



Norm Gerestein

2.Campaign Email - For Public Distribution

ngerestein@outlook.com

3.Campaign Website

norm gerestein for mayor

4.Campaign Social Media

5.What are your top 3 priorities if you are elected?

critical infrastructure, community safety and economic development

6.City Council meetings are often held at inconvenient times for many to attend. How will you ensure you are available to your community and their concerns?

I will be available to our residents by being regularly at the city office, walking the community, being at community events, via phone or email to ensure transparency and accountability.

7.What do you consider to be your strongest qualities and how would it be an asset to you as a member of City Council?

I have been a councillor for 14 years and have 35 years of successful business experience. My experience is based upon making common sense decisions. I will ensure our community is my number 1 priority and i will listen and be accountable to the citizens of Brooks.

8.Passion for the community is best shown through action. Please share volunteer work on clubs and committee's you've been on, and how long you were involved.

14 years on council i have sat on most boards. 8 years in rotary. 7 years in Kinsmen. A past president of the chamber of commerce for 2 years and vice president for 2 years. chairman of lifetalk counselling President of the United Conservative party for 4.5 years. 10 years as official agent for MP Shields (Conservative Party of Canada).

9.What is your vision for economic development and how do you plan to attract and retain businesses and jobs?

We must invest in critical infrastructure, community safety and collaborate with the county and smaller surrounding communities to ensure development occurs. we must also ensure the attraction and retention of new doctors as well.

10. Have you run or managed a successful business? For how long? Did you grow the business either by employees or profit?

14 years with the Bay/Zellers and 21 years as an independent retailer taught me the responsibilities of budgeting, staffing and meeting sales/profitability goals. The above performance was in large part due to my staff and allowing them into the decision making process.

11. What does supporting local mean to you, and how do you plan to prioritize it within Brooks?

We realized the importance that every \$1 spent locally had a tremendous impact in keeping jobs in Brooks while I was president of the chamber. This led to a stronger community spirit and we had a program highlighting successful businesses by promoting their businesses.

12. We have seen many small businesses close in town over the past few years. Many leave and do not return. How can you prevent this from continuing?

Many businesses have closed in Brooks. We must contact these businesses to ascertain whether the business is a retirement, poor location, poor sales or a lack of business expertise. We may have to implement a mentorship program through the chamber to help businesses at risk of closing.

13. There is currently a tax break for new homes, which will likely benefit newcomers or big business. What will you do for the 30-40 year tax payers that helped build this town?

We have to do a review of property taxes for existing tax payers to see if reductions can occur.

14. Vacant land in Brooks has a high contamination issue with the soil. What would you do to clean these up to sell for business?

We must get an inventory of contaminated land to assess whether this is a private or public situation. We would then have to determine whether the properties can be developed and then work with the provincial and federal governments to see whether any grants are available to clean up these properties. If the property can be cleaned up affordably then we can entice a business to build.

15. Since the cost of living and grocery prices have risen over 20%, what would you do to keep Brooks property taxes from rising as well?

Brooks property taxes have increased and we must relate our wants to our needs. We will need to assess our operations to find savings to the taxpayer and maximize our grants from the provincial and federal governments to reduce our municipal spending. We may be able to partner with JBS or many other businesses to source savings.

16. What steps would you take to address affordable housing in Brooks?

Brooks has implemented a variety of steps to address affordable housing by collaborating with developers to build different types of housing. Again we must collaborate with the provincial and federal governments to lobby them for grants as we have a diverse community.

17. Rental prices have skyrocketed in Brooks (and everywhere) making it difficult for young people to get a start. What would you do to improve this in the future?

There are 400 new units being built in Brooks presently. This should have an impact of reducing rents. We must lobby the provincial and federal governments for grants to make accommodations less expensive and allow young people to get into an affordable rental unit.

18. What is your position on allowing or limiting liquor stores or cannabis stores?

The city of Brooks has a policy to ensure these types of businesses are not near schools, daycares, etc. There are no laws preventing these businesses from operating but our by-law officers can ensure the bylaws for signage, admittance and hours are followed ensuring a safe community.

19. How do you plan to bridge the current or perceived gaps between different cultures in our community?

Brooks has many different cultures. We must work with our cultural groups to hold events like the Taste of Nations, Filipino Day, Mexican Day, etc. We must encourage cultural groups to attend our city committee meetings so we can collaborate to see how we can bridge cultures with education and communication.

20. How do you plan to support the well being and development of the youth in our community?

The well being and development of our youth is critical. Partnering with Grasslands and CTK to develop programs for youth is essential to creating programs for youth at the JBS centre to make them sustainable when the programs are not available at the schools.

21.What are your plans to expand/attract events to Brooks? What are your plans regarding future fees to use our facilities?

We can attract events to Brooks by maintaining our facilities to a high standard. This will attract tournaments and other events thereby filling campgrounds, hotels, restaurants and improving retail sales for businesses. Fees are carefully reviewed by staff to ensure competitive rates in Brooks are in line with other communities fees.

22.Why does it seem like parking is not a concern with new developments? Is this something that can be resolved in the future?

Parking is considered on new developments. We must review our bylaws to ensure on site parking requirements are met. The municipal planning committee can deny variances to avoid problems down the road.

23.What can council do to work with the 2 largest employees in our community -- Grasslands Public Schools and JBS?

We must partner with Grasslands and JBS.by listening, communicating and meeting jointly to meet the needs of our vibrant community.

24.With 25 councilors and 5 mayors plus one Reeve for a population of 24,000, what is your position on possibly merging municipalities within the County of Newell?

I don't see merging happening as all communities are presently self sufficient.

