and the planning seems to have little or no respect for our ecologies or our economies, but these issues can no longer be separated. The people who live and enjoy Huntsville want to see a responsible respectful path forward that restores the community and the lands and waters we depend on. There are many great people who love this area and want to see a council genuinely interested in creating a kinder and gentler footprint sooner than later. The people are clear they want leadership from these councils that encourages a more discerning eye on development at the planning level particularly with our shoreline and wetland development.</p> <p>My experience as a respectful peaceful advocate for Muskoka has helped me developed my confidence and the experiences over the years has provided with a wealth of information with a grassroots education around the needs of the people and the places we all love. I do understand the enormity of this commitment and come to the table fully prepared to work full time and I promise to do my best to represent all the people.</p>	
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2. What is your working style? Describe how you work to ensure productive discussion and resolution of issues and how co-workers and colleagues describe your working style.

Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
<p>I am an inclusive team builder. I challenge staff and members of council to bring their best to the table.</p>	<p>My working style is simple and effective, and it continues to evolve as I meet more people who are interested in responsible and respectful leadership. My practice as a Professional Gardener and Permaculture Educator provide me with a clear understand of what the components of the creation of a healthy prosperous community. The Unity Plan has one clear message PROTECT THE WATER and it sits gathering dust on a shelf with many reports that need to be reviewed. Much of the work was done during that time and I think we can find some gems in these documents to get the community moving quickly in the direction of being more mindful of the fragile nature of nature. Circles of conversation will be part of a plan to be more inclusive and I believe in educating the public and ensuring people have facts to make informed decisions. I support the power of the people to make the changes once the path forward is clear with good balanced unbiased leadership. I am a skilled listener and it is my hope that this next council will be warm and welcoming to the people. I work like a turtle in my business and my life by being dependable, consistent and group goal oriented. The people in my life who have witnessed my work ethic would agree that I am an effective leader and dedicated to what I commit to. I am a very persistent person who searches for the truth behind the front-page article and who is willing to engage with anyone and all levels of government entities fearlessly. I consider the most important consideration for a future Mayor of this place a chair who creates a</p>	

	respectful balanced unbiased meeting that is inclusive, thoughtful and effective. Clear open communication is the cornerstone of good working government I will do my best to create a quality working atmosphere at the town hall with staff council	
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3. Name three priorities for the Town of Huntsville and how you will address them.

Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
<p>Saving our Hospital is the top priority and I will continue to work on the Task Force planning for the future of healthcare. I will also continue to challenge the province to improve the funding formula so that it no longer hurts medium size hospitals. Completing the re-development of Fairvern is an important priority that I will continue to work toward and working to ensure that Huntsville becomes a more inclusive, engaged community that is open for business and new ideas.</p>	<p>The three priorities are a common thread in my platform, the ecology the economy and the community and my message is simple. Our ecology is our economy. I believe that next few years are critical for the planning and implementation of changes at all levels of Canadian society that will keep us strong and resilient to the changes, including the environmental changes and drastic weather patterns. We must address the growing local consequences of this new dynamic of Opioid addiction. This is an issue that like many is found everywhere and we all need to be part of a create solution locally and globally. This is our responsible as citizens of Canada, a privilege we cannot take lightly. As a council I will encourage a council that is accountable and responsible to the people and we must ensure a future for Huntsville and area that is financially responsible and clearly respectful and protective of the environment. The community needs to be confident in our ability to be resilient in these times of change, proactive instead of reactive. The communication between municipalities and all levels of government is critical for a small town, I will do my best to have a good working relationship with Town Staff and the Council and all effected parties and support an engaged and environmentally supported economy. There are issues like the Hospital and Library Funding that must be addressed so there is no loss of services. We have a clear message for Queens Park that we will not be surrendering our services and we will</p>	

	<p>be happy to be part of a new funding model. The town is behind on the street and sidewalk issues and many are safety related and need to be addressed as soon as possible. I am suggesting the current council address some of these safety issues in their term, so winter will not create and further risk to the public or civil liability. This next term may be the most challenging in our history and strong leadership and a commitment from the new council could make that happen. We have an opportunity to ensure a healthy future for the people who love this area and want to see balanced responsible prosperity for everyone.</p>	
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4. How do you or will you balance constituents' interests and staff recommendations?

