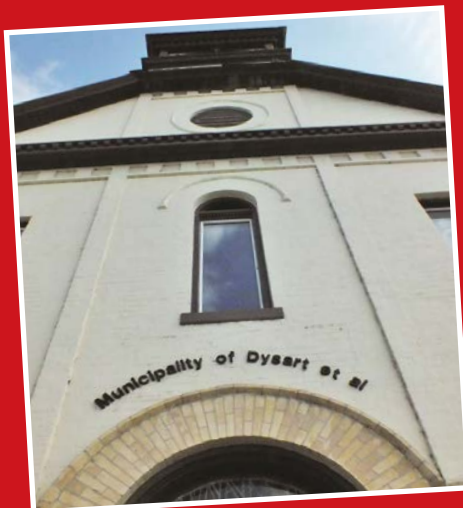


✓vote 22

**The
Highlander's
Haliburton
County
Election Guide**



Voting in Haliburton County

Highlanders have been able to vote since Oct. 8 via phone and online ballots, however, the official day of the election is Oct. 24.

Each township will have at least one digital polling station available at municipal offices during regular office hours for people who require assistance voting. Stations will be open from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. on voting day, Oct. 24. Minden Hills is the only township offering the option of a traditional paper ballot.

Find further details on each township's voting methods by clicking your township's name:

- [Dysart et al](#)
- [Minden Hills](#)
- [Algonquin Highlands](#)
- [Highlands East](#)

The Highlander has spent the last few weeks interviewing each candidate running for election about top issues facing Haliburton County.

We've compiled all our profiles in this PDF document with the goal of providing you with the information you need to make an informed decision on election day or whenever you vote online or by phone.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ALGONQUIN HIGHLANDS.....	4
Mayor candidate Liz Danielsen.....	5
Mayor candidate Mike Lang	6
Ward 2 candidate Lisa Barry	7
Ward 2 candidate Amber Meirik	8
Ward 2 candidate Sabrina Richards	9
Ward 2 candidate Napier Simpson	10
MINDEN HILLS.....	11
Councillor at large candidate Tammy McKelvey	12
Councillor at large candidate Trevor Chaulk.....	13
Ward 1 candidate Ivan Ingram	14
Ward 1 candidate Shirley Johannessen.....	15
Ward 1 candidate Mike Grozelle	16
Ward 1 candidate Richard Bradley	17
Ward 2 candidate Pam Sayne.....	18
Ward 2 candidate Stephen Hertel.....	19
DYSART ET AL.....	20
Ward 1 candidate Tom Bailey	21
Ward 1 candidate Pamela Brohm	22
Ward 1 candidate Pat Casey.....	23
Ward 1 candidate Rob McCaig.....	24
Ward 2 candidate Jennifer Korpela	25
Ward 2 candidate Daniel Roberts	26
Ward 2 candidate Nancy Wood-Roberts.....	27
Ward 4 candidate Brian Atkins.....	28
Ward 4 candidate Ron Evans	29
Ward 4 candidate Hayden Hughes	30
Ward 4 candidate Carm Sawyer.....	31
HIGHLANDS EAST.....	32
Mayor candidate Dave Burton	33
Mayor candidate Cheryl Ellis.....	34
Ward 2 candidate Janice Dahms.....	35
Ward 2 candidate Angela Lewis.....	36

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OPINION

Time to vote

Internet and phone voting has begun across the County's four municipalities.

The voting period began this past Saturday, Oct. 8 and goes right up to 8 p.m. on election day, which is Oct. 24 this year.

All of the townships, with the exception of Minden Hills, are only doing internet and phone voting. Minden Hills has in-person, paper voting. Some cast their ballots Oct. 8 while others can go to the S.G. Nesbitt Community Centre at 55 Parkside St., Minden, Oct. 24 from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

By now, people should have received a letter from their township with a unique pin. Using the pin, and your date of birth, you can log on to the specified website in your letter and vote, or call the toll-free number.

It's a change for some townships. Last election, for example, Algonquin Highlands, Dysart et al, and Highlands East allowed

mail-in ballots. Minden Hills had internet, phone and in-person voting..

We believe it would have been preferable to have a consistent voting method across the Highlands, but a majority of Minden Hills councillors didn't. They voted against their clerk's recommendation for internet and phone voting, only. This despite the clerk saying it was very labour intensive, expensive and confusing for the public.

