

Alnwick-Haldimand Township

2026 Municipal Election

Community Candidate Questionnaire

Prepared by AHRPA

Purpose

This questionnaire has been developed to provide residents of Alnwick-Haldimand Township with an opportunity to better understand the views, priorities and leadership approach of each municipal candidate.

Every candidate has been asked the same questions and will have the same opportunity to respond. Responses will be published as submitted (subject only to formatting and the 2,000-character limit per question) to help residents make informed decisions at the ballot box.

Candidate Information

Name	Mike Ainsworth
Office Sought	Mayor
Email	mainsworth93@yahoo.ca
Website / Facebook (optional)	

Section 1 – About You

1. Why are you running for municipal office?

What motivated you to seek election, and what do you hope to accomplish if elected?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

My motivation for running in the election is the personal feeling's I have for doing things for people in general. For instance, Factories where I worked, workers wanted a union because of working conditions and wages, I stepped forward and lead the workers through that process and I sat on the CAW team. The men's hockey team that played in Grafton on Tuesday nights and Colborne Thursday nights, I ran that league for 20 year's. I was a volunteer fire fighter for A/H for 17 and worked my way up to Deputy chief, I was a supervisor in multiple factories. ATVs in our county had no direction and where running with no set trails. I organized a club and put together a trail system that connects to the Ontario Federation system and this has helped control the riders and bring tourism to the county. I have coached multiple hockey and baseball teams and JR curling team. So making the jump to Councillor in 2022 and now Running for Mayor in this 2026 election is me wanting to do this for the residents. What I want to accomplish

is getting this TWP moving in a direction of financial stability. Every issue we have is because we don't have the budget to get them all done. This has been handed down for many years from council to council and It has to change. We can not keep going to the residents for tax hikes. Let's be proactive in creating responsible growth, those tax dollars come right to the TWP. Its also about residents being heard, supporting volunteers, improving recreation, helping local businesses and maintaining our infrastructure. I want to build a great TEAM. I want to introduce a tax relief By-Law for Seniors and Residents Living with disabilities on a fixed income. We need to build a Tourism platform. I want to build a partnership with our local farmers and the NFA and local businesses. This TWP has it all and we are not fully utilizing it all. We also have to remember our staff, work force, and fire fighters and support them in their day to day work duties.

2. What experience has prepared you for this role?

Describe the skills, education, professional experience, volunteer work or community involvement that you believe will help you serve residents effectively.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

First I have been on council for the past 4 year. These 4 years have been the building blocks for me to make the jump to Mayor. Learning the policies and processes and the people in different positions that can help with arising issues and the ability to listen and learn from peers and elected officials in upper tiers. This will help with a smooth transition to the new Mayor and council. My background in manufacturing and all the courses that I had to take to keep up to the changing times like, Health and safety, Lean management, Automation, employee relations and problem solving, and crisis training. Ran my own Business, Auto Cleaning and Detailing. I sit on the Lower Trent Conservation Board, The Library Board, Parks & Rec Board, & Chair the Arena fundraising committee of which to date has raised \$330,000 for the new Arena floor replacement project, I go to local fairs, coffee time in Vernonville, Friday breakfast at the Anglican Church, and Friday night suppers at the Grafton Legion. I use and support local businesses and participate when asked with NFA or other events. All these give me a great opportunity to meet and work with residents.

Other volunteer work

Coached Multiple youth Hockey teams from house league to AAA

17 years with the A/H fire department

24 years president with the Northumberland District ATV Club (NDATV)

18 years as a director with the Ontario Federation Of ATVs (OFATV)

Support the local Snowmobile Club (GPRSA)

Fundraised for multiple organizations like the,

Northumberland school breakfast program,

Cobourg Humane society

Horizon Of Friendship

Northumberland food banks

All these give great insight on the TWP and residents and staff and helping them through their issues and moving the TWP forward.

3. What are your top three priorities?

Please identify the three most important issues you would focus on during your first term and explain why.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

1- I want to see the TWP be more proactive in creating opportunities for responsible growth and cutting red tape and building partnerships in growth and Grants.

WHY: It is important to build a strong financial position to invest in our infrastructure and growth with out unnecessary burdens on tax payers.

2 - I want to focus on farm road safety while building an alliance with NFA and local businesses and Tourism and volunteers.

WHY: The farming community takes up 50% of our labour force and farming machinery has gotten to an incredible size for our roads. Road safety and road trimming has to be a priority.

Working with the NFA will help build this program.

Local businesses need support to survive and grow and farmers feed cities and volunteers are essential to our program's

3 - I want to work with the new council to introduce a new tax relief By-Law for our seniors & residents living with disabilities and fixed income.

WHY: Our seniors have given to this TWP, Some all their lives and with the cost of inflation and the small increase in their CCP & OAS these resident are finding it hard to meet the essentials and we need to give back and help them. The disabled are caught up in the same money flow finding it hard to make ends meet. We will make this up in responsible growth.

