

2024 Andrew MacKinnon - Candidate District 9

Candidates in District 9 & 10 were asked to complete and submit a questionnaire composed by The Shoreline Journal. Questions are printed in *italic*, while candidate's answers are printed in **BOLD. The following is the submission from Andrew MacKinnon candidate for District 9.**



Andrew MacKinnon

What do you consider to be the strongest asset of your electoral district and how it can contribute to an even better Municipality of Colchester?

In District 9, the two strongest tangible assets are the Debert Air Industrial Park and the farms. However, the most important asset in the district is the work ethic and resiliency of the people.

How will you assist residents to co-operate and urge the municipality to ensure better services are provided to the very remote rural areas?

County and councillors need to provide many means to give and receive information. Timely, civil, and ongoing communication is always the most productive way forward. We must be open to all voices.

What services need to be improved so your district achieves and delivers a better lifestyle for all residents?

While going door to door residents have 4 main concerns about municipal services. The high cost of property tax versus the limited services received, the road conditions, rural community policing, and assistance for seniors.

Everyone complains about condition of roads and highways. Since rural residents have to travel farther for everyone – work / shopping / medical / banking / government service, should roads in rural areas be prioritized?

The maintenance of our roads should be a priority of our property taxes regardless of whether they are owned by the County or the Province. Planning in capital and operational budgets for roadwork is challenging but necessary. Roads should be prioritized based on their condition but necessary travel distance could also be factored in.

Should a plan be developed to improve, pave or repave all county owned roads within five years?

No doubt a plan exists but 5 years is not a practical frequency for a plan of this magnitude. Annual maintenance schedules and 5-Year capital plans should be developed that would see a 20-40 capital reinvestment frequency on each road depending on its rate of degradation. These plans could also include provincially owned roads with an agreement developed with the province for county property tax revenues to be used to cost-share on provincial roads, particularly on provincially owned roads that have a fairly dense population of county taxpayers.

Based on tri-government level of financing (Feds/Province/Municipal) should the municipality pay half its 113 or (20% share - based Feds 40% / Prov 40%) from general revenues, while applying an area rate based on assessment to all tax bills for the remainder, should the municipality develop a five or ten year plan to pave all County-owned and J Class Roads?

Yes, we should develop a plan, but no it should not be done based on area rates. Area rates should be reserved for broader type services such as for sewer service areas. They should not be applied to specific needs like paving (or streetlights) as area rates favour affluent neighbourhoods, and the other areas become neglected.

With an aging population should the municipality encourage more senior and long-term care housing facilities be developed and those facilities be built in the rural areas, which would allow residents to remain in their community and also be a job provider?

There are some residential developments for seniors in place now. One example of a community designed complex is the Fundy Gemstone Townhouses here in our district, in Central Onslow. The ability to be close to family and community is important to all of us and these community designs can be encouraged by the County with the assistance of developers, and provincial regulators.

Many rural students feel a college education, is not for them, but prefer "trades". What would you recommend as the best way to encourage students to follow "trades"?

All students should have the opportunity to follow whatever career path is best for them, regardless of where they live. Our schools have very good guidance councillors, but we also have a wealth of different business

professionals in the area that I would encourage students and their families to contact. We have people of all trades living locally, as well as the resources of DalAC, NSCC and Commercial Safety College.

Staying in school is vital. How would you recommend "students at risk" be given opportunity for part classroom time combined with "supervised work term" at local or nearby business to learn basics of a trade but get high school diploma?

We are fortunate that we have program in place within our school system. The school system has a Youth Pathways Consultant as well as guidance counsellors to assist all students, not just those at risk. Current programs that can incorporate work terms or practical experience include the Career Exploration Program and the Options and Opportunities (O2) program. The O2 Program at CEC, led by Roger Crowe, gives 20 students per year the chance to enter a program that guides them into a trade that results in a guaranteed seat at NSCC. These programs give the students a great start to training and education and the County can take the opportunity to promote the programs to our employers.

The ability of Colchester communities / residents to be able to communicate with their nearby neighbours or to the other end of the county is vital. The reverse is true, it is essential the county be able to easily and economically contact area residents and business en masse. To achieve this would you support a \$25 annual fee be added to every property tax bill with proceeds used by communities to develop a "Local economic/family assistance fund" or "Aid to Entrepreneurs Fund"?

I see two questions here. More than ever, we need the ability to communicate in a timely and accurate way and maintain our sense of community. We have seen some inroads being made with electronic alerts, newsletters, and social media but we can always do better. We need to encourage more infrastructure that supports our relied upon channels of communication.

As to an annual fee, there have been initiatives by local groups to assist families but with raising costs it would be worthwhile to explore what the County can do to develop long-term strategies to aid families and to encourage and support local entrepreneurs.



By Laura Sharpe

Another season has come and gone here at the Bass River Heritage Museum, and what a great summer season it was. This was our busiest summer season since before the

Bass River Heritage Museum Notes

Covid pandemic. This summer we welcomed guests from the local community, across Canada, the United States, and parts of Asia, Europe and South America. So a huge thank you to everyone who stopped by to visit.

