



**2022 Municipal Elections, Candidates Questionnaire
Town of Huntsville, Mayoral Candidates
Nancy Alcock, Steve Hernen, Reuben Pyette-Bouillon, Tim Withey**

Click on any question to go directly to the answers for that question.

1. What should the Township/Town do to reduce its carbon footprint and facilitate movement away from fossil fuels?
2. The Muskoka Watershed Council is recommending an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Muskoka which would require municipalities to base planning decisions on impacts to the entire watershed, not just the local municipality. Do you support this approach? Why or why not? How could this change planning decisions in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville?
3. What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too much funding and why?
What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too little funding and why?
4. There has been an increase in year-round use of seasonal properties due to the Covid pandemic, retirement, and other factors and trends. How should this affect municipal services such as roads and garbage, and other non-municipal services such as internet?
5. How should the Township/Town evaluate its Short-Term Rental Licensing program?
6. The Lake of Bays Association has identified several Election Priorities (see cover letter). What can the Association do to help council address any one or more of these priorities.

Contact and other information.

1. What should the Township/Town do to reduce its carbon footprint and facilitate movement away from fossil fuels?

Nancy Alcock: There are several paths I believe we can take at the municipal level. As a start, the Town should prepare a carbon footprint report to take stock of our current practices and to prepare to make our community more resilient and responsive to the impact of climate change. There are tools that can be used to assist with this response including, targeted fees and subsidies, climate-related financial planning, as well as more natural approaches such as wetland conservation and rehabilitation and wide scale tree planting programs. Most importantly, we need to anticipate, through adaptation measures to begin to respond to climate stresses. With respect to the specific question of moving away from fossil fuels we need to encourage the use of more advanced building techniques such as the use of heat pumps, as an example, and alternative solutions for household sufficiency. The municipality can prepare for the influx of e-automobiles in our community by ensuring we have the necessary infrastructure throughout our community that supports the newer models coming into the market.

Steve Hernen: For the Town of Huntsville to reduce its carbon footprint it will need to focus on building efficiencies and reducing its reliance on gasoline/diesel for its equipment. Building efficiencies will include using new technologies and upgrades on current and new facilities. That would include increasing insulation values, making use of products that consume less energy such as LED lights and proper heating and ventilation systems. Due in part to the large road network being serviced, the Town of Huntsville uses over 250,000 liters of diesel fuel yearly. That number does not include the amount of gasoline used by service vehicles and other equipment. As new technology becomes available for heavy equipment the Town will need to move their fleet to this technology. Not only can the Town lead by example but it can also assist the public by installing car-charging stations in municipal parking lots and facilities, improving sidewalks and trails to encourage active lifestyle and improving the transit system to reduce reliance on personal vehicles. Reducing the Town's carbon footprint will have an initial higher capital cost, but it's one we must accept and save for in order to protect the environment.

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: One of the biggest concerns these days is our carbon foot print on the environment. While many people may argue whether in fact there should be a concern about greenhouse gases just as many will argue that greenhouse gases are naturally occurring and part of our environment. Regardless of your opinion building a sustainable future requires good decision making and planning. Sustainable imprints that will last decades without reconstruction. Reducing Green House gases should include solar and electrical generation. We have substantial electrical needs generated through water already but we could do much better through wind initiatives. It will be interesting to see the impact of solar through energy creation with such innovations as solar roof tiles and panels. As a municipality we need to take the lead through using our vehicles longer and buying for the future. Cutting transportation costs by buying local and supporting our communities rather than purchasing outside of our regions and countries. Community garden initiatives that support home grown and preservation of foods through canning rather than fresh and frozen. Many skills have been lost and reteaching recycling and reusing should be a priority. Sustainability through smaller homes and alternative living should include an increase in height restrictions while supporting our fire departments in reaching new heights.

Tim Withey: As the holder of a degree in Environmental Studies I am very concerned about our impacts on the environment. Specifically, I will install more charging stations in town for EV vehicles. I will also transition the town's vehicle fleet to EV vehicles where practical. The Town currently has solar panels on the roof of town hall and has changed out our streetlights to more efficient LED bulbs. I was instrumental in the removal of unnecessary street lights on Deerhurst Highlands road and remain committed to reducing light pollution wherever we can.

[return to top of document](#)

2. The Muskoka Watershed Council is recommending an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for Muskoka which would require municipalities to base planning decisions on impacts to the entire watershed, not just the local municipality. Do you support this approach? Why or why not? How could this change planning decisions in the Township of Lake of Bays/Town of Huntsville?

