

2022 Mayor/Council Candidate Questionnaire - Zach Sawatzky

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?

I think all humans should have the right to safe lodging. It is impossible to try and value anyone based on income.

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

I have never seen research that suggests this as best practice. Regardless, I do not agree that all neighborhoods should have small complex care housing. I believe quite the opposite. We should be very selective of the neighborhoods we choose to house complex social issues.

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?

That is a great question. Action could be in the form of creating an online link or platform on the City's website where all matters that affect community safety in our area's is shared openly everyday.

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?

This is a concerning change for sure. I would fight to reinstate previous policy or at a minimum review the changes that severely limit the ability of our neighborhood associations to bring forward their concerns. These concerns must be allowed to be discussed openly and fairly for any reasonable resolve can be reached.

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?

I personally have not heard of any vigilantism within our City. It is important that we all citizens stand up for one another against wrong doings to the best of our ability.

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)?

Provincially and Federally I would like to see a strong rehabilitation initiative for our homeless. The bulk of our crime within Kelowna can be prevented as long as we properly solve our homelessness issue. Somehow we have to find a way to rehabilitate those who are willing to become productive again so they can start to contribute to our society rather than subtract from it.

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

I have not studied this project at all, at the moment, so I will not comment.

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?

On September 20th, Mayor and Council approved a new Liquor Primary licence for a 685 person, 1:00 AM serving time music venue (aka nightclub) downtown. I would have voted against this as residence made it clear they were NOT in favour and this is clearly going to be a noise nuisance at a minimum. I would have pushed for consideration of alternative sites for this business.

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

I want to make a positive impact for my daughters' generation.

I know I can help bring bottom line growth.

To share my skills and ability with this beautiful community we love.

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?

Their voices should be given the same value as everyone else which should be fair and reasonable for all.

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?

Yes, it sounds very reasonable to me that the neighborhood and residents associations have an equal voice as the business voice.

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?

It is a reasonable request the city could consider. I know budgets are tight at City Hall. Regardless, the residents' associations benefit all residents they represent so even if it is run by volunteer only I highly suggest residents form these associations.

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?

Being one member of eight councillors I can't say exactly "how" we could achieve this but I would be happy to bring these voices forward myself if it came down to it. I'm here to win and make a bottom line impact on behalf of our citizens.

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 would look at why so many variances are made AFTER approval and WITHOUT neighbor's input. That sounds very one sided.

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?

This is unfortunate. I would have to understand this process better than I currently do to give an answer.

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?

I could not guess at what becomes of people to who do not exist yet.

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?

Kelowna would look different in that we would and could focus more City resources on current amenities and infrastructure that are in great need of improvements.

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?

We would see a far more robust working and middle class sector in Kelowna if there was more affordable housing.

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. I believe this needs to be a balance of economic necessity (how much demand aka population does our economy require for health and growth) versus how will council help ALL resident's continue to enjoy their views. We cannot have zero growth and change to our skyline and expect to retain a robust working economy. So, views are part of that sacrifice and I know how disappointing that can be. My wife and I had the ONE towers come up right in line with our beautiful mountain view. But, they are important to Kelowna's economic health and amazing views are not hard to come by in this city.

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 job may have to work 3 jobs to even survive and there is no real opportunity to advance in those jobs.)

Yes, I would be in favour of bringing in more diverse industry and manufacturing. Our city is in need to exactly these types of jobs and residents. They bring specialization and bolster our economy moving forward.

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?

Yes I would ensure my statement is clearly communicated and justice served to my fullest ability.