

DIANE THERRIEN'S MAYORAL CANDIDACY ANNOUNCEMENT SPEECH MAY 3 2018 // CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Thank you all for coming out this evening.

I'm really excited to be with all of you in here Peterborough, on Williams Treaty Territory. It's an honour and a joy to be surrounded by so many people who care so passionately about our city.

Tonight, I'm excited to share with you that I'm announcing my candidacy to become the next Mayor of Peterborough.

When I think back four years ago to when I first ran for Council - I felt compelled to run by the issues that dominated my life at the time - arts and culture, environmental sustainability, active transportation, housing and poverty issues. I expected more

from our local leadership and I saw the need for an advocate for these issues.

So I put my name forward, and then I campaigned tirelessly for the job, knocking on each and every door in Town Ward, listening to people from all walks of life, hearing their stories, and asking them what they want from their elected representatives.

Every citizen I met taught me something and helped me paint a portrait of our city as it is now... and as it has the potential to be.

Peterborough is an amazing place to live. We experience it every day - the river, the trails, the shops and local businesses, the artists. The hardworking people. The sense of community.

But sometimes our local politics seems disappointing - filled with too much conflict and too little inspiration. We seem to have fallen into a rut in which many politicians believe that the only way to effect any change, to pursue any policy, is to draw up battle lines, manipulate the process, and quash dissenting opinions.

Is it really any wonder why so many people get turned off by the political process? Why so many dismiss the whole thing? Some of those in power rely on that disengagement as a way to push through their agenda. Their approach does little to improve the life of a young family living in a new subdivision, or a Fleming student juggling loans and midterms, a single mother trying to make ends meet, or a senior citizen who wants to move about our city with dignity and in safety.

The games some politicians play serve no one but themselves.

We expect more from our elected leaders - more transparency, more consultation, more careful planning, more empathy towards the many different stories that play out each and every day in this city. We expect more from the people who ask for our vote. We expect more from the people who sit in Council chambers and make decisions that affect our lives. We expect more, and we demand more.

I expected more from City Council after I first got elected. I thought that I would be collaborating with all of my fellow councillors, that through give and take and listening to each other, we would have an opportunity to make a real difference. Gradually, I realized this wasn't going to happen. Too many of my peers were locked in a pattern, and often a voting bloc, that actively resisted collaboration, and was even at times hostile to emerging voices and resistant to acknowledging and managing the rapid changes occurring all over our city.

When this reality became evident, I had a choice – I could have lowered my expectations, reconciled that that is business as usual, settled into my job as Town Ward Councillor, and made sure that I did just enough to get re-elected...

But that's not how I'm built. That's not the community I know and that's not the Peterborough we want. I am choosing to make a difference.

I'm a 32 year-old woman passionate about our community, and I'm running for Mayor because I have a clear vision of how we can move forward as a city. That's what I would expect from a politician, and it's what you can expect from me.

We need to start focusing on the basics and we need to make sure we get them right. My platform focuses on three fundamentals of building a strong community jobs, taxes, and infrastructure.

First of all, jobs. Our city has experienced a painful transition out of a manufacturing-based economy. And while good jobs still exist in that field and we are open to new industry, we must recognize that our future employment growth will come from small and medium-sized businesses in emerging sectors. We are uniquely positioned to capitalize on this new economy, but we need leadership that understands this new economy. Our city is an attractive destination for investment – as we already know – but we need to focus on establishing Peterborough as a regional economic centre. We need to leverage our educated workforce, our natural environment, and our proximity to the GTA. When it comes to jobs, we must expect more.

The second piece is taxes and how your money gets spent at City Hall. Municipal taxes have increased by more than 30%¹ in the last seven years. At the same time, our current mayor has overseen an increase our city's debt by 50%². But here's what really matters: what do we have to show for it? Of course, tax revenue is crucial for important projects and programs, and debt can be a useful tool - but again I ask: what do we have to show for it? If you're asked to pay more, it is reasonable for you to expect more. When it comes to how we spend your money, we must expect more.

This brings me to my third priority: infrastructure. Council has spent millions on chasing vanity projects and paying endless fees to consultants while our basic necessities like roads, transportation and sewers fall into neglect. A lot of our city infrastructure is aging and we are overdue on upgrading some of our most essential assets like our storm water system, fixing our roads and making our streets safer. The longer we delay these upgrades, the more expensive it will become. We could begin immediately on building better roads and creating safer residential streets for families... particularly if we stop trying to fight an ongoing, expensive, and hopeless battle to build a bridge over a park! When it comes to infrastructure, we must expect more.

This is how we get it done. Jobs. Taxes. Infrastructure.

We start with the basics and we get them right. And we get them right not because I or any one individual has all the right answers, but because we recognize the collective wisdom of you, the people who call Peterborough home, working towards a common goal.

You may disagree with your neighbour down your street:- they may cheer for the Habs, you for the Leafs, you may put different coloured lawn signs out each election. But you and that person both want this city to succeed. Just because you differ on politics, it doesn't mean that either of you is any less caring. Just because you have different maps, it doesn't mean you aren't trying to get to the same destination.

So, let's move forward in the spirit of good neighbours. Let's end this idea that city building is a zero-sum game in which some have to lose if others are to win. We are all so fortunate to live here in this place, in this time. Peterborough is a great city and it can be even better. We can expect more. Our best and boldest years are right ahead of us.

I am still the woman who will fight for arts and culture, environmental sustainability, active transportation, housing and poverty issues every time. But the way we get these things done is by focusing on jobs, taxes, infrastructure.

I am running for Mayor because I have seen firsthand that we can and must expect more from local decision-makers, and tonight I pledge to each and every one of you that I will work hard every day to live up to that expectation.

So, let's get to work. We have a big job ahead of us, leading up to Election Day on October 22nd but we are ready for that challenge and I will work hard to earn your vote. Finally, there are some realities of campaigning -- campaigns need volunteers and money -- if you believe in what I believe in, then please join me. Join us as a volunteer and contribute financially to our campaign today - whatever you can afford - so we can start off strong and bring our message to the entire city.

I'm hitting the campaign trail first thing tomorrow morning, and I look forward to seeing you out there!

Thank You.

¹ Based on the change in municipal residential tax rate and median residential assessment between 2011 and 2018, from 1.171739% to 1.256428% and from \$197,500 to \$ 243,800 respectively. See 2011 City of Peterborough Budget Highlights and 2018 City of Peterborough Budget Highlights.

² Total debt issued and outstanding has increased from \$72.6 million (Dec 31, 2010) to \$109.2 million (Dec 31, 2017). See 2011 City of Peterborough Budget Highlights and 2018 City of Peterborough Budget Highlights.