

What's On questionnaire for candidates. Not organized by the questions posed by WO.

Charles H. Jeanes, candidate for Nelson Council.

Please vote in the Nelson and/or RDCK elections. Also, send your ballot in the mail to the legislative office in Victoria, and support BC Proportional Representation: vote yes for electoral reform in BC.

I was born Oct. 20, 1951; I have been 30 years resident in Nelson, at one address that entire time: 214 Houston St. I have been an electoral candidate before, for mayor and council, never successfully.

- born in Ontario, came west 1978.
- universities: Trent, Guelph, SFU, UBC.
- undergraduate degree, History, Trent
- graduate degree, History, U of Guelph.
- teachers' qualification certificate UBC.
- journalism certificate (Conestoga, Waterloo, ON)
- one child, two grandchildren. Never married.

Employment in Nelson:

- residential services client worker, NDCRS
- SD8 teacher [on call] 1987-2013. Retired.
- Nelson Museum, curator, historical exhibit, 1994-95
- taxi driver, Whittewater. 1990's
- journalist, *The Kootenay Weekly Express*, 2000-06
- columnist, *Roseland Telegraph*, 2012 to present
- Security guard, Mountain Eagle Security, 2014 to present

Societies, boards, voluntarism, community activity {1987 to present }

Nelson anti-poverty action group (NAPAG)

Kootenay Center for a Sustainable Future (KCSF)

Nelson University Center, NUCES [board, faculty, chair]

NML Library Board

Arts Council

Nelson Museum

David Thompson Student-Cultural Society DTCS [chair, board, committees]

Kootenay coop radio KCR [chair, boards, committees, programmer]

Learning in Retirement LIR, at Selkirk College 2012 to present [instructor, committees]

What is my campaign platform?

It would not be accurate to say I have a "platform". I've been more organized and conventional in past elections, and produced a lot of noise addressed to "the issues." I have an aspiration, to use the election process to talk about ideas and get them in front of the public. I am a voracious reader about the state of our region, province, country, and planet. I am an "intellectual" -- which does not denote intelligence but means I like to think alone and feed my mind with reading and listening.

Do I see myself as a leader or a servant to the community? [question posed by *What's On*]

Being a “civic leader”, to me, is not the main job description of a city councillor, although I am sure Nelson electors expect leadership from an councillor. Leadership is a quality, not an office. I personally see meaningful leadership exercised by civic activists in various causes, rather than by politicians. I have a lot to say about being a “servant” of the voters. Civil servants, or public servants, are people employed by governments. The provincial and federal governments have large civil services. The professions in this service are often highly-educated and trained, and have organized themselves into unions and associations as bargaining units; their work is well remunerated. Please read my extended comments about politicians and their employees in the end section of this *What's On* fact sheet about me. I title the section “Professional Employees and Amateur Employers”.

I **do** think of myself as “an Elder” and would like that to empower significant contributions. Age can be an aid to insight and compassion, and communities need these. I am an historian, adding wisdom, I hope, to my perspectives. I'm at that age where I ask what role “elders” play in their communities. Seniors are an engaged age-demographic: we participate in political processes perhaps more than others, because we have more time than those raising children and pursuing careers. We also have obligations to our children and grandchildren; for me recently that's meant less activism.

Affordable Rental Housing: a personal priority

On Council, I want to accomplish something for affordable rental housing. Housing that's affordable for seniors and low-income-earners, is my priority now. A *Nelson Rental Covenant*, to put wage-payers and rent-collectors together to negotiate a fair structure of wages and rents, is my aspiration and my newest idea, but may be impractical in the face of Market Forces (so I've been told). As Gandhi would say, “moral force” -- *ahimsa* and *satya* -- might work. People ought not to ask too much rent, and should pay a living wage. The minimum wage in BC is well below the living wage for Nelson.

Nelson's living-wage-calculated rate is \$18.42 per hour. See the research result at http://www.livingwageforfamilies.ca/living_wages_in_bc_and_canada

I believe Nelson can access funding from senior governments and begin building tiny houses on city property such as the campground on High St. and the land where the old museum sits. The city can be a landlord and keep rent affordable at the level of income tenants earn. A new campground can be located on the site of the former transfer station on the west waterfront.

Also, Nelson must begin to collect more per door from developers for each unit of new housing built here at market profitability. We have been collecting \$250 per door. Double or triple that.

Climate change and regional economics

The present human prospect, with manifest wrongs, injustices, and threats, is, sadly, not what I saw ahead when I was graduating university. Climate peril is on everyone's mind. I suggest people take the time to listen to Charles Eisenstein's podcast about “carbon-reductionism”, the solution on offer. (<https://charleseisenstein.net/podcasts/new-and-ancient-story-podcast/helenanorberghodge/>)

My work against environmental degradation has been various. In political activism, I have consistently opposed growth and development in Nelson and area over 31 years here. This principle formed the backbone of my campaign platforms in previous city elections, beginning with my one run for Mayor in 1994.

