

Council Q&A – WEEK 3 – To camp or not to camp?

By **Dan Gray** - April 8, 2022 @ 3:35 pm



The campground at Pointe Des Chenes sign hangs out front on a cold day. (Dan Gray/SaultOnline.com)

This is week four of our series highlighting your questions to our Councillors and Mayor in lead up to the end of their term, or in some of the cases, the chances at Fall re-election.

As always, SaultOnline reached out to the community for a question to send to all Councillors as well as Mayor Provenzano on Monday. Each respondent was given until Noon, today, to provide their answer. Our reporter also tracks at the bottom the responses received and not received in terms of answering the constituents' questions.



With summer on the horizon, we focused on a question our newsroom receives frequently.

What is your vision for Pointe Des Chenes (PDC) campground and the whole park out there in general?

Do you see it opening up in some capacity to help generate non-for-profit revenue in the City?

As always SaultOnline is bringing responses to you in the order in which they were received. It has come to our attention due to technical difficulties, Councillor Luke Dufour who usually answers didn't receive the question for the week due to an error on our end.



Matt Shoemaker

Ward 3 Councillor Matt Shoemaker –

To keep the campground operating, the taxpayer was being asked to spend more than a quarter-million dollars for infrastructure improvements that services 200 or 300 people. The residents there would say it served much more than that, but even if we included family members and extended family members, the number of people the campground serviced was limited as a percentage of the total population. If we were eager to put \$250,000+ into an initiative, my opinion is that we should put it into an asset that is more accessible to the public, such as the Pointe des Chenes beach. That's why I was keen to see improvements to the park, including the summer beach bus, so that the great asset we have (the only city-owned beach), would be well used and offer patrons something to do.

I would not support re-opening the campground there. I would like to see what it will cost to fix the water problem first, and from there, determine what we should do with it. If it made the most sense for the city to maintain ownership and expand the beach/playground, I would be happy to support that.



Corey Gardi

Ward 5 Councillor Corey Gardi –

I want it to remain a campground. I would like the water issues remedied as best as possible by Transport Canada, whom I believe is the entity responsible, due to the issues created originally on the airport property.

Personally, I think it would be best if it were a privately owned and operated campground. I am not in favour of developing it into residential lots.

In the meantime I am looking forward to the additional investments we are making out at the day park including frisbee golf course, volleyball play area and our beach bus that is transporting families out there over the summer.



Matt Scott

Ward 5 Councillor Matt Scott-

It's no secret that I was strongly in favour of keeping the campground open and paying for the necessary repairs to make the water potable. I met with the organizers and supporters of the rally held outside of Canadian Tire prior to the majority decision to close the park (which I voted against, of course) and they were all very passionate about their enjoyment of the campground, often referring to it as a community. I believe that Pointe Des Chenes Campground was a staple for Sault Ste. Marie in that it offered many families from surrounding areas and beyond an opportunity to explore our city and what we have to offer. I have first hand experience of camping there and meeting people from other areas of Ontario, from across Canada, and even International campers. My intent is to support any options we have to reopen the campground.

As for the whole park, we are actively making improvements on it and this summer will be installing volleyball and pickle ball courts. It's important to the residents of Ward 5 to have these amenities as we feel left out of city wide offerings – an example of this would be Ward 5 not having one single city operated ice rink, indoor or outdoor, despite being the largest Ward by area. I will continue to push for and support any initiatives that will benefit the constituents of my Ward and the city of Sault Ste. Marie. Parks are important and I know the west end has a lot of growing families which is why I have been vocal about my support for improving our parks in Ward 5.

Here is the running total of who has responded week over week to constituents' questions and who has not.

WEEKLY ANSWER TRACKER			
Week 3	This Week	Last Week	Overall
W3 - Matt Shoemaker	Yes	Yes	4
W5 - Matt Scott	Yes	Yes	4
W2 - Luke Dufour	No	Yes	3
W5 - Corey Gardi	Yes	No	2
W2 - Lisa Vezeau-Allen	No	No	1
Mayor Provezano	No	No	0
W1 - Paul Christian	No	No	0
W1 - Sandra Hollingsworth	No	No	0
W3 - Donna Hilsinger	No	No	0
W4- Marchy Bruni	No	No	0
W4 - Rick Niro	No	No	0

Do you have a question you want asked of your councillors in the next 28 weeks leading up to the election?

Let SaultOnline know and our staff will do their best to get answers for not just you, but the community as a whole.

Thank-you for choosing SaultOnline/ONNTV as your source of news in Sault Ste. Marie and the surrounding area.

Dan Gray

A native of Centre Wellington, Ontario, I have worked as a freelance journalist all over the province of Ontario. Most recently I ran a local news page in my hometown of Fergus, Ontario. I look forward to bringing my experience covering breaking news, municipal matters and general interest stories to the team at Superior Media and communities we serve.

