

Candidate Name: Ernie Klassen
White Rock Coalition

Please tell us about yourself and why you're running for City Council:

I am a local businessman who has spent my adult life giving back to my community. Growing up in a farming family in the Fraser Valley, I learned the value of hard work and I've never strayed from that core value.

I've always tried to get involved and make a positive impact wherever I could. I'm proud of the work I've done for a number of different organizations, from forming the Upper Fraser Valley Neurological Society, working as an organizer for Sip 'n Savour, to working on the Night of Hope and the Peace Arch Hospital Foundation, to my work as President of the White Rock Business Improvement Association. I've always felt that we must all try to do what we can to make a positive contribution to our community.

I am married with three children and two grandchildren, and have owned Ashberry and Logan, the Art of Flowers on Johnston Road for the past 16 years.

Several candidates are independent, and while others are part of a slate, it is entirely possible that only one from a slate may be elected. Regardless of whether you are part of a slate or an independent, how will you work with what may be a mayor & council with diverse viewpoints to bring forward your ideas and address issues?

I believe that I have a clear understanding of the issues facing White Rock and can bring a balanced approach to the Council table. I believe in a positive approach to the revitalization of White Rock. There are challenges ahead, but if we all work together, White Rock will be a much more vibrant community in the future than it currently is. I want our city to continue to be one we can all be proud of, one that leaves a great legacy for future generations. We need to remember that the decisions we make today chart the course of our children and grandchildren's future.

Affordability is a major challenge for residents and businesses in White Rock. Sky high property values lead to rising housing costs and expensive leases, making it hard for people to live here and businesses to stay here. How will you address this existential threat to our community?

As both a resident and a business owner, this question really resonates for me. I believe we must work to keep taxes low, and we must promote our city to attract tourism. I believe that we must be proactive and work towards more housing options for residents now before it becomes a crisis. We also need to work with all levels of government to resolve these issues.

How will you improve our transportation system- including roads, sidewalks, transit, and bike routes- to ensure that our community is accessible for residents and visitors?

Lots has been done, but there is much to do. We need to ensure White Rock stays accessible for everyone. I would like more connectivity between our Uptown and the waterfront for both residents and visitors. I would strive to create a walkable city. I believe we need to ensure that barriers are removed whenever possible. I recently saw a program which showed a pilot study for buses on demand vs a regular route. Technology allows us to work with options and I believe it could work very well in a small city.

Communication between the City of White Rock and the residents and businesses have been challenging- there have been concerns that people haven't been informed of projects and decisions. How will you revitalize communications and relationships between residents/businesses and the City?

I will advocate for increased town hall meetings, fliers, and social media initiatives which have started. I support the livestreaming of council meetings and would continue the meetings with the BIA and the Chamber. I will have an open door policy and am always willing to listen and advocate on behalf of a concerned resident or businessperson.