

2020 Municipal Election Amherst Candidates Business Outlook

Town of Amherst – Candidates for Mayor

- 1) How do you see the role of the business community in strengthening our communities, and what will you as Mayor/Councillor do to encourage and support businesses?
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David Kogan

Business in our community is the lifeblood of the community. Over 95% of municipal revenue comes from residential and commercial taxes. The direct impact of businesses is their provision of commercial tax dollars. But it is the employment of Amherstonians that has an even bigger positive effect. This enables our citizens to earn their living and achieve financial success for themselves which keeps the community vibrant and alive. A third very important factor is the financial support businesses provide for community groups and charitable organizations that in turn make life so much better for our citizens from our youth through to our senior population.

Ed Childs

Businesses are vital to our Town and our Cumberland community.

Council and the Town need to be more supportive and interactive with all businesses.

I would seriously look at

- ways to work with all businesses directly to find out what will work for each of them.
- our commercial tax structure
- downtown snow clearing, regulations are currently outdated and really non-functional...as the only place to push snow is into the street.

There has to be better way.

- an efficient way to get more regular input into Council decisions.

All views are important. Regular communication and interaction provide strong effective growth. Overall, the role is that of a strong but independent partnership.

Vaugh Martin

- 2) What are the cost sharing initiatives between the three municipalities of Cumberland, Amherst, and Oxford which you will pursue to reduce municipal costs and improve services?
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David Kogan

Starting up a business can be quite complex as land use bylaws and permit acquisition have to be contended with. I will ensure that town staff are available to guide and assist business owners in navigating through the processes. I will continue to make sure that the town continues to financially support both the Amherst and Area Chamber of Commerce and the Cumberland Business Connector so they can continue to be the vital connections to our local and area businesses. The single biggest budget item for the Town of Amherst is policing. During my first term we approached the Town of Oxford about providing them policing through the Amherst Police Department as we calculated significant reduction in cost per officer which translated into overall savings for both municipalities. Unfortunately Oxford passed on our offer. Historically the RCMP is the highest paid police force in the country however currently they are well down the list. When they sign a new contract it is expected they will go back to number one. This will be translated into either a large jump in policing cost or a marked reduction in service to those municipalities

utilizing RCMP for policing. I plan to approach Oxford again after this election to see if their new council might reconsider that decision. I also suspect the County of Cumberland may wish to enter into discussions with us on this same issue. We currently share in waste management through CJSMA and this collaborative effort will most certainly continue. Currently we are investigating ways to improve efficiencies in waste management and I will actively continue to pursue this. We also provide fire protection service to a large portion of County residents through contracting which reduces costs for both municipalities and will continue this going forward. The joint CED strategy will continue to be supported to the benefit of all three municipalities.

Ed Childs

We must remember that Town Council's prime function is to serve the people of Amherst.

If we approach it from that perspective, we need to work to find the services that all our municipalities have in common and find the places where there is a benefit to sharing. We also must remember that Amherst is basically urban and the County is rural. Our methods of operation are similar but different in delivery.

Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority is a wonderful example of cost sharing that works.

We could look at joint calls for proposals for services to see if there are cost benefits in sharing. We could look at procurement of needed materials. For example, fuel, heating, and maintenance of buildings.

These are just a few of the possibilities. We have to actively seek out new ways of operating in the future.

Vaugh Martin

3) What are the top three things that you would plan to do to encourage entrepreneurship in our community?

David Kogan

Over my first term in office as Mayor, we have attracted a number of new businesses and seen the expansion of others. It has created a new issue for the Town of Amherst. We now lack sufficient labour force to fill the large number of jobs created. So developing a people attraction strategy is a vital next step and this has already begun. Secondly, providing support for businesses to help them prosper is very important. Examples of this are the Gritty to Pretty and the Amherst Loves You Back programs. I will strive to ensure these types of programs continue and expand. The third element is to continue to showcase the Town of Amherst via website, social media and other promotions so that it becomes more well known to people. They can then see Amherst as the great place that it is and choose to bring their business here.

