



♀ ST. JOHN'S WOMEN'S CENTRE  
♀ MARGUERITE'S PLACE  
♀ SAFE HARBOUR OUTREACH PROJECT

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## CALLING ALL CANDIDATES

Feminist Q&A with municipal election candidates

**5. Residents such as single parents, people receiving Income Support, people living with disabilities, temporary and permanent residents, and people who are criminalized can be left out of civic feedback and decision making. How will you engage residents who are often excluded?**

DEPUTY MAYOR (acclaimed)

**Danny Breen** - No response.

**Sheilagh O'Leary** - Covid 19 exposed the gaps in our system for those who don't have adequate access to the virtual world. Lack of access to technology for many residents is real, especially for vulnerable populations including seniors and those living in poverty. During the pandemic, we partnered with The CMA Foundation to establish two free wi-fi zones for public use in the downtown core. These types of partnerships create access. Now that we can commune in person, we can host town halls and bring engagement opportunities to neighbourhoods.

AT LARGE

**Maggie Burton** - The City must do everything possible to ensure engagement processes are inclusive. I know that is a priority for me and for staff. But so far even the most inclusive processes have been biased towards those with spare time and available resources. I have made a commitment to building relationships of trust with individuals and communities that are often excluded. This can supplement formal engagement processes, and I work hard on it; but it too provides an incomplete picture of the city. I am committed to considering which voices are left out and identifying ways to engage those communities.

**Tom Davis** - All residents deserve a voice. I will maintain a website, email and social media presence that will be available to all. I will work diligently to educate and offer support to all our residents but in particular those living on the margins. I will also host 4 annual family days at community centers in the less privileged parts of town. These will be a free outdoor movie and bouncy castle that I will provide in partnership with the centers but at no cost to the city or centers. I will be there to face our taxpayers and show that I am accessible.

**Ron Ellsworth** - I was raised by a single parent who at times relied on income support, so I understand many of the concerns that these residents have and how difficult it can be to access services or engage with community leaders. For 30 years I have undertaken community service with many organizations that support these residents, and I have advocated on their behalf. I have relationships with residents and the associations that represent them and have always sought out their advice in my past time on council. I will continue to regularly spend meaningful time with residents whose perspective needs to be considered in the decision-making process.

**Debbie Hanlon** - Engagement is part of good governance. This past council engaged the community very well, and functioned in a very respectful way in making informed decisions. Social media presence, community outreach, active presence, and working directly with community agencies and groups where there is genuine opportunity to hear the voices of community members is very important to me. Prior to being on Council, I have been an active member of various community organizations and a participant of a variety of community events. Sometimes the route to hearing the voices of less vocal individuals and groups is through the engagement with advocates. Active presence in our school communities, community centers and service agencies is vitally important.

**Sandy Hickman** - Again, professional staff handle engagement and have been doing a great job. I do agree that marginalized groups and individuals may not be as aware of or have access to our engagement processes and we are always looking for ways to increase accessibility. I think organizations such as yours can offer ideas for enhancing engagement and we are open to input at any time. The best way we can do this is to work closely with such organizations that are on the ground and well understand the needs and concerns of marginalized individuals.

**Meghan Hollett** - Seeing yourself reflected in decision-making is vital to meaningful engagement. Listening is key. I'm committed to meeting people where they are at - particularly from communities directly impacted by decisions and those who have historically been left out of engagement. As a city, we need to recognize that people who can't vote or who don't own property also have a voice and we need their input just as much as anyone else. Our decisions determine whether or not they can build a life in this city. We can also improve engagement by establishing alternative meeting times to make it easier for folks to participate; and by providing childcare at city meetings and consultations.

**Mark House** - First and foremost, I would need to show a willingness to listen to their stories with empathy and compassion. This would enable me to have a greater perspective in formulating my point of view. Whenever I am given the opportunity to spend time with someone from a marginalized group I really need to hear what they are saying, and learn. Discrimination and intolerance are values I am unwilling to tolerate.

**Anne Malone** - I've already begun by prioritizing under-represented neighbourhoods and PWD's in my campaign canvassing, offering assistance with voter registration on our cell phones, asking folks what is important to them in this election, leaving my

contact information with them. I have a disability. I live on a fixed income. I know how precarious things like money and housing can be. I listen. I am real and relatable. People respond to that, which is why the representation of all kinds of people and income brackets is so important in government.

