

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	Joan Stover
Office Sought	Deputy Mayor
Email	stover4you@gmail.com
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.

I am seeking re-election as Deputy Mayor because I care about Alnwick/Haldimand and the people who call our Township home. I also believe experience matters. The decisions we make around the Council table today can have an impact on our residents and our finances for many years to come.

I previously served on Council from 2010 to 2014 and returned to municipal government when I was elected Deputy Mayor in 2022. Between those terms, I continued my career with the Cobourg Police Service Special Constable Unit, taking on increased responsibilities before retiring. Both my municipal and working experience have taught me the importance of listening, working with people, asking questions and sometimes making difficult decisions.

This term has certainly had its challenges. We have dealt with aging infrastructure, financial pressures, provincial requirements and important decisions about our municipal facilities. Alnwick/Haldimand is a small municipality, but we are often expected to meet many of the same requirements as much larger municipalities without the same financial or staffing resources. We have to be realistic and balance what we would like to do with what our

taxpayers can afford.

I am proud of what we have accomplished, but there is more work to do. I want to see the Haldimand Memorial Arena project completed, continue planning responsibly for our municipal buildings and infrastructure, and make sure that as our Township grows, we don't lose the rural character and sense of community that make Alnwick/Haldimand special.

I enjoy serving our community. I enjoy talking with residents, hearing their concerns and helping where I can. I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I will continue to listen, ask questions, do my homework and make the best decisions I can for the whole Township. That is why I am asking you, the residents of Alnwick/Haldimand, for the opportunity to continue serving as your Deputy Mayor.

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.

I bring municipal experience and many years of professional and community experience to the role of Deputy Mayor.

I first served on Alnwick/Haldimand Council from 2010 to 2014 and returned when I was elected Deputy Mayor in 2022. Serving two different terms has given me a good understanding of municipal government and how much it has changed. The responsibilities placed on municipalities continue to grow, and Council members need to learn, ask questions and understand the information before making decisions.

My career with the Cobourg Police Service Special Constable Unit also prepared me for this role. I was given increased responsibilities and learned the importance of professionalism, confidentiality, dealing with difficult situations, listening and treating everyone with respect. I continue to use those skills as Deputy Mayor.

During this term, I have served on the Short-Term Rental Ad Hoc Committee and currently represent the Township on the Ganaraska Conservation Authority. I also continue to work on the Haldimand Memorial Arena fundraising efforts. The STR Committee brought different viewpoints to the table and required me to listen to concerns and work toward solutions. As Deputy Mayor, I also support the Mayor, step in when required and represent the Township at the County level in the Mayor's absence.

Community involvement is just as important. I am a member and volunteer at St. George's Anglican Church in Grafton and support local initiatives with the YMCA and the Grafton Legion.

Experience does not mean having all the answers. It means asking the right questions, listening, doing your homework and understanding that every decision around the Council table affects someone. That is the experience and approach I bring to the role of Deputy Mayor.

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.

My top three priorities for the next term are about finishing what we have started and planning responsibly for the future of Alnwick/Haldimand.

1. Finish the Haldimand Memorial Arena project.

We have made significant progress, but there is still work to do. I want to see this project through to completion and continue working with our community on fundraising efforts. The arena is more than a building; it is a gathering place that has served generations of families. We need to complete it responsibly and make sure it remains a community asset for many years to come.

2. Plan for our Township buildings and infrastructure.

Our roads, bridges, municipal buildings and other infrastructure all require ongoing investment. We cannot do everything at once. We need to use the professional information and reports available to us, determine what needs attention first and develop realistic long-term plans for how the work will be funded. Good planning today can help prevent much larger and more expensive problems tomorrow.

3. Protect what makes Alnwick/Haldimand special while planning for growth.

Growth is coming, and we need to be prepared. I support responsible growth that provides opportunities for new families and businesses while protecting our agricultural land, natural environment and rural communities.

Development also needs to be supported by the roads, services and infrastructure required to accommodate it.