This summer was also notable in that it marked the museum's 25th summer of being open! To mark this occasion we hosted a celebration here at the museum on Saturday, Au-

gust 31st, for which we had a great turnout. Those who attended were treated to many delightful desserts, a photo display commemorating the history of the society, and live music from Carl and Mike Elliott. Thank you to everyone who came out to show their support!

We would like to remind everyone that even though the museum is now closed for the season, that the Bass

River Heritage Society meets year round. Our next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 21st at 6:30 pm at the Bass River Heritage Museum (5666 Highway #2, Bass River, B0M 1B0). This meeting is open to everyone, and we are always happy to see new faces!

Additionally, now that we have marked our 25th anniversary, we are looking ahead to the future of the Bass River Heritage Museum. It is the society's hope to perform some up-

dates to the museum and the displays within. We would love to hear from the community regarding what they would like to see at the museum in the future. After all, the museum is a space for our local community, not only tourists! If you have ideas or suggestions, please stop by our monthly meeting, or send your ideas via email to bassriverheritage@gmail.com.

Thank you for another great summer, we look forward to welcoming you back again next year!

**Getting Zen about e-bikes
One Halifax Startup is Working Toward a World-Wide Transportation Revolution**

**By Philip Moscovitch
Climate Story Network**

Ravi Kempaiah apologetically pops into the interview a couple of minutes late: "Running a startup is like having accidental triplets. At any point in time, there are three things going on — and something's about to break."

Heading an e-bike and energy storage startup — and potentially helping to revolutionize the world of transportation — was not on Kempaiah's mind back in 2013, when he bought an e-bike. He was just a grad student looking for an easy way to get around.

"It really changed my commute from university to off-campus housing, and I kept thinking, why are more people not using this? They're taking an SUV just to travel three, four miles," Kempaiah recalls. "I kept thinking, how could we popularize this?"

His short-term solution? Raise awareness by setting a new Guinness world record for longest e-bike journey: 8,200 km from Madison, WI to San Diego, CA. Total cost of electricity along the way? Six dollars.

The longer-term solution? Well, that's what brought Kempaiah to Halifax's Dalhousie University, and, more specifically, to Jeff Dahn's world-renowned battery lab, which describes itself as working to "improve the energy density, increase the safety, decrease the cost, and improve the cycle and calendar lifetime" of lithium-ion batteries.

Kempaiah is a post-doctoral fellow at the lab, and the founder and CEO of Dartmouth, NS-based Zen Energy, which grew out of his Zen E-bikes startup. He hopes the company's battery technology will help lead to greater adoption of e-bikes worldwide.

One of the "pain points" holding

back e-bikes is uncertainty related to safety and reliability, especially in hot climates, he says.

"Batteries don't like high temperatures. That's one of the reasons if you keep your phone in the back of a car on a summer day, if it overheats, it shuts down to protect itself," Kempaiah says.

Unlike electric car batteries, which are liquid-cooled, batteries on the two- and three-wheeled vehicles common in large parts of Africa and India rely on air cooling — which is less effective in the heat.

But Kempaiah said Zen's batteries help solve that problem.

"With the chemistry developed here, working with our key partners Novonix and Dalhousie, even at 40 degrees Celsius, your battery will still easily last eight years," he says. "It will withstand more than anything on the market right now. And what that does is eliminate the pain point and skepticism around the batteries."

According to Kempalah, there is huge potential for lowering emissions by converting riders in the Global South from gas-powered to electric-powered bikes; saving them money in the process.

"In India, Indonesia, and Nigeria, they all use two-wheelers and they're 98 per cent petrol-based right now," he says. "It's not sustainable, but they don't have an alternative."

Kempaiah may have started out in the e-bike business, but he soon realized that reliable batteries can have many other applications. That's why he founded Zen Energy, and is now working on bringing the company's battery technology to other vehicles.

"There'll be another division, probably in the next six months, that will focus on a light electric vehicle pack, and then next year we'll have a divi-

sion for a high-voltage pack for electric boats and buses," Kempaiah said. "But we started with the bike division because that's something we know very well. We can make an impact there, and once we have shown the growth potential, we can scale that to light electric vehicles."

Zen e-bikes has shipped \$2 million worth of bikes since May 2022, Kempaiah says, and the company is a partner in a "mega factory" slated to open in India the first week of August 2024, which will be able to manufacture "about 5,000 battery packs a month."

But the company's business isn't entirely focused overseas. In early August, Zen also launched the Keji Cruiser, a limited-edition e-bike being sold in Nova Scotia at a discounted rate.

"The goal is for us to bring this tech to a wider market, get people excited and see how good Nova Scotian companies can be," Kempaiah said.

The next step is to solve a current pain point: getting more protected bike lanes, so riders feel safe on the roads. Nova Scotia's provincial rebate program has helped residents of the province purchase nearly 7,500 e-bikes, but there's still more work to be done.

"It's so wildly popular. The only thing preventing people is infrastructure. Lack of protected bike lanes," Kempaiah says. "That's the number one barrier here. Next comes the weather. But if you had good protected bike lanes, most people would bike from May until November. That's seven months of the year."

The Climate Story Network is an initiative of Climate Focus, a non-profit organization dedicated to covering stories about community-driven climate solutions.



Ravi Kempaiah
(Photo courtesy of Dalhousie University)

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