**Jess Puddister** - Reaching people where they are is paramount to capturing diverse voices, representing diverse needs. More public engagement sessions should take place in community (rec centres, parks, churches, schools, the prison) so people don't have to go so far. I want more creative methods of engagement, like Q/A drop boxes at health clinics, grocery stores, and bus stops. Important point: it takes personal resources to participate. This makes the net cost of participation comparatively higher for marginalized people. We must respect people's investment in the process by showing how feedback integrates into decision-making, and providing transparent access to raw data.

**Greg Smith** - As I stated prior, I'm a person who was raised on low income social assistance. I understand how people in the areas I grew up feel because I felt it myself and it wasn't easy breaking down walls and barriers in establishments I entered. We need to rely more on our Inclusion Advisory Committee, neighbourhood associations, community groups and additionally grow them, more public community engagement, and asking the questions often not asked as opposed to just looking for those to provide feedback to us. We need to have more community gatherings and foster a city that all feel a part of and are valued.

**Paul Combden** - No response.

**Steve Parsons** - No response.

**Raymond Petten** - No response.

## WARD 1

**Jill Bruce** - I have been actively involved in our community for the past several years and have always put public engagement first with regards to issues or decisions. It is important that through engagement we include everyone. This will require working with community groups to share information that is effective to various populations. Looking at each group we need to realistically look at how to get information to them. This includes, using online, print, radio, TV, etc. and working formal and informal communication channels to allow for feedback via mail, TTY, online platforms, roundtables, and one on one sessions as needed. These should never be a one stop policy to engagement.

**Mark Nichols** - Another core policy of my platform, inclusive representation, involves listening with respect to all voices and representing their concerns to city council, with intentional emphasis given to those whose voices have, all too often, been marginalized or ignored. My work with the Social Justice Co-operative NL over the past couple of

years has provided many opportunities to hear from people with lived experience of being marginalized, and these voices have informed my campaign policies. I will continue to intentionally seek out opportunities to listen to feminist/marginalized voices as part of my decision-making process as a ward councillor.

**Jenn Deon** - No response.

## WARD 2

**Art Puddister** - The city needs to hold more public meetings.

**Ophelia Ravencroft** - My approach to governance is grounded in the belief that no citizen should feel unheard by their leaders. Government isn't just here to represent the rich and powerful. I am always personally available to residents, especially those who've faced marginalization and disenfranchisement, and am proud to address their concerns. It's also important for Council to build relationships with community groups, like the SJSOWC's own SHOP, who build trust with marginalised citizens and advocate for their stated needs. Standing together to hear, amplify, and answer the calls of our most vulnerable citizens makes our society a better place.

**Peter Whittle** - We need to make a point of creating focus groups or workshops with multiple representatives from each marginalized community to hear their suggestions of how we can best connect with all persons. If the city council wouldn't approve that for the city as a whole, I would be willing to create ways for that to happen in my Ward. Everyone deserves a voice, no matter what their circumstances and not everyone can be reached in the typical generic ways so we need to hear what the groups have to say and implement those solutions.

**Derek Winsor** - No response.

## WARD 3

**Walter Harding** - My Mother was a trail blazer as a working-poor Mother of 6 children. Mom organized and spoke at events in the 1980s bringing attention to the plight of single parent families who struggled to meet the monumental challenges of raising a family on their own. It led to public education actions as well as government intervention to assist those who worked hard for a living but were being taken advantage of. I grew up poor and I'm not ashamed to say it. Engage, educate and encourage all those who struggle. We are all in this World together.

**Greg Noseworthy** - As I work in the community non-profit sector, specifically in the non-profit legal field, as well as working with persons facing food and financial insecurities, I will continue to engage and consult with experts in areas so that I best understand the services available for these people, policies and procedures impacting them, and more. I will also continue to speak at a front line level with these individuals to

better understand what the barriers look like for them so I can speak with, and not for, these people.

**Jamie Korab** - No response.

WARD 4 (acclaimed)

**Ian Froude** - I recognize that my experience in this city is not representative of all the diverse people and life situations in our community. This means that it is of utmost importance that we create opportunities for everyone to contribute their ideas and experiences. This is especially important for those that are typically excluded, and may require new approaches that meet people where they are. I will reach out to these individuals, community organizations, and to the committees of community members who give advice to Council and I will listen actively to those who are advocating from the perspective of lived experience.

WARD 5

**Scott Fitzgerald** - There is likely distrust among these groups that they can have any impact at City Hall so we need to go to them. By engaging through community based groups and organizations we can break down barriers of mistrust.

**Carl Ridgeley** - The city has done significant work in recent years to enhance public engagement. In 2017, the city released an evaluation of its engagement policy with twelve recommendations. All of these recommendations need to be actioned in order to enhance the consultation process. To engage residents who are often excluded, opportunities for consultation must be convenient. The use of technology (e.g., videoconferencing, ZOOM, virtual attendance at public meetings) would help facilitate convenience and be welcomed by people with accessibility challenges and/or home commitments (e.g., child care). In certain cases consultations must also be targeted to specific community stakeholder groups.