Keeping human population small on this land is an effective environmental policy and a way to decrease carbon. Not many voters agreed with me that Nelson should pursue no-growth policies.. Economic needs have trumped every other issue; people need jobs, I hear repeatedly.

I have described myself as a socialist almost all my adult, voting life. I still do.

I never paid job-creation much attention, and I am not interested in that now. Local food security would create some employment opportunity for certain. It was distressing to me to see the “*Endless Harvest*” business shut down in 2015, for want of an investor to take over the operation. That enterprise was, to me, the sort of economic investment that local cities and the RDCK ought to engage, perhaps with help from the CBTrust. Nelson should build more greenhouses to contribute to food security projects, and Nelson Hydro should continue vigorously pursuing alternate-energy opportunities and use efficiencies.

Under global capitalism, I see no worth in defining economics contained within one city's borders. We live in a global village. Everything everywhere impacts economies; Nelson is a particular kind of city, feeling global forces differently from how industrial towns (our near neighbours) feel them. Again, Nelson is unusual. It's why we chose it as home. Again, as a socialist, I am opposed to fundamentals of capitalism and wish to end its reign. We have recently lost CanFilter, a local industry. Pacific Insight is likely to follow. Global market forces, such as changed owners of local activities, make decisions that throw people out of work.

Without doubt, internet broadband -- “the information highway” -- access is essential to Nelson and to our online professionals and innovators who can “live here, work anywhere” (as the KCR co-op radio documentary said.) Rubber-tire traffic on the old paved highway is essential to any business dependent on out-of-town shopper/tourists, whether that person is coming from Slocan Valley, New York City, or Australia. I would not evaluate one of these “highways” as better for business than the other.

Nelson needs to forget all the old ways of business, do as much as possible to disengage from the overworld of banking, fiat money, real estate, and corporations, and prepare for the end of capitalism when the next Wall St. collapse hits; what happened in 2008/09 will happen again, and the next time there will not be the solutions available in that global crisis. Prepare for some collapses of the systems we have come to depend on.

Please educate yourself reading *Sacred Economics*, and other teachings of Charles Eisenstein.
[\[www.charleseisenstein.net\]](http://www.charleseisenstein.net)

On cannabis commerce and consumption issues

I will not second-guess what has already been done at council to this date, preferring to say nothing specific about what to change in the existing regime, number of allowed stores, sites etc., established by current council. But nothing is written in stone, and the regulations now in place can be revisited by a new council and new attitudes and people at the table might mean changed regulations. I have some thoughts about that and I will indicate the kinds of initiatives I would pursue if I were on Council.

Nelson has already missed an opportunity to use local talent and knowledge to enter the market for cannabis as a producer of high-quality consumables, when, well before now, we did not put investment into building a facility and making a business plan for growing it. The day Justin Trudeau won election as our prime minister, was the day to start planning how Nelson would capitalize on its advantages of decades of being a city in the center of a cannabis culture. We had the personnel and the expertise here.

Our local entrepreneurs, from the owners of “Holy Smoke” down to our mom-and-pop growers, were a resource Nelson could have put to good purpose. The political will has been lacking. The imagination of this possibility, of a city owning such a business, was lacking. It was unthinkable to the kind of minds who have been in authority here. It is too late now for Nelson to become active in this way, I'm sorry to say. There may be opportunity in future once the new legal regime becomes clarified by practice, when fine-tuning the system will be undertaken.

The hypocrisy of how we approach cannabis differently from alcohol was probably unavoidable. The acceptance of alcohol and all its attendant damage to individual people, to social health and well-being, to property and lives, has been with us for most of recorded history. We Canadians learned fast that Prohibition was no answer after WWI. But we have lived a long time with prohibition of cannabis and a large segment of our population will likely **never** be able to view this substance with dispassion, nor accept it as they accept alcohol. Alcohol has been and is deadlier than cannabis will ever be.

I would like Nelson to be a cutting-edge city showing how the hypocrisy can be overcome. I mean, try to ensure councillors, mayor, and all employees of the City demonstrate a welcoming attitude to the marketing and consumption, and the consumers, of cannabis as they would toward alcohol buyers and sellers. Not to endorse the use, but to show no extra hostility to it that they would not demonstrate toward alcohol. For the Police, with their history and experience of enforcing law against this product, re-education will be challenging. Nelson must commit to that process. I commit to that process.

I am not a smoker. I would wish the anti-smoking by-laws to be enforced for cannabis the same as they are for tobacco. We have a right to air unpolluted by substances we do not wish to inhale.

