



## **Municipal Election 2018 (Survey Results): Town of Tillsonburg**

Poverty negatively impacts our ability to create a healthy, vibrant community. The fact that some people in Oxford County cannot afford basic needs, including nutritious and sufficient food is a real concern. In Oxford County, based on the 2015 after tax Low Income Measure, 10.8% of the population (11, 835 people) live in low income.

On September 10, 2018, all Town of Tillsonburg Candidates were contacted via email with a follow-up call and provided an introduction to, and a link to the following survey. The survey questions provide an opportunity for voters to start a discussion with candidates about poverty reduction. Our hope is that this survey serves as a starting point to an ongoing conversation about poverty in Oxford County.

Participation in the survey was voluntary. Responses provided by the candidates that completed the survey are posted and have not been changed in any way. Social Planning Council Oxford would like to thank those candidates who have completed the survey.

The following candidates from the Town of Tillsonburg did not submit a completed survey:

<b>Candidate</b>	<b>Position</b>
Mark Anthony Renaud	Mayor
Maxwell Adam	Councillor
Sherry Hamilton	Councillor
James Murphy	Councillor
Chrissy Rosehart	Councillor



## Municipal Election 2018: Candidate Survey Responses to Social Issues

### Question #1: Poverty Reduction Strategy

In 2017, Oxford County declared:

*“Poverty reduction in Oxford County is achievable and will strengthen well-being for all. It’s the right thing to do.*

*Through leadership, innovation, and the transformation of relationships, in working to eliminate poverty. Oxford County will deliver improved health and well-being for all residents and enhance community prosperity.”*

As a result a draft [Zero Poverty Plan](#) was presented to council in June 2018.

#### Do you support the funding and implementation of the Oxford County Zero Poverty Plan?

Candidate	Position	Response
Stephen Molnar	Mayor	Yes
Chris Parker	Councillor	Yes
Cindy Allen	Councillor	Yes
Kim Sage	Councillor	Unsure
Deb Gilvesy	Councillor	Yes
Dave Beres	Councillor	Unsure
Penny Esseltine	Councillor	Yes
Pete Luciani	Councillor	Yes
Michael Holly	Councillor	Unsure

### Question #2: Housing

a) Is safe, decent and secure affordable housing a priority in your platform?

b) How will you help families and individuals secure and maintain safe, decent and affordable housing?

Candidate	Position	Response A	Response B
Stephen Molnar	Mayor	Yes	I am excited to continue on with a number of the exciting and creative initiatives I have endorsed at the Oxford County level for the past four years. The “Housing First” initiative has already provided significant benefits to residents of the County, including in my hometown of Tillsonburg. I am proud of the support I have given to this creative financial model, unique to the County of Oxford.



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			<p>As a sub-category of the comprehensive Community Sustainability Plan, the identified items in the 'Zero Poverty Plan' are actionable and attainable. Further success will be realized by greater inter-agency communication and ensuring all responsible partners are working towards the same goals. I am pleased with the alignment of priorities between the County, the area municipalities and local service providers to date and will be leader in ensuring these relationships are strengthened. Continued conversation with the new Provincial government (and the Official Opposition) will be more important than ever to ensure appropriate policies, programs and financial resources are available to enhance current housing stock, will providing for the additional units that are so badly needed. I look forward to continuing the dialogues I had recently with both housing representatives of the MMAH and the Leader of the Official Opposition party on just these matters. There also needs to be a continued realistic approach to understanding the issues of affordable housing and including the entire community in the understanding that we are all part of the solution.</p>
Chris Parker	Councillor	Yes	<p>I will push for the creation of more affordable or alternative housing at a county level. I will be an advocate for ensuring that everyone has a safe, decent and affordable house in Tillsonburg.</p>
Cindy Allen	Councillor	Yes	<p>I have provided Future Oxford a reference for affordable housing using shipping container buildings like in Burks Falls Ontario. This idea stays true to our waste reduction and minimizing our impact on the environment. The building in Burks Falls was to address the shortage of affordable housing in that area, you would never know they were shipping containers. I have experience finding efficiencies as I have worked in Not-for-Profit for over 15 years! I have supported clients with many aspects including housing. We need to keep our services affordable and accessible for everyone. Affordability comes with efficiency in current processes to maximize the funding received in programs. I have experience working with other Service Agencies to open and provide services in a new building for older adults with mental health. All Service Agencies worked together to identify duplication of service and gaps in service delivery. If you provide safe, affordable housing people can avoid stress and focus on other areas such as health, education, raising your family and maintaining work. These issues are interconnected and benefits can be seen by providing such services.</p>