**Donnie Earle** - No response.

**Brenda Walsh** - No response.

**6. In working with City Council and the City of St. John's, what would equitable, feminist leadership look like to you?**

DEPUTY MAYOR (acclaimed)

**Danny Breen** - No response.

**Sheilagh O'Leary** - Equitable leadership means supporting and electing diverse candidates in the political sphere. Supporting gender diverse and BIPOC representation on council, on city committees, and community boards is key to feminist leadership and benefits everyone. I have been mentoring women in the municipal sector for the past

decade and believe promoting diversity enables all of us to continually learn and grow as intersectional feminists and allies. In the immortal words of Ruth Bader Ginsberg, "Women belong in all places where decisions are being made".

## AT LARGE

**Maggie Burton** - To me, equitable and feminist leadership means first and foremost that I bring my hard-work ethic, passion and commitment to community and feminist values to all of my work as a councillor. I work to ensure that decisions prioritize the needs of marginalized communities and are informed by and reflect the voices and perspectives of marginalized communities. I believe that Council and the City should represent a diverse and representative collection of voices and perspectives and the internal operations of Council and the City are explicitly and actively embody anti-racist, anti-oppression, equity and inclusive principles.

**Tom Davis** - Feminist leadership is part of wise long term leadership to create a place that all want to live. A safe, sustainable and affordable city that works towards mental, physical and financial health for all.

**Ron Ellsworth** - I recognize that factors including a person's gender, ethnicity, disabilities, social and economic status, can result in inequitable access to opportunities, programs, services, and benefits. The problem rests, not with the people negatively impacted, but with antiquated systems. I will advocate for a Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) lens for everything that happens at City Hall. Throughout my life I have been a mentor for many, including women and people in marginalized groups. I will lead by example to ensure a safe and respectful working environment for all. When I recognize a problem, or one is brought to my attention, I will take swift and supportive action.

**Debbie Hanlon** - Leadership involves respect, action and making informed decisions. We have been fortunate to have had a respectful workplace during the past few years on Council; it has made for efficiency and equitable choices. We need to be communicative as a council with one another, but also in our approach with the community where there is opportunity for collaboration, consultation and the cultivating of meaningful relationships. The City's agenda has to focus on how we can serve the best interest of residents in a way that is inclusive, respectful and fiscally responsible. I am very pleased to see more diversity in leadership roles on Council and with the City.

**Sandy Hickman** - One of the things I am most proud of is the level of inclusion on city council and city staff. Council is getting there but, of course, the electorate will always have the final say on composition of council. I am most pleased that City staffing is becoming more diverse all the time and all hiring processes are clearly open to all. Our senior leadership team is equal actually and many senior managers are female. Equitable, feminist leadership is just that, hiring the best available people of any gender or background.

**Meghan Hollett** - The complex and intersecting challenges facing our city require leadership not just from individual councillors but from a critical mass of people, leading the way in shifting power dynamics to prioritize equity and justice. Collaboration and relationship-building are fundamental to my vision of equitable, feminist leadership. As a community organizer and advocate, I've seen firsthand the transformative impact of amplifying voices at the grassroots level – when we stop making things about “me” and start making them about “us.” This includes transforming the systems, processes and structures that entrench the status quo, that are proven not to work for our communities. This kind of feminist leadership is required to bring about lasting change.

**Mark House** - Women and other historically excluded groups need to be included in public discussion where decisions are made. This would enable a healthier, more inclusive environment to respond to the needs of the entire community. Women's experiences differ from men so it is important they are represented accordingly. This would bring greater diversity to council in decision making and provide wider representation of women's needs and interests. We must acknowledge that women should play the greater role in deciding which actions are better for them.

**Anne Malone** - Equal representation of women and gender-diverse people. Policies and budgetary decisions that reflect the economic disparities experienced by women, the complex caregiving roles that women fill in the various stages of life, and ensuring that policies and systems are fluid and responsive to evolving social ethos as they relate to women, children, and family units.

**Jess Puddister** - It means standing up and saying the hard things that privilege allows people to ignore, but are integral to making this community an equitable one, a safe one, and a respectful one. It means creating budget priorities that reflect the needs of women, non-binary folks, the LGBTQ+ community, BIPOC, and other marginalized communities that often disproportionately experience the difficulties of living in St. John's. It means creating space for lived experience in the decision-making process. It also means working to empower marginalized individuals to step up and get involved in democracy, to increase diversity at the table going forward.

