

Mike Cyr

He/Him They/Them • Saint John Harbour • Independent

Candidate #02

1. Why are you running in this election?

Well, the biggest thing is, other than being sick of being an arm chair advocate for various things in government, I really wanted to step up. I've done a bit to help my community and the people around me. And I see the same thing happen every time we elect someone new, and I want to do something different. I'm sick of the petty party politics that everybody else goes on... You wind up voting somebody in, and they just wind up fighting for the party instead of the people that elected them. With myself running as an independent... If people vote me in and I get in, I am not behooven to hold party lines, I can be nimble and do what's needed for the city.

2. Describe how the time living in your riding has informed your qualifications as a candidate.

Well, the easiest way, because living is kind of a loose word... living would be in this riding. Most of my time has been couch surfing, a brief period, squatting, living in a business that I had up here generally suffering all the yields of unaffordable housing, and all the uncertainty of housing in this city. In addition to just generally living here, hearing what people have to say, knowing what the problems are, because I don't just see them, I live them.

3. Describe how your time living in New Brunswick has informed your qualifications as a candidate.

So as New Brunswick as a whole I've seen a lot of it. I've been to most of it, and I've spent a large portion of time. I tried living in Moncton. I've tried living in Fredericton. I've spent quite a bit of time in Sussex. Yet again, you get to meet the people, you get to see the problems and as somebody like myself, you wind up living those problems. You see the shortcomings of all the different areas of this province. You see the people who are struggling and why they're struggling. I'm not just an outside observer saying I hear the statistics on this. I'm either one of the statistics or I'm directly related or sitting with those statistics.

4. How does your experience (ie. education, lived experience, workplace) contribute to your qualifications as a candidate?

Well, my main and most consistent gig as of late has been a barber. People come into the shop on Germain street and they tell me about their problems. Nobody's truer and more honest and open about what's going on with their world, then in a barber chair. I hear the complaints. I hear the concerns. Furthermore to that, I have been a member of the local arts community for a very long time, particularly in the world of music. And if you want to meet people on the fringe of society, both in the goods and the bads, it's musicians. They're the ones who deal a lot with the problems. So I hear it from them. And as far as knowing how the solutions go, a lot of these

solutions are a lot more simple than most people would like to think... a problem with homelessness. It's not a complicated process, but to have somebody who's actually been there, who sees it, it makes it easier. And working with the people every day, my entire career, that's what I think informs, and gives me the best education I needed, to know what's going on here.

5. If elected, what will be your top 5 priorities for your riding?

The top five priorities would be: number one, housing insecurity and homelessness in general, food insecurity, I mean the fact that people are still going to bed without food and their stomach in the city is appalling, considering how much we make.

Educational reform, the amount of people who are leaving schools in this province that are having a difficult time, even understanding basic reading. We really got to take a look at what we're doing and set ourselves up, not only for a better future for all of those individuals, but as a province, as a whole.

Healthcare reforms... Our healthcare, I mean, it's good, but it's not great. I've experienced a lot of the problems with our health care and the shortcomings, something just as simple as myself, I went through a period of time where I had a hernia and I was waiting on surgery and that made me very ineffective at my job. So I'm not earning as much. It's putting me at risk and everything else just due to the long wait times. It's a lot better to get people up and running again, as fast as humanly possible so that they could get back to the normality of their life and not have so many concerns and worries as well as our mental healthcare issues and all that, that healthcare really, we need to take a look at it. Maybe what we're doing is entirely wrong. Maybe it needs a ground up rebuild, but that's another story for probably another question later down the line, we also have a fifth big thing would be tax reform, tax reform, tax reform. If your candidates out there aren't preaching that, there not doing it right.

That's the biggest thing to be able to help everybody get things running, right? We need to start putting money where it's supposed to be and making everything a lot more fair. If you're in the poorest section of New Brunswick and you're paying the highest taxes in that area, there's something that doesn't add up. Yeah. We need to make things add up at the end of the day. And that's really what we've got to do. The industrial tax, in with that, really needs to be looked at as well. I mean, if you've got to suffer the sights, the sounds, and as we all know the smells of heavy industry, we should also be reaping all the rewards from it as well. And we're just not with provincial government keeping a hold of all the industrial tax money.

6. LGBTQ+ and reproductive healthcare

Straight up, that one I feel is easy when you have places like Clinic 554. We don't need to just fund that one. We need to fund one of those in every major city center. We need doctors who are trained and knowledgeable in the issues that come up there and doctors that aren't just going to refuse because they're not trained on dealing with somebody that is trans for instance,

like we don't want anybody to not be able to receive the same health as everybody else in a timely, healthy, and manageable way.

7. Access to mental health and/or addictions services

We definitely need to step that up. I have dealt with so many people with mental health issues in Saint John and tried to help them attain them, and the fact that they're rarely attainable, and if they are, requires so much work to get, we really need to focus on that. And not just from a -it's the right thing to do perspective-, but even if you look at it from keeping your population healthy and mentally well, means they are working, they're no longer a liability line, if you will, they are now an asset line, because they are productive, healthy, happy member of society. It's way cheaper just to make their mental health better than it is to not deal with it at all, or deal with it poorly.

8. Glyphosate use in New Brunswick

Just stop doing it. Other areas have banned it. We should be doing the same. It doesn't make a lot of sense to be doing something that really only benefits the heavy industry. It doesn't benefit all of us.