These priorities all require the same approach: listening to our residents, using the professional advice of our staff, planning ahead and making responsible financial decisions. As a small municipality with limited resources, we need to balance what we want with what we can afford while continuing to move Alnwick/Haldimand forward.

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.

I believe openness, accountability and public engagement are important parts of municipal government. However, I do not believe it is fair to assume that public confidence in our Township government needs to be rebuilt. I speak with residents regularly, and many take the time to ask questions and understand the issues before Council.

We are always looking for more ways to improve communication with our residents. We have excellent staff who work hard every day to serve our residents. Our Clerk's Department has initiated a newsletter that is published periodically throughout the year. We are also making greater use of social media and working to expand our email list so information can reach more residents.

Residents also have a responsibility to ask questions and seek clarification rather than accept incomplete or inaccurate information as fact. I appreciate the residents who have reached out to me during this term with questions, concerns or simply to better understand a decision.

I support open Council meetings, accessible agendas and minutes, clear communication and opportunities for public input. There will be matters that must remain confidential under provincial legislation, and Council has a

responsibility to respect those requirements.

Trust is built through actions. I will continue to listen, be available, ask questions and explain my decisions where I can. Residents may not always agree with every decision Council makes, but the information should be available to help them understand how and why those decisions were made.

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.

would not support moving all regular Council meetings back to evening hours at this time. We have held evening meetings in the past, and in my experience, public attendance was generally very low. Simply moving a meeting to the evening does not necessarily mean more residents will attend or become more engaged.

I certainly understand that daytime meetings are not convenient for everyone. People work different hours and have family and other responsibilities. However, we also need to consider the impact evening meetings have on our staff. We are a small municipality with limited staff resources, and many of the staff required to attend Council meetings have already worked a full day. Regular evening meetings can result in longer working hours, additional costs and added pressure on our staff without necessarily increasing public attendance.

Accessibility is about more than the time of a meeting. Residents should be able to easily access Council agendas and minutes, follow the decisions being made and contact members of Council with questions or concerns.

For issues that generate significant public interest, there may be occasions when an evening public meeting or another opportunity for public input is appropriate. We have done this during the current term, and I would continue to support that approach when there is a demonstrated need.

Based on my experience, I do not believe moving all regular Council meetings to the evening would result in greater public participation. I would rather focus on practical ways to make Council and information more accessible while also making responsible use of our staff and municipal resources.

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.

The Municipal Act requires municipalities to have a Procedural By-law that governs how Council meetings are conducted. The Act also requires meetings to be open to the public except in specific circumstances where a meeting may or must be closed. A closed or in-camera meeting should only be used when the matter meets one of

the specific exceptions permitted under the Municipal Act.

There are legitimate reasons why Council sometimes needs to meet in closed session. These can include legal matters, personal information about an identifiable individual, labour relations, property negotiations and other matters where confidentiality is required. In those situations, Council has a responsibility to protect confidential information and follow the legislation.

My approach is straightforward. If a matter can be discussed in open session, it should be. If there is a legal reason for the discussion to take place in closed session, then Council needs to respect that requirement. I also rely on the professional expertise of our Clerk's Department and legal counsel when necessary to make sure the proper procedures are being followed.

I understand that residents can sometimes become frustrated when they know Council has discussed something in closed session but cannot see all the details. Council members may also find that difficult because we cannot divulge publicly what was discussed or the confidential information we received. However, confidentiality is a responsibility that comes with holding public office.

I will continue to support providing as much information to the public as legally possible once Council returns to open session. Transparency is important, but so is protecting information that Council is legally required to keep confidential.

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.

A healthy Council does not mean everyone agrees. Five members of Council can look at the same issue and come to different conclusions. What matters is how we handle those differences.

I believe every member of Council has the right to ask questions, express an opinion and vote according to what they believe is in the best interest of the Township. We should be able to disagree without making an issue personal. I may not agree with another member's position, but I will listen to what they have to say and expect the same respect in return.

