

Valdene Callin - Social well-being

1. What is the role of the municipal council in ensuring the social well-being of its citizens?

Municipal council must be leaders in the area of social well-being. If the well-being of our citizens is compromised then our community is compromised. No two people see well-being the same but general principles include that citizens should feel that they are a part of a welcoming and inclusive community and can participate at whatever level that they are comfortable without judgment.

Municipal council must listen and work with the community to ensure that their needs are being met. This means collaborative, creative conversations that include all stakeholders and concrete actions. It is not good enough to participate at ribbon cuttings and grand openings; they must be involved in the work to know what the citizens need and want.

2. What is the role of the municipal council in addressing social issues and fostering a positive, inclusive and barrier-free community?

Municipal council sets the tone for addressing social issues and fostering a positive, inclusive and barrier-free community. If council embraces being a community that tackles social issues head on and makes this a positive, inclusive and barrier-free community, the citizens will want to be a part of the solution and not focus solely on the problem. There are many social issues facing Red Deer and by looking at the root causes and working collaboratively with our community partners, stakeholders, and different levels of government, we can change the conversation and the outcome.

It is important in the design of the community for facilities that they be inclusive and barrier free and a safe environment for all. What these terms mean will be different for every individual but need to be explored to ensure that the citizens do engage and feel a part of the community.

Council cannot advocate for change unless they are willing to be a part of the change.

3. How will you address the barriers affecting citizens who are socially isolated.

I believe that everyone has been socially isolated at one time or another. It is not the isolation that is the problem but what solutions are available that will make a difference in our citizen's lives. Young families, seniors, English as a second language, low income residents, citizens experiencing mental health issues or citizens with physical disabilities are some examples of people that might feel this isolation.

We need to build capacity in our citizens so that can manage this isolation. We need to work with community groups to ensure that programming and transportation is planned where the citizens live. Education sessions need to be provided so that citizens can be empowered to make different choices and that a fee waiver or reduced fees are in place so that this barrier is removed. We must understand that there are different barriers for different people but by

removing these barriers our citizens can feel less isolated and this will have a positive impact on our community. We need to give these citizens a hand up not a hand out.

4. How will you deliver on the City's Social Policy Framework?

I believe that hard work and thoughtful conversations developed the Social Policy Framework. The Framework talks about a strong, engaged community that embraces its diversity. It is important council view its decision making process through the Framework's lense. If Council remains focused on what we say we were going to do then we have a better chance of achieving it.

The Framework's principles include: community cohesion and engagement educational opportunity and attainment, equitable services and access, health and basic needs, housing, jobs and wages, poverty prevention and reduction, resilience, safety, and social and cultural diversity

I believe in collaboration and conversation. Not all work should be completed by the city in that there are many resources in the community that can lessen or share the load. By working together we can be a stronger community and achieve the goals of the Framework. An annual progress report needs to be provided to the community to ensure that they understand how important Council sees the Framework in helping to develop a community that is welcoming and inclusive to all.