<b>Scott Aitchison</b>	<b>Peggy Peterson</b>	
One issue at a time.	<p>Balancing the interests of the people and business and working with staff will be an important challenge. This will bring together all the issues to the forefront if we want to work together successfully for this next term. This is certainly the most challenging issue daily for a Mayor. The Town Hall must be considered a place for genuine conversations and sharing that includes a balance of interests. Listening to all parties and providing an opportunity for all voices to be heard is my task and finding the resolutions is the responsibility of every elected official. The budgets at the town are very large and it will be an ongoing process to review and consider where there is any excess or wasteful or unneeded expenses that can be addressed. The challenge for a town like Huntsville is finding a balance between the needs of tourists, cottagers and residents. We are a long-established soft tourism-based economy with great potential for more environmentally responsible growth in our business sector. Year-round employment remains an issue and the poverty level for Muskoka is very serious, so we have work to do to make this community work for all the people.</p>	
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5. How will you work with the Lake of Bays Association, its members and other community groups?

Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
<p>I work with many community groups including lake associations by including them in the decision making process particularly regarding the updates of important municipal documents such as the Official Plan.</p>	<p>Lakes Associations have been critical for the care and honest review of watershed health. There is no way we would be looking at the health of our watersheds now if it had not been for the forward thinkers establishing groups of caretakers on the lakes and rivers of Muskoka. I learned to care for the water from my father Russ McCammon. He and my mother retired early to Huntsville from a farm in southern Ontario in 1967 for a centennial project. We lived on Fairy Lake and one of the first things my father noticed was the impact of development on the watershed and he and another gentleman began the regular testing of the water qualities in the local lakes. I remember going out in the boat with my dad to help him take the samples for Fairy and Pen Lakes and it is those old samples that the Muskoka Watershed Council uses for their statistics. Protecting the watershed is in my blood and it is the protection and restoration structure of this natural infrastructure will ensure the future for this community. The first thing I will promise the local lakes association is that I will attend your meetings and ensure your reports are received and read by Council and involved staff. I am aware of the expertise found in our lake associations and the interest in responsible management of our lakes and rivers. I am hoping we can provide space for interested parties to gather for conversations about the present and future of the area. It is time to work together on our common goals and ensure the future. We could set a standard for other communities to follow with our respectful responsible path of development. One only must</p>	

	<p>consider the people who make up this community and their passion to make it better and more inclusive. The Arts and Music community is filled with beautiful people following their passion and they need to feel loved and supported as important parts of a healthy balanced community and a vibrant economy. I have concerns about leftover debt from the Town Hall Renovation and the G8 spending spree and I will have more information about these inquiries as the campaign proceeds. I think the timing is perfect to engage with each other and plan a future that looks different from the one on offer.</p> <p>The legacy of lakes associations is clear to me and I would suggest they will only become more important and valued in the future. Too often I have witnessed activities and decisions at council in the past 12 years that has bothered me. I have seen lakes association strong respectful arguments to council be dismissed and not given proper consideration. The worst incident involved a presentation from the Pen Lake Association to the Huntsville Council concerning the unprecedented expansion at the Deerhurst properties. The group presented a well researched document as written. The presentation spoke clearly detailing the reasons for the ask for a delay in a decision for more time and consideration and the ultimate dismissal by the council was disturbing for me and I am sure it was an exercise in frustration for the Association. It is times like this that have helped me to decide to become a member of this government to see if we can improve the system from the inside.</p>	
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6. How will you balance economic development and environmental issues?