Good decisions require good information. Council needs to listen to our professional staff, ask questions, review the information provided and come prepared to the Council table. Debate is an important part of municipal government, but it also needs to remain respectful and follow our Procedural By-law.

There are times when discussions can become heated. When that happens, a point of order may be necessary, or sometimes a short recess gives everyone an opportunity to regroup and return to the discussion in a professional manner. Those procedures are there for a reason and should be used when necessary to keep Council business moving forward.

Once Council makes a decision, whether I voted with the majority or not, I respect the decision of Council and move forward.

At the end of the day, Council is a team. That doesn't mean we always agree or vote the same way. It means we respect each other's role, respect the decisions of Council and continue working together for the Township. I will continue to be prepared, respectful and willing to work with every member of Council, even when we disagree. We need to remember why we are there — to make the best decisions we can for the residents of Alnwick/Haldimand.

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.

Financial responsibility means providing the services our residents need while being mindful of what our taxpayers can afford.

I don't believe it is responsible to promise that taxes will never increase. The cost of fuel, insurance, equipment, wages, construction and other municipal services continues to rise. At the same time, we have aging roads, bridges, buildings and other infrastructure that cannot simply be ignored.

We need to plan ahead and set priorities. Our Asset Management Plan, professional staff reports and long-term capital planning help Council understand what needs attention, when it needs to be done and how we are going to pay for it. We also need to maintain healthy reserves and plan for major expenses rather than continually reacting when something needs to be repaired or replaced.

During this term, Council introduced a dedicated Infrastructure Levy to help address the growing cost of our aging infrastructure. We also need to continue looking for grants and other funding opportunities and make sure we are getting good value for the money we spend.

As a small municipality, we cannot do everything at once. Sometimes that means saying no or putting something off because there are more important priorities.

My approach is to protect essential services, plan for our infrastructure, listen to the professional expertise of our staff and carefully review spending. We need to balance what we need, what we would like and what our taxpayers can afford. Responsible financial planning today will help put the Township in a stronger position for tomorrow.

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.*

I support independent financial accountability, but I also believe we need to recognize the financial oversight that is already in place.

The Township's financial statements are independently audited every year. Our auditors look closely at our finances, ask questions and report publicly to Council on the financial position of the Township. This provides both Council and our residents with independent professional information about our finances.

During this term, Council also brought in MNP to conduct an external review of how our Finance Department operates. This was different from our annual financial audit. It provided an outside look at our processes and how the department functions, with opportunities to identify areas where we can improve.

I would support an additional independent financial review if there was a demonstrated need for one. I would not support spending taxpayers' money on a forensic audit simply because someone asks for one. A forensic audit is a significant step and should only be considered when there is credible information or evidence that justifies it.

When an independent review identifies areas where we can improve, Council has a responsibility to listen and take those recommendations seriously. That does not mean every recommendation should automatically be implemented. We need to understand the recommendation, the cost, the benefit and whether it makes sense for our municipality.

Financial accountability is important, but so is making responsible use of taxpayers' money. If there is a problem, we need to address it. If there is an opportunity to improve, we should look at it. Decisions should be based on facts and professional information.

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.

Alnwick/Haldimand has a lot of infrastructure and limited dollars to look after it. Roads, bridges, municipal buildings, recreation facilities, libraries and community halls are all important, but we cannot repair or replace everything at once.

My first priority will always be public safety and essential services. From there, Council needs to look at the condition of our infrastructure, how it is being used, what happens if we delay the work and what the long-term cost will be. Our Asset Management Plan, professional reports and the expertise of our staff help Council make those decisions based on information rather than simply choosing the project that gets the most attention.

We also need to plan ahead. If we know a bridge, road, building or piece of equipment will need major work in the future, we should be planning financially for it now. Maintaining healthy reserves, using our dedicated Infrastructure Levy and pursuing provincial, federal and other grant opportunities can help spread those costs over time.

The Haldimand Memorial Arena is an important project already underway, and I want to see it completed responsibly. At the same time, we cannot lose sight of the other infrastructure needs throughout the Township.

