

**Questionnaire prepared by Christie Lake Association Inc.  
to Candidates for the October, 22, 2018 Election to TVT Council**

**Responses from Rob Rainer  
Candidate for Councillor - Sherbooke Ward**

**1. How long have you resided in Tay Valley?**

Three years as of October 24, 2015.

**2. What is your educational background?**

My formal, traditional education consisted of elementary and high school, and one year of university (in 1977-78). My informal education consists of extensive self-directed learning, ample on-the-job training and learning, and particular periods of specialized training (e.g., in 1980 in outdoor recreation and education instruction; in 1997-1999 in an international training program, sponsored at the time by the Rockefeller Foundation, in leadership for sustainable development).

**3. Provide a brief synopsis of your work history. Be specific.**

The centrepiece of my working life has been as an executive director, over 1993-2014, of six not-for-profit organizations in succession (from community-based to national organizations), followed by a stint as the interim executive director of a national political party. Prior to 1993 I also worked as a sawmill labourer, a shipper-receiver, an outdoor recreation and education instructor, a letter carrier, and a writer/editor. Since 2014 I've worked as a consultant/contractor to several not-for-profit organizations.

**4. What specific qualities and experience do you have that you believe qualify you to serve TVT residents as a Councillor?**

I'm a "people person" with strong listening and critical thinking skills, and who makes decisions based on my values, on knowledge and evidence, and on common sense. I am a forward-thinking and positive-minded person with a deep concern for people and our planet. I look for the best in others and I strive to treat others the way I wish to be treated, with kindness and respect. I have deep experience in the role of executive director (akin to the CAO position of TVT Township) and also experience on boards of directors (i.e., akin to the governance role of TVT Council). I also served a term as a school trustee in New Brunswick (further akin to the governance role of TVT Council).

**5. Why are you interested in running for Council at this time?**

To make a positive contribution to this community to which I have developed a very strong affinity in a short period of time; to help ensure that the new Council is as cohesive and as well-functioning as it can be; and to help ensure that every decision by the new Council is in the public interest.

**6. What do you feel your primary responsibility will be as a Councillor?**

To help ensure Council, and the staff which reports to Council, is on top of all responsibilities pursuant to applicable legislation; to help ensure Council is a cohesive, well-functioning body, with excellent relations with staff; and to help ensure Council is communicating effectively with the constituents of the Township.

**7. Do you share, or identify with, the sentiment “Back off Government! This Land is Our Land!”?**

I do not. This sentiment reflects a degree of anger or hostility to the idea of government and, in this sense, is unhealthy. I do not view government as the enemy or the aggressor but, rather, nothing more and nothing less than “we, the people” (the essence of democracy). I see government when I see a school, a hospital, a library, a park, and so much more that is possible (in most instances) because of “we, the people” and the funds we pool to make such things possible.

I do not believe that landowners have the right to do anything they want with their property, which seems to be the driving ethos behind the “back off government” sentiment. I believe land is something we hold in trust for the people who will “own” it following our time. In this sense, we “borrow our land from our children” and have an obligation to try and leave land in as good if not better condition than when we came into possession of it. We all (whether we own land or not) ought to treat land with the greatest respect, including recognizing that there is a “downstream” where impacts on our neighbours can be felt if we misuse or abuse the land we have in our trust. An example of this is from a real-life case in Tay Valley Township, where a couple has been burning their household garbage (including plastics) in an oil drum and the smoke and fumes (highly toxic) have been blowing into a neighbour’s yard and into their house. This inconsiderate action by the first landowners has been dramatically impacting the quality of life of the neighbouring landowners, to the point where the latter are considering to sell their property.

I recognize that sometimes government can go “too far” with regulations and rules (e.g., requiring people or businesses to adhere to a heritage-specific colour scheme, such as became an issue in Perth last year with one of the storefronts; in that case, I supported the business owner’s wish to paint her storefront in a certain colour scheme that was out of compliance with Perth’s heritage requirements which, in my

view, are not only too restrictive but have not been applied uniformly at any rate).

The answer to government going “too far” is not to demonize government but to calmly, steadily, and respectfully work for legislative and policy change, respectful of the fundamental role of government – to establish institutions (e.g., health, justice, education) and to deliver services of value to the public.

8. **In your opinion, does TVT have adequate regulations in place regarding Council and staff procedures, zoning by-laws, road infrastructure, waste disposal, etc.? If not, please outline your 3 main concerns and the steps you propose to remedy those concerns.**

I am still too new to the Township and to the workings of the municipality to be able to offer a fully-informed view on this question. My sense, though, is that while regulations or policies may not be “adequate” (a subjective evaluation at any rate), a good-faith effort to guide and manage the Township is being made by Council and staff as a whole. If elected to Council, I will have much to learn and can only pledge to always approach every matter or problem re: regulation with a hunger for information, evidence, and a spirit of teamwork (including with the greater community) to work on finding the solution(s).