Section 2 – Transparency, Governance & Public Trust

4. Restoring Public Confidence / Engagement

Many residents have expressed a desire for greater openness, accountability and public engagement. What specific actions would you take to improve transparency and rebuild public trust in Township government?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Being on Council for the past 4 years and seeing how staff keep this in line makes me wonder why we would think someone is trying to hide something. Everything goes through all 5 council members. Any closed mtgs is strictly governed by sec, 239 of the municipal act and sec 5.2 of our procedural by-laws. All other mtgs are on our TWP YouTube page and all minutes and agendas are on the TWP website. The TWP has also started a monthly news letter where residents can send in their emails and get on the monthly news letter email list. The TWP website has been updated for easier use and the TWP has a FB page. All rules have to be applied evenly, not pick and choose what ones someone may or may not like. But can we do better, YES. I would support a ? minute public Q&A before each council mtg.

5. Council Meeting Accessibility

Would you support returning regular Council meetings to evening hours to improve accessibility for working residents, families and business owners? Why or why not?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

This is a great idea but has already been tried. We had mtgs at 6pm in Grafton and Roseneath and no one showed up only if there was a report that pertained to them. The problem with having mtgs at 6pm is paying staff after hours. So if the mtg runs until 10pm they get overtime or time in lieu. With shift work being the norm, mtgs are going to be hit and miss for everyone. All our mtgs are on zoom and everyone is open to watch and listen and can participate on zoom when mtgs are public or doing a delegations and leave when they are finished. So with the lack of interest for mtgs at 6pm council as a whole decided to go back to 930 am mtgs. why pay overtime to staff when we don't have to. At any given mtg you could have the CAO, Clerk, deputy Clerk, Building official, Planner, PW manager, P&R manager, HR manager, all at time and a half. ?

6. Closed (In-Camera) Meetings

Ontario law permits Council to meet in closed session only under specific circumstances. What principles would guide your decision to move a matter into an in-camera meeting, and how would you ensure those meetings are used only when necessary?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

All closed mtgs are governed by sec 239 of the municipal act and sec 5.2 of our procedural by-law. They make the decision when we go into closed.

7. Council Culture

Healthy councils rely on respectful discussion and differing viewpoints. How would you contribute to a culture of collaboration, respectful debate and professional conduct around the Council table?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Sec. 18.1 in our procedural by-law is our role of a councillor.
Sec 224 of the municipal act also governs the role of a councillor.
Sec 15 of the procedural by-law code of conduct at mtgs
When things go sideways it is because someone crosses those lines. It is the Mayors duty to run the mtg and keep it under control and keep positive debate a priority

Section 3 – Financial Responsibility

8. Financial Stewardship/Efficiency

Property taxes continue to rise while municipalities face growing infrastructure demands. How would you balance maintaining essential services, investing in infrastructure and keeping property taxes affordable?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

This is a situation where TWP and residents need to work together. Taxes are not going away. But what I would present to council and residents is that we keep taxes at the province inflation rate which is set at about 2%. Then let us build houses and find industries that are looking for a home. Work with our MP & MPP to steer any of these companies looking our way. 1% tax increase is about \$88,000, 1km of road resurface is about \$80,000 So taxes get raised 3.7% and add 2% to reserves. It really does not cover all the increases. The average annual house valued at \$313,000 is an annual increase of \$106.02 to the house owner. We need to look at all agreements and apply Lean management to them. Community centers, Boat launches, Parks, Town Hall, are all in need of maintenance. That is all above what we bring in, in taxes. So what we have been doing is not working. Taxes alone are putting us deeper in the hole.

9. Independent Financial Accountability

Public confidence in municipal finances is essential to good governance. If elected, would you support commissioning an independent external financial review—or, where justified, a forensic audit—of the Township's finances to provide residents with an objective assessment of the municipality's financial position and financial practices? Why or why not?

Would you commit to implementing appropriate recommendations arising from the review, whether they identify strengths, weaknesses or opportunities for improvement?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Once again a question that staff does not do their due diligencies.
MNP is a company that just completed our review of finances and staff use Baker Tilly to do our annual audit of our books every year under legislation requirements. If there was any recommendation, YES I would ask to follow those recommendations.

10. Infrastructure Priorities

Roads, bridges, water treatment facilities, libraries, recreation facilities, municipal buildings and local halls (i.e. – Fenella) and other infrastructure all compete for limited funding. How would you prioritize infrastructure investments over the next four years?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I would want a municipal wide asset management and needs assessment done before any ranking took place. We would need to know what's failing and what can wait.

Section 4 – Growth & Economic Development

11. Responsible Growth

What does responsible growth look like for Alnwick-Haldimand Township over the next decade?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Planning for approximately 1000 more homes in the TWP and some industry. Industry may be a smarter way to generate revenue as it won't add as much residential service demands.

The county planning had our TWP at 2,845 households in 2021 with a forecast of 3,180 by 2041

We can't tax our way out of our infrastructure defect, and we can't stop growth. We need to manage growth intelligently and attract new industry and employment, and make sure new development pays its fair share. Done properly, growth can broaden our tax base and give us more financial capacity to repair the roads, bridges, facilities and other infrastructure our residents depend on.