We get that some councillors were worried about people not having good internet connections or cell phones, making the process potentially difficult for them. We also understand that not everyone is great with technology. However, it will be interesting to see how many people actually vote in-person to gauge if it was worth the time and money. It will also be notable if Minden Hills' results are later than the other townships come

election night.

Voting by internet or phone allows people to cast their ballots from anywhere with a connection. In the past, if you were going out of town, for example, you had to find a pre-polling station. Now, you can be on a beach in Florida and still vote.

It is more accessible for people with disabilities, seniors and seasonal residents. There is also a longer voting window. In theory, it should attract more young voters. We're told the e-voting townships should have results quickly.

All of this would point towards more people voting in 2022 than 2018.

However, for that to happen, people have to be engaged in the process. They need to take an interest. Just because mayors and deputy mayors have been acclaimed in Dysart et al and Minden Hills, for example, does not

mean you do not vote. Find out what ward you live in, if it is being contested, do your homework, and vote for a candidate. There are races in all four townships.

The people you vote for will help determine the kind of County that Haliburton becomes and The Highlander has already done a lot of your homework for you.

You can listen to our podcast to find out about some of the Highlands' biggest issues. Check out our opinion pages in the paper, where we elaborate on these issues. Listen to the full interviews we've done with all candidates on our podcast. Read the paper for our candidate profiles. Above all, vote.



By Lisa Gervais



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Algonquin Highlands



Danielsen sees mayoral run as 'next logical step'

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Liz Danielsen said she was a councillor in Norman Wells in the Northwest Territories for 12 years. She then spent several years as a reporter with the old *County Voice* newspaper. She was elected to Algonquin Highlands in 2010 and has done three terms as deputy mayor. Danielsen has also served four straight terms as warden of Haliburton County.

Amalgamation

"It's easy to say, 'you all need to amalgamate, and we need to get rid of all these high paid personalities that you've got working for us', but it's much more complicated than that. I'm concerned about communities being able to keep their identities. That sense of local identity and history is so steeped in so many small communities here and I want us to be able to protect that to move forward, streamline things and make services better. I'm wondering if there isn't a midway point where we can see all those things happen with services, without necessarily taking that last step of amalgamation." Danielsen said she feels many of those service efficiencies will be identified during the service delivery review process the County is currently leading.

Health

Danielsen would not commit one way or the other when asked if Haliburton County should consider amalgamating its two hospital sites. She said the upper-tier was doing what it could to attract more health care professionals to the community, including hiring a physician recruiter and renting accommodation for workers to live in.

Poverty

"We are taking steps to try and reduce it. There have been housing studies, poverty reduction groups established, so I have some hope for some results coming out of that work. But really, at the local level, it's difficult. If you ask me what the base root cause of poverty in Haliburton County is, I really couldn't say. I could just say that we're much more aware of it now and are taking steps to look at every aspect of poverty here and trying to seek solutions."

Housing

"It breaks my heart to hear that people are being forced to leave our community. Our housing difficulties are also making it impossible for people to join us here, to move into our community and fill much-needed jobs. It's going to be a challenge for municipalities [alone to address this], we are reliant on upper levels of government assisting us." She added the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus is developing a housing strategy for eastern Ontario that could bear potential



Liz Danielsen is looking to trade in her position as deputy mayor for the big seat on council. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

solutions. She expressed an interest, too, in Algonquin Highlands investigating tiny homes and secondary units. And, while the County currently works with the Kawartha Lakes Haliburton Housing Corporation, she believes it might be time for the upper-tier government to establish its own housing corporation in the Highlands.

Transportation

"It's a problem ... Haliburton County is such a huge geographic area, and, because of that, we haven't landed on anything so far that has been financially viable or workable." She referenced recent pilot projects launched by Point in Time, Fleming Crew and SIRCH Community Services, partially funded by the County, as success stories. "We are continuing to work on this file."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

"Am I 100 per cent happy with the final draft we came up with? No. I think there is still some work to be done. Bylaws are living documents and sometimes you have to put something in place to see how they're going to work. We've heard from hundreds of people... I truly believe the bulk of them wanted us to do something."

Short-term rentals

"They definitely have a place in our community. The short-term rental business does support our economy. They do bring people here, and I want that to continue... But I do believe they need to be regulated. We've heard some horror stories over the past few years how some short-term rentals have impacted their neighbours... so we have to do something viable and reasonable, while also protecting the lifestyles of our current residents."

