

Questions for Town Council Candidates 2015

1. What are your thoughts on the current animal control ordinance? Did you vote in the special election held on December 4th, 2013 and if so, how did you vote and why did you vote that way? Should you be elected, are you open to a review of the ordinance to see how it is working? How do you feel about the role the USFW played in this issue in our town?

Answer: Having read the current animal control ordinance, I would say it is a balanced approach to a divisive issue. Like the DOGS website says, it should recognize the needs of everyone in the community. I did not vote in the special election because I did not use the beach. I am open to a review of the ordinance, which I understand is this year. A personal note: I went to Higgins Beach last week to watch the surfers, parkers and dog owners. I was quite shocked. I watched one dog owner let 5 dogs out of his SUV. They ran along the beach under no voice control whatsoever. The owner appeared to be completely unconcerned for the others using the beach. This brought to mind some of the complaints I have heard from people opposed to the DOGS group. This one irresponsible owner made a bad impression on the remainder of people on the beach. Some of the dogs defecated. The owner made no attempt to pick it up. I stopped going to the beach several years ago when I could not fish on the shore because of the dogs attempting to steal my bait, my lunch and urinating on my tackle box. These are irresponsible owner problems and enforcement problems, not necessarily ordinance problems. As is usually the case, one bad apple gives the rest of the group a bad name. The USFW played a part as they were interested in migratory bird defense, as they are supposed to do by law.

2. Why are you running for Council? List your top three priorities and proposed solutions and the single most important thing you hope to accomplish as a Town Councilor.

Answer: My vision is of a Scarborough that enjoys sustainable, affordable growth. To that end, my priorities are:

- A quality education system that meets State standards while preparing future generations of Scarborough residents.
- Grow business investment. More businesses would provide more tax money to the town and relieve some of the burden off home owners.
- Reasonable taxes. If we limit our budget increases to 3% or less, we can grow our town and schools without huge tax increases each year.
- Decrease the town and school debt so more money is spent on services and education and less on servicing the debt.

The single most important thing I hope to accomplish as a Town Councilor is to keep the tax rate affordable while decreasing the town debt. The next most important would be to change the Town Charter to allow a two-year budget cycle that ends/begins one to three months after the State's fiscal year. We would replace the annual budget fight to one every two years; and we would not have to worry about how much General

Purpose Aid the town would receive. We would have that answer before we get our budget.

3. Do you believe that there is an apparent lack of trust in town governance and our local process? Why or why not? If you do believe trust is a concern what do you attribute that to? What personal attributes would you bring to address that concern and what steps do you believe the current and future Councils could take to rebuild trust in the community?

Answer: I believe there is a definite lack of trust in town governance. We always seem to get circuitous, evasive answers to simple questions. The latest example is the question of when it is legal to put up signs on public roadways. I attribute that to the group of people presently, and previously who controlled the majority of seats on the Council. The town manager and clerk provide answers that satisfy that Council. The only step I can personally take is to provide honest answers, regardless of who may disagree.

4. What do you consider an appropriate tax increase for the next fiscal year? What do you consider an appropriate yearly increase for our school budget? What are your thoughts on this year's budget process? Please include ideas for change or improvement including any cost-revenue analysis you might conduct.

Answer: An appropriate tax increase for the next fiscal year would be based on a budget increase of 3%. That would not necessarily translate to a 3% tax increase. If we increase the municipal and school budgets by 3%, keep the capital expenditure budget to 3% and lower the town debt, the tax increase could be less than 3%. Tom Hall has assured me last year that the town (municipal and schools) must increase between 1% and 2% just to stay up with wages and to stay 'level'. I am being generous by giving them an additional 1%. If we set a 3% limit, the school superintendent and town manager can make long range plans while sticking to the 3%.

5. How should the Council / Town deal with its current level of debt?

The Council/Town should deal with its current level of debt the way all responsible people deal with debt: pay it off while decreasing your purchases that drive it back up.

6. What are your thoughts on the recent controversy over access and parking at Higgins beach? If elected, how would you address similar citizen concerns?

Higgins beach parking is a hugely emotional topic. I have listened to people who support the present parking, and those who oppose it. As always, the answer probably lies in the middle. I have more questions than answers, as is usually the case when attempting to get to the bottom of an issue. I am told by one group that there used to be more liberal parking near the beach. I am told the opposite by some Higgins Beach home owners. Some of the questions running through my mind are: How does Higgins Beach parking compare to other beach parking in town? Are people allowed to park right next to the beach at the other beaches? Are there parking lots at all beaches? If so, why can't we all park in the parking lots and walk a short distance to the beach? Since we all appear to

be healthy enough to walk on the beach, are we not healthy enough to walk from the parking lot to the beach? If people are healthy enough to surf, are they not healthy enough to walk to the beach, surf, walk back to the parking lot, change in the rooms provided, and then depart? Oddly enough, when I met with several Higgins Beach home owners, not one of them mentioned noise at 6 am. Most complained about surfers changing clothes behind open car doors and blocking sidewalk access while snarling traffic.

7. Do you think it would be appropriate or in the town's best interest to explore its right of eminent domain for access at Higgin beach? This could effectively end the ownership debate proactively. Why would you or would you not support that approach?

Answer: I am unfamiliar with the details of eminent domain. As I understand it, access to the beach is not a problem for the owners. The disruptions caused by traffic is their primary concern. People walking to and from the parking lot are on public roads heading to a public beach. More to study up on.