

2022 Mayor/Council Candidate Questionnaire - Noel Wentworth Response

1. Should all sectors have affordable housing and permanent rental stock, or should one or two sectors be designated for rentals and designed for low income no income people?

Great question! I believe all sectors should have affordable housing and permanent rental stock. I'm looking forward to working with council and developers to address this.

2. Should all neighborhoods have small complex care housing as has been suggested by research?

I can understand and appreciate the concern and fear of our residents based on what I've heard. I do think a pilot program of one house and then more would be something to explore and work towards for helping our affected residents get back on their feet and contributing to our society.

3. One of our members was advised that in March 2023, the Ministry of Social Development & Social Innovation office will be moving from Dilworth Drive to the old CIBC building across from the Petro Canada on the corner of Dougall Road South and Highway 33. This has sparked concerns that community safety will be put further at risk as the population of repeat offenders and transients will increase even further and we have already seen a large increase over the last year. What actions would you take to ensure that residents are informed of matters that affect community safety in the area?

Keeping neighbourhoods advised will be critical. Starting with neighbourhood leaders/groups and social media "groups" and platforms like Next Door, Instagram, Twitter or even direct mail would be helpful to keep residents advised. This would have to be a team effort and not a one person volunteered job.

4. Neighborhood Associations previously had access to speak at City Council meetings open to the public on any matters affecting residents living within their boundaries. Recent changes to City policies severely limited the ability of Neighborhood Associations to bring forward their concerns and discuss these at Council meetings. What would you do to ensure that Neighborhood Associations are included in decisions being made at the municipal level? Individual residents can bring up specific concerns at the podium on Tuesday public hearings as long as it takes up no more than 5 minutes of time. Having one representative with 40 minutes of concerns (as in a recent council meeting) would not be possible, but a coordinated effort of multiple speakers with individual topics to be addressed could do the same thing. Advance emails/letters to Council and Mayor would also be helpful.

5. We constantly hear that 'community safety is everyone's responsibility'. Do you think that this has contributed to a level of vigilantism within the community?

Yes. It's been a difficult time for RCMP and residents. The pandemic and directives from our Provincial Government has made it incredibly difficult for the RCMP to do their job.

I completely understand the frustration and the feeling that people should have the right to fight back for what is being done to them but that shouldn't be happening either.

To avoid this, we need more RCMP and Provincial support with updated post-pandemic policies, supports, detainment and punishments in place for the RCMP to keep offenders, especially repeat offenders, off the street.

If elected, I will advocate for more change on a Provincial level to help curb our crime.

6. What would you like to see municipal, provincial, and federal governments do in terms of addressing safety concerns in our community (as well as others)?

As we move out of the Covid-19 pandemic and with pressure from our Municipality, the Provincial government will be able to make changes to address a number of things that are creating the chronic crime and safety issues across our Province. Budget permitting, I would like to see a PACT (Police And Crisis Team) nurse to help with mental health calls as well as the ability for the RCMP to detain repeat offenders.

7. Do you support replacing the current Kelowna Theatre and what priority does this project have to you?

When the current theatre was built, Kelowna was only 18,000 residents. We're now over 220,000. Yes, I do support replacing the current theatre. I have been involved with the collecting of data, debates and meetings for the last 15 years on this very topic. Bottom line, it's time.

We need a bigger theatre not only for our community and mid sized cultural events, but to also attract artists who will bring more people than the current theatre can hold making it more feasible to bring in bigger named acts that can't afford to perform at our theatre because of their touring expenses. A new theatre will bring income and help our economy, create employment and add excitement and vibrancy to our downtown core.

There are a few priorities that need to be addressed first but definitely a new Theatre is on my radar. In the end, I do think it will end up being a Private and Municipally funded venture.

8. What is one specific process or decision of the last council that you disagreed with, and what specifically would you have done differently on this file?

Okanagan Springs Golf course was a difficult decision for me. Weighing the pluses and minuses based on what I saw, heard and read, it was a difficult choice. Ultimately, I sided with the majority of council but the decision didn't feel 100% correct either.

I'm not certain what I would have done differently other than wish I could have found out more of how the City might be planning to keep some of the green space and what the environmental/economic impact would have been to keep a golf course that the owner was trying to sell. I also wondered if the proposed industrial area that will take its place could have been designated somewhere else, but on the surface it seemed like the best option considering current city plans.

Both decisions will impact our environment. One with tonnes of chemicals going into our water supply each year, the other removing green space for developing an industrial area that will employ higher paying jobs.

At the end of the day, Okanagan Springs was a privately owned business and I wouldn't dream of telling someone they couldn't sell their business or use/sell it to someone else. I'm hoping now the city can use the land for ways to make money to pay for other things our city needs like parks (more green space) and infrastructure.

9. What are your 3 main reasons for running for Mayor or Council?

I'm running for City Council because I want to make a difference and play a part in Kelowna's future. I would also like to be a voice on City Council for Small business and Arts and Culture (I already represent Arts and Culture on the Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission).

I was born and raised in Kelowna and have seen a lot of changes. I've played a strong role in

community service, helping the youth in our community and raising over \$270,000 to put back into our City.

I am a Business owner, Teacher, Musician and a good listener.