Vision for the future

Danielsen said she's committed to keeping taxes low in Algonquin Highlands, while continuing to maintain municipal assets and meeting the growing needs of the community. "Algonquin Highlands is a beautiful place to live. We are exceeding other municipalities. I want to continue that. I'd like to have a stronger committee structure, which would allow more people to be involved in our decision-making process."

Algonquin Highlands

"There are a number of really serious and huge issues. Housing has been identified at all levels of government as being a number one priority. We have a labour

shortage. Everybody is having difficulties hiring people, so we have to try and address that. The service delivery work that the County has been doing is also really key."

Liz Danielsen the candidate

"I love municipal politics. I like to be able to help solve problems, to help people when I can. This seems like the perfect transition for me, a perfect next step after 12 years as deputy mayor. I've got the experience and yet I can bring a new voice to the mayor's chair, a little bit of a different perspective. I have a lot of knowledge about this community, what the people want, what they're concerned about. And that goes for the County too. I think I have a lot to offer."



WHAT ARE WE DOING?

A NEW PODCAST FROM THE HIGHLANDER.

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Lang considers himself a man of the people

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

“I’ve been a public servant with the federal government for 33 years. I started out with the Department of Communications, which morphed into Industry Canada... In the last 20 years, I’ve been involved in quite a few major projects: World Youth Day when the Pope came to Canada, the G8 Summit in Huntsville, the Pan Am games in 2015.” Lang said he is familiar with government policies and procedures, which would help him adapt to a mayoral position. “I deal with the public quite regularly. It’s a matter of listening to the people, finding out what’s the issue and offering solutions for them.”

Amalgamation

“I am against amalgamation. I have suffered through it once already in Toronto and nothing worked. On paper, it looks great. You think ‘we’re going to save money, we’re going to reduce costs, everything’s going to fall into place and be wonderful’, yet the exact opposite happens. You end up with the worst of the worst,” Lang said.

Health

Lang said he would be in favour of Haliburton County maintaining its two hospital sites. “If you’re having a heart attack, you want to be as close as possible to a hospital. And with the senior community we have, where the average age is 55, that’s an issue. You want to have something close.” Addressing staffing shortages at the sites, Lang believes the Ontario government’s recent decision to make it easier for overseas-trained nurses to get licensed here would help. He said he would lobby the Ontario Medical Association to up its intake of would-be physicians to medical school. “You have 105,000 applicants for 100 spots for med school. Why can’t we have 200 slots? Why not more. Let’s start [pushing] more doctors through the system.”

Housing

“You have to look at the bigger picture. I did a deep dive on the 2021 Census. In 2011, there was a high of 3,800 dwellings [in Haliburton County]. In 2021, that had dropped to 3,300. We lost 500 dwellings in 10 years. Why are people destroying homes instead of keeping them, and using them for things like affordable housing?” Lang likes the idea of developing vacant land along Hwy. 35. He thinks tiny homes could be an option for couples and single people. “You’ve got to look at every idea. Everything is a possibility.”

Poverty

Lang said all levels of government in Haliburton County need to do a better job of bringing more businesses to



Mike Lang wants to bring a new voice to Algonquin Highlands council. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

the community. “There are minimal opportunities in Algonquin Highlands. Once you start bringing in good, quality jobs, that’ll start digging into the poverty levels.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“It wasn’t necessary and was a bad idea... There was no transparency in the process, councillors didn’t listen to the people who were bringing up ideas. The shoreline bylaw is a very bureaucratic exercise.” Lang said if elected, he will look to reopen discussions on the file at the County. “That’s what people want from me. Hopefully we have enough people... and we can repeal the [legislation] so that it wouldn’t be in effect in Algonquin Highlands.”

Short-term rentals

“It’s a complex issue... For people who buy a property and maybe need a little help with it, that’s fine. But when you start turning it into a business, it’s competing with resorts and becomes a problem.” He would like the township to implement a licensing program for short-term rentals that are operating like a business, charging fees so enforcement is self-funded. He believes this issue should be tackled by

each lower-tier municipality, rather than at the County level.

Transportation

Lang doesn’t believe a public transportation system is feasible in Algonquin Highlands or Haliburton County. For people experiencing problems getting about the community, he suggested there were alternatives. “I got through university because of ride shares. That would be a far more effective, far less expensive way to solve the problem. And, it’s community-oriented.”