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Kim Sage	Councillor	Yes	Saying that I alone can help these families is unrealistic when it comes to a council setting, I alone can't make these changes however I can be their voice.
Deb Gilvesy	Councillor	Yes	Solutions to the current housing crisis which sees wait times of 4-5 years takes collaboration of all Governments to develop a solution. Firstly we need a healthy economy and fiscal planning at all levels to encourage job growth and investment into Ontario and Canada. Ontario shed over 80,000 jobs last month and investment into Canada is at a 40 year low. Secondary suites (i.e. granny flats or in-law suites) creates more units on existing spaces. Moving to a system of housing credits would allow rent seekers to compete on the private market.
Dave Beres	Councillor	Yes	It is the responsibility of the Municipalities to ensure developers are encouraged to invest in safe, decent and affordable housing. To do this, our economic development team must list obstacles such as new legislation to the Ontario Building Code and to know what costs are involved prior to investment.
Penny Esseltine	Councillor	Yes	Public housing is for the most part an upper tier responsibility. In Tillsonburg, Tillsonburg Non-Profit Housing manages housing for seniors in two locations, one on Maple Lane and the other on Queen Street, with a third property currently under construction on Sanders Street near the community centre. It is my understanding that funding for these projects has been largely provided through the county and I believe applications for non-profit housing are processed through the county as well. These housing initiatives are of tremendous benefit to Tillsonburg and local residents. Similar housing opportunities are available for families in Tillsonburg but again this is managed by the upper tier government (Oxford County Council). Certainly I support any of these initiatives as they come through Tillsonburg Council for community consultation, discussion or approval.
Pete Luciani	Councillor	Yes	The draft Zero Poverty Plan contains a number of options that I see could be implemented. Although I don't have full knowledge of every strategy that has been considered locally, there are some initiatives currently underway including affordable housing for seniors. Rent Geared to Income and Affordable housing are options that I support.
Michael Holly	Councillor	Yes	The only method to climb the economic ladder is through education. I run a business. I have and will again hire more staff. That staff has to have certain qualifications to be hired. If a person wants to secure a better job, they need



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			to prepare themselves through education. I myself did that from a Chemical Tech to a business owner. And finally, it takes hard work and you have to simply do it.
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### Questions #3: Transportation

a) Is affordable public transportation a priority in your platform?

b) How will you create or enhance public transportation that is affordable for everyone, especially people living in poverty?

Candidate	Position	Response A	Response B
Stephen Molnar	Mayor	Yes	While the opportunity for an affordable, accessible and sustainable community transportation system is important for all segments of our population, it does provide an important mechanism for assisting those living in Poverty. I remain proud of the T-GO Transit system that was developed with those in our community who need some level of assistance to gain greater independence. The system has proven effective and has received positive operational recognition from the former Ministry of Transportation. Low ticket fares, that make it affordable to get to work and back in a day, have provided greater opportunity for individuals just starting full-time employment and a bridge to greater options in the future. The next phase of an affordable and sustainable system will be to continue to network with our regional partners to ensure transportation hubs are developed or enhanced the provide connectivity to other areas of Oxford County and beyond. The discussions are taking place now and I am proud to be a leader of an organization that is endorsing the regional transportation plan, and look forward to ensuring we work together in the near future to see its' operational success.
Chris Parker	Councillor	Yes	Tillsonburg currently has an affordable transportation system. We also need to develop a regional transportation system.
Cindy Allen	Councillor	No	
Kim Sage	Councillor	No	
Deb Gilvesy	Councillor	Yes	Tillsonburg has received funding for 5 years for an in-Town system. The fare is \$2 per ride and it is funded by gas tax dollars. Vouchers for Private Cab