Ed Childs

1. Tax breaks for new businesses. Over three years – 45% reduction in year 1; 30% in year 2; 15% in year 3.
 2. Make it easier to work with the Town to get the necessary permits and inspections to start up. New businesses are difficult to start and need support. The Town needs to be more helpful and encouraging.
 3. Perhaps provide a list of resources for new businesses which could also apply to new residents, contractors, plumbers, electricians, etc. This would save time and help start-ups. It could be expanded and regularly updated. Together with the Chamber it would be easy to make happen.
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Vaugh Martin

- 4) Over the past 4 years, the Cumberland Business Connector and the municipal units have developed a strong partnership in supporting and growing the business community. How will this partnership and the Cumberland Business Connector's goals help you to achieve your goals?
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David Kogan

My goals, very simply, are to keep Amherst financially sustainable and be the best place to live, work and play. A viable, active business community is a key element in that, as we are the urban centre for Cumberland county. Business provides jobs for our citizens and county residents and so is the basis for fiscal health. To that end, the on going excellent relations between Amherst and the Cumberland Business Connector is a powerful component in achieving those goals. I will see that this relationship continues and strengthens. This will greatly benefit the CBC and thus augment its success. Its success will then have a huge beneficial effect on the successes of the Town of Amherst and its citizens. So it is obvious that the success of the CBC benefits Amherst. A win-win situation.

Ed Childs

I strongly support this venture and want it to continue. It has been sorely needed and fills a vacuum.

This helps achieve growth of our business community. It provides a place for all businesses to access information and find available help.

My goal is simple. The Town will support every effort to grow our commercial sector.

I want to have a plan in place within months that lays out definitive steps to start to become competitive in attracting new businesses and growing those already present. This is vital. You can't grow without a map that clearly shows your goals and how you intend to get there.

When Gerry Hallee was Mayor, we grew the commercial assessment by 5-10% every year.

Let's get back to this. I believe I can do just that by ensuring Mayor and Council are proactive rather than reactive.

Vaugh Martin

Town of Amherst – Candidates for Council

- 1) How do you see the role of the business community in strengthening our communities, and what will you as Mayor/Councillor do to encourage and support businesses?
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Vince Byrne

The Business Community in general, not just in Amherst, must begin to think outside the Box in attacking new clientele, in the services they offer and they must challenge the status quo and norm as to how the business community operates. The current situation (pandemic) has shown that the status quo or norm is not sustainable. While hopefully, the pandemic will be resolved over time, it could be considered a wake-up call. As a business community, we have to become familiar with the various legislation that governed our respective industries and strongly advocate for change where it is required-whether it be hours of business, the method of delivery, access etc. The Mayor and council can certainly be your advocates for your business, however, communication and a sound well thought out alternative is always required to ensure the advocacy is well understood by the business community, the council and by the intended recipient.

Sheila Christie

The business community plays a very important and invaluable role towards the contribution of our economy and society.

Local businesses, and supporting them are mutually beneficial to businesses as well as to the community. A strong business community brings increased employment opportunities, allows for a broader or increased population base, puts money back into the hands of local people, provides a community that is unique, and embraces diversity in people and products.

A thriving business community can be strengthened by local networks that provide access to local expertise, providing a better sense of the local market place, helps to create more choice, adapts quicker to change, provide personalized services, including mentorship or motivation for entrepreneurship or start-ups.

During Covid, our Business Community with the help of various partners, including the Town of Amherst, the Cumberland Business Connector, and The Chamber helped to support each other with webinars, speaking with experts in their fields, received current updates on changes to regulations, grants and claiming for subsidies. This shows the importance of working together and networking.

The Community benefits as businesses invest in their community, volunteer with local charities, provide assistance or donations for community groups or sports teams and local causes. The business community can be big supporters for local projects and this helps to empower a community. They can also help in the discussion about the direction of the community with an engaged Mayor and Council.

Surveys say that for every \$100 spent at your local businesses, that \$68 remain in that same community.

As a councillor, I have helped to bring the Business Development Officer position back to Amherst, as I feel that our businesses need to be heard and have a resource for their issues and problems, or advice on growth opportunities. We needed to brand ourselves better, find different ways for promoting Amherst as a great place to Live Work and Play.