12. Supporting Business & Agriculture

How would you support local businesses, agriculture, tourism and economic development while preserving the Township's rural character?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

My goal would be keep it simple, Grow strategically and protect what makes Alnwick Haldimand rule.

I would support our local businesses, agriculture and tourism while working to attract new industry and economic opprotunities

Try and make sure our residents and businesses benefit from that growth and extra taxes go to the needs of the TWP.

13. Housing

What role should the Township play in encouraging appropriate housing opportunities for seniors, young families and first-time homebuyers?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

We should look at a percentage of attainable housing in every development we approve. I would argue to cut red tape on housing approvals. We also need to recognize that our villages and Hamlets are small and we don't have many of the services larger communities take for granted. That means growth needs to be planned in a way that supports our existing communities, local businesses and infrastructure.

Section 5 – Community Services & Quality of Life

14. Recreation & Community Facilities

What improvements would you like to see in Township parks, recreation facilities, trails, libraries and community spaces?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

All our community centers and Libraries are in need of repair and update's. The arena is under going an ice surface replacement and is slated to have ice this fall/Nov. The ATV Club and snowmobile club provide trails at no cost to the TWP and also donate money to the county forest for trail work, maintenance, and volunteer work. Our parks and Sanctuary need some TLC but are very usable now. I would also like to see our two beaches and 5 boat lanuches beautified

15. Volunteers & Community Organizations

Volunteers contribute significantly to our community. How can Council better support local volunteers, service clubs and community organizations?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Volunteers are an asset to our community and need to be preserved, but what they are allowed to take on has changed. With the new union in our labour force the work load for parks and community centers and maintenance is a union job. Although we have limited work volunteers can do, it is still an important position and I will always be in favor of helping and keeping them in the TWP.

16. Healthcare Recruitment

Access to family physicians and other healthcare professionals remains a challenge across Ontario. What role, if any, should the Township play in attracting healthcare professionals and supporting local healthcare initiatives?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

We should be a part of any committee that dose any research, but really this is a county and province job. This is not a cost that the TWP should have to take on

Section 6 – Communication & Leadership

17. Communication

If elected, how will residents hear from you between elections? Please describe how you intend to communicate regularly with the community.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Through news letters, council mtgs, and events and community sponsored events. Working and talking with businesses and going to committee mtgs and the annual breakfast and supper venues. Monthly emailed news letter from Staff.

18. Listening to Residents

Describe a time when listening to another perspective changed your opinion or improved a decision.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Budget process is always a big task. Just when you think you have it, another councilor comes up with a different view of the report and that changes your mind. So having the mind set to listen and accepting a different view is important.

19. Difficult Decisions

Tell residents about one difficult decision you expect Council will face during the next four years and how you would approach it.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

One difficult decision (But there are many) I believe council will have to address in the future is our historic municipal building. It is an important part of our TWP history, built in 1858 I would begin with a complete independent engineering assessment and a detailed needs and financial analysis. My preference would be to preserve the historic character of the building where ever it is practical, while creating a modern and safe accessible space for our staff and residents

20. Working with Others

How would you work with fellow councillors whose opinions differ significantly from your own?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I think different opinions are good for the conversation, I think first is to listen and understand their concerns and keep the discussion focused on what is best for the TWP and the residents. So we must work to find common ground and keep each other involved.

21. Measuring Success

At the end of your term, what accomplishments would you hope residents use to judge your performance?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

That I communicated and left the TWP financially stable and infrastructure sound, and made Alnwick Haldimand a better place where people want to live and play.

22. Why Should Residents Vote for You?

In 250 words or less, tell residents why you are the best person to represent them.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I am the person for this job AND I HAVE A PLAN and I will not stop improving this TWP and going to bat for the residents and business owners, and agriculture, staff and workers, and pushing the province to help with responsible growth. Also strengthening our tax base and attracting appropriate industry and dealing with our ageing infrastructure before the problem becomes even more expensive. I have lived in this TWP my entire life and I know this TWP. I know taxes are an issue and I will bring in revenue so Taxes can stay at the provincial inflation rate. I understand the challenges we face and the responsibility that comes with spending our tax dollars. This is our home and we need to work together to make it bloom.

Optional Closing Statement

Is there anything else you would like residents to know that was not covered in this questionnaire?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I HAVE A PLAN, Singing kumbaya to the residents doesn't pay the bills and advance our TWP, and get us out of the hole we are in. With responsible growth and keeping upper tiers involved with cutting red tape and to help with grants. We can get more of the aging infrastructure issue upgraded, as well as parks, beaches and boat launches operational and beautified. This will help us to keep taxes low. While also partnering with businesses and Farming committee's

Submission Guidelines

- Responses exceeding the 2,000-character limit per question may be truncated. All candidates who submit responses by the deadline will be posted on the AHRPA website.
- Responses will be published without endorsement or editorial comment.