



Springwater Township – Candidate Questionnaire 2014

We hope that, as a candidate for Springwater Council, you will take the time to complete the following survey. Please return no later than **Monday, September 22nd at 4 pm**. Your responses will help us determine who to recommend to our many supporters, both in Midhurst and the Township at large, for each contested seat on Council. Answers will be rated according to our organizational values. The names of our chosen candidates, together with comments from the MRA board, will be published in the Springwater News. All completed questionnaires will appear on our website after the deadline has passed. Those not received by the deadline will be listed as “no response”. Thank you in advance for your time and your participation.

Platform

What do you believe should be the **top 5 priorities** for Council? (*in order of priority*)

1. Stop Midhurst Secondary Plan (ie. growth within historical percentage increases)
2. Protect our greatest industry (agriculture) through a " food & water first" and preservation strategy.
3. Responsible tax adjustments **only after** best practices implemented (purchasing, shared services, etc.)
4. An immediate moratorium on centralizing municipal services (ie. no closing Midhurst and Minesing libraries).
5. Elmvale as a primary focus as the only sustainable, complete community within our "community of communities" township".

What steps do you intend to take or recommend to council in order to achieve **NUMBER 1**?

In my opinion, the defined Midhurst Secondary Plan (MSP) is the most important single issue the combined townships of Vespra and Flos and the village of Elmvale have faced in their near 200 year history. The MSP will lead to a shift of financial control over tax policy from the citizens' hands into unelected corporate interests. In summary, **the MSP is a debt trap** which is irreconcilable with a fundamental tenet of representative democracies: the need of this, the next and all future councils to set tax policy to serve the public (not private) good. If allowed to stand or "negotiated", only a cynical facade or pretense of a municipal democracy will remain.

As a citizen and office holder and in consultation with the existing good faith community stakeholders, I promise to defend the independence of the Corporation of the Township of Springwater.

If, however, a consistent majority of other members of council fail act to follow through with their own individual promises to kill the MSP, I will be forced to resign in order to not be thrown into a conflict of interest with the oath of office I have sworn. I promise to act responsibly throughout this matter and that includes disclosing fully the reasons for the additional cost and distraction of this unfortunate but required, other-provoked by-election.

The immediate and test action of the good faith of this new council should be an immediate resolution to the appropriate provincial ministries indicating that the new council has lost confidence in the financial, environmental and social net benefits of the MSP and therefore cannot support any of its further implementation.

Transparency and Accountability

	YES	NO
1. Are you in favour of appointing the Ontario Ombudsman to oversee Springwater Council?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you agree with the following improvements to council meetings?		
a) More frequent council meetings?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Question Periods that are not limited to the agenda?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Later start times to improve public accessibility?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Publishing agendas one full week in advance?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Mandatory Question Period for Special meetings?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) All questions asked during Question Period to be recorded in full, answered in a timely manner either orally or in writing and placed on the public record	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you support requiring elected representatives to keep their constituents regularly informed via email, newspaper articles, town halls and/or social media?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are you in favour of NVCA board representatives providing monthly reports to council on decisions and actions of the NVCA board, with such reports to be placed on the public record?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

Growth & Development

	YES	NO
1. If elected, with regard to the Midhurst Secondary Plan, will you support:	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
a) Stopping it in its current form?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Lobbying the provincial government to rescind the special rule?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Lobbying the provincial government to help stop the MSP?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Creating a new plan that puts farmland and source water protection first?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Helping to establish a moratorium on the MSP until all financial and environmental studies have been completed?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. If elected, will you support the following measures to manage development:	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. Extra levies or charges to make growth pay for growth?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Establishing a Planning Committee to oversee and guide the work of the Planning and Public Works departments?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Ensuring future development prioritizes farmland preservation and source water protection?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Creating master plans for heritage areas, areas of archeological significance and key agricultural hubs?	X	<input type="checkbox"/>

Environmental Responsibility & Agriculture

	YES	NO
1. Do you think Springwater is doing enough to protect and enhance its natural environment? Comments: I commit to instruct the Heritage Committee to designate Willow Creek from Little Lake to the Minesing Wetlands as a heritage landscape under the <i>ON Heritage Act</i> . The model to be used for other worthwhile above- and below-ground township landscapes. Broaden and deepen existing Official Cultural Plan. Bring forward to Simcoe County a moratorium on any sale of Simcoe County forests. Adopt a "best practices" approach to planning, rather than "minimum legislated" approach. Ensure adequate funding flows to groups to protect their cultural heritage (ie. provide meaningful consultation and accommodation).	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
2. Do you support making Springwater Township a "Food and Water First" township?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you satisfied that Springwater is doing enough to preserve its farmland from development? Comments:	<input type="checkbox"/>	x
4.		

Leadership and Governance

	YES	NO
1. Do you support independent peer reviews, paid for by Springwater, of all reports critical to strategic planning? Comments: Adopt a litigation avoidance strategy based on best practices in ON, CDN and North American municipalities. While agriculture is the greatest industry now, culture is the largest industry in the world. Springwater Township has several thousands of years of internationally-respected and -envied agronomic, silviculture, and forestry expertise. Culture and eco-tourism are the highest value-added industries but they require vision, sustainable funding, and respectful relationships between First Nation and settler communities.	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Are you in favour of establishing a Finance Committee comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and/or Councillors to oversee and guide the work of senior staff?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Are you in favour of establishing a Planning Committee comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and/or Councillors to oversee and guide the work of the Planning and Public Works departments?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Are you in favour of establishing a lobby registry?	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Does your campaign accept union or corporate donations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	x

Additional Comments:

I am publishing all amounts of all donation on my website as soon as they are received (see <http://lesstewartconsulting.wordpress.com/campaign-finance/>). I commit to sign a declaration that I will not be an employee or consultant to any planner or developer for 5 years after a successful term ends. Would, as an individual and encourage council to join in to press the provincial government to pass an anti-SLAPP (Strategic lawsuit against public participation) legislation, volunteer at my own expense to act as a resource or witness if public hearings are held. The same for expanding the scope of the Ontario Ombudsman to encompass the MUSH (municipalities, universities, school boards and hospitals) sector. Fully fund First Nations involvement in the rapid deployment of an interim Archeology Management Plan and Official Cultural Plan (no tax increases for this work: self-funded by cutting fat in purchasing decisions and user-pay charges). Conduct additional information meetings for public input in Elmvale, Minesing, Hillsdale and Midhurst community centres.

Name:

Mr. Les Stewart MBA
Candidate Deputy Mayor
Springwater Township (since Jan 2, 2014)
1201 Bayfield St N
Midhurst, ON L0L 1X1 (since 1960)