Also know that, I will continue to be proactive to help businesses in our area navigate through the challenges presented after Covid and how to keep our local businesses thriving. I also have personally gone to many new and existing businesses and have “Listened” to what our business leaders want, or need.

Darrell Jones

I see the role of the businesses community in strengthening our communities:

- Help make the town grow prosper
- To provide employment opportunities
- To show faith in the community
- To promote the Town as a great place to do business

What I will do as Councillor to encourage and support business:

- Support buy local initiatives
- Encourage others to buy local
- Promote local business with a positive comments
- Help promote local business contests and events

Wayne MacKenzie

Terry Rhindress

As a councillor I will continue to work with local business as well as industrial business to help them stay top of mind and grow their gross profit. We need to continue to use our central location to attract new business. Businesses in our Industrial Park can assist to promote new interest for this location.

George Baker

The key to our success in growing is for businesses both new and old to communicate and work in tandem to create a connection between our citizens and businesses which inspires people to support our home-grown products and services. I plan to work tirelessly to promote local shopping and entice new businesses to set up shop in our community

Hal Davidson

The business community must take a proactive role in encouraging ALL local businesses (inclusive of county businesses) to be active participants in the Cumberland Business Connector and Chamber of Commerce. These organizations can be more effective by taking a collaborative approach to identifying gaps, lobbying for change, and developing marketing strategies.

As a small business owner, I was always encouraged by politicians who took an active interest in my business. Unfortunately, our overall current councillors' interest in doing so (except as election promises) reflects significant complacency unless and until businesses cry foul. Some councillors have never even visited our largest town industries.

As councillor, I will proactively visit and develop an understanding of the unique and common challenges faced by our business community. I expect to be held accountable in doing so and as such will prepare quarterly reports on my activities. I will boldly represent business interests and demonstrate leadership (lead by example, not words) in being an active participant, in lobbying for business incentives, and in promoting the Northern Nova Scotia business community.

Lisa Emery

The business community, in particular the small businesses are the backbone of the economy in Amherst. Without them we would not be able to thrive as a town.

Small business entrepreneurs are typically very involved in the community. They may belong to various volunteer organizations or perhaps sponsor a team sport. They also create local jobs. Their knowledge of operating a business can help the non-profit survive even when times are tough.

When local people shop at a local small business their money stays within the community. And in turn, the local small business and their employees will try to buy locally as well, which pumps more economic activity back into the local economy.

Each year, the mayor meets with Rotary to let them know what has happened and what will happen in the town going forward. But that is not enough. We need to communicate directly to the business community.

One thing I would like to see happen is to have at least one meeting a year with the business community. Not just Chamber members but invite all businesses and have the meeting held at a local business or hosted by the local business at a location of their choice. This takes council out of the comfort zone of the council chamber and has them communicating directly to the people and businesses that may need to discuss issues of importance that directly affect them; especially now, as we continue to recover after the Covid 19 shutdown.

Paul Farrow

Dale Fawthrop

The well-being of a community is judged by the variety and strength of its business community. Businesses are the hub of the commercial wheel of a community. If a community is to move forward, the people and the local government need to shop local and to promote local products.

Municipalities are controlled by provincial legislation and that legislation will not allow Municipalities to give grants to business. However, I

believe there is some provision for preferential tax treatment . To strengthen the business community of Amherst local government needs to play an assistance and supportive role in the beginning and in the continuance of both new and long standing businesses.

Prospective residents and businesses will assess Amherst based on its businesses and the role of local government in building our economy.