There will always be more projects than available dollars. My approach will be to prioritize safety and essential services, use professional information to determine need, plan for the long term and make sure we understand how we are going to pay for a project before we commit to it.

Good infrastructure planning is not about one term of Council. It is about making responsible decisions today that

will serve our residents for many years to come.

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.

Responsible growth means recognizing that Alnwick/Haldimand will continue to grow while making sure we don't lose what makes our Township special.

We are a rural municipality with agricultural land, small communities and a natural environment that our residents value. Growth needs to respect those things. I support new housing and economic opportunities, but development needs to happen in the right places and in a way that fits the character of our Township.

We also need to understand the impact growth has on our infrastructure and services. More development can mean additional pressure on roads, fire services, recreation facilities and other municipal services. Before approving growth, we need to understand what infrastructure will be required, what it will cost and how it will be paid for. Existing taxpayers should not be expected to carry an unfair share of the cost of new development.

We also have to recognize that many planning decisions are affected by provincial legislation and County planning policies. As a small municipality, we don't always have complete control over the amount or type of growth that comes our way. Our responsibility is to make sure Alnwick/Haldimand's interests are represented and that local concerns are heard when those decisions are being made.

Over the next decade, I want to see growth that is planned, affordable and sustainable. We need housing and opportunities for families and businesses, but we also need to protect our agricultural land, rural communities and quality of life.

For me, responsible growth is not about stopping change. It is about managing change so Alnwick/Haldimand remains a place people are proud to call home.

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.

Agriculture is an important part of Alnwick/Haldimand's economy and our rural identity. Supporting our farmers and protecting agricultural land need to remain priorities as our Township grows.

We also need to support the small businesses, tourism operators and entrepreneurs who choose to invest in our community. Municipal government cannot create a successful business, but we can make sure our processes are clear, provide good customer service and avoid unnecessary barriers while still following the rules and regulations

we are required to follow.

We need to continue to listen to our farmers and business owners. They understand the challenges they face better than anyone. Whether it is municipal regulations, road access, development applications or other issues, Council should be available and willing to work with them to determine where we can reasonably help.

Tourism also provides opportunities for our Township. Our rural landscape, agricultural community, local businesses, recreation and natural areas attract people to Alnwick/Haldimand. We can promote those opportunities while making sure tourism fits within our communities and respects the people who live here.

We should also continue working with Northumberland County and other partners on economic development opportunities. As a small municipality, partnerships allow us to access expertise and resources that we could not reasonably provide on our own.

Economic development and protecting our rural character do not have to compete with one another. With good planning, we can support agriculture, encourage local businesses and welcome appropriate economic opportunities while protecting the rural community that makes Alnwick/Haldimand special.

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.

Housing is a challenge across Ontario, and Alnwick/Haldimand is not immune. Seniors who want to remain in their community, young families and first-time homebuyers all need appropriate housing options, but we also have to recognize the limitations we face as a rural municipality.

The Township does not build housing, but we can assess our planning policies and look for opportunities for different types of housing where they are appropriate and can be properly serviced.

Servicing is one of our challenges. In Grafton, we have municipal water but no municipal sewer system. Much of the rest of the Township relies on private wells and septic systems. That limits the type and density of development that can take place and means we cannot simply look at solutions that may work in larger urban municipalities and assume they will work here.

We need to recognize that housing needs change throughout people's lives. Seniors may want to remain in the community as they age, while young families and first-time homebuyers are looking for opportunities to establish themselves here. Secondary or additional residential units, sometimes referred to as granny flats, may provide another housing option for some families. Where they are appropriate, they can allow generations of a family to live close to one another or provide another form of housing without changing the rural character of an area. They still need to meet planning, building and servicing requirements.

We also need to continue working with Northumberland County and the Province because many housing and planning policies are outside the direct control of the Township.