9. **The Municipal Act requires municipalities to adopt policies to try to ensure that it is accountable to the public for its actions and that its actions are transparent to the public. [See Footnote 1] In your opinion, are TVT’s policies adequate for those purposes? If not, please outline your 3 main concerns and the steps you propose to remedy those concerns.**

Akin to my previous answer, I am too new to the Township and to the workings of the municipality to be able to offer a fully-informed view on this question. That said, there has been recent discussion about having, as a matter of practice, regular or special Council meetings (those that are not in camera) taped and made available to the public. I support that idea. I am in favour of as much openness and transparency as possible re: Council business, including utilizing a range of means (within reasonable limits) for ensuring constituents are informed of such business prior to its transaction and following its completion.

10. **If TVT is required to adopt policies to try to ensure accountability, are you of the view that all votes other than unanimous votes, should be recorded so that voters will be able to ascertain who voted for and against each resolution or by-law?**

Yes

11. **Does it concern you that TVT deals with an increasing number of matters in “closed sessions” which are not open to the public? If so, please outline the reason(s) for**

**your concern(s) and the steps you propose to remedy those concerns.**

Per the above, I am too new to the Township and to the workings of the municipality to be able to offer a fully-informed view on this question. My understanding, though, is that many of the recent closed sessions have had to do with a couple of conflicts that have heavily consumed Council over the past year, and that this period represents an anomaly in Council's recent history. I am confident that with a certain configuration of the new Council (beginning in December) that these conflicts will be resolved before too much longer and thus enable the Township to resume a smoother course of business.

- 12. In 2018, TVT passed bylaws containing policies and procedures for dealing with complaints by TVT residents against TVT staff, and *vice versa*. In each case, staff will investigate the complaints, decide the outcome of those complaints, and impose a range of sanctions or penalties, if complaints are upheld. The public is given no role in the investigative, decision-making, or penalty process. [See Footnote 2]**

**If a staff member investigates a claim by or against another staff member with whom the staff investigator works on a daily basis, should the public be concerned about bias in favour of TVT staff, or the appearance of such bias, in the complaint process? If so, please outline the steps you propose to remedy those concerns.**

**[Clarification of the question provided by Gordon Hill to Rob Rainer, September 28, 2018: The question does not relate to conflicts between or among staff....The question concerns conflicts/complaints by the public against staff, and complaints by staff against one or more members of the public.]**

Firstly, I would hope that any complaints or claims against Township staff, by members of the public, would be few and far between. Should they be numerous, that would suggest either a pervasive problem within the staff (e.g., an antagonistic style of communicating by a particular staffer), or perhaps an effort by one or more members of the public to "make life difficult" for the staff person(s) of concern.

To answer the question, yes, I believe the public could have grounds for concern about bias in favour of TVT staff if a given complaint is first handled by a staff member (other than the CAO) who has supervisory responsibility for the staff member(s) who is/are the subject of the complaint. I would prefer that all such complaints be handled from the get-go by the CAO who, as the senior staff member, has ultimate responsibility for day-to-day problem solving. He/she should be as neutral as possible in looking into the nature of complaints and working on their resolution. If the complaint concerns the CAO, including any allegation of CAO bias in a complaint investigation, the matter should be referred to the Reeve and the

Reeve (or Deputy Reeve in his/her absence) should work to resolve the matter. All of Council should be immediately apprised of the matter and potentially involved in its resolution if the Reeve (or Deputy Reeve) are unable to achieve that on their own.

- 13. Based on the fact set out in *Footnotes 3 and 4* (which you should assume are correct), are you satisfied that the TVT tax expenditures for the 14 years from 2004 to 2017, both inclusive, are fair and reasonable having regard to:**
- (a) the relatively large percentage of TVT residents aged 65 years and older, many of whom may be on fixed incomes; and**
  - (b) changes in CPI, CPP retirement benefits, and GIC interest rates during the same period?**

Once again, I am too new to the Township and to the workings of the municipality to be able to offer a fully-informed view on this question. That said, from the campaigning I have done thus far in this election, my sense is that residents (year-round and seasonal) in Sherbrooke ward are not generally dissatisfied with the present level of municipal taxes they are paying. There has been a degree of grumbling but no one has said to me, emphatically, that their taxes are too high; some have even said that they find the taxes they pay to be “about right.”

In fact, when I have asked the question “Do you have any notable municipal issues or concerns?” many people have responded “No.” In other words, there seems to be a general level of satisfaction of life for people living here, whether year-round or seasonally, although many people seem unaware of the wide range of services their municipal taxes actually help support.