Leon Landry

The success of the business community in Amherst is inherent to the success of the town itself. To be simplistic – Amherst is a township; but it’s also a business, and this business provides necessary infrastructure and services to the people and businesses that reside within our town boundary. In 2018 tax dollars accounted for 56% of the total consolidated revenue and 80% of the general operating budget for Amherst (Municipal Report – Town of Amherst, Department of Municipal Affairs – Municipal Profile and Financial Indicator Results, 2018). The 2020/2021 budget report for the town shows that commercial property accounts for approximately 33.7% (vs. 66.3% residential) of the assessed taxable property in Amherst. However, compared to the previous year’s budget, commercial assessments have increased by 6%, while residential assessments increased only by 0.4%. If we combine this with a downward trending population (as well as a population that is aging), we can conclude that we are experiencing a stagnation of a qualified labour market. This means that as a councillor I would ask Council to examine ways that we could create a more balanced labour force. This may be achieved by exploring avenues of increasing population growth. If we expect new businesses to develop within our town, we must ensure that they are able to find the staff they need to be successful. The role of the business community will be to create opportunity for growth while the town simultaneously works to entice a labour force that can fill the demand created by same. We need recruitment initiatives on both sides of this problem.

Roy Pettigrew

The more people we have working the better off all the local business community will be. Create and promote an avenue to train those looking for jobs to do the jobs that are available in our area. Promote people from other provinces to come to our area to live and fill these jobs if need be. New industry will not be in a hurry to locate in Amherst if the work force is not here to support it.

- 2) What are the cost sharing initiatives between the three municipalities of Cumberland, Amherst, and Oxford which you will pursue to reduce municipal costs and improve services?
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Vince Byrne

1-Tourism- As a global community, we must not draw lines between what Amherst, the County and Oxford has to offer. Whether it be a beach in Northport, the Joggins Fossil Cliffs in Joggins, the Golf Course in Amherst, Pugwash, Springhill or Wallace or the Regional Hospital; all are amenities which can benefit the area. Tourist may stay in Amherst for overnight accommodations but play golf in Pugwash and have lunch in Oxford.

2-There is the matter of regional policing. Not an easy file to address but something that could be considered.

3-Procurement- All municipalities have common need in public works (salt, asphalt, sand, oil, gas etc., maintenance etc. If an agreement could be reached on joint pricing policy and followed through to procurement, costs savings may be realized. Such was the case with the electronic voting system, wherein in HRM negotiated a priced for the package with the understanding that the same unit pricing would be provided to other municipalities

Sheila Christie

The Town of Amherst, currently have several cost sharing agreements in place, such as the Town of Amherst provides Fire Services, and water to various areas of the County, also CJSMA (Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority, REMO (Regional Emergency Measures Office),

The Cumberland Business Connector. There are temporary agreements in place for building inspection, dog catcher, as well as for Town staff helping with planning duties for Oxford.

In the last 4 years since I have been on council, we have also looked at the possibility of providing Policing to Oxford which was declined, and we now have several joint committees, such as the Nova Scotia Border Entrance committee, of which I am the vice-chair of, we have a regional Tourism Advisory Committee, of which I am the Alternate.

The 3 councils now meet quarterly to discuss issues and hear presentations that are of interest to all of our municipalities. These are improving communications between the units as well as paving the way for shared visions of improvement for our region.

This open line of communication will lead to increased services as well as reduced costs as things are identified further and worked on collaboratively.

Also the Town of Amherst, (I was the representative on this group), along with the Deputy Warden of the County at the time, saw the successful submission of a grant to the province for Doctor Recruitment and Retention, for our region.

This approach is something that has proven successful and I plan to push for increased collaboration between the groups.

Darrell Jones

- I will be pursuing the cost sharing initiative for funding for the Joint Tourism Project. This operation cuts down on any potential of duplication of services.
 - The goal is to bring more tourist to the Cumberland Region and keep them here over a longer period of time.
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Wayne MacKenzie

Terry Rhindress

The three municipalities will need to continue working together to gain better cost sharing. This will allow us to get better pricing for materials, contracts and purchasing goods and services such as garbage collection.

