

HOUSING AS A MUNICIPAL ELECTION ISSUE



*West Hants Regional Municipality
Candidate Responses*



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West Hants Regional Municipality: Candidate Responses

The Homeless No More Initiative invited candidates to respond to questions about housing. Candidates were provided the opportunity to respond to our questions via email or complete an online questionnaire. Candidates who completed the questionnaire had the opportunity to provide responses to additional questions. This report includes publicly shareable responses.

Question 1: If elected, what action(s) will you take to address housing in your community?

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Candidate for Mayor

My approach focuses on what I call "Housing That Works," aiming to meet the diverse needs of our community. We need a balanced mix of housing options that cater to different lifestyles and budgets. Furthermore, we need to build the capacity of housing developers and promote different types of real estate ownership. Growing up, my family was involved in providing community-based housing, and that's the missing link I see here. By integrating impact investing with community economic development, we can generate capital to rethink our housing strategies and create sustainable solutions.

Jamie Juteau, Candidate for District 10

I think we need to be more education and informed of the actual scope of the problem. I would like to see someone responsible to keep us apprised of what is going on in WHRM, and being able to recommend solutions. No one on council is an expert on the issues of homelessness nor the related underlying causes. Whether it's a staff person or a community liaison, that's a relatively easy one. With proper information, solid decisions can be made.



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Question 2: In your opinion, what are the housing needs of people living in your district or municipal unit?

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Candidate for Mayor

Our community faces a spectrum of housing challenges. Renters struggle with poor-quality housing and fluctuating oil prices. There are also residents ready to transition from affordable housing to homeownership but are hindered by a lack of suitable housing options. Moreover, unplanned development has created a fragmented housing ecosystem, putting people at risk of falling through the cracks. We need to bridge these gaps by encouraging developers to create housing that reflects the diverse needs of our community. That starts by merging our development strategies with our community needs assessment.

Jamie Juteau, Candidate for District 10

The main issue is that we have massive amounts of building going on, but nothing is set aside in these places for affordable units. They get filled up by folks from more metro areas who want a quieter lifestyle that can afford the large rents.



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Question 3: What role do you think municipal government can play in addressing those needs?

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Candidate for Mayor

The municipal government should foster a community-centric housing environment by securing funding and supporting the creation of different levels of development. We need to figure out how to encourage multiple forms of developers committed to affordable housing. We need a comprehensive development strategy for the next decade that aligns with community needs and connects our diverse communities. This strategy would guide sustainable growth and ensure that housing development is cohesive and community-driven.

Jamie Juteau, Candidate for District 10

Possible part of development plans that 'x' number of units in a building be set aside as affordable housing, perhaps some type of provincial funding in this regard to offset to the owner. I would like to see a similar program as what the Downtown Halifax Business Commission and the Spring Garden Rd Business association did some years ago with the Navigator Outreach program, so that unhoused people can be properly identified, assisted where needed while keeping council regularly informed on required statistics like numbers of people involved. I know the province has just partnered with POSSE on a for interventions with people in crisis which isnt quite the same, but perhaps could take the lead.



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Question 4: If elected, what are you willing to do to ensure that your council addresses the issue of housing in your community?

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Candidate for Mayor

I am committed to meeting people where they are, engaging with residents directly, and exploring the creation of a steering committee on Community Economic Development. This committee would keep a pulse on community needs and connect with specialists to drive development. As Mayor, I see my role as a navigator, supporting community champions, exploring funding opportunities, and fostering partnerships with provincial and federal representatives to bring sustainable housing solutions to fruition.

Jamie Juteau, Candidate for District 10

The main thing is for us to keep it at the front of our mind and when reasonable and workable plans come before us to help our citizens, to support it. Not just lay it at the province feet which is the easy way out.



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Question 5: Which of the opportunities for municipalities to address housing needs in your community would you be committed to supporting as a member of Council?

Vacant Property Registration

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Vacant Property Taxes

Incentives for Renting Out

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Registration of Tourist Accommodations

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Elimination of Non-Owner-Occupied Tourist Accommodations

Jamie Juteau

Landlord Licensing/Registration

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Developing a housing plan/strategy

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Initiatives to support energy efficiency for homeowners and renters

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau



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Question 6: Which actions will you commit to doing, as a member of Council, with respect to supporting community housing needs?

Adopting a Municipal affordable housing plan that increases the supply of safe, affordable housing that meets peoples' needs

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Championing the role of Municipal Government in addressing issues related to housing

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Ensuring local policies reflect the vision of Federal and Provincial housing policies

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Engaging with local agencies, NGO's and stakeholders in creating a community driven action plan

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Ensuring local agencies are heard by funders and Government stakeholders

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Ensuring local businesses are supported in the effort to make a living wage the baseline for all employee compensation

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede
Jamie Juteau

Question 7: If you have identified other opportunities for action on housing, please share them with us here.

No responses provided for this question.



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Question 8: What are your questions or comments about housing?

Kjeld Mizpah Conyers-Steede, Candidate for Mayor

My primary concern is the lack of a growth plan, leading to disjointed communities and flawed planning, financing, and support. We need a coordinated strategy that builds a collection of communities, ensuring that we plan for growth, support it effectively, and create a cohesive vision for the future.