

Maria McMillan – Districtwide Candidate

Economic Development

- 1. What is your understanding of the Kotahitanga Board and the role that they play? Should they be independent?** The Kotahitanga Board oversees and forwards the Kāpiti Economic Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. It also provides strategic advice to Council around economic activity in Kāpiti, building trust with partners and stakeholders and championing the region. It should work closely with Council but be independent because a/ it offers Councillors access to a range of people with expertise not available in Council or Council staff and b/ strategy and direction is by nature long-term and independence allows a certain autonomy from the three-year election cycle.
- 2. Kāpiti Chamber values town centres as vital contributors to our local economic system. What examples of benefits have you seen from town centres?** Benefits of town and village centres are numerous. Unique village centres with locally owned shops attract tourists, village centres become a way for locals to connect and meet with each other, services and shops in close proximity mean greater efficiency for locals accessing the things they need. Paekākāriki's village centre is Beach Road. Proximity to the beach, the cafes, dairy and St Peter's Hall events like the monthly market mean there is a natural and lively gathering point for locals and visitors. Beach Road feels like an interesting destination in itself and is often filled with visitors and shoppers who are at the beginning or end of the Paekākāriki to Raumati cycle track and the Paekākāriki to Pukerua Bay walkway.
- 3. How do you plan to support and grow town centres, and their relationship to the economic development team and wider business community?** Kāpiti is a string of town and village centres which are each unique in character and style. Council support should encourage the development of local businesses, both to ensure economic benefits stay within the community and to enhance the unique flavour of each centre. Council has a role of taking a bird's eye view of each centre thinking about any enhancements and developments in relation to long term plans for the centre, traffic calming, access by public transport, foot, wheelchair, mobility scooter or bike. Council needs to ensure the town centres support other Council objectives around tourism, economic development and climate change.
- 4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the Tourist Advisory Board and their relationship with Wellington NZ and KCDC?** The Tourism Advisory Board leads the implementation of the Kāpiti Destination Management Plan and works to increase tourism and visitor numbers to Kāpiti. WellingtonNZ is the wider Wellington region's economic development, events, and promotions agency and Kāpiti is promoted as a destination on its website and within its brand. The Board partners with KCDC to help ensure the successful implementation of the Plan.
- 5. What are the opportunities around tourism in Kāpiti?** Kāpiti has enormous opportunities for tourism. As well as the obvious attraction of Kāpiti Island, we have amazing walkways, cycle tracks, parks, streams and rivers. We have interesting town

and village centres, from Ōtaki with Māoriland, the vibes from the Wananga, the high te reo speaking population, all the way through to Paekākāriki with its laid-back cafe beachside vibe. I see further opportunities in promoting Kāpiti as a destination for Wellingtonians wanting a day or a weekend away. Kāpiti also seems well placed to offer a range of corporate “away days” as professional development or team building opportunities for the large Wellington corporate and government workforce. The breathtaking beauty of the train ride from Wellington could be better promoted. The Kāpiti line should be extended at least to Ōtaki meaning we can promote the entire region as a climate-friendly destination from Wellington.