Over the past 10 years, I've been getting more and more interested in City Council and the inner working of our City.

10. Do you believe that residents associations should play a bigger role development and planning within their areas, should their voices be given more value?

Yes, I do believe they should be consulted and their concerns addressed in advance.. It's possible someone might catch an issue others may not have considered.

11. URBA and possibly the Downtown Kelowna Association receive funding from the City and are often called on to speak as stakeholders for an area. Do you feel that Neighborhood/Sector Residents Associations should have a valued voice equal to the business association voice? That's a very interesting idea and worth exploring. I would look forward to speaking with our residents and council about this.

12. The residents' associations would not want to be paid for by the city because their voices need to be kept separate and responsive to residents' but do you feel small grants from the City could be allotted to keep the voices of citizens in neighborhoods heard?

Not necessarily. We need to think of ways to save money as a city. That said residents should keep themselves informed on developments in their community and be aware of proposals that may affect them. The City of Kelowna website is quite robust and residents can find everything they need to know. Residents have 5 minutes to air their concerns at city council meetings. I've heard some speakers bring some things up that I would have never thought of.

13. If elected, how would you work to have resident's associations voices involved at the beginning of planning and development in their areas rather than an after thought when the planning is already well on its way to being completed?

I would like to see the proposal be sent to the residents association before the proposal went before councils first reading to try to keep them informed, dispel misconceptions and ultimately save time. I have seen at least one meeting recently where residents thought a parcel of land was owned by the City. The land in question was actually privately owned for years and was purchased with the intention of developing it. The neighbourhood residents were unknowingly trespassing on private property using it as a dog park or hiking trails and didn't want to see the neighbourhood area developed.

Advance communication would have gone a long way to help residents understand this was the intention of someone who bought the property to develop it years ago. The developer even consulted and worked with the residents to address nearly all of their concerns but it was still not enough for residents who were against change or seemingly uninformed.

14. If elected, would you look at why so many variances are made after the initial development approval where neighbors have some input? Variance which can change the whole character of the initial proposal are approved without further resident/neighbor input. For example:

Neptune/Mercury Road was to have a development of townhouses to be owned by purchasers which close neighbors agreed with so didn't present anything to Council. After approval the developer changed this to be a rental development where tenants do not own the property and

possibly will not have the same initiative to look after the property.
Yes, I'd be diligent to find out why. There must be an explanation for this.

15. If you are elected, how would you address that development permits which include zoning changes are then allowed to sit idle sometimes for years until the property is sold, based on that change to zoning, with a totally different developer/development than what caused a zoning change?

To be honest, I wasn't aware of this but it sounds like it's very possible it's happening. If elected, this would be something I would really like to bring up with the City Planner and Manager and then Mayor and Council.

16. If Kelowna does not build for 40,000 people who want to come here by 2040 what do you think those people will do? Move to a different city? Become homeless?
Let's hope it won't come to that. We'll have to see what the landscape will look like over the next 18 years. I don't think they will choose to become homeless and would very likely move to find employment elsewhere before that.

17. How would Kelowna be run differently and look if we were not focused on building for the multitude of people who want to move here, and instead built well planned affordable housing and neighborhoods for those who are already here?

A thought provoking question!

People want to move or relocate to Kelowna for a number of reasons (employment, retirement, family, lifestyle, school, etc.). Housing isn't just about the people living here currently. All of us at some point moved here from somewhere else.

Housing and neighbourhood planning is happening all the time and each year Kelowna is changing. That said, It doesn't take long to wonder some of the reasoning for the plans and wanting to ask questions.

Regardless, this is a conversation to bring up with developers and their intentions.

This also bring up a lot of conversation like: How it would be run differently? Would it need to be run differently? Why would to need to be run differently?

All questions and reasoning I would love to listen to and think about when making a decision on City Council.

18. What do you think Kelowna would be like if we planned affordable neighborhoods with as much care as we plan our more expensive neighborhoods?

I think that would be fantastic. I have a meeting this week to discuss a developers plans for just that reason.

19. Our latest OCO (2040) has increased the heights for many areas, but developers still want to build higher. What do you believe is important for assessing increased building heights? Should residents in an area be given a chance to speak to major variance changes when they are presented to Council?

Great question.

Internal function of the building would be the reasoning behind height variances. Some, but not all of those reasons could be schools, hospitals, museums and more.

Residents are encouraged to speak to their concerns and are welcome to do so at the appropriate regular Tuesday night City Council meetings.

As a note UBC heard the concern of the tower height and removed 3 floors of their plan based on the concerns of our residents.

20. If elected, do you plan to bring more and diverse industry or manufacturing to our area where citizens can learn and progress from a ground level job to a well-paying job through education and work experience? (At this point, many of the people working in the service industry and at ground level jobs may have to work 3 jobs to even survive and there is no real opportunity to advance in those jobs.)

I would support more diverse industry or manufacturing was to move into our city to give our residents opportunity for employment and ways to make more income..

21. If you witnessed an incident of bullying, intimidation, or discrimination against another Council member, would you be willing to act as witness for that Council member?

I have not seen bullying but have in conversation heard this has been happening. No work environment needs to be like this.

Yes, I would be willing to act as a witness.