George Baker

I will pursue the following areas:

1. Cost sharing services.
 2. More cohesive work as a group.
 3. Search for municipality grants to make it more cost effective for the taxpayers.
 4. Energy saving and ecologically friendly alternatives to run our municipalities with more efficiency.
 5. Hotel levies, as seen in other municipalities, to put money back into the communities to help improve signage and build a nest egg available to help businesses in need.
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Hal Davidson

We currently have joint services through Emergency Measures, Building Inspection collaboration, Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority (landfill), mutual aid with fire and police services, along with joint ventures regarding water. These appear to function very well. More recently, there has been some movement with joint council sessions and tourism. These latter initiatives have brought very little to the forefront in terms of outcomes. The participants of these meetings (joint council/tourism) must be more assertive in identifying readily apparent measures to reduce overall costs associated with our marketing strategies in particular. Joint marketing strategies promoting our region as Atlantic Canada's best small town/regional destination to do business, visit, host events, and for relocation is a must!! Such marketing strategies must target local, regional, national and international audiences.

Lisa Emery

At the moment the three municipalities have cost sharing agreements in place for the Regional Emergency Measures Organization; Cumberland Regional Tourism and for the Cumberland Joint Services Management Authority.

The regional tourism is fairly new. Bringing tourism to the area will benefit all three municipal units. The visitor economy represents one of Canada's most important growth opportunities. We need to develop a tourism strategy that will take us through the next five years. However, I am sure even more can be done to reduce municipal costs and improve services.

There are three municipal units that are duplicating and triplicating services. Do we really need three finance departments, three recreation departments; three public works departments or three of any department within a half hour of each other? More discussion regarding collaboration within the three municipal units would be needed to join all these services and then split the costs between them. The development of a fair plan without having to amalgamate the towns into the county would be needed over the next four years.

Several years ago the Town of Amherst needed a new police vehicle and the commission asked that they try buying in bulk with another agency that may also need a new police vehicle. After a little research was done there were 5 police vehicles bought at the same time. I know one went to Truro and one went to New Glasgow and I think the others went to HRM. The end result was a several thousand dollar savings for each municipality. But, I don't think it was done again. I believe the procurement process made it too cumbersome. And, all the vehicles were delivered to HRM, which meant there was a cost to pick them up.

This might work better if the three local municipalities work together to purchase vehicles. Not just police vehicles but all vehicles; fire trucks, work trucks for town crews, or any other large expenditure for any other department.

Paul Farrow

Dale Fawthrop

The three municipalities presently share costs for waste management. Over the next 4 years the three need to explore Green projects that will benefit the environment and that are cost shareable. On the energy issue Amherst should be part of the Cumberland Energy Authority. Co-operation between the three municipalities is crucial in our new world. Let's think all in this together, let's think bulk purchasing and let's think Green.

Leon Landry

Firstly, Joint Council sessions must adopt new terms of reference that will make agenda items more meaningful and allow for joint municipal committees. If we are going to examine cost sharing initiatives, it makes sense that we mandate a committee to accomplish this task. We can only do this if the Joint Council recommendations are binding (or somehow carry weighted influence) for the respective municipalities. Secondly, after formation, the committee could make recommendations to municipal councils with respect to joint purchasing opportunities. Joint tendering activities both reduce administrative costs from duplicate transactions and increases economies of scale (especially if all 3 municipalities participate). The committee could also perform an initial best practices audit; with the intent to identify which service areas would be most likely to provide the greatest rate of return, so we may select the most efficient projects and create momentum for more projects moving forward.

Roy Pettigrew

There are several cost initiatives the area can share to reduce cost, policing is one that comes to mind. We have a strong police force and the resources in Amherst that could be shared by both towns and the municipality.

3) What are the top three things that you would plan to do to encourage entrepreneurship in our community?

Vince Byrne

- Entrepreneurs must understand the risk of opening/owning and operating a business. Government funding is not the answer. Entrepreneurs must be willing to put their assets at risk/commit the time required to make a business successful and be prepared to be flexible.
 - Researching the business opportunity that they believe is available in the community is essential to success. What will make their business stand out from their competitors. Is it a unique business? A new business cannot be rushed in to opening. There are regulations/licenses/staffing to consider.
 - Network with your peers. Peers may not be in the same industry, but all have started a new business at some time. Reach out for advice. Do not take critical advice as a negative but rather as a chance to learn. Ask many questions so you are prepared when something unusual happens. Build relationships that you can rely on-whether with competitors/other industry personnel/your suppliers/your financial institution/Canada Revenue Agency. Always communicate with these people on a regular basis as they will work with you in the event there are issues that need to be addressed.
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Sheila Christie

Entrepreneurship is extremely important for a healthy vibrant community.