Nancy Alcock: As a member of the Muskoka Watershed Council Board of Directors, I have been an early champion of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan for all of Muskoka. This is the only way we can begin to understand and tackle the issues that cross all boundaries between our communities and is an essential tool for protecting our natural environment. Once this plan is finalized, I will ensure all planning and public works decisions integrate the policies and recommendations from the Watershed Management Plan. I would also include this document as a resource in ongoing dialogue with residents in our community. Having been a member of the MWC for eight years now, I will continue to support their approach to educate the public on our watersheds and tools we have to protect them. I believe communication is key to ensuring successful implementation of these policies.

Steve Hernen: I support the Muskoka Watershed Council's proposal for an Integrated Watershed Plan. Huntsville, being the northern point of the District of Muskoka and the beginning of the Big East River, accepts water which flows through Huntsville/Port Sydney and eventually into Georgian Bay. This water system is a resource in which we all share and must take responsibility for. The water flowing into Huntsville needs to leave our municipality as clean or cleaner as when entered. From a planning and development prospective, we will need to protect our shorelines. We also need better investigation and evaluation of new storm water management systems including increasing system capacity to handle the more frequent storms. A proper monitoring and maintenance plan needs to be implemented for all storm water management systems within Huntsville today.

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: Our communities have been rather blase when it comes to protecting our watershed and spawning grounds. Planning must ensure an environmental impact be examined by counsels and planners in the field as well as Ministry inputs of potential concerns. A coordination of regional concerns should be all encompassing to deal with new developments and upgrades. I support this coordination of efforts and would support local initiatives for improvements in stock and healthy environments.

Tim Withey: I absolutely support this approach. We have recently undergone a comprehensive survey of our waterfront strategy and I commit to adopting the recommendations in the report to protect our important watershed.

[return to top of document](#)

**3. What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too much funding and why?
What area(s) of the Township/Town budget do you think receives too little funding and why?**

Nancy Alcock: If elected, I will increase funding to climate change initiatives. The District of Muskoka has been diligently working on a Climate Change Strategy that will include all municipalities within the region. The implementation of this strategy is a critical piece of my platform for the next four years for reasons stated above. I'm less comfortable responding to your question with respect to parts of the budget where we spend too much although I'll try. As a small rural municipality, we tend to hire consultants for various activities within the town's administration. It may be a useful exercise to review where we use consultants the most and determine if it would be more appropriate to bring in in-house staff that could do the same job. An example that comes to mind is having an in-house engineer to provide input on all development and public works applications.

Steve Hernen: Tourism and Marketing, although extremely important to the Huntsville economy, is an area, I feel, needs to be reviewed to find other methods of revenue so it does not rely on tax-based funding. The Accommodation Tax was created by the Provincial government to fund these activities and implemented by the Town of Huntsville for this reason. It is time to reduce the tax-based funding and replace it with the revenue generated from the Accommodation tax. Capital infrastructure such as roads, bridges, sidewalks, storm sewer systems and facilities are the municipalities largest spend to maintain and replace. The Town of Huntsville has a Capital Asset Replacement Plan which is underfunded. This plan will need continued monitoring and regular maintenance of the assets to extend the asset life cycle where possible. It also needs additional funding to provide for future needs. Although the provincial government has committed to a new hospital for both Huntsville and Bracebridge, they will not fully fund this capital spend. The provincial government will expect a local share which, according to a District of Muskoka report, could be as high as \$75 million. Huntsville, the District of Muskoka and every community within the catchment area of these hospitals, needs to recognize this fact and start to save for this future (10 year) expenditure. If elected I will make this a budget priority starting in 2023.

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: I believe that Town and District are duplicating services that could be better amalgamated under one roof, putting these savings into roads for resurfacing, repair and snow removal services. District Housing while needed should be located within the communities they have properties, localizing services that require less travel and time.

Tim Withey: As the Chair of Corporate Services in the Town of Huntsville I have taken a hands on approach to scrutinizing our budgets to deliver the best outcomes for our citizens taxpayer dollars. If elected mayor I commit to restructuring our committees to reflect the needs of our rapidly growing community. Top among this is the creation of a new Climate Change Committee that will focus on protecting our environment for both current and future generations. So to that end, more funding is needed for this important aspect of our lives. I believe we need more funding for affordable and attainable housing and commit to working with all levels of government to move this forward. Another area that requires more funding is our enforcement of bylaws. Our bylaws are often ignored because people know many infractions will not be enforced. We need 24/7 coverage to stop people from taking advantage and breaking the rules.

[return to top of document](#)

4. There has been an increase in year-round use of seasonal properties due to the Covid pandemic, retirement, and other factors and trends. How should this affect municipal services such as roads and garbage, and other non-municipal services such as internet?