Next, do not regulate our pot stores at any more than *the absolute minimum required* by federal and provincial laws. Be as lenient and extend as much latitude to retailers as possible. Instruct our city Police that this is the policy of our elected government and ensure the police are educated into the appropriate attitudes. Overcoming years of prejudice against cannabis in the minds of police officers will not be a simple task. Let Nelson's reputation as a haven for “hippies and heads” stay strong!

Finally, whenever a business selling cannabis wishes to open, let neighbourhood opinion about site, hours, and policing of the premises, be thoroughly canvassed. The people who must live near these stores should have the most influence over these questions; let advocates educate the public about cannabis, and let opponents make their case against it. Children need to be educated, with a better job of it than we've done with alcohol. Baker St. can be exempted from the general rule, however, as it is our core business district, and the mall is another. Otherwise, residential opinion must prevail.

I'm sad to see cannabis become just another corporate investment opportunity in Canada. I wished to see a multitude of small producers and sellers benefiting from legalization. The pessimists among my grower friends in the past were correct: legalization means corporatization. Big business wins again.

Money no object, what cultural facilities would I like to see here? [question posed by **What's On?**]

A first-class performance stage for music concerts, capable of attracting acts which now pass from Vancouver to Calgary or Spokane or Kelowna but do not stop in Nelson. Our community rec. complex and rink was promoted as a venue that would bring big acts, but after the debut of the center when Jann Arden played, we have lacked this kind of musical performance. Such a venue could also host dance and theatre, and surpass the Charles Bailey facility in Trail. Charles Bailey Theatre has hosted operatic works on film, and Nelson surely could do the same if we had the facility. A large corporate sponsor is

why Trail has this advantage. I do not know how Nelson could finance such a venture. Our existing venues might be upgraded, but I hesitate to say which one should become our premier theatre.

While I am dreaming big, I would also like our hospital to have all the features and treatment options that only the Trail hospital now has...

How would I like to see Lakeside Park and Nelson's other parks/boulevards/ lawns, improved?
[What's On question]

Parking at Lakeside could be improved, and Streetcar #23 needs to have its range extended to Baker St.

We ought to do everything possible to keep trees and grassed areas of Nelson preserved; I was very upset by the felling of two trees on Hall St. to allow a changed entry to the civic rec plex. More decorative lighting with solar energy is easily possible on our downtown streets, while at the same time light pollution where too-bright lights are left shining all night requires some attention too.

Nelson Cemetery is enumerated among the city's parks and adds to the total of greenspace in the city, and I walk there frequently as it is close to my home. I am hoping to see beautification of the area extended further south past the crematorium building. A small kiosk at the gates with historical and cultural information for visitors to the site would be welcome, and probably might be undertaken by one of the city's service clubs if requested.

Final Thoughts:

Professional City Employees and Amateur Politician Employers

I have run for council eight times in the past, never winning a seat, but nevertheless thinking optimistically about how I would do the job. I want to do it well, or not at all. An elected person is the main agent by which ordinary civilians who pay taxes keep control over the machinery of government. The elected politician answers to voters and taxpayers. Non-elected city-hall bureaucrats and city-works staff answer to the mayor and councillors. The elected personnel are a conduit to city staff.

How can an *amateur* elected official cross-examine or doubt the united, *professional* opinion, plans, and recommendations, of city bureaucracy? Not easily. But the attempt must be part of the job description of an elected Nelson politician. The city's employees are specialists in their field, whether it be administration, personnel management, technical support, or mechanical and electrical work. A politician is a generalist, not a specialist. Politicians have to know a bit about everything the city does, to do a good job of supervising all the skilled employees of the Corporation of the City of Nelson.

Nelson taxpayers elect amateurs to supervise the professionals, and make good decisions for the community. An elected official must commit to work hard to know enough, to read sufficient research, to canvass public sentiment, so that major decisions are not made by the professionals on the city payroll, but by the politicians chosen to decide on actions.

It is clear to me, to do the job well and responsibly, one better have a lot of time to devote to the work. One had better come to office ready to read a mountain of paper, first the reports and plans that are already in effect, and then the reports, recommendations, budgets, and by-law drafts waiting to be acted on. One had better feel confident questioning the experts about their work and their plans.

Elected politicians' salaries should be commensurate with this very onerous work. I do not object to Council recently raising the remuneration of the mayor and councillors, even though their own committee recommended a smaller raise. But with this salary, I expect to be accountable. Keeping track of hours seems to me a fair method by which councillors can be judged by the electorate, and I advocate a system to do that. I would commit myself to keep some office hours at City Hall.

