



All Candidates Response Form

Village of Harrison Hot Springs



Instructions

1. Complete the Candidate Information below, then answer all questions, including the Lightning Round. These questions apply to all candidates, whether running for Mayor or Council.
2. Type your answer in the response box under each question. Responses may be given in any order.
3. Each response must be no more than 500 words. Lightning Round answers are YES or NO.
4. Your file **MUST** be saved in PDF format and titled with your name, for example: Stephanie_Gallamore.pdf
5. Word documents will **NOT** be converted to PDF for the website. Files that are not PDFs cannot be posted.
6. When finished, in Word use File > Save As (or Export), choose PDF as the file type, and name the file with your name. Return the completed PDF as directed by the event organizers.

Candidate Information

Candidate name:

Michie Vidal

Running for:

☐ Mayor ☒ Council

File name to save as:

MVidal.pdf

Click in a box and type. Boxes expand as you type.

CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

For all candidates

Question 1

When a tourism business wants to expand, do you see that as an opportunity for economic development or a risk to preserving Harrison's character? What criteria would you use to decide?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

I see tourism business expansion as both an opportunity for economic development and something that needs to be managed carefully to protect what makes Harrison special. These two goals don't have to be in conflict. Harrison's tourism economy supports local businesses, jobs and services, and responsible investment can help our community thrive. At the same time, we need to make sure growth doesn't come at the expense of the character, livability, and natural environment that residents and visitors value. I would ask the following questions before deciding: Does the proposal fit Harrison's character, neighbourhood and community vision? What are the impacts on traffic, parking, and noise? Can our roads, water, wastewater and other services adequately support the proposal? My approach is not to choose between economic development and preserving Harrison's character. It's about finding the right balance. We can welcome investment and support tourism while being thoughtful about where, how and at what scale growth occurs. Harrison is our home. I want to see our Village thrive, but I also want to make sure that the Harrison we are building for the future is still the Harrison we are proud to call home.

Question 2

What is your approach to transparency and accountability? What information do you think residents are not currently getting from council that they should be receiving?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Transparency and accountability are fundamental to building trust between Council, staff and residents. My approach is straightforward: residents deserve to know what your Council is deciding, why we are making those decisions, and how those decisions affect our community. That means clear communication, accessible information, and being willing to explain the reasoning behind our decisions, even when people may not agree with them. I also believe transparency means recognizing the difference between information that can be shared publicly and information that Council is legally required to keep confidential, such as certain personnel, legal or property matters. Closed meetings are not a way to avoid accountability; they are permitted under specific circumstances, and Council must follow those requirements. But transparency isn't just about putting information online. Accountability means answering residents' questions, explaining decisions, and taking responsibility for those decisions. As a Councillor, I will continue to support openness, meaningful resident engagement, and clear communication. Residents don't have to agree with every decision, but they should understand how and why a decision was made.

Question 3

How would you work to strengthen the relationship and communication between the Village of Harrison Hot Springs and the District of Kent, including pursuing a cost-sharing agreement for the regional aquatic centre so Harrison residents can access the same rates and registration

opportunities as District of Kent residents, while also strengthening partnerships with other community organizations?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Harrison and DOK have a good relationship and share many resources and committees. I would be open to a cost-sharing agreement with the District of Kent, but ultimately, I believe Harrison residents should decide whether they want to take on the financial commitment. There have already been discussions with the District of Kent about regional recreation and the possibility of Harrison residents having access to the same fee structure as Kent residents. I believe those conversations should continue so we can fully understand what an agreement would mean for our community. However, it would be an important financial consideration. Entering into an agreement would require borrowing, which would create a long-term financial commitment for Village taxpayers. Before Council moves forward, residents need to clearly understand the cost, the benefits, the borrowing implications and the impact on future budgets. This isn't simply a question of whether lower recreation fees would be beneficial. We also need to ask: What would it cost Harrison residents to achieve that benefit, and is that something they are willing to support?