9. Access to affordable housing in Saint John

House the homeless and ensure people who have homes now are worried about it just makes good sense. If you take care of people too, at the end of the day, basic needs like food and shelter, everything else becomes easier and cheaper, frankly, focusing on affordable housing and at the end of the day, even free housing for those that absolutely need it, is going to save us so much money. It just doesn't make good financial sense to keep slapping bandaids on... That costs way more than it is to just solve it.

10. Police funding in Saint John

Honestly we need a complete restructuring of our emergency services in Saint John, including the police. One, because they're doing jobs that their entire job wasn't meant to do. They are another great example of band aid fixes being applied to problems instead of just dealing with the problem. When you start looking at crime, how much crime is driven by poverty in this city? So why are we giving more money to police to deal with crime that is a result of poverty, instead of just resolving the poverty, so we don't need the police. It's finding ways to solve problems before it comes to police. Police should be our last line on anything we do because, it sounds horrible, but they are a lot more like a janitor in anything with society, they clean up after everything else has failed. So if we don't have things failing as much, we don't need to have them as much. And that's really, we should be working towards a future where we don't have them. I mean, they're still going to be there, but if we can do things in a way better way, we should even be doing things such as less necessarily criminal policing and moving more towards things like even just traffic control, having a better setup for that, because, why is a police officer going to a non-hazardous, if you will, traffic accident, when really at the end of the

day, it's to take a couple of photos and fill out forms so that the insurance companies can decide what's actually going to happen. We don't need to have an armed officer taking care of that.

11. Reporting and investigations of sexual assaults

We really have to look deep into that, and not just here in Saint John, not just in New Brunswick, but globally needs to really change their attitudes on what's going on with that. The fact that our ratio of, and yet again, nothing's been proven, but claim sexual assault versus solve to resolve cases, versus it's just left to sit there, cause they say there's no proof, there's no evidence, there's no anything. They need to do a lot more work and actually do the police work that we are kind of overpaying them for anyway. At the end of the day, do your job. We absolutely have to have you. We absolutely have to pay this amount. Maybe whenever somebody brings up a claim, you should probably do the job and investigate it. Otherwise people are going to be screaming to defund you.

12. Municipal and Industrial Tax reform

Oh, definitely. And I'll be a hundred percent clear and transparent. Do I, a hundred percent, know what needs to replace it? No, but I've got some great ideas of ways that we can work at, but we're working with a tax system that's sixty years old. I mean, I don't know about you, but a lot of people won't even live in a home that old, for fear of what the problems it has. Why are we using a tax system that's old? We need to do a much better job of making things fair. If that means converting to regional taxation versus individual municipalities and everything else, then maybe that's the way we have to go. But at the end of the day, we need to make sure everybody paying taxes is not only paying their fair share, but getting their fair share for the taxes that they do pay.

13. Access to public transit in Saint John

How can you be worried about the people at the bottom rung of a society's ladder, as far as financial and risk and everything else go, if you're not worried about public transit. And a lot of people say... "Well, we don't have the ridership". Well, if you don't have good service, people aren't going to use it. So it becomes kind of a chicken and the egg. If you build a stellar transportation system, you're going to get people using it. It's when a transportation system and a general active transportation isn't helpful to people, that's when they stop using it, that's when it stops being feasible and everything else. We've got to start from a good position if you want to stay in a good position. And it is one of the most important thing to keeping your citizens mobile and working and everything else

14. Access to affordable childcare in Saint John

So yet again, if you want your citizens to be happy, healthy, and gainfully employed, they've gotta be able to have a spot to put the rug rats. It's really gotta be a thing that we're working and doing a lot better on. I know a lot of work has come up on it, but we need to do a better job. If that means we have to look at it as a public thing. If that means we have to start looking at it as giving more incentives to private things, then we've got to do whatever is going to do the best thing to get childcare available for individuals. I mean, some of the biggest stuff, if we really

want to recover from COVID, and give women, who traditionally wind up stuck at home with the kids, back into the workforce as well, we need to make childcare affordable and available. We disproportionately punish a large portion of our population by not providing affordable and easily accessible childcare.

15. Media Ownership in New Brunswick

Oh, the whole monopoly thing, right? It's ridiculous. Now some can argue that, oh yes, they have a monopoly cause nobody else has tried to do anything, but often anytime anybody else tries to do anything, they get basically strangled and choked out of the market by the giant ones. This is why things like CBC are still good because they, although they are a little left leaning, they still are fairly neutral towards these things. And we do need to encourage more media to grow in New Brunswick. Oh, do we ever! It would be lovely to see things back, like various broadcast stations out of Saint John that we had that were not owned by a giant mega oligarchy monopoly. We need available media, we need non-biased media, one that's not spinning it from one point or another. We need the most neutral media we can have show up and still tell interesting and decent stories. Unfortunately, not a lot of people are stepping up to the plate anymore. Whether it's out of fear, whether it's out of lack of finances, and, if at the end of the day, that's something that we have to fund maybe, but even then my fear is of government funded media often tend to lean or bias towards the hand that feeds, if you will. So independent media, it is incredibly important. I wish we had more if there were ways... If people had great ways to foster it, I'd love to hear it. I worked briefly in journalism myself and just getting started up to get to that audience and maintain a solid journalistic ethic of standards is incredibly difficult and incredibly hard. And I really hope some people out there are up to the challenge.