

## Farah El-Hajj

September 30, 2020

Questions for all Ward 7 candidates of the upcoming by-election:

1. In 2017 the City of Windsor passed its [Community Energy Plan](#) committing to a 40% reduction in 2014 emission levels by 2041. In November 2019 it passed unanimously the [Climate Change Emergency Declaration](#) and in May 2020 the report on [Acceleration of Climate Change Actions in response to the Climate Change Emergency](#) (see page 503 at link), was passed unanimously by Windsor City Council. Which, if any, of these documents have you read?

**I have read through both documents and support the Climate Change Emergency Declaration which has also happened in 400 communities across Canada and the actions needed to address Climate Change.**

2. How do you intend to ensure the City's effort remains on climate mitigation in addition to climate change adaptation? For example, although continuing to address the flooding in Ward 7 would be a beneficial climate change adaptation response, how will you work to ensure the City also takes sufficient measures to reduce emissions, and in a way that benefits all residents?

**The Degrees of Change document outlines succinctly the challenges we face as a community to address the impacts of climate change in our region. Additionally, the current Council has passed several high level documents focused on achieving the goals of environmental sustainability and greenhouse gas emission reduction. To begin I'll be strongly supporting initiatives to support the objectives outlined therein.**

**The challenge in front of us now is to implement the measures that need to be implemented to address climate change.**

**Specifically, the City has committed to dramatically improving our public transportation system as well as the active transportation network. Both will have positive impacts on the climate change mitigation front. As well there is a very interesting proposal the City is currently developing that would help residents to retrofit their homes making them more energy efficient.**

**As well Council identified tree planting as a high priority through its Strategic Plan process. I also support this area of focus.**

**These are all good initiatives, what will be important moving forward will be to elect candidates who not only support climate change initiatives, but also are to articulate**

**the arguments to the community that can build the support for doing the work that is required to protect the community from the impacts of climate change. There are many ancillary benefits attached to these initiatives that go beyond addressing just climate change, the economic benefits of addressing climate change are real and need to form part of any discussion addressing this crucial topic.**

3. If you are elected as Councillor for Ward 7, where will the necessity for climate mitigation action rank in your priorities when it comes to the City's budget decisions? What is your position on allocating funds in the 2021 and future budgets to address climate mitigation (i.e. reduction of emissions) in Windsor-Essex?

**The longer we wait to fund climate change actions, the more it will cost in the future. We need to prioritize climate change actions especially as we see the visible damage climate change has caused many Ward 7 residents. Flooding, damage to parks, roads, sewers and public places are evident. We need to continue investing in sustainable infrastructure.**

4. What do you think about the idea of a [carbon budget](#) for the City of Windsor?

**I would be interested in seeing a carbon budget for the City of Windsor. This will help provide an inventory of our overall amount of emissions. This will also help residents understand what we produce in Windsor, and how we can bring emission levels down.**

5. Urban sprawl has been called "[Ontario's oil sands](#)". If elected, how would you ensure that the City of Windsor makes climate-friendly urban planning decisions?

**As the City of Windsor continues to develop we need to ensure that investment proceeds sustainably. There are many development related decisions that have created significant problems that we are being forced to address today. We cannot repeat those mistakes.**

**We should always be looking to stimulate investment in infill areas, as we already have services and infrastructure in those areas to support development. In less developed parts of the City it must proceed through a model that ensures that growth pays for growth where that it proceeds sustainably.**

**The Degrees of Change document for example contemplates a Sandwich South neighbourhood energy and climate change strategy that has a goal to create a Net 0 energy area. I strongly support this process and would be keenly interested in developing planning related reforms that are informed by this analysis.**

6. What are your ideas on how the City of Windsor can work with the County of Essex, surrounding municipalities and the City of Detroit in order to actualize climate mitigation action?

**We need to look into regionalized transit that is effective and reliant that allows passengers travel to Essex and other municipalities. Many residents use public transit as their primary mode of transportation and we need to continue investing in our Public Transit services. It currently takes Ward 7 residents over an hour to get to the University of Windsor campus.**

**As a constituency assistant to Brian Masse MP, I witnessed the advocacy work to ensure the new public Gord Howe International Bridge has pedestrian and bike lanes to get into Windsor and into Detroit. This will help attract many to our downtown core and in other communities. Alternative transit options such as low emissions or zero emission transport, for example natural gas or eventually an electric ferry for transporting people between downtowns would help with the economy, tourism, employment opportunities and much more. I know many in both cities would enjoy and use it often if this was seriously considered.**

7. Climate action is a priority for many youth voters. Why should young voters come out and vote for you?

**As a youth myself, climate action and the environment are very important to me. Attending the climate action strike last year and seeing many young people in our community caring; really opened our eyes. There is always misconceptions that 'young people do not care' about important issues. This is not true. Climate Change is impacting all of us, especially our youth as we care about the future of the planet and what our lives will look like.**