We need more housing choices, but they have to be realistic for Alnwick/Haldimand. Responsible housing growth means understanding our servicing limitations, planning for the infrastructure we can afford and protecting the rural character of our Township while creating opportunities for people at different stages of their lives.

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.

Our parks, recreation facilities, libraries and community spaces are important to the quality of life in Alnwick/Haldimand. They bring people together and provide places for recreation, programs, events and community activities.

For me, maintenance is key. I would like to see continued improvements to the care of our parks and green spaces, our trails kept safe and usable, our boat launch properly maintained and improvements made to playground and recreation equipment as it is needed. We should also continue looking at accessibility so that as many residents as possible can enjoy our facilities and community spaces.

Before we start talking about adding new facilities, we need to make sure we are properly looking after what we already have. These are assets our residents have already invested in, and good maintenance can extend their life and help prevent more expensive repairs in the future.

The Township has recently moved forward with a review of our municipal facilities. This is an important step. We need good professional information about the condition of our facilities, how they are being used and what improvements may be required. Once we have that information, Council can establish priorities and determine what we can realistically afford.

Completing the Haldimand Memorial Arena project remains an important priority for me. I want to see it completed responsibly and then properly maintained so it can serve our community for many years.

We also have to be realistic about our resources. We are a small municipality with a small staff, and there is only so much that can be done at one time. That makes setting priorities and planning ahead even more important.

My priority is not simply to build more. It is to maintain what we have, make practical improvements where they are needed and make sure our community facilities continue to serve our residents well.

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 a big part of what makes Alnwick/Haldimand a strong community. We need to continue to value our volunteers and recognize the time, experience and commitment they give to our Township.

I see this firsthand through my own community involvement. Many of the events, programs, fundraisers and activities our residents enjoy would simply not happen without our volunteers.

Council can support our volunteers and community organizations by listening to them, recognizing their contributions and making it as easy as possible for them to support our community. Sometimes support may be financial, but it can also mean helping an organization understand a municipal process, connecting them with the appropriate staff, sharing information or helping promote a community event. There are always new ways we can support our volunteers, and our staff are very knowledgeable about programs, resources and opportunities that may be available to help.

During this term, we put out calls for volunteers to serve on our committees and were pleased to see residents step forward to fill those positions. That involvement is important, and we need to continue encouraging residents to participate.

At the same time, we have to be realistic. Alnwick/Haldimand has a small workforce, and every municipal committee requires staff time and resources to support it. We need to be careful about how many committees we create and make sure there is a clear purpose and need for them. Creating another full committee is not always the answer. Sometimes a smaller subcommittee focused on a particular issue or project may be a more practical way to get the work done.

Our volunteers give a great deal to Alnwick/Haldimand. I will continue to value their contribution, listen to them and support them.

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.

Access to healthcare is important to our residents, particularly in a rural community and as our population ages. We are fortunate in Grafton to have a compounding pharmacy and a walk-in clinic providing services close to home. Having healthcare services available within our community is something we should continue to value and support.

Physician recruitment is a challenge throughout Northumberland County, and the County has taken on a greater role in physician recruitment. I believe that makes sense. Rather than each municipality trying to do this on its own, we can work together through the County and make better use of our resources.

Alnwick/Haldimand still has a role to play. We need to advocate for our residents and make sure the needs of our rural communities are part of the discussion. We can support the County's recruitment efforts and be prepared to help where there is a practical opportunity for the Township to do so.

We also need to listen to our local healthcare professionals and organizations. They understand the challenges of providing healthcare in our area, and their knowledge and experience should be part of the conversation about attracting and retaining healthcare professionals.

Healthcare is primarily a provincial responsibility, and a small municipality cannot solve the shortage of healthcare professionals on its own. We can, however, be a strong voice for our residents, work with the County and other partners, and support the healthcare services we are fortunate to have in our community.

I will continue to support practical efforts to improve access to healthcare while making sure Alnwick/Haldimand has a voice at the table.

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.

Communication with residents should not only happen at election time. I have always been available, approachable and visible in our community, and I will continue to do that.