Vision for the future

“We have a blank slate right now in Algonquin Highlands. We can take the community in whatever direction we want. We just have to have the vision and willpower to do it,” Lang said. One of his priorities would be installing fibre-optic internet in high-volume residential areas, something he believes would attract more working professionals to the community. He also wants to address land around Stanhope Municipal Airport, saying council should be thinking outside the box when it comes to attracting new businesses or operations. “Why don’t we build a retirement community there? We have 100 acres. The province is looking

for long-term care. Seniors need a place to retire... That’s an option.”

Algonquin Highlands

“Municipal government is the first line of government people see that affects your everyday life. You look for the core services, that’s basically infrastructure, roads, parks and rec, garbage removal. Make sure those are covered, because those are quality of life issues. As long as they’re good, you can start moving on secondary issues. The government is elected by the people, so focus on the people and then you can start moving onto the bigger items. When the people are satisfied and content, that’s the first primary goal.”

Mike Lang the candidate

“I’ve been a property owner in Algonquin Highlands since 2011. I’m part in Toronto right now, part here. I plan on retiring in November and then will be able to spend a lot more time in the community. If I’m elected, I will be a full-time mayor. When you step back and watch over 10 years, you wonder ‘why are they doing this, why are they doing that?’ I decided to run for council because I think I can step up and do a good job.”

Barry calls for County buy-in at Stanhope airport

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Lisa Barry is seeking re-election following three successive terms on council. She is an artist, running Homestead Pottery studio alongside husband, Mike Mihlik. Reflecting on her skills, Barry said, "I'm inquisitive. I'm frugal – I personally live in a feast and famine lifestyle being an artist, so as a councillor I'm looking at the best way to spend money for the greater good of the community."

Algonquin Highlands

Barry is a proponent of Stanhope Municipal Airport and wants to see other municipalities chip in to ensure its long-term viability. "It's not just Algonquin Highlands residents using it... I think there's an opportunity for the rest of the County to be involved in helping to fund it. It is an asset, but just like recreation centres, they don't bring in revenue," she said.

Amalgamation

"We've already amalgamated a fair bit of Algonquin Highlands. There's a service delivery review ongoing at the County level – there's great work happening there, we should see where it goes." Barry believes there's an opportunity for the four lower-tier townships to work together on solutions for waste management, bylaw enforcement and road maintenance.

Health

Barry likes the current system HHHS has in place, operating two facilities in the Highlands. "I am in complete support of doing whatever is possible to have two hospitals in the County," she said. "My dad was in an accident and was taken to the hospital in Minden. Given where his accident was, if we had to wait 10 extra minutes for him to get to the hospital in Haliburton, I might not have a dad today."

Housing

"We need to have fewer restrictions for housing in Algonquin Highlands," Barry said. "There's been great gains in smaller houses in some communities. Also, having secondary suites, things like granny flats are becoming quite popular." Barry

believes most discussions surrounding housing are happening at the County level but said there were some options Algonquin Highlands could explore. "We can change the footprint of properties now. The province is allowing people in rural situations to have two dwellings on one property. That can only be a good thing." Barry also said she was a "huge proponent" of tiny homes. The township recently approved legislation to reduce the minimum size of a new home to 600 sq. ft. She also believes in the idea of cohabiting of a property by friends or different generations of the same family.

Poverty

Barry believes Algonquin Highlands needs to improve its community programs to better support families living in poverty. "There's lots of programs than run from, say 10 a.m. until noon. Well, if you're working how do you actually access these things? I think there's lots that can be done, whether it be initiatives designed to get people back to work, food initiatives, support programs. Families just can't afford it right now, it's hard."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Barry believes County council has already spent enough time debating the shoreline preservation bylaw. "This has been going on for four or five years. As far as I'm concerned, [the process] was fully transparent. At the root of it, everyone wants to enjoy the water and if we don't protect the water, there's going to be problems down the road."

Short-term rentals

"There is an appetite for some sort of bylaw enforcement surrounding short-term rentals... I don't think it has to be an iron hammer, but something has to be done," Barry said. She doesn't have a problem with people renting out their cottage a couple times per year to help cover costs or fund a renovation project but believes people owning places and offering them up on sites such as Airbnb year-round should be licensed. "Blue Mountains or Collingwood have a demerit point system that is complaint driven. If you have five or six complaints, you lose your permit... These [short-term] rentals are dangerous for our lakes if not [handled correctly]."

Transportation

Barry believes the vast geographical landscape of Algonquin Highlands makes public transportation difficult. "I think having some services in Minden and Haliburton as a starting point would help move people around... But for us to get something that goes up to Oxtongue Lake and then down Hwy. 35 [to Carnarvon], that's going to be a challenge."