**Greg Smith** - Feminist leadership is standing up for those who aren't treated equal in our community. Women and gender diverse people who still make less than men aren't represented. The 2SLGBTQIA community which I happen to be apart of as openly queer and pansexual, permanent residents who still don't have the right to vote in our municipal elections, and the BIPOC community whose voices need to be elevated to have a more just society, those with physical disabilities who need our city's infrastructure to meet their needs and finally those with mental health concerns that need all levels of government to ensure proper resources and healthcare.

**Paul Comben** - No response.

**Steve Parsons** - No response.

**Raymond Petten** - No response.

## WARD 1

**Jill Bruce** - To have a city free from poverty, oppression and patriarchy requires transformative feminist leaders: leaders who enable others to lead, building power with them instead of over them. To develop this approach, we have to adopt a set of feminist leadership principles. This means working to ensure women are at all tables and are included in all decision making processes at the council table, and its sub committees. This includes calling out any form of discrimination and abuse of power that we witness or experience in the workplace, and safely enable and support those around us to do the same.

**Mark Nichols** - As someone who has advocated for gender equality on a number of fronts, I acknowledge the privilege I have as a man in a patriarchal society and how that often blinds me to gendered impacts of public policy. I recognize that I will have to be intentional in listening to feminist/marginalized voices to ensure that I am engaging in inclusive representation as a member of council. This also means giving weight to the perspectives of female colleagues on council. Applying GBA+ to municipal budgets, which I will advocate for, would demonstrate feminist leadership by City Council as a whole.

**Jenn Deon** - No response.

## WARD 2

**Art Puddister** - Leadership comes from the mayor, deputy mayor and councillors.

**Ophelia Ravencroft** - Feminist leadership starts with the people we elect. Choosing representatives with diverse lived experience will ensure that the folks in charge of decision-making will be imbued with a fuller sense of the impacts government's decisions can have. Equally, ensuring they are committed to principles of equity and justice will center our future on the same principles. Finally, feminist leadership should specifically represent the diversity of gender and sexuality that we see in our society. Women, gender-diverse people, and queer people belong everywhere, at every level, and it's beyond time to make sure we take our seats at the governmental table, too.

**Peter Whittle** - I strongly believe that the principles of "feminist leadership" can be embodied equally by women and men. Women are often under-represented politically although, we're doing great in this election with a number of incredibly talented and insightful women candidates. Practicing truly inclusive leadership is a critical goal for any government or organization.

**Derek Winsor** - No response.

## WARD 3

**Walter Harding** - May I please quote Camus. "Don't walk behind me, I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow. Just walk beside me, and be my friend." Equitable, feminist leadership looks to me is how all leadership looks to me. Communication. Cooperation. Admiration. Respect. Honesty. Integrity. It would be my great pleasure to have the opportunity to work with community Leaders on shining the light on fairness and equality for all.

**Greg Noseworthy** - Equity is a long-standing legal principle that requires that people who need additional support, regardless of particulars (gender, identity, race, ability etc.). This principle guides many legal doctrines that I have been trained to apply throughout my career. An equitable feminist leadership includes providing supports to all marginalized genders, regardless of gender expression, identity, and presentation, so that they succeed in their leadership roles, whether at a supervisory, management, or councillor level. This includes non-discriminatory practices, as well as positive policies, procedures, and practices that allow all women to be leaders of our city.

**Jamie Korab** - No response.

WARD 4 (acclaimed)

**Ian Froude** - This starts with a representative Council, and I encourage every resident to consider voting for diverse and community oriented candidates. Equitable, feminist leadership looks like providing opportunities for marginalized voices to be amplified; by doing the difficult and sometimes unpopular action that makes our community better for those who need it the most; and by knowing when I, as a male, cis-gendered individual does not understand an issue, and instead to lean into action based on trust of the lived-experience and expertise of people in the community.

WARD 5

**Scott Fitzgerald** - I believe that feminist leadership is inclusive, transparent, and always aware that bias exists. We have to strive to eliminate that bias wherever possible.

**Carl Ridgeley** - Municipal government is the level of government that is closest to the people and therefore has the greatest impact on the residents. A diverse council and city staff would be more representative of the residents of the city. In particular, with women at the table, their issues are more likely to be included resulting in more inclusive discussions. It is also important to have women in leadership positions within the departments of the city. To attract women into leadership positions, barriers must be removed. Some initiatives that could be considered include flexible work arrangements and mentoring for potential female candidates.

**Donnie Earle** - No response.

**Brenda Walsh** - No response.