

Dear Neighbours and Friends:

My name is Craig Gammie.

I have been listening to the residents, and I have learned a lot.

I have learned that all you have to do is start people talking and you quickly find out why they love this great place called South Bruce Peninsula.



Residents love Lake Huron on the west with its beautiful sand beaches and its great sunsets. They love Georgian Bay, the Niagara escarpment, Colpoy's Bay, Hope Bay, and so much more on the east. They love the wide open spaces, the community centres, the community activities, the friendly neighbours, the quiet rural ambience, and the great family feeling.

(And some just love it for what it isn't ... Toronto, Hamilton, Waterloo)

It truly is a wonderful place to live, work, and play.

But in talking to people I have also learned that many residents feel dark clouds have rolled in over the last four years, and that more dark clouds are on the horizon, and that their paradise may be threatened.

Residents are aware that taxes have risen sharply, that water and sewer rates have for many gone through the roof, that our financial reserves have been squandered, that roads and bridges have fallen into disrepair, that by-law enforcement has all but ceased, that services in general have declined, and that some of our taxes have been improperly spent.

A few have become so discouraged by the tax and utilities burden forced upon them by the current council that they have packed up and left town. Some, whose properties have lost value due to high water rates and high taxes, cannot afford to sell, and yet they cannot afford to stay, and so they feel trapped.

Fortunately, the situation can be improved. But we need to change course. We need a new council that considers the residents. We need a council that puts the needs of the residents above their own self-interests. We need a council that can stop the wasteful and improper spending. We need a council that encourages residents to participate. We need a council that conducts its business, which is our business, in the open. We need a change at town hall.

I am running in the October 27, 2014 municipal election for the position of councillor, Town of South Bruce Peninsula.

I am looking for your support. So that we can change course. So that we can get taxes and municipal utility rates down (without loss of services). So that residents get value for their tax dollars. So that residents can once again feel comfortable staying in their own homes. So that residents can participate in the decisions that affect them without fear of reprisal.

I can bring to the council table many years of relevant education and experience, especially in engineering, finance, government, and government affairs.

Many council policy decisions would benefit from an engineer's input, yet the town has not had an engineer on staff since about 2008, except for a few months in 2012. I was a professional engineer for 35 years and I can contribute an engineer's perspective to the council table.

Lots of policy decisions are financial, and almost all decisions have a financial aspect. I have a Masters degree in business, with a finance concentration, I have lots of experience as a corporate financial analyst, and I have managed budgets of over \$50 million dollars. I can bring my finance background to the table.

As a staff member working for the federal government and as a senior government affairs professional in a large private sector corporation I became very familiar with the government policy decision process, even writing parts of statutes, regulations, and by-laws.

I have attended all council meetings since the 2010 election except for a brief period when I was improperly excluded. I have reviewed every agenda package. I have provided council with a resident's perspective on their policy proposals.

I am very familiar with the Town's procedural rules, and also the rules of order used for council meetings.

I believe there are many opportunities to reduce taxes without any loss in services. Here are some:

1. Reinstate Sauble paid parking for tourists (\$250,000 tax reduction or 3% off your municipal tax bill), while residents park free.
2. End unfair subsidies to commercial operations (2% reduction).
3. End council members paying private matter legal fees from the treasury (2% reduction).
4. Explore alternative police services arrangements (tax reduction unquantified).

5. Cut the unproductive waste out of the economic development budget (1% reduction). (This will also improve the economy.)
6. End the airport deficits (2% reduction).

Here are my feelings on some issues that residents have raised:

First Nation Claim of our beach

The First Nation claim is very weak. Our defence is very strong. We should not be throwing in the towel. We need to slow the process down and get all the information to residents.

By-law enforcement

We have some good by-laws. But enforcement is almost non-existent. That needs to change. I will change it so that by-law enforcement is separated from staff and council. The by-laws themselves, and not staff or council, should determine how by-laws are enforced.

Infrastructure

Many roads, the Warton sewage system, and some water systems are in disrepair. We need to fix these.

Economic development

Current council's approach to economic development is to tax money away from residents and donate it to commercial enterprises, in cash or in kind. This does not work. It actually slows economic development because it takes so much money away from residents, leaving residents with less to spend and invest, making the economy not better, but worse.

It is also grossly unfair to take money from those who earned it and who have a right to invest it or spend it, and to then donate that money to those who did not earn it and have no right to spend or invest it.

I feel that the best way to get the local economy moving is to harness the skills and energy of the residents, (rather than by using their scarce tax dollars). I feel the best way to do this is to set up an economic development committee independent of the local government. I am offering to get such a committee going.

Sauble Sewers

Over and over Sauble sewers have been shown to be unnecessary, extremely costly, and unwarranted. Yet some candidates, in spite of all the evidence that septic systems are

working well, keep insisting that septic systems are contaminating drinking water and the lake where we swim, and they are using that misrepresentation to try to justify a communal sewage system at Sauble. The only difference is that now they want all residents to pay, not just Sauble residents. If they get their way it will cost each residence more than \$10,000. The residents of TSBP should not be saddled with that unnecessary burden. The Sauble sewers issue needs to be put to rest, once and for all.

Legal Costs

I will fight to make sure that no council member or staff member can use taxpayer dollars to bully any resident into silence with a lawsuit, or by any means. And I will fight to make sure that no one can ever again freely defame residents while using taxpayer dollars to pay any legal costs incurred as a result of their defamation, or to pay for any settlements awarded against them. And I will fight to make sure that no council or board member can ever use taxpayer dollars to hold themselves harmless while openly violating the conflict of interest rules.

The Airport

The airport needs at least \$100,000 of taxpayer subsidies every year, and provides little or no municipal service. This is neither sustainable nor acceptable. Something must change. If the airport cannot be operated at a benefit to the taxpayers, then we need to get out of the airport business.

Sauble pay parking for tourists

The late 2012 decision to have free parking for tourists at Sauble is costing all residents in the Town \$250,000 in extra taxes. The decision needs to be reconsidered. Residents should have free parking.

Transparency/ closed meetings

In 2010 the Ontario Ombudsman investigated the 2006 – 2010 council of TSBP and found many contraventions regarding open meeting laws. Then in 2012 the Ontario Ombudsman investigated the current council of TSBP and found six violations of the Municipal Act regarding closed meetings, the second highest number of violations for any municipality (Meaford was first). But the Ombudsman cannot do anything about it. The Ombudsman can only recommend that council stop doing it. The current council, in my analysis, just kept on breaking the law. That has to change too. I would like to have few if any closed meetings.

For comments on other issues please visit my website at www.craigammie.com

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call (519 422 3599) or email (cammie@rogers.com).

Thank you for your support,

Craig Gammie

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