

**NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION (NOTLRA)
Governance, Finance & Civic Engagement Committee**

Minutes of Meeting

Date: Friday, April 24, 2026

Time: 2:00 PM – 3:45 PM

Location: Community Centre – Board Room

Chair: Alan Young

Secretary: Stuart McCormack

1. Call to Order, Attendance and Approval of Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Alan Young. The agenda was reviewed and approved without amendment.

2. Election Countdown and Key Dates

The Committee noted that nominations for the 2026 municipal election open on May 1, 2026, close on August 21, 2026, and that election day is October 26, 2026.

It was noted that the Town's election website has not yet been updated for 2026. Normand Arsenault advised that interim information has been sourced from other municipal websites and will be updated once the Town site is current.

3. Updated Draft NOTLRA Election Website

Normand Arsenault presented the draft NOTLRA election website, including structure, navigation, and proposed content pages.

The Committee discussed tone, credibility, front-page content, and branding. Concerns were raised regarding informal elements and the need to prioritize clarity of issues and seriousness of presentation.

The Committee agreed that a standardized review process is required.

Action: Stuart McCormack and Normand Arsenault to finalize a website review template.

Action: Stuart McCormack to circulate the template to Committee members.

Action: Steve to collate Committee comments into a consolidated document.

The Committee agreed the website should not be launched until substantially complete and accurate.

4. 2025 Survey and 2026 Update

The Committee reviewed the prior 2025 resident survey and agreed it provides a useful baseline.

There was consensus to repeat the survey using the same questions to allow comparison of results. The possibility of broader distribution beyond membership was discussed, with concerns noted regarding data integrity.

Decision: Repeat the 2025 survey in identical form for members.

Action: Normand Arsenault to locate and prepare the survey for relaunch.

5. Municipal Election Objectives and Desired Outcomes

The Committee reviewed proposed objectives:

- Inform residents / increase awareness
- Increase voter turnout
- Hold incumbents accountable

The Committee discussed measurement of success, noting that voter turnout is quantifiable, while awareness and accountability require indirect measures such as website usage.

It was agreed that all materials must remain neutral and fact-based.

6. Candidate Engagement Plan Update

Bette Ann James and Normand Arsenault reported on planning for candidate events.

Crossroads Public School remains the preferred venue, subject to insurance and booking confirmation. Parking arrangements are being coordinated.

Action: Normand Arsenault to finalize insurance arrangements.

Action: Normand Arsenault to proceed with venue booking upon confirmation.

7. Candidate Questionnaire Refinement

The Committee discussed strengthening candidate questions to require substantive responses.

It was agreed that input should be sought from other NOTLRA committees to ensure subject-matter depth.

Action: Committee members to continue refining questions.

Action: Engage other committees to contribute relevant questions.

8. Third-Party Advertising

Stuart McCormack outlined the requirements and risks associated with third-party advertising.

The Committee agreed that registration as a third-party advertiser is advisable. All materials must remain non-partisan and fact-based.

The Committee discussed financial rules and the need for a separate election account.

Action: Stuart McCormack and Normand Arsenault to confirm contribution and surplus rules.

9. Candidate Scorecards

The Committee reviewed proposed scorecard formats for use at candidate events.

It was agreed that both paper and electronic formats may be appropriate.

Action: Committee members to review scorecard templates and provide feedback.

Action: Normand Arsenault to circulate additional candidate question materials.

10. Workstream Updates – Municipal Finance / Infrastructure

Stuart McCormack reported on analysis of the proposed old hospital site parking project. Draft analysis has been shared with the CAO for validation.

The Committee discussed the need for improved financial transparency in Town reporting.

Action: Stuart McCormack to follow up with CAO Nick Ruller.

Action: Stuart McCormack, Tony Varga, Steve, and Joe to coordinate further financial analysis work.

11. Planning Committee Update

Normand Arsenault reported on work relating to Community Planning Permit Systems and upcoming discussions with Town staff.

12. Action Items Summary

- Finalize website review template (Stuart / Normand)
 - Circulate template (Stuart)
 - Collate website feedback (Steve)
 - Relaunch survey (Normand)
 - Finalize insurance (Normand)
 - Confirm venue booking (Normand)
 - Refine candidate questions (Committee)
 - Engage other committees on questions (Committee)
 - Confirm third-party advertising rules (Stuart / Normand)
 - Review scorecard templates (Committee)
 - Follow up on financial analysis (Stuart)
 - Coordinate finance workstream (Stuart / Tony / Steve / Joe)
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13. Next Meeting

Friday, May 8, 2026 at 2:00 PM
Community Centre – Board Room

14. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:45 PM.