

Answers provided by David Shulist Aug.11 2018

Question from Wilmer Matthews: What do you see as the top priority for the new Council?

- Answer: The first thing I would like to review is our Municipal Assets. I feel we have some properties that need to be put in the hands of the public. One in particular, is the Barry's Bay Train Station. I feel it is not used for its proper purpose. This historical building was saved and restored to promote Barry's Bay Heritage, yet it is not happening. There is no place in the village of Barry's Bay where you can find Barry's Bay History told under one roof. We can go to Wilno and Combermere and their story is told and displayed in their Museums. The people of Barry's Bay need their story told and showcased. We need to showcase the people who built this beautiful town. We need to tell the story of the people, the railway, logging and lumbering of Barry's Bay. Barry's Bay historical artifacts must be showcased for the whole world to see. The Train Station is the perfect property to tell this unique story. This property needs to be put into public hands and run as a Museum, just like in Wilno and Combermere. There is a group in the community called the "Barry's Bay Heritage Society" who could take the lead hand in this project. I love the name, it goes well with the other two (Wilno Heritage Society and the Combermere Heritage Society) local organizations. I heard that this organization is a genealogy group at this moment. I can see that this group can step up and change their mandate and take on the task of running a museum. This property should be leased to a group like this with no interference from the Township. The model should be the same as Wilno and Combermere Museums. The museum should be run by the people with no burden to the tax payer. Next year it will be the 125th anniversary of the Railway coming to our area. Most of the discussion on this historical property has been at the municipal table where sometimes we hear so many negative views on this property. If we take it off the political table, there will be no more discussion. It would be run by the people. I find that when it is at the council table, for some reason it does not work as well when it is in public hands. All successful projects are driven by the public and the proof is the Wilno Heritage Park and the Combermere Museum. Once it is in the public hands, the Heritage Group who runs it, can rent the grounds to events like the Taste of the Valley, Farmers Market, Art festivals etc where they can generate funds and at the same time promote our local culture. They could host music festivals through the summer. Once it is in the people's hands, you will see that the town folk will take ownership of this project and will feel like they are part of this rich history. There are also other groups that have been formed that could be part of this project such as the Madawaska Valley Culture & Heritage Society and the Caboose Committee where partnerships could move this forward. If elected, I hope to work with the elected officials to discuss this possibility. If I do not get elected, I will still be available to help if this was to move forward. I have over twenty years of experience from the Wilno Project which I can share. I am always ready to serve my community. I believe in Promoting the Madawaska Valley - Locally, Nationally and Internationally. Promoting year-round tourism as vital to improving our commercial status and economic viability.

Question from Wilmer Matthews: What one strength would you like to bring to the Council table if elected?

- Answer: What I would like to bring to the Council table if elected is my knowledge, experience and leadership qualities. As past Mayor, I can bring my knowledge and experience which I received while sitting at our local Council table, and my knowledge and experience as a member of County Council which I served between 2010 and 2014. I have been blessed to be placed in many leadership roles, such as the founding President of the Wilno Heritage Society where we promote our local Kashubian and Polish heritages. I am proud to be the founding Commissioner of the Opeongo Heritage Cup where we use hockey to promote our local cultures and our diversity. Hockey is our vehicle and Diversity is our fuel. I was fortunate to be president of the Wilno Rink back in the 1970's. I have been blessed to have been put in these leadership positions, but I want to make sure the public knows that you do not need to have a leadership title to be a leader. What is important is that you lead by example and you work with people to achieve the goals you have set. A great leader is also a team player. I believe that I have these qualities and I am ready to serve the people of the Madawaska Valley. I want to mention that it is time to unity as one. The Township of Madawaska Valley means that we are under one umbrella of government. This does not mean that we lose our identity when it comes to our villages that we live in. It means that we need to unite and govern together. We need to embrace this to become more effective when promoting our area to the outside world. Yes, we are all proud of our towns that we live in, but we are stronger as one. I know for myself, I have always put the Madawaska Valley first when identifying myself. I have always felt that I belong to Madawaska Valley before the Township got its name in 2000. It just happens that my wife Diana Marie Honey from Detroit Michigan which I meet in 1975 in Jamaica, won the contest for naming our Township at the time of amalgamation. When asked why she selected the name "Madawaska Valley" her quote to the press at that time was "When David and I first met he said that he was from the Madawaska Valley so it was the first thing that came to mind". The day we start realizing that we are from a very special place, the sooner we can put are differences aside and move forward. I became Madawaska Valley through sports where I played hockey on the Combermere Flames, the Barry's Bay Gents and the Wilno Hounds. These three communities were always part of my Madawaska Valley community and I was proud and privileged to play for these three unique towns. These are the strengths that I would like to bring to the table if elected.