The Township already has a newsletter that goes out to residents, along with our website, social media, Council agendas and minutes. These are important ways of keeping residents informed about what is happening in the Township, and I support continuing to improve how we communicate and make information available.

For me personally, I believe some of the best communication happens face to face. I am out in our community, attending events, supporting local organizations and talking with residents. I also hear from people by telephone and email. Sometimes a conversation with a resident brings an issue to my attention that I may not otherwise have known about, and sometimes a resident simply wants an explanation or clarification about a decision Council has made.

I don't believe communication is just about sending information out. It is also about listening. Residents do reach out to me with questions, concerns and ideas, and I appreciate that. I want residents to continue to feel comfortable approaching me and asking questions.

I will continue to be visible and accessible throughout Alnwick/Haldimand, not just during an election. I will answer questions where I can, help residents connect with the appropriate Township staff when necessary and continue to listen to what people throughout our community are saying.

That is how I have approached the role of Deputy Mayor during this term, and that is how I will continue to serve.

18. Listening to Residents

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

Maximum 2,000 characters.

The Haldimand Memorial Arena is a good example for me.

When the arena was facing a major repair, I was not prepared to support using what was left in the reserve to pay for it. My concern was financial. I did not believe it was responsible to deplete the reserve on a repair when there was no certainty it would provide a solution that would even last until the end of the ice season.

That position was not popular with everyone in the community, and I certainly heard about it.

Outside donations came forward that allowed the necessary work to be done without depleting the Township's reserve. It provided a temporary solution and gave us the opportunity to look at the bigger question of what needed to happen with the arena.

What changed for me was not my belief that we needed to protect the Township financially. What changed was my understanding of how strongly the community supported the arena and what people were prepared to do to help find a solution. I listened to arena users, volunteers, staff and residents, and those conversations helped me see

another way forward.

As the next steps developed, I became Council's representative on the fundraising committee and have continued working with the community toward the Haldimand Memorial Arena project.

I still believe asking the financial questions at the beginning was the right thing to do. But I also believe listening to the community helped us reach a better decision and move forward in a different way.

That experience reminded me that listening doesn't always mean changing your principles. Sometimes it means being willing to change how you get to the best outcome.

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 of the difficult decisions I believe the next Council will face is the future of our municipal buildings and facilities.

We have a review underway that will provide Council with professional information about the condition of our facilities and our future needs. I don't want to prejudge what that review will tell us. Once we have the information, Council will need to look carefully at the recommendations and determine what makes sense for Alnwick/Haldimand.

These decisions may not be easy. Repairing and maintaining older buildings can be expensive, but replacing them can be even more expensive. We need to understand the condition of each facility, how it is being used, what work is required and what the long-term financial impact will be.

We also need to listen to the residents and community organizations who use these facilities. At the same time, Council has a responsibility to consider the needs of the whole Township and what our taxpayers can reasonably afford.

My approach will be to review the professional information, listen to our staff and residents, ask questions and make sure we understand both the immediate and long-term costs before making a decision.

There may not be a solution that makes everyone happy. Council's responsibility is to make the best decision we can with the information available and to explain why that decision was made.

Once the review is complete, I want Council to use that information to develop a realistic long-term plan for our municipal facilities, set priorities and determine how we are going to pay for them.

20. Working with Others

How would you work with fellow councillors whose opinions differ significantly from your own? *Maximum 2,000 characters.*

I have served on Council long enough to know that we are not always going to agree. Five members of Council can receive the same information, ask different questions and come to different conclusions. That is part of municipal government.

We are elected to serve our residents and are expected to conduct ourselves professionally. Our Code of Conduct provides the roadmap for how members of Council should conduct themselves, and I believe we have a responsibility to follow it. That is the way I have approached my role as Deputy Mayor, and I will continue to do so.

I will listen to another member's point of view even when it is very different from my own. Sometimes another councillor will raise something I hadn't considered, and sometimes after listening and asking questions, we will still disagree. Either way, the discussion needs to remain respectful and focused on the issue.