With regard to the 65+ age demographic, statistically that demographic is the least likely in Canada to have members living in a state of material destitution. That is because seniors, thanks to CPP and benefit programs like Old Age Security, receive the greatest level of income security support of any age group in Canada; statistically, seniors are the least likely to live in poverty compared to any other age group. To the extent that low income seniors need greater help re: income security, that is largely a matter of federal and provincial policy. The same holds true for working-age adults and for children as the other two main age-specific demographic groups.

That said, it may be possible for TVT to make certain adjustments in its taxation policy that offers some reduction in municipal taxes incurred by low-income households, without unduly impacting the overall financial well-being of the Township. I would be interested in seeing this possibility explored through in-depth financial analysis.

**14. The derelict restaurant premises on Hwy 7 just west of Hwy 511 (last known as “Paros Island Restaurant” and once known as “Patterson’s Restaurant”) is located in Tay valley Township. It has been a community eyesore for more than 10 years and is getting worse every year.**

Questions for incumbents: -

- (a) during your years on Council, what steps has Council taken to eliminate this blight on our community, and when were those steps taken?
- (b) What are the impediments, if any which prevent TVT from demolishing the building on the premises and either allowing the property to return to a state of nature, maintaining it as parkland or a recreational facility, or offering it for sale for commercial development?

Questions for all candidates:

- (c) **What steps, if any, would you propose to eliminate this community eyesore?**

My understanding is that the property is in private hands and that the Township may not have any means of forcing the owner to do something about it. (My understanding is that past efforts to establish a property standards by-law have not been successful.) If on Council, I’d seek to look into this issue to understand the site history, to know who is the owner, and to know what discussions, if any, have been held between the owner and the Township, and what the “bottleneck” for addressing this problem may be. If the owner is open to selling the land, I would be interested in seeing discussion within the Township for creating a vision for that site that might enable the property to become municipally owned (or perhaps owned by a not-for-profit entity) and then developed to help showcase the Township and what it offers to prospective new residents or businesses. The site’s positioning along Highway 7, at one of the entrances to the Township (coming from the direction of Perth), suggests the potential to transform the site into something highly visible to a lot of traffic and to which the entire Township could take pride. At the least some brainstorming of ideas seems warranted.

For example, perhaps there could be a large-scale outdoor map of the Township showing its many lakes, rivers, and other key features (including historical and cultural), a self-serve information kiosk, and a number of small demonstration houses offering designs and construction techniques from local builders with expertise in state-of-the-art sustainable housing (the latter component would be akin to the Evergreen Homes demonstration site east of Perth along Highway 7). Such an idea, if found favourable, would require a

funding strategy to realize. I believe with the right coalescing of interests that such an idea could be feasible.

### Footnotes to Questions for Candidates

#### Footnote 1

The Municipal Act , 2001, S.O. 2001., C 25 as amended, S. 270(1)

#### Footnote 2

Complaint Policy – Complaint made by member of the public regarding municipal facilities, operational procedures, programs, services, or staff.

<http://www.tayvalleytwp.ca/en/municipal-government/resources/By-Laws/Section-AD-2--Complaint---Policy.pdf>

Complaint policy- Complaint by municipal Staff against a member or member of the public in respect of Unreasonable Customer behavior.

<http://www.tayvalleytwp.ca/en/municipal-government/resources/By-Laws/Section-AD-3--Unreasonable-Customer-Behaviour---Policy.pdf>

#### Footnote 3

The 2016 Government of Canada Census Profile indicates that TVT seniors' population (aged 65 and over) represented 25.7% of TVT's total population on Census day whereas the provincial average was only 16.7%.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3509015&Geo2=CD&Code2=3509&Data=Count&SearchText=Tay%20Valley&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&TABID=1>

#### Footnote 4

In the 14 years from 2004 to 2017, TVT's tax expenditures have increased from \$2,716,700 to \$5,453,364 an increase of \$2,736,664 or 100.73% for an average annual increase of 7.2%.

*[Information obtained from TVT Budget Summaries for the years in question]*

By comparison, over those same 14 years:

CPI for Canada All Items on the 2002 base stood at 104.7 in 2004 and at 130.4 in 2018 , an increase of 25.7 or 24.55%, for an average annual increase of 1.75% per year; <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1810000501>

CPP Maximum monthly retirement payments (without supplements) have increased from \$814.17 per year to \$1,114.17, an increase of 36.9% for an average annual increase of 2.64%

Average 5 year GIC rates paid by the major Canadian banks have **declined** from 2.53% to 1.01%.

[http://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/selected\\_historical\\_v122515.pdf](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/selected_historical_v122515.pdf)

Consequently, over same 14 years, TVT tax expenditures have increased:

4.1 times greater than the CPI index noted above;

2.7 times greater than CPP increases as noted above.

At the same time income generated from falling interest rates has **declined**.