Question 4

What specific initiatives would you support to attract visitors in the fall, winter, and spring? What are your priorities for improving Harrison's tourism infrastructure?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Tourism is an economic driver for Harrison, and one of our biggest opportunities over the next four years is to build a stronger year-round tourism economy. I would support initiatives such as: Expanding shoulder-season events and festivals that give people a reason to visit outside the traditional summer months. Supporting outdoor recreation and wellness tourism, including hiking, cycling, paddling and other activities that can attract visitors throughout the year. Working with local businesses, accommodations and Tourism Harrison to develop packages that encourage longer stays and repeat visits. I believe tourism infrastructure needs to be planned around our community's capacity. However, we can't simply focus on attracting more visitors without considering the impact on our roads, water, wastewater, parking, environment, and quality of resident life. I want visitors to have a great experience in Harrison and I want residents to feel that tourism investment is making our community a better place to live, work and enjoy year-round.

Question 5

Harrison Hot Springs Elementary is an aging school in a growing community. If elected, do you support the Village actively pursuing the Civic Campus project in partnership with School District 78 to make a new elementary school a reality? What specific actions would you support?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

At UBCM, Council met with the Minister responsible for new schools to discuss the need for a new elementary school in Harrison. I believe that advocacy is important and should continue. For me, these are two separate issues. Supporting a new school does not necessarily mean supporting the proposed Civic Campus at this time. If circumstances change, new information becomes available, or there is a proposal that addresses the concerns raised by residents and demonstrates a clear community benefit, I would consider re-visiting the project.

Question 6

What are your priorities for emergency management?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

We live in a beautiful community, but we also face risks, including wildfire, and flooding. Council's responsibility is to prepare for those risks, support our emergency services and make sure residents know what to expect. Over the next four years, my priorities would include: Good communication with residents. People need to know where to get reliable information, what evacuation alerts mean, where to go and what they should do to prepare their families and properties. Clear communication with residents. People need to know where to get reliable information, what evacuation alerts mean, where to go and what they should do to prepare their families and properties. Our firefighters, emergency personnel and volunteers need the training, equipment and resources necessary to respond effectively. Support continuing FireSmart funding and looking at more ways the Village can reduce risks to our homes, and natural areas. Emergencies don't stop at municipal boundaries, so cooperation with the District of Kent, Seabird Island, the Province and other agencies is essential. We can't prevent every emergency, but we can be better prepared. That's the kind of practical, forward-looking emergency management I will support.

Question 7

Harrison is a small, close-knit community. How would you keep personal relationships, business interests, or political disagreements from influencing your decisions as an elected official — and how would you handle it when residents strongly disagree?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

In a small, close-knit community like Harrison, personal relationships, business interests and disagreements are part of community life. But when I sit at the Council table, I represent the whole community, not just the people who agree with me or the people I know personally. Elected officials have a responsibility to separate personal relationships, business interests, and political disagreements from their role as a Councillor. My decisions will be based on the facts, the information before Council, Village bylaws and policies, and what I believe is in the best interests of Harrison. And when residents strongly disagree with me, I will hear people out, consider new information and explain my position respectfully. In our small community, we're going to continue seeing each other at coffee shops, community events and around town. We can disagree on an issue without becoming divided as a community. Once I sit at the Council table, my responsibility is to all of Harrison. I don't represent one neighbourhood, one group, one business or only the people who voted for me. I represent the whole community. That's the kind of respectful leadership I will continue to bring to Harrison.

Question 8

Can you tell us about your involvement in our community to date — whether through serving on committees, volunteering, or attending council meetings?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

My involvement in Harrison goes well beyond sitting at the Council table. I have made community involvement and volunteering an important part of my time in the Village and while on Council. As a Councillor, I have served on numerous Village Council committees, participated in meetings, and through my involvement in the Lower Mainland Local Government Association brought forward initiatives that affect our community. Committee work requires time outside of regular Council meetings, and I believe it is an important part of being an effective Councillor. I attend all Council meetings, and I participate fully in the work of Council, not just regular meetings, but also special meetings, and Committee of the Whole meetings. For me, being a Councillor isn't simply about showing up on a meeting day. It is about showing up for the community I serve. It means listening to residents, volunteering alongside them, attending community events, understanding local concerns, and putting in the work required to make informed decisions. I am proud of the involvement I have in our Village, and I intend to continue being an engaged member of our community.