I also believe Council is a team. Being a team does not mean we all vote the same way. It means we respect each other's role, come prepared, listen to the professional information provided by our staff and work through our differences around the Council table.

There will be times when I feel strongly about an issue. I will explain my position and the reasons for it, but I also have to give other members the same opportunity.

Once Council has debated an issue and made a decision, that decision belongs to Council. I may not always be on the winning side of a vote, but I respect the democratic process and continue working with my fellow Council members.

At the end of the day, we were all elected to serve the residents of Alnwick/Haldimand. We may not always agree, but we should be able to disagree professionally, make a decision and then continue working together for the good of the Township.

21. Measuring Success

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

Maximum 2,000 characters.

At the end of the next term, I believe residents should judge me on what we actually accomplished, not simply on what I promised during an election.

I want residents to be able to look back and see that we completed the Haldimand Memorial Arena project responsibly and that it is serving our community. I want us to have a clear long-term plan for our municipal buildings and facilities based on the professional review now underway, with priorities established and a realistic understanding of how we are going to pay for them.

I also want residents to see continued progress on our roads, bridges and other infrastructure. We will never complete every project in four years, but we should be able to show that we set priorities, planned ahead and invested taxpayers' money where it was needed most.

Financially, I want the Township to remain in a position where we are planning for future expenses, maintaining appropriate reserves and balancing the services our residents need with what our taxpayers can afford.

Residents should also judge me on how I have represented them. Was I available? Did I listen? Did I ask questions? Did I do my homework? Did I conduct myself professionally and work with the other members of Council even when we disagreed?

Success to me is not being able to say yes to everything. It is being able to look back at the end of four years and

know that we made responsible decisions, took care of what we have, completed important work and left Alnwick/Haldimand in a stronger position for the Council that follows us.

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 asking the residents of Alnwick/Haldimand for their vote because I bring experience, commitment and a practical approach to the role of Deputy Mayor.

I understand municipal government and the responsibility that comes with making decisions that affect our residents and their tax dollars. I don't believe in making promises simply because they sound good during an election. We are a small municipality with limited financial and staff resources, and we need to balance what we want with what we can realistically afford.

During this term, I have worked hard to be available, approachable and visible throughout our community. I listen, ask questions and do my homework before making decisions. I respect the professional expertise of our staff, the role of my fellow Council members and the responsibility we all have to conduct ourselves professionally.

There is still important work to finish. I want to see the Haldimand Memorial Arena project completed, develop a responsible long-term plan for our municipal buildings and infrastructure, continue to protect our rural character and make sure we are planning responsibly for growth.

I won't promise that I will always make the decision everyone agrees with. What I can promise is that I will listen, consider the information in front of me and make the best decision I can for the whole Township.

I am proud to serve as your Deputy Mayor, and I am asking for your support so I can continue working for all of Alnwick/Haldimand.

Optional Closing Statement

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

Maximum 2,000 characters.

It has been an honour to serve as Deputy Mayor of Alnwick/Haldimand during this term.

I want to thank the residents who have taken the time to speak with me, ask questions, share concerns and offer ideas. I may not always have the answer someone is looking for, and we may not always agree, but I have always appreciated the conversation. Hearing directly from you is an important part of doing this job.

I also want to recognize our Township staff and the many volunteers and community organizations that give so much to Alnwick/Haldimand. We are a small municipality, and much of what happens in our community is possible because people are willing to work together and help one another.

The next four years will bring challenges. We will have difficult financial decisions, infrastructure needs, growth pressures and important decisions about our municipal facilities. We will have to set priorities and recognize that we cannot do everything at once.

I believe experience, common sense, professionalism and a willingness to listen will be important as we make those decisions.

I am proud of the work we have done during this term, and I know there is more work ahead. I would be honoured to have the opportunity to continue serving as your Deputy Mayor and working for all of Alnwick/Haldimand.

Thank you for taking the time to read my responses and for taking an interest in the future of our Township.

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.

