Stephen Hernen:

2. The obvious easy answer to this question is the Ghandi statue or public washroom fiasco.

However, more importantly, the decision I would have handled differently was Council's approval of the updated Development Charges Study and bylaw. I strongly support the principle that development should pay for growth. But I believe the 10-year capital plan needed greater scrutiny to ensure that the projects and equipment included were genuinely required because of new development—not simply projects the municipality would like to undertake.
The plan proposes $50 million capital spending, with development charges covering about $25 million. That means existing taxpayers are responsible for the balance. I don't believe there was enough clarity about how those costs would ultimately be funded.
Before approving the bylaw, I would have required a more focused list of genuine growth-related priorities, a clear funding strategy for the municipality's share, and a careful assessment of the impact of the charges on the cost of building new homes.
If elected, I will seek a review of the Development Charges Study, the projects it includes and the fees being charged. We need development to contribute its fair share to growth, but we also need to make sure our policies don't unnecessarily add to the cost of creating new housing in Huntsville.

3. If elected, the one measurable change I would like residents to see is greater control over municipal spending and property tax increases. My goal would be to keep annual increases in the municipal portion of the property tax bill at or below the rate of inflation, while maintaining or improving the services residents rely on. That means focusing council on the municipality's core responsibilities, carefully setting priorities, and making sure taxpayers are getting good value for every dollar spent. At the end of four years, residents should be able to look at their tax bills, compare those increases with inflation, and see that we have maintained strong municipal services while keeping costs under control.