Better Infrastructure

- 6. What role do you think KCDC plays in the Peka Peka Interchange?** KCDC has a key role in amplifying Kāpiti’s voice in decisions around the interchange including ensuring that our town and village centres are protected and ensuring that opportunities to expand our networks of cycleways and footpaths are incorporated into designs.
- 7. KCDC has been making strategic housing purchases. What are your thoughts on KCDC as a housing provider or facilitator? What does intensification mean to you, and how do you think it could change Kāpiti?** KCDC should take a key role alongside the central government, iwi and hapū in social housing. There are already people without secure housing in our region and all projections show population increases over the next decades. Intensification means more houses, probably taller and closer together. Intensification is a common-sense move both in terms of increasing housing stock and environmentally. Good intensification means homes that are close to and well connected to shops, transport options and services. We need to think carefully about how intensification happens, involve the community in decisions and ensure the unique flavour of Kāpiti communities is not lost. I think we can do it all.
- 8. As it stands, KCDC has funding to move forward with Te Uruhi. This has been a big talking point in our business community and membership. Assuming it goes ahead, what impact do you foresee the gateway having on business and community wellbeing in the Kāpiti region?** The budget blowouts means we can’t assume Te Uruhi will go ahead. The cost, the fact we can not increase the numbers of visitors to Kāpiti Island, that the plan requires building on our fragile shoreline and would involve removing existing dunes all point to the fact the project needs to be dropped. The project did generate some exciting ideas around opportunities for spaces and buildings which centre iwi and hapū culture, history and connection to the land and sea. An alternative project focused on these aspects could provide material benefit to the region in terms of tourist numbers, and in terms of social wellbeing, where both tangata whenua and tau iwi are better celebrated and connected to each other and the place.
- 9. What do you think are the opportunities for business if the Kāpiti Airport stays an airport, or if it gets developed?** Kāpiti airport is running at a loss and will almost

certainly close. The owners of the airport land wish to develop housing. It's a large area and this would be a long term project. Through the duration of the project there will be opportunities for building and building-adjacent businesses to be involved in the project. Longer term more housing and people mean the ability to provide goods and services to new people

Future thinking

- 10. What actions should KCDC be taking to support businesses to become climate friendly?** Council can work collaboratively with business to develop an ambitious carbon net-zero strategy recognising the key role of business in achieving net-zero. It can promote to consumers the low carbon footprint of supporting local businesses and services. It can continue to support the climate change strategy efforts in the existing economic development strategy.
- 11. How do you envision the relationship between local iwi and KCDC operating in the future?** Te Whakaminenga o Kāpiti, the partnership between KCDC and tangata whenua) is an excellent base to build on. I support the current arrangements where Ngāti Hapū o Ōtaki and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Toa Rangatira are represented on Council committees. I have great faith in iwi and hapū-led initiatives grounded in their knowledge of what is important and what works. Council should support such initiatives and further develop the relationship
- 12. Summarise your understanding of the following reforms: Three Waters Reform and Local Government Reform. How do you plan to keep Kāpiti's voice strong throughout these changes and advocate for our business community?** Three Waters reform is the creation of four water authorities that will manage drinking water, wastewater and stormwater amalgamating services previously run by Councils. Each Council will hold ownership shares of the entity. We need to advocate for mechanisms that ensure the voice of the Kāpiti community and council continue to be heard. We need to ensure that management and governance arrangements remain accountable and relevant to local communities. Section 117 of the Water Services Entity Bill appears to allow for a water entity to contract out the operation of any part of water services for up to 35 years. Internationally, long term contracts in water management have had some disastrous consequences for local communities with poor water quality, loss of service responsiveness and less accountability. If LG reform meets its goal of improving wellbeing I am in favour of it.
- 13. What is your vision for Kāpiti, and how do you intend to implement it? Name three visionary actions you aspire to implement?** I think Kāpiti can be a place where everyone has a warm home, good water and enough to eat. Where women, children and everybody lives free from violence and discrimination. Where you don't need a car to get to shops and services. Where climate change is taken seriously, our land, rivers and ocean are protected, and the role of mana whenua is supported. Where good things happen, whether it's a new business, a community garden or an adult learning to read for the first time. 1/ Introduce living wage for all Council employees and contractors making a material difference to some of the people who need it

most; 2/ Make Kāpiti carbon net-zero by 2040 3/ Harness business, central government, iwi, hapū and communities to make housing affordable.

14. How do you plan on being a visible and accessible leader for our council and community? I'll use my plain language expertise to improve communication between Council and the community. I will avoid policy jargon that only a handful of already engaged people understand. I will be clear and straightforward about what's going on and how it will affect people. I will listen to different views and make practical decisions based on the best evidence and the best ideas. I will be up-front and clear about how and when I can be contacted.