I have always tried to encourage growth and applaud local start-ups. I am someone who is present in their community, and show my support by visiting, promoting on social media as well as through my actual purchases at these locations to help support new businesses as they start in our area.

We need to have our youth feel that they have a voice, and our Youth Town Council can be a valuable to help us with finding better ways for encouragement and stronger youth engagement.

1) I also brought forward “ A Fresh Start” community grant program during my 4 years on council which provides up to \$35000.00 a year for New, Fresh, ideas or events that help to promote the town, that benefit our shared community or provide growth. I will encourage the promotion of this valuable program to encourage its use.

The Cumberland Business Connector (Which the Town contributes to), holds yearly entrepreneurship events, that I have attended and am always excited to get to know and encourage these young business people personally and have given them valuable contact information to further their ideas, if it was of use to them.

2) I also want to see the role of our Business Development officer evolve further for more direct involvement with individual businesses and citizens on promotions for new growth. Fresh ideas need to be encouraged and I feel that as a Town we can do more to be the resource that promote these, or to provide valuable training as may be needed. For Example, “lunch and learn “type seminars so that young potential businesses have the tools they need to be successful.

3) I think that the time has come, for a complete review of current Bylaws and Zoning so that as a town, it can help to make the process easier or simplified. If as a town, things are in place that make it harder for businesses due to outdated policies or processes, within their control, they need to be addressed.

Darrell Jones

- Have workshops on what business opportunities are available or which could be developed in the Tourism Industry.
 - Assist start-up to find sources of Business Counselling & training.
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- Assist businesses in finding the resources for start-up Financing
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Wayne MacKenzie

Terry Rhindress

My top three things to encourage new business start up;

- a. Offer new business development classes at NSCC
 - b. A strong look at zoning regulations allowing easier start up for mom and pop businesses to operate from homes.
 - c. Make business start up easier by lessening red tape, by providing a pathway for proper procedures through government departments and the correct contacts for start up programs.
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George Baker

1. Aim to appeal to more of our youth.
 2. Provide incentives for our residents to entice new businesses ideas and services to stay in Amherst rather than changing location to start their businesses.
 3. Provide more clarity of grants available through the Federal and Provincial Governments for entrepreneurs as well as existing businesses.
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Hal Davidson

- (1) As indicated above, I will be an active participant in the business community and report of my activities.
 - (2) I will familiarize myself with federal, provincial, municipal and non-governmental initiatives and programs such that I can be an informed ambassador for entrepreneurs.
 - (3) I firmly believe we should ensure NSCC and high schools are partners in our entrepreneurship endeavours while established entrepreneurs would be encouraged to be mentors.
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Lisa Emery

First of all I would like to mention that government doesn't create business entrepreneurs do. The best thing for government to do is remove any barriers to business creation. There are also many organizations in town that will help with business development such as ACOA that will help with funding and CBDC that can help with funding and training. The Cumberland Business Connector and the local Chamber of Commerce can help with networking.

To encourage entrepreneurship in our community we have to start young. Work with the schools to help plan what type of education is needed to start a business or a trade. There are also programs like Junior Achievement that can train young students on how to develop a business plan and then follow through and develop that business. In the past the Cumberland Business Connector has done a "Pitch It" contest with youth in the area. This was a great event that brought out tremendous ideas for business start ups.

Following this thought, work with the Nova Scotia Community College and Nova Scotia Works CANSA to make sure that students are being trained to enter the workforce immediately. Business students should be encouraged to look for gaps in services in the community and develop plans to fill those gaps with a new business idea.

Business owners and entrepreneurs are driven to create something they believe needs to exist; even if it is in competition with another business. This kind of drive requires ingenuity, innovation, creativity and leadership especially for a new business owner or someone that may want to expand into another service.

