

PLATFORM: Meet the Candidates

North Vancouver Chamber – Questions for Candidates - BC Election 2020



KARIN KIRKPATRICK
Candidate - West Vancouver-Capilano
BC LIBERALS

Karin has held leadership roles across several sectors. As CEO of Family Services of Greater Vancouver, she led one of BC's oldest and largest social services organizations. She has worked in advanced education as Assistant Dean of the Sauder School of Business and as the CEO of the of the provincial crown corporation which regulates the private career training sector. Karin was the CEO of the Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia working with community groups across BC supporting sustainable land use projects. Karin spent six years as provincial appointee to the Judicial Council of BC and was previously on the board of the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade, the Vancity Community Foundation, and the BC Council for International Education. In 2012 Karin was a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and a nominee for the YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards. She holds a Master of Laws (LLM), International Law and Practice, from the University of Edinburgh, a Master of Business Administration (MBA), Human Resource Management, from Royal Roads University, and both a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) designation. In 2019 she was honoured as a Fellow of the Chartered Professional Accountants and was named as one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women by WXN and the National Post. Since her high school days, Karin has played in several performing bands on vocals and guitar. She lives in North Vancouver with her husband, teenaged daughter, dog and cat. With a passion for gardening, she keeps her neighbours stocked up with zucchinis and lettuce.

QUESTION 1. *Impacts of COVID.* The availability of rapid COVID testing is a critical issue for local business as they work to ensure a safe work environment for their staff and customers. Staff/kids are back...Businesses need their staff back at work, staff need to get back to work. Given the economic impact of uncertainty around COVID in the workplace, what would you do to address the ongoing availability of rapid COVID testing?

KK Response: The BC Liberals are supporting the BCCDC and Dr. Henry with their recommendations. There is currently no reliable 15-minute test administered by a non-professional in Canada which makes it very difficult for small and medium businesses. Without rapid testing or access to non-symptomatic testing, employees may be away for work for extended periods if there is any concern about exposure. Then you have a whole set of other issues about we compensate people for being responsible with their health and not coming to work. The BC Liberals support action on moving along development and

approval of a faster test and increasing the capacity of current testing resources. We know a reliable and accurate 15-minute test will be a game changer for business and our whole society.

QUESTION 2. *Costs on Business.* Many small businesses are desperately trying to get their customers back. They are struggling to find ways to get the revenue they need to survive through COVID. We see the increasing burden on business related to costs that government can control such as Property Tax Assessments and the Employee Health Tax. What would you do to help keep the costs for business down so they can maintain the jobs they provide and survive this tremendous downturn?

KK Response: I had my own small business and when 9/11 occurred. I remember sitting in my office that day and knowing that my world had changed; that a global event had occurred that would reach all the way to my own business here in Vancouver. The phone stopped ringing and I was scared. There were limited supports available for businesses like mine. When COVID 19 health measures shut down businesses, I felt that pain again. The BC Liberals know that small and medium businesses are the lifeblood of the BC economy and that is certainly the case here on the North Shore. The reduction of PST for the one year and moving to 3% in the following year will have a direct impact and reduction on the costs of doing business. Yesterday, the BC Liberals also announced the elimination of the 2% small business tax and a loan guarantee program for tourism and hospitality, as well as committing to putting a hold on new regulations and policies that add burdens to small business. This will make BC the most competitive place to start a new business.

QUESTION 3. *Transportation & Housing.* Employees working in North Vancouver are not able to find reasonable transportation or affordable local housing options. Businesses are suffering, choosing to move, or simply closing as a result. What would you do to ensure transportation and affordable housing investments are made to support the needs of the community and the future of our local small businesses?

KK Response: Transportation and housing are hot topics on the North Shore. The North Shore has challenges with hiring and retaining workers as access to both transportation and to affordable housing is limited. We need to be able to offer those people who work in our community the ability to live in our community or be able to access it easily. I will advocate for fixed-linked rapid transit to the North Shore. Although there are many factors that contribute to housing affordability, the issue of being inaccessible on transit puts additional pressure on housing stock. The introduction of rapid transit to the North Shore would reduce traffic congestion and promote more pedestrian friendly development. Housing happens on a continuum. Affordable rental is the root of the tree, but it grows from there. I have seen innovation in other communities developing affordable housing, for example, entry level ownership townhomes or condominiums with lock-off suites dedicated to affordable rental. You are adding rental stock, you are allowing income to help support new purchasers, and you are creating mixed communities. Development doesn't have to be one thing or another. It can provide multiple options to help build

communities.

QUESTION 4. *Climate Change.* The issues of climate change remains a concern for the business community. What is your position and your party's position on the most important steps that need to be taken in the next year to address this issue?

KK Response: I believe our natural environment must be protected for future generations. We borrow this world from our children and grandchildren. Climate Change and the transition to a clean economy has been something I have been passionate about for years. I have not been to a gas station to fill up in five years – my car is electric and is powered off the solar panels on my home. Six years ago, I did a Master of Laws with an emphasis on Climate Change law. This looked at how we use economic incentives as carrots to change behaviour in both corporations and individuals. The Carbon Tax, introduced by the BC Liberals, is an example of how an economic lever can result in reduced emissions. I believe we can be innovative and leverage our broad supply of renewable resources, clean energy and green-tech expertise to create jobs and reduce emissions. We have the gift of being on the West Coast which allows us to take advantage of tidal and wave action as a source of energy. We can produce energy from geothermal, wind and solar sources. We can leverage this for our own energy needs but build an economy around it as world leaders in energy research and technology.

QUESTION 5. *Retraining Underemployed Workforce to Meet Opportunities in the BC Tech Sector.* The NV Chamber has championed a provincial call for the funding of retraining and skill enrichment that will help more fully employ new Canadians and other individuals with technical aptitude to support the growing needs of our growing local and provincial technology sector. What is your position on this and what steps would you take to tap into this talent and economic potential in our community?

KK Response: We know the BC Tech sector is a significant contributor to BC's economy. We also know they are facing a talent shortage. At the same time, we have underemployed new immigrants, and employees transitioning out of sectors such as forestry. There needs to be a strategy for dealing with these issues collectively. This will come down to training – which is easier to deliver than ever before and is not confined by geography. It doesn't matter if you live in North Vancouver, or Kitimat, you can have access to comprehensive and current training. But it has to be strategic and take into account the variety of backgrounds of those seeking entry to the high-tech sector. BC has the ITABC which is funded by the Province to invest multiple streams of trades training. Perhaps we approach retraining for high tech in this same manner.

