



Amanda Maxwell For Ward 5

Question 1:

Over the last two and half years it feels as if we have become a less compassionate and caring community and are seeing increased incidences of racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia and sexual and gender-based violence, not only in the broader community but in our schools. If elected, what are steps you would take or policies you would propose/support to begin addressing this troubling trend?

- Reading this paragraph breaks my heart. For many years I felt we were a country where we were becoming more inclusive and accepting of people. Over the last few years we're seeing that although progress has been made, more progress is needed. I think bringing awareness to all types of people is imperative. Educating others about different groups of people will hopefully eradicate these issues. I think as a city we need to celebrate people. So perhaps we need to do more for pride month. We really don't do a lot. I know in Brantford they have the Villages Festival for a weekend in July. It's an amazing event that showcases cultures around the world. We need to be celebrating different religious holidays. I would love for my kids to learn about how different cultures and religions celebrate their important holidays. I think having strong and compassionate leadership that accepts everyone is one way to start. The rest is awareness.

Question 2:

What is one decision made by Cambridge/Regional Council in the last four years that you believe has had the most impact on the lives of women and gender-diverse individuals? What more would you like to see?

- An important decision for me is free menstrual products in city buildings. I believe women and gender diverse individuals who have female anatomy need to have the basic right of access to these products. Some people, especially in todays uncertain times, simply cannot afford them. They now have access to these via city buildings.



Question 3:

Data from neighbouring municipalities and cities across the globe show that Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) reduce the risk of overdose and drug poisoning. Waterloo Region currently ranks as having the eight highest rate of overdose deaths in Ontario. This is a crisis and punitive “war on drugs” models of managing it have failed time and again, causing countless preventable deaths. If elected, are you prepared to support a CTS in Cambridge as it has been proposed and agreed to by Council? Please explain your rationale.

- CTS is definitely important and needed in our community. I don't think that 150 Main is the ideal location for the site. Perhaps temporarily with a better plan in place for a permanent location. The Realtor in me says there are other locations close but not in the core that could serve the purpose. I think one good option is the old Chubb and Checker building beside Tim Hortons at the Delta which is close to the shelter. It's fenced off from the other businesses. Not abutting housing. Its closer than I would like to a school but it's not within the sight lines of a school. Most importantly, its really close to the hospital in case there was a life-threatening emergency where the person required a hospital. I'm not even sure that this building was looked at when they were deciding where to put it. It's an empty building with a great location. Bottom line is we really need to help those struggling with addiction, CTS is greatly needed I would just prefer it was in a more ideal location. I have yet to hear a resident say they think 150 Main is a good location but many feel the need.

Question 4:

From children to seniors, adults and couples, people across the community are facing mild to severe mental health challenges. We have heard many stories of people not being able to access the mental health supports they need. From community counselling to crisis and residential supports, organisations and institutions are lacking the resources to meet the community need (<https://www.cambridgetoday.ca/local-news/cmha-still-seeing-high-demand-for-mental-health-supports-5559717>), and waiting lists are significant. Why do you believe this to be the situation, and if elected, what will you do in your capacity to support the mental health needs of the community?

- There is definitely a mental health crisis on our hands at the moment. My Mom (Sherry Maxwell) is a local therapist, so I know how inundated they have been with people struggling. It's actually overwhelming. I think the covid pandemic really added a whole new layer of mental health issues. People who were already struggling started to struggle more and those who weren't struggling started to struggle. We didn't know what was happening, we weren't socializing and engaging with friends and family, work and school were disrupted, and it's been a really long 2.5 years. I know at times even I really struggled. I think it's figuring out how we can attract new therapists and social workers to the area is important since we know we need more. I think it's also being open and honest and saying that life isn't perfect that a lot of people are struggling to some degree at the moment. It's not something to be ashamed of, because everyone struggles at times, yet I think that social media has given us a skewed version of everyone else's reality so you feel like you're the only one struggling.



Question 5:

More than 5,500 individuals living in Cambridge visited the Food Bank this year for emergency food assistance. Of those, 1,200 individuals accessed the food bank for the first time in their lives. What will you do to ensure that no one in our community goes hungry?

- That is an absolutely staggering number. With inflation and the price of food it has been hard on a lot of people. We have a moral obligation to help all people in our society. I think we really need to continue to raise awareness. If people don't understand what is happening or the need then they're not going to give above and beyond what they normally give. When you put it out there that there is more of a demand and this is why then people tend to donate. I think social media could be a great tool to use to promote needs and issues in the community. My goal as a councillor is to engage on social media frequently with constituents so that they know what is happening at city hall. You can utilize the same platform to let them know what local charities are doing and what those charities need.

Question 6:

An unprecedented number of people are experiencing homelessness, either accessing shelter or living unsheltered. This is happening across the country, and we know that no one level of government can fix this issue.

What will you:

- a) do, in your capacity, to support the people currently experiencing homelessness?
- b) do, in your capacity, to ensure that everyone has access to affordable housing?

- Part A) I think that we need to really examine the social supports in place to help these people. What is working and what is not working? I also think that there is such a crisis on our hands at the moment do we go back to the way we used to do it, which is sheltering people in churches. That's what we did before the bridges opened up. Do we need to do this again?
- Part B) We need to have a good relationship with our local MP to understand what government grants are available to assist with this, because there are some initiatives currently ongoing. We can make a plan and talk with some developers. There is a great project going up on Hespeler Rd where once building is affordable housing and the second building is market rent. There were some government grants used for this. I also think that because we are in an era of development we are going to see a lot of condo buildings go up in the cores (especially Galt, which is a designated growth centre) and along Hespeler Rd. How amazing would it be if every new building had even one or two units donated to the city for affordable housing?



Question 7:

Last year's Child and Youth Planning Table survey of the Region's youth, particularly the report with disaggregated data by municipality (<https://childrenandyouthplanningtable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CYPT-YIS-GEOGRAPHY-SNAPSHOT.pdf> and <https://www.cambridgetimes.ca/opinion-story/10651359-the-kids-aren-t-all-right-cambridge-youth-are-sounding-the-alarm/>) showed youth in Cambridge experiencing more significant challenges than their peers in other parts of the region. This includes lower outcomes in their sense of belonging, mental health, support from family and community, and access to recreational facilities. Youth in Cambridge have clearly identified significant issues growing up and becoming successful adults in our community. Why do you believe this is the case, and what will you do to improve child and youth wellbeing and outcomes in our community?

- As a parent with 3 young kids (6 year old twin boys & 4 year old girl) failing our kids simply isn't good enough. I think we really need to see what the main issues facing these kids are then figuring out how to promote and pair social services to them. Are we missing services in the area? Is there government funding for the gap we're missing? It's figuring out what the main issues are then problem solving how we can fix it together. In Cam Dearlove's article it was interesting that he talked about the Refugee Café which was down in the Ray Electric building. It was started by a couple from the vineyard that ran it as an outreach where everyone was accepted. Perhaps we need to figure out more safe spaces for our teens to go? The YMCA also used to have "The Z beside the Y" which was a drop in for youth. That too is now gone and houses are being built in its location. I think it needs to be a collaboration of the city with organizations that are helping these children to figure out what's missing and how we can help them.

Question 8:

Do you have a candidate page or social media you would like to direct people to for more information?

- My website is AmandaMaxwell.com
- I have a lot of videos talking about some of the issues on Instagram @AmandaForWestGalt and Facebook!
- Thanks for reading my answers and if you have additional questions please email voteforamandamaxwell@gmail.com