The best thing the town can do is collaborate with all the resources available and encourage a new business entrepreneur to use those resources to help get the business off the ground. If we can encourage more business growth then in turn the tax rate can decrease incrementally.

Paul Farrow

Dale Fawthrop

For entrepreneurship to thrive in a community there needs to be a can-do attitude at town hall and throughout the community. We need to have start-up assistance in the form of programs and grants. We need to have a continuing care approach to maintain and grow our small businesses. We need to have programs and funds available to support small business through challenging times and in their growth and expansion. We need to make it known that Amherst is open for business in both the manufacturing and retail sectors. In the past a business needed to have a physical presence to operate. In today's world a business can operate in the virtual world-buying and selling products 24 hours a day. For 21 st century entrepreneurship Amherst needs to have a well known presence in today's world.

Leon Landry

1. Youth Retention: We need to develop a strategy that will keep young and vibrant minds working in our business community. We ought to develop outreach initiatives that will ensure young people feel encouraged to start new businesses in Amherst. One idea might be to develop a mentorship program where established business leaders dedicate time to share advice and provide guidance to budding entrepreneurs. This could be formulated as an extension of the Connector Program offered through CBC and could even form a partnership with the Amherst Youth Town Council to make inroads with high school students that may want to explore the possibility of entrepreneurship. We need to take this issue seriously and build on the momentum created during election campaigns; following up with concrete plans and results to execute on campaign promises.
 2. Capital Investment: We need significant capital investment in infrastructure that will allow us to develop and grow a competitive labour market. We can achieve this by investing in amenities that will appeal to families that we hope will relocate to Amherst. A new recreation facility is something that I have highlighted in my platform and I believe completion of this project would be a contributing factor in developing a growth strategy for our region. I've had casual conversations with the Mayor of Truro as well as the Senior Planner for Colchester County regarding the Rath Eastlink Community Centre. Reaching out to other communities could be a valuable component when considering a project of this magnitude.
 3. Collaborative Development: As mentioned in my response to question 2, joint council initiatives could provide a powerful cost saving tool for our municipalities. One such area that may be facilitated by another joint committee is entrepreneurial development. This work could include grant programs (or other investment avenues), promotional collaboration, services hubs, and other shared enterprises. We may be able to increase access to provincial or federal funding if we initiate these ideas as a pilot projects through the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities or the Provincial Government's Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing.
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Roy Pettigrew

- Tax breaks for at least 3 to 5 years to give a new entrepreneur opportunity to get a good start
 - Calling on all levels of government for any financial support that may be available
 - As a border town we need to address any provincial controlled pricing to be sure we are in line with our neighbouring provinces. The rest of the province is not affected the way Amherst and Cumberland County are by Provincial pricing and taxes. e.g.: fuel, Cigarettes, alcohol, medical
- Every town needs a gas station and a grocery store in its downtown core
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- 4) Over the past 4 years, the Cumberland Business Connector and the municipal units have developed a strong partnership in supporting and growing the business community. How will this partnership and the Cumberland Business Connector's goals help you to achieve your goals?
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Vince Byrne

By growing the business community, the municipality benefits from increased revenue-whether it be from deed transfer tax on home sales/development of new subdivisions or ongoing revenue streams such as water and sewer/property tax etc. with increasing revenue available to the municipality, additional services and improvement-maintaining of existing infrastructure can be considered for the benefit of the citizens

Sheila Christie

Having worked with the newly formed Cumberland Business Connector during of my 4 year term, I know the importance of having our own REN (Regional Enterprise Network). RENS are set by the province for each region for a leading edge collaborative approach to economic development and in support of business growth. The Cumberland Business Connector is this replacement for a REN for our Regional and is funded in collaboration with our other municipal units for our specific region. By doing this we have more direct influence on a focused approach for our area.

I have seen the work that has gone into data collection, information sharing, training, and promotions, job fairs, and development of entrepreneurs. An example of this work, is the recent video's highlighting our local businesses on social media.

Also extensive work has gone into working with individual businesses, accessing their needs, especially with different industries such as agriculture, and forestry just to name a few.