Question 9

Council operates under specific rules of procedure, including Robert's Rules of Order and the Community Charter. How do you plan to educate yourself on these, and what commitment will you make to being prepared before your first council meeting?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

My experience on Council gives me an advantage when it comes to understanding the rules and responsibilities of local government. I have already developed a strong knowledge of Harrison's Council Procedural Bylaw, Robert's Rules of Order and the Community Charter through my time serving on Council. These aren't simply technical rules. They provide the framework for how Council conducts its business, how motions and debate are handled, and the legal responsibilities that come with being a member of Council. That experience means I would not be starting from scratch on my first meeting. I already understand the importance of coming prepared, reviewing the agenda and staff reports in advance, asking questions and being ready to participate constructively in Council discussions and debate. At the same time, I don't believe anyone should hesitate to ask questions when clarification is needed. If I am unsure about a procedural, legislative or legal matter, I will ask staff for guidance rather than make assumptions. Staff are an important resource in helping Council understand the information. Residents deserve Councillors who are prepared, informed, and willing to do the work. That is the standard I have set for myself during my time on Council, and it is the standard I will continue to bring to the table.

Question 10

What is your top priority for your term in office in Harrison Hot Springs?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

My top priority for the next four years is to help ensure Harrison grows and moves forward in a responsible and sustainable way, while protecting the community and character that make our Village home. That means focusing on the fundamentals: infrastructure, financial sustainability, emergency preparedness, responsible tourism, and protection of our natural environment. Harrison is growing and facing important decisions. We need leadership that looks beyond the next election and considers the long-term impact on residents, taxpayers, and our community. I believe we can move forward without losing what makes us special, not growth for the sake of growth. I believe Council experience matters when making these decisions and so does listening to new ideas and different perspectives. I want to help lead Harrison forward, not re-live the past and not simply react to what comes next.

Question 11

What do you believe is Harrison's most urgent infrastructure problem, and what would you do about it?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

Harrison's most urgent infrastructure priority is our water and wastewater systems and making sure we have a clear, affordable long-term plan for them. These are the fundamentals of a healthy and sustainable community. As Harrison grows and tourism continues to be an important part of our economy, we need to understand what our systems can support today, what upgrades will be required in the future, and most importantly, what those upgrades will cost our taxpayers. Infrastructure decisions also need to be connected to decisions about growth. We should not approve growth simply because we can if our infrastructure cannot responsibly support it. My approach is to plan ahead rather than react when infrastructure possibly reaches a crisis point. That means maintaining what we have, identifying future needs early, pursuing senior government funding where available, and making financially responsible decisions that protect taxpayers. Harrison needs infrastructure that is reliable today and sustainable for the generations who will call Harrison home tomorrow.

Question 12

What is your position on the Village's water and wastewater infrastructure, and how should council approach the significant capital costs involved?

Your response (maximum 500 words):

I believe Harrison needs to take a long-term, strategic approach to our water and wastewater infrastructure and we need to be very realistic about the significant costs involved. Water and wastewater are essential services, and maintaining reliable systems has to be a Council priority. The recently adopted master plans provide an important road map for identifying priorities, planning capital projects, and pursuing potential grant funding. The challenge will be affordability. Major infrastructure projects can place significant pressure on taxpayers and utility users, so I do not believe we should simply move forward with expensive projects without first understanding the need, the options, the timing and the full financial implications. Just as importantly, infrastructure planning needs to be connected to decisions about growth. We need to know what our systems can support and what additional capacity may cost before taking on commitments that could ultimately fall on our taxpayers. My approach would be to plan ahead, prioritize, pursue funding opportunities, maintain our infrastructure responsibly and be clear with residents about what projects will cost and why they are necessary. We owe residents infrastructure that is reliable and sustainable, but we also owe taxpayers responsible financial management.

LIGHTNING ROUND (YES / NO)

All candidates: check YES or NO for each question

Lightning Question 1

Do you support the Village continuing to pursue the Civic Campus project and a land exchange with School District 78 for a new elementary school?

☐ YES

☒ NO

Lightning Question 2

Would you support the Village pursuing a cost-sharing agreement with the District of Kent so Harrison residents pay the same fees at regional recreation facilities?

☒ YES

☐ NO

Lightning Question 3

Will you commit to holding council wages and expenses at 2026 levels for the next four years?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Lightning Question 4

Do you support stronger protection of Harrison's natural areas even if it limits some future development opportunities?

☒ YES

☐ NO

Lightning Question 5

Have you volunteered with a local organization in the last three years?

☒ YES

☐ NO

Lightning Question 6

Do you believe Harrison should actively encourage expansion of tourism businesses and new tourism investment over the next four years?

☒ YES

☐ NO

Lightning Question 7

Do you commit to respectful conduct to fellow council + staff even when you disagree?

☒ YES

☐ NO