**Scott Aitchison**

**Peggy Peterson**

Our environment is our economy. We are always seeking to strike that right balance between private property rights and protecting the natural surroundings that have drawn so many people to our community. We do this by ensuring the policies of the Official Plan are followed and development is properly located to reduce it's impact.

Finding the balance is the challenge of the day and the biggest challenge for any council. This is going to take some thoughtful forward thinking and the collection of minds, but it is not impossible. I have great experience working the people to empower communities to help them define their future and there is not shortage of people who want to help in this process. The atmosphere and the environment at the Town Hall are clearly the responsibility of the Mayor and Council and this relationship will be a priority. If I am elected to be the next Mayor I will prioritize my relationship with staff and council and work to create a good working relationship, so we will ensure we are working well as a team and are effective as a staff and council.

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7. What is your position on more clean energy projects in the Town of Huntsville?

<b>Scott Aitchison</b>	<b>Peggy Peterson</b>	
<p>We have completed many clean energy projects in Huntsville, including the replacement of our street lights with LED fixtures, installation of solar panels on the town hall, installing LED fixtures in the arena etc. We will continue to invest in technology which will reduce our carbon footprint and reduce our energy costs.</p>	<p>the introduction of respectful responsible renewable energy is another key component of any plan to be resilient and self reliant as a community in the future. I will presenting more information about this topic of conversation during the campaign and look forward to sharing my experience with the now defunct Ontario Green Energy Act which had little to do with true green energy and more to do with private profits. I am looking forward to discussing key issues with and my work to help the people who fought fight the small for-profit power projects planned in Baysville, Brunel Locks and Port Sydney. Our work in Bala to create the Bala Falls effect created a higher bar in community accountability that became the reason these projects were never engaged. Unfortunately the Bala Fall effect did not save the Bala Falls. What we must do is clarify genuine green energy that serves the economy locally and provides local sustainability without doing damage. The experience of the resistance in Bala to this project introduced me to all levels of government and will help me in my work with Huntsville and District Council.</p>	
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<p>8. Do you support or oppose the as-proposed development of Langmaid’s Island into 36 lots, and two mainland parking sites? Why?</p>		
<p><b>Scott Aitchison</b></p>	<p><b>Peggy Peterson</b></p>	
<p>I will support any development that meets the intent of the Official Plan. Langmaid’s Island is not in Huntsville, so I would work with the Township of Lake of Bays to ensure that whatever is ultimately proposed for Langmaid’s Island and the necessary parking facilities in Huntsville will be compatible with our Official Plan as well.</p>	<p>This is a very timely question and I am comfortable in saying that I do not support the development as it is written on Landmaids Island. The Idyllic nature of this yet undisturbed ecology must be given great consideration before any more approvals are given. I met a man with information and a petition a few weeks ago who introduced me to the issue and we are in touch. There appears to be a lack of clarity on the scope of the project and the potential watershed impacts. There needs to be a timely review by the new council and a true assessment done. I am asking the current council to refrain from approving any more large or controversial projects and hope they take this time to finish up their current undertakings including the downtown spending spree and Kent Park remodel.</p>	
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9. What is your position on funding for the day-to-day operations of the Town of Huntsville library?		
Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
The Town of Huntsville currently funds the day to day operations of the Library and I favour continuing to do so.	Libraries, like hospitals are cornerstones for any healthy town and that is has been for over a century in Huntsville and there should be no more thought to removing or reducing services. I believe Libraries are going to become even more important in the future as a gathering place. Libraries have become so much more than a place to find books, they are community gathering places that are inclusive and accessible to all. Safe access to the internet is an important part of the services that local libraries provide. CBC had a report the other day about how library staff are filling the gap for communities who have lost their local papers. Library will always be reverent and necessary in any vibrant community like Huntsville.	
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10. What is your position on hospital reform in Muskoka and do you support maintaining hospitals in each of Bracebridge and Huntsville?

Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
<p>I support two fully functioning acute care hospitals – one in Huntsville and one in Bracebridge.</p>	<p>The Huntsville Memorial Hospital is a foundation of care for all of us whether we are residents’ cottagers or someone touring around. The legacy of our local hospital is a critical part of our infrastructure and there is not way the people of Huntsville and Bracebridge should be having to worry about a hospital closure or a reduction in services. I have been following this issue for years and recall clearly the wise advice by Dr, Lynn Sergeant when they were threatening our hospital with closure a few years ago. He was clear that if we start to surrender services we will lose our hospital and that message stands true. I look forward to being part of the work that ensures this ongoing threat of closure ceases to be a problem. The power to address this rests with the people and the politicians and the people of Huntsville have been incredible clear stating that we want and need a fully functional local hospital to serve us now and in the future. The issue of a stable funding model is going to be the work of many voices and I trust the people will be heard loud and clear.</p>	
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11. What area(s) of Town of Huntsville spending do you think is given too much funding? Why?		
Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
Too much funding? None.	There are issues swirling around Huntsville on spending habits and I certainly have concerns about the cost of advertising paid by the taxpayers. We have just ended a very expensive experience as a landlord at the Waterloo building and it was recently sold it at considerable loss to the taxpayer. Then we see plans spend that money in the downtown when we have debt from some of these endeavours. I think there are savings to be made by working with other Municipalities to find solutions to common problems instead of this ongoing competitive nature. I also see the costs trucks and crews for maintenance going up and I am not sure why, so I will be interested in seeing the details on that spending and how it has increasing substantially over the past few years.	
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12. What area(s) of Town of Huntsville spending do you think is given too little funding? Why?		
Scott Aitchison	Peggy Peterson	
Capital Asset Management. We would have to double taxes to fully pay for how the province expects municipalities to fund the maintenance and ultimate replacement of all the roads, bridges, building etc.	There is a challenge to properly fund for a safe and resilient infrastructure including roads and public sidewalks, I would like to see a detailed assessment as see a plan for addressing this as soon as possible. I am sure the towns insurance company would like to see the same ...,	
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**13. What ways would you work to increase affordable housing in the Town of Huntsville?**

<b>Scott Aitchison</b>	<b>Peggy Peterson</b>	
<p>We are currently working with the district, the province and the private sector to construct more attainable housing. The Town of Huntsville has given away parcels of land to support the construction of affordable housing and to support the work of Habitat for Humanity. The Town of Huntsville also waives all fees and charges we can in support of affordable housing. We will continue to do this and look for new ideas to deliver more housing for the people in our community who are in need.</p>	<p>Affordable Housing has been discussed for years in Huntsville, but I can honestly say I have not seen the Town Council embracing the issue as serious as I had hoped they would be at planning. A perfectly sad example of this is the loss of the Empire Building and the affordable housing it was providing people. When the Town got involved with the zoning of the lot for future development they did not listen to the people asking for these units to be included in the plans. There is a very real sense in this community that the people in need of affordable housing are less worthy and that is something I hope we can change in future. Creating healthy community requires an all-inclusive attitude and working together to make it better for everyone.</p>	
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14. Complete this sentence. Vote for me because ...

<b>Scott Aitchison</b>	<b>Peggy Peterson</b>	
<p>I have a proven track record of working with any who are interested in being involved in the leadership and direction of their community. As Mayor we have paid down debt, built up reserves and invested millions more dollars into our roads, bridges and trails. I seek to continue the great work we have started.</p>	<p>I am the right person for the job, who will work full time for the people of Huntsville and area and because I genuinely care about our collective future.</p> <p>Vote for me because you trust me to do my best to ensure respectful thoughtful and inclusive meetings and effective leadership.</p> <p>Vote for me because I will support cost effective solutions to the issues that face us today and, in the future,</p> <p>Vote for me because you believe I have earned the the opportunity to represent you and ensure your voices are heard.</p> <p>We all need to be prepared to get involved in everyway we can to make a difference and set a path forward for Huntsville and I am grateful for this experience and this opportunity to serve.</p>	
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