I would like to see the collaborative approach with the Cumberland Business Connector and the Town of Amherst Business Development officer continue. A strong foundation has been put in place, and will allow the town to continue to adapt to the ever changing needs of our community.

As the largest Service Center for the County, Amherst wins when we grow our region together.

Darrell Jones

- By having an organization to offer resources to new and existing businesses which they will need to be successful.
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Wayne MacKenzie

Terry Rhindress

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George Baker

If we continue working together as a whole, we can accomplish anything with dedicated work. We are all in this together to make Amherst and Cumberland County a stronger community. It all comes down proper marketing and development to achieve a greater Amherst.

Hal Davidson

Collaboration is key to our future. I am promoting an Asset Based Community Development model for moving our region and town beyond 2020. We have considerable human, business, and natural resources available at our door step which are not being fully utilized. The Town of Amherst must take a leadership role in ensuring such resources are effectively and efficiently utilized in the promotion and development as the Best Atlantic Canada Small Town.

Lisa Emery

In reading the Cumberland Business Connector's (the Connector) Strategic Priorities 2020-2021 I see many things that will foster growth in Economic Development, which is one of my priorities along with growth in Tourism and population.

The Connector wants to build relationships to support local businesses and productivity to help with recovery after the Covid 19 shutdowns. Working with this partner the municipal staff, from all three municipalities, needs to minimize the duplication and triplication of services to increase our level of economic development.

It looks like there is a joint 2020-2026 Community Economic Development Strategy between the three municipal units and the Connector being developed. I look forward to seeing how we can move our economy forward with this strategy.

Paul Farrow

Dale Fawthrop

We are all in this together. To enhance our local community, I have a facebook page, "Support Amherst", that promotes local events and businesses. The pandemic has caused major set backs in business and industry. Nova Scotia is looking at over 60% tourism revenue loss in 2020 compared to 2019. We have learned from the pandemic that we must rely on each other. We need to support our local businesses, our local charities and our food bank. We need more promotional videos like the one recently released on Waldale. Business travel is very limited due to quarantine restrictions; so internet promotion and sales are key factors to growth.

Leon Landry

CBC Mission Statement: The Cumberland Business Connector is a business led, not for profit organization. Our focus is to foster a strong business environment in order to strengthen Cumberland County by removing barriers to business and connecting businesses with the resources they need to be successful.

A community minded and collaborative approach to business development is what I believe would be best for our local economy and produce a long-lasting direction of growth for our region. The main theme in my platform is poverty reduction (www.leonlandry.com) and it is my position that any region's economy is best served when a maximum participation rate by all its citizens is sought. Without question, we need to develop businesses and a qualified labour force, and this will require us to look externally for recruitment opportunities. However, we must not overlook the importance of searching inward for opportunities to develop our community to achieve economic prosperity. If the mission statement of the Cumberland Business Connector includes removing barriers and connecting businesses with resources they need to be successful, this work must include a seat at the poverty reduction table.

If the business communities of our municipal partners want a long-term vision for success, that vision must include consideration for the entirety of the population in Cumberland County, Amherst, and Oxford. It is not reasonable to believe that we can have sustainable business growth over the long term with a county wide poverty rate approaching 40%. Further, how can we expect to retain youth in Amherst when we allow 34.7% (StatsCan 2016) of all youth under 17 to live with poverty? The answer is – we cannot.

I do understand that many of our businesses support poverty reduction already; but we need more. We need support from the business community to truly make an impact on poverty reduction. If this region is to become prosperous, we need to proceed with a holistic approach to every issue. Business Development, Emergency Services, Housing, Poverty Reduction, Recreation, Food Security, Community Health and Wellness, Mental Health and Addictions, Care for Seniors, Infrastructure and Services, Our Environment, and Policies / Bylaws can no longer be looked at as separate entities. The successful path forward for our region will be collaborative, cooperative, transparent and honest conversations between municipal governments and all community stakeholders as we look through myriad lenses.

Roy Pettigrew

Strengthening the partnership will be important, growing our population and growing our work force, along with cost sharing and operational support.