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			Companies would also be a program that should be investigated as taxis have longer service hours available and are more flexibility.
Dave Beres	Councillor	Yes	This Municipality continues to partner with the transportation committee to make applications for Gas Tax refunds and local levies. The transportation costs are a minor \$2.00 per ride offset by other funding sources.
Penny Esseltine	Councillor	No	In this past term of council the Town of Tillsonburg council has been much involved in the planning phase and in supporting a local public transit initiative which has resulted in the T-Go program. Through various largely provincial government grants as well as with local support this program is now an established transit program in the community. TGo operations have recently been contracted by the municipality to a third party operator to ensure the service continues. The \$2 fee seems manageable for riders. The local committee charged with planning transportation initiatives reports to council and there has been discussion relating to transportation between nearby communities.
Pete Luciani	Councillor	Yes	Tillsonburg currently has T:GO Call-N-Ride in operation which offers one way fares for 2.00 for travel within Tillsonburg. Other options include Stonebridge Community Services which provides wheelchair accessible transportation as well as home pickup through volunteer drivers. There are also two taxi companies operating although they may be a less affordable. I am open to and support further exploration of additional options.
Michael Holly	Councillor	Unsure	Affordable also has to be to the taxpayers. Living in Hamilton for 18 years, the system was wonderful. I am unsure how to get that system in Tillsonburg.

## Question #4: Other Comments

Any other comments or areas in your platform that will address poverty or other social issues in Oxford County?

Candidate	Position	Response
Stephen Molnar	Mayor	Understanding the real numbers of Poverty and their overall impact on our local communities is the most efficient place to begin understanding all potential resolutions. Poverty is not a one solution issue, and it will not be solved at any level without enhanced communication and cooperation between all levels of government, social agencies and an engaged citizenry. The advancements in the Housing initiatives and Transportation program have provided greater opportunity that is already making an impact on those living in poverty. There have been some identifiable benefits to



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		<p>the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act (Bill 148), however it does need to be noted that a balanced approach is required in introducing any legislative solutions when they further impact the sectors that also have much to provide to incent a reduction in poverty.</p> <p>Our Community Strategic Plan has three identified priorities; Environment, Community (Poverty, Housing, Transportation) and Economy. Without balance between these three strategic areas, the model will collapse and the individuals who the objectives were designed to assist will not receive the enhanced benefits they both demand and deserve.</p> <p>Thanks for providing me with this important opportunity to share both my ideas and my commitment to all the residents of Tillsonburg and Oxford County.</p>
Chris Parker	Councillor	<p>It is unfortunate at this time that poverty still exists. We need to put the people of Oxford in the best position to succeed. Our council needs to work with the Social Planning of Oxford to work towards the elimination of poverty in our county.</p>
Cindy Allen	Councillor	<p>I have sent Future Oxford a reference to address food poverty like in Mississauga Ontario. There they have fish that provide nutrients to the hydroponic lettuce they grow in 500 sq ft! People have an opportunity for better food as the fish is harvested and fresh lettuce is provided. We can do this here! I have also addressed Crime Prevention and Service Improvements in My Plan. We have an escalation in crime in our area and there are many social issues affecting our community. I feel this is a huge issue in our area and the community is frustrated with the lack of services locally. I have worked in Human Services for a long time and have ample experience identifying the issues and trying to find</p>
Kim Sage	Councillor	<p>In looking at the information provided regarding Oxford County, I would like to be able to have a snap shot of Tillsonburg. I can honestly say that I have worn the shoes of the working poor and possibly still do. I feel that my community needs to be more educated on resources. My personal thought is social exclusion due to poverty or status is not acceptable. We all live, we all die, the differences we have in life do not designate the size of the burial plot. We need to work together and create a difference. There are so many issues that need to be addressed and developed for Tillsonburg and not just for a chosen few.</p>
Dave Beres	Councillor	<p>This community has a Community Garden where people can rent an affordable plot to grow garden vegetables for their own consumption. This program is successful and as a member of Council, I support expansion of garden areas when needed.</p>
Penny Esseltine	Councillor	<p>Always accessibility of all local residents, regardless of their skills or abilities or financial means need to be able to access and benefit from a broad spectrum of municipal services.</p>
Pete Luciani	Councillor	<p>My platform doesn't specifically address Oxford County poverty or social issues but it is based on enhancing quality of life within Tillsonburg. A safe, prosperous community with vibrant parks, trails and recreational facilities is an asset to all citizens and increases their standard of living.</p>



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Michael Holly	Councillor	I am a firm believer that if you give someone a fish, he eats for the day. A fishing pole allows him to eat forever. That is how you leave poverty. Education is the key but if someone is truly serious about it, they will have to work to educate themselves, thus making themselves valuable to employers, and it will be reflected in their income.
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