Nancy Alcock: All residents within the Town of Huntsville pay taxes to be used for the ongoing maintenance of municipal infrastructure. This includes those who are here on a seasonal basis. While services may differ for various reasons, it is incumbent on all of us to find solutions that meet the needs of all residents. The province has mandated various initiatives that have had a direct bearing on services provided to some residents. I believe, it's our job to determine how to respond to these changes to allow for continued improvements to services where needed. E.g. waste management. With respect to internet services, I'll continue to advocate for better internet throughout the entire Muskoka region. If Covid taught us anything, it is the absolute importance of staying connected to ensure the overall health of all of our citizens.

Steve Hernen: The recent increase of seasonal properties being used year-round should not have an affect on our tax base. Many owners have been using their properties frequently for several years, and the Town has been anticipating that many of these properties will be year-round homes in the future. Perhaps that future is now for many people. Many of these properties, due to market value assessment, pay relatively high taxes to the municipality at present and have contributed to the betterment of their communities for many years. The municipal roads on which these properties are located are already being maintained by the Town and there is already garbage pickup on these Town roads. Thus, I would anticipate minimal cost to the municipality for an increase in population in certain rural waterfront areas. Although many of the waterfront properties are located on private roads, this should not cause an issue or an increase in servicing, as the residents are quite aware that these roads are private, and therefore maintained by the property owners. The Town of Huntsville does not have as many of these private roads as our neighboring municipalities, like Lake of Bays and Muskoka Lakes, however our policy has been, and most likely will continue to be, that the Town will not be upgrading any of these private roads. The Town's policy is, and I support this, that any seasonal roads must be brought up to Municipal standards by the property owners prior to being assumed and/or any Town funds being spent on these roadways. Any requests for upgrades to these private roadways would have to be brought to Council and looked at on an individual basis.

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: Increases in Seasonal Properties being used puts stress on services, roads and garbage collection but also town services and demand for services. As counsel we must plan for the future and for now. Parking and transportation services should be supported in every way possible. Weekly garbage collection and waste management for large items. Ease of access which supports recycling needs. Internet services coming through infrastructure grants should be the priority of the companies providing services. As seasonal dwellings become year round homes we should also look at the AirBnB issues surrounding our communities and put limits on such properties. By identifying absentee owners and onsite occupancies we should be able to mitigate neighboring concerns and service use for incidental management.

Tim Withey: Huntsville is a rapidly growing community. We are essentially adding the population of Parry Sound to our community every two to three years. Our population currently stands at about 22,000 souls and I believe will be the size of Orillia by the end of this decade. With this growth comes many opportunities and challenges. Making sure our infrastructure and services are set up to serve our new residents has to be a priority. Not only making sure our roads, bridges and culverts and garbage collection are sufficient for this growth but also that this important infrastructure is built to withstand the increased frequency of more intense weather events due to climate change. We also need to focus on areas such as adequate healthcare services such as attracting more Primary Care Physicians and making sure our hospital has a robust range of services available for our citizens. We need to prepare for an increase in our fire services as well. More recruits, more equipment and more stations to adequately cover our growing needs.

[return to top of document](#)

5. How should the Township/Town evaluate its Short-Term Rental Licensing program?

Nancy Alcock: As you know the Town of Huntsville has had a licensing program for short-term rentals for two years now. We have been updating our policies, fees and penalties since the day it was first implemented. As we were the first municipality in Muskoka to enact a by-law of this kind, it has been a learning experience and I believe we continue to make the program better with each change. It is my view the licensing of short-term rentals is here to stay ... if the program didn't exist the municipality would have very little control with respect to rentals in our community, which has been a growing market for years. I believe there is always room for improvement and I will endeavour to continue to review and update where necessary.

Steve Hernen: The Town of Huntsville has a Short-Term Rental (STR) By-Law and a licensing program to track and approval STR units. The Town needs to continue to monitor to ensure that all STR properties are properly licensed and registered. I have heard many complaints about the behaviour and activities of the occupants of these STR units in which no By-Law staff are available after hours to deal with the issue. If elected as Mayor I will bring two motions to council for consideration and approval. The first would be that the Town of Huntsville take a zero-tolerance approach to these STR units for both the occupants and the property owners when breaking any of the current licensing By-Laws. The second motion is equally importantly. I would have By-Law staff available 24/7 to respond to issues as they are occurring, not the following Monday after everyone has left the property. All costs associated with the increased enforcement would be covered by an increase in the STR yearly licensing fee so that the cost does not affect the tax base.

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: The Town should scrap the licensing program in favor of business licensing. Identifying business concerns and requirements at the onset. A different program creates a situation which creates ambiguity and animosity. Taxing the traveler and taxing a business further creates unnecessary taxation that is regressive.