Over and over in conversation within my social circles in Nelson, I hear questions about the power of the unelected staff who administer, repair, plan, inform, and operate our city-corporation from their offices with their documents and machines. A councillor legislates for Nelson. City employees make things happen, or not. Every person on the city's payroll, from Kevin Cormack our CEO, on down to the least-well-paid, must answer to elected officials. The staff are the people voters pay to make Nelson run well for all of us; the staff must answer to citizens. Citizens delegate their power to elected individuals, the Council, who represent citizen interests. Council stands in for the community when decisions about spending city revenues are made.

That is how we validate and legitimize government in the system we call democracy.

It is a major irritant to taxpayers and voters to suspect Nelson is run not by our elected council but by unelected staffers at city hall who are never identified as the real, effective power. Citizens get angry if they think their elected agents are being led by unaccountable bureaucrats.

Public-input processes are not negligible in Nelson. We do a lot to learn from our public what the public thinks about decisions and issues facing government. Our local news media do a creditable job keeping the reading and listening and social-media-savvy public informed. I do not minimize the effectiveness of these tools. Yet still I hear complaints from people feeling things are done that were not given permission by a public process. Or that things are not done, despite repeated public requests.

Community Control over Development

Development projects are the most-sensitive of issues of this nature. Citizens want to be heard, and to be seen to be heard. Merely hearing everyone's opinion and recording it, but not changing a plan, while the predetermined plan drawn by professionals is pushed ahead, is a major irritant. Housing projects are suspected of being carried through for the agenda of developers who persuade government that the latter must not "tie up progress with red tape" or that the developers must have their way "for the sake of growth and economic benefits" [jobs, tax-base].

The Hall St. Project was one of those development issues dividing public opinion, I can say from my vantage point. It was "sold" as a beautification of the street, good for tourism, and an effective link from Baker St. to the waterfront, but the selling job was not persuasive. Irritation at effects of this project has been obvious; I myself am amazed at the incompetent job of redesigning the Hall/Vernon intersection so that sight-lines downhill were left as bad or worse than before.

Perhaps Nelson's business community pushed for the Hall St. Project, and perhaps it did not. I cannot really know. Common sense tells me that different business interests have differing opinions about each project, depending on how its impact will fall upon them. Business is not a monolithic lobby group.

Nelson Councils have been, in my opinion, too feeble in *resisting developers* – people who ask for variances, for breaks and bonuses to lower their costs and fatten their profit margins. I have seen it and I can give examples when it happened in recent history.

I am quite opposed to Nelson using its existing fund for housing (worth close to \$75,000) to defray developer costs by lowering fees/ charges paid to the city. I quote a recent news story: *“There is a sentiment in the construction industry in Nelson that the affordable housing reserve fund — that the city set up several years ago — should be used to pay for a reduction in the fees for servicing associated with development, or waive them entirely through the fund, said city director of development services, Pam Mierau.”* I say no, no use of the fund for developers' cost reduction.

The credentialed professionals of city hall staff, with engineering degrees, or planning or accounting or social-work credentials, are a “special interest” demographic, no doubt with high standards of good conduct, who possess the weight and prestige to persuade an elected Council in one direction. The staff work closely with developers (third parties) on projects. An elected politician must be wary of that closeness. One wants to be very sure our staff and third-party interests, who might prefer Council follow a recommended plan – *e.g.* new infrastructure, a promotional campaign, a tax rise or reduction, or a change in a by-law – are aligned by principles. The staff and the third party must be above suspicion of being too “cosy.” Their alignment must not happen because there is material benefit to staff and businesses (*e.g.* developers, construction crews) who advocate the proposal put before Council.

Collusion will never be acceptable between city hall staff and third-party interests trying to advance an agenda. I am not charging that this has happened before. I *am saying I hear suspicion in the public* that such agendas have been advanced in the past.

Conclusion

I personally commit to be a well-informed, well-prepared amateur when the professionals of our city administration bring forth their documents for action by council. I will be wary of relationships between our employees and third parties becoming too self-interested.

All labour by our city employees come with a price tag, most recommendations from city staff will cost money to be enacted; the **source** -- of paycheques for city-hall employees, of the funding for projects -- is in the **taxes** and fees paid by the voters. (except where senior governments might fund the City for certain activities.) It is the most-upsetting experience of all for tax-payers, seeing their money **badly** spent. I commit to be stingy with the money our voters entrust to Council.

If you have read or heard much of the available electoral materials about candidates, I am grateful, and amazed. It means you are a citizen who takes their civic duty to heart, to know the candidates and chose the ones you want on council. My thanks to Nelson Becker and **What's On** for this service to the community.

Please stay engaged after the election. Keep coming to council meetings, or offer yourself as a member of the public for seats on city boards, committees, commissions, and volunteer positions.