Tim Withey: I am on the record as opposing STR's. I believe they destroy the fabric of our community as well as negatively affecting our cottage resort industry. We have a licensing program for STR's in our town currently that employs a three strike process for those who disregard the rules. We need to stop speculators that are buying up properties sight unseen for the sole purpose of converting them to STR's. Perhaps a longer minimum stay period will help as well as a regulation that only allows people to run an STR from their owned properties only. This will hopefully stop corporations from this activity. I commit to increasing our system of fines to include the corporations such as Air Bnb and VRBO who will also monitor the worst offenders.

[return to top of document](#)

6. The Lake of Bays Association has identified several Election Priorities. What can the Association do to help council address any one or more of these priorities.

Nancy Alcock: I have looked at all of your priorities and believe they fit very well with the issues I will be raising in my campaign. I have identified climate change resiliency, the lack of attainable housing, the need for balanced development in our communities and ensuring our community remains economically vibrant and healthy. Ensuring high-speed internet is available to all is a critical piece of infrastructure that has been and will continue to be necessary for ensuring continued equity and vibrancy in our community. Ensuring all services, specifically health-care (eg. continue to advocate and work with senior levels of government on the redevelopment of the hospital in Huntsville) is paramount. The Town of Huntsville is in the process of completing and in the near future implementing a new Community Planning Permit system that will adopt the policies from our 2019 Official Plan. This will allow ensure all future development is balanced and will be done in a way that allows for creative and more flexible thinking with new development in our community. LOBA can play a role by staying involved in community consultations around climate change initiatives, ongoing review of significant developments and the implementation of the new Watershed Management Plan when it has been completed.

Steve Hernen: The first four stated Lake of Bays Association priorities; Action against climate change, District-wide integration watershed management, sustaining environment protection and shoreline environment protection, are akin to what I have been hearing from other Lake Associations and residents throughout the community. This is about protecting the natural environment, which is the reason many of us were drawn to the area in the first place. So, when I am asked what I (we) can do to help achieve these goals I simply state that education and meaningful communication is the best place to start. For example, by simply talking to your neighbours or local road association about your thoughts on steps neighbours and the local community can take to lessen their impact on the environment and the effects these have on the local area will go along way in resolving the issues before they become battle grounds for neighbours. I truly believe that no one wants to find themselves on the negative side of an issue but may be there because of their lack of knowledge of local rules, regulations and best practices. However, when education fails and in the interest of protecting the natural environment, the Municipality must be prepared to take action by any means available to it. This includes By-law and Site plan enforcement, zoning enforcement or defending planning decisions when appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal (formally known as Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT)).

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: Open Government must be a priority. Coordination of services must bring together both counsel and staff to create a fluid system of delivery and consultation.

Tim Withey: I believe the Lake of Bays Association plays an important role in assisting municipal governments in identifying and providing action for issues affecting all of us. You are the stewards of the local environment and are instrumental in acting as partners with local governments to make sure we don't lose sight of the importance of these matters. Your voice matters.

[return to top of document](#)

Contact and other information.

Nancy Alcock:

- Town and District Councillor - Town of Huntsville and District of Muskoka Councils (Two terms) (2014- present)
- Deputy Mayor for the Town of Huntsville - 2019 - present
- Chair, the Town of Huntsville Planning Committee 2014 - present
- Chair, District of Muskoka Community and Planning Services Committee 2018 - present
- Member, District of Muskoka Planning Committee (2014 - 2018)
- Chair of the Muskoka Housing Task Force (2019 - 2021)
- District representative (one of two), Muskoka Watershed Council Board of Directors. 2021 - present (formerly on the MWC Executive Committee 2018 - 2021)

alcockformayor.com

vote@alcockformayor.com

Steve Hernen: Although I have never held a council position, I have worked with Municipal Councils for the past 38 years in various roles including Fire Chief for Huntsville/Lake Of Bays , Acting CAO and Director of Operations and Protective Services.

steve@hernenformayor.ca

705-788-4008

Reuben Pyette-Bouillon: I have never sat on a council for the Municipality or Town; I have sat as President of OPSEU local 366 as well as chair of the G.L.A.S Social Club sat on a number of steering committees through out my career with the Ministry of Community and Social Services and CEO of my corporation.

[ReubenPyette@facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com/ReubenPyette)

rpyette64@hotmail.com

Tim Withey: I was elected in 2010 as the representative for Brunel Ward in Huntsville. During that term I was Chair of Community Services. I ran for mayor of Huntsville in 2014 but was unsuccessful. I ran successfully in 2018 for a seat on District Council and Huntsville Town Council. I sit on the Health Services Committee at District and am the Chair of Corporate Services for the Town of Huntsville.

tim@withey.ca

705-783-3289

[return to top of document](#)