Vision for the future

"I like the idea of having a night sky policy in place where there's not a direct light beaming off of every place. I think there's a place for cell towers, but we don't need to have them everywhere," Barry said, discussing the need for service upgrades in the community. She'd like to see the township engage the community in developing a strategic plan that can be used to outline municipal goals now and in the future.

Focus for 2023 budget

"The big things we're hearing about are parking and waste management." Barry said she would be willing to reconsider Algonquin Highlands' previous decision to shutter the Hawk Lake transfer station. She also wants to discuss plans for the airport, looking into what council can do to attract more industry to the area.

Lisa Barry the candidate

Barry grew up cottaging in Algonquin Highlands. She relocated to the community permanently in 2004 to be closer to her dad. "We decided this would be a good place to call home." She feels much of her third term on council has been spent reacting to the COVID-19 pandemic and filed her papers again in the hopes of tackling some long-standing issues. "We have a huge boom in the municipality. A lot of things are being talked about that will help to shape our community ... I want to be part of those discussions, helping to drive decisions."



Algonquin Highlands ward 2 candidate Lisa Barry is hoping to secure a fourth term on council. Photo by Mike Baker.



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Meirik promises to be ‘community voice’ on council

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Amber Meirik has been an elementary school teacher for almost 30 years. “I’ve dedicated my life to helping others and finding solutions that optimize outcomes.” She believes her greatest assets to be her communication and problem-solving skills. “I don’t do anything without 200 per cent effort.” Meirik is also a coach with the Minden Skating Club.

Algonquin Highlands

“There needs to be a focus on greater cooperation with other levels of government, to empower municipal governments and increase the participation of citizens,” Meirik said. “We also need to restore and improve services for taxpayers. Waste management, roads, transportation, parks and rec, municipal infrastructure ... we need more careful examination of budgeted items ... and we need to commit to no further increases in property taxes.”

Amalgamation

Meirik believes any decision over the potential amalgamation of the four lower-tier townships in Haliburton County should be decided by local residents. “That’s a major, life-changing decision. We would need some type of a referendum vote,” she said. “This issue has been spoken to many, many times, but I do feel there is a savings to be had in streamlining [municipal] administration... My opinion is it’s something that should be looked at.”

Health

“I would not be opposed to looking at streamlining the [two] health care centres we have in Haliburton County down to one, which can then be maintained with staffing, extra resources,” Meirik said. She indicated she’d like to see the community vote on this issue too, should the amalgamation of Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS) sites ever be brought forward.

Housing

“We need an expansion of available housing and incentives. If we can tackle

the housing crisis, that may contribute to our ability to fill vacancies in our workforce, which is another critical thing crippling our community. Basement [apartments], bunkies – those types of things could be explored.” She called on the provincial government to provide more funds for housing projects in Haliburton County. While Meirik considers herself pro-development, she is also mindful of protecting the environment. “We can’t just build without consequence. We need to do what we can to get the housing that is needed here ... but also protect nature and all that makes Algonquin Highlands great.”

Poverty

“There’s got to be a lot more programs... there’s got to be more money put into the budget. Food banks are alive and well, we need a lot more in that area, certainly for children. They need nutrition and after-school programs. We need drop-in centres; we have to expand on our library programs.” Meirik said she’d like to see new businesses donate a percentage of their profits to the community to support poverty reduction strategies.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Meirik isn’t a fan of the County’s new shoreline preservation bylaw. “The problem is that it’s a complaint-based system. This kind of system is not only inefficient due to the onus being on the citizens, but it also does not effectively stop the offenders.” She would have liked the County to hold an in-person open house, where people could attend and ask questions about the proposed bylaw, before council passed it. She also feels concerns over septic systems and the impact they can have on lake health was largely ignored. “I don’t think this shoreline bylaw is going to make the difference it was intended to make.”

Short-term rentals

“Multiple municipalities across Ontario are tackling this same issue ... There shouldn’t be these overnight types of rentals, because those do not really do any long-term good.” Meirik believes the township needs to refine its definition for short-term rentals, and work closely with people who have secondary properties in

the Highlands. “Instead of having to rent out your property for a week here and two weeks there, perhaps they could rent out to a worker who needs a home while they’re here for the summer... That could be subsidized [by the municipality] in some way – everyone’s happy.”

Transportation

Meirik believes the County and lower-tier townships should be exploring options for public transit. “You can operate a system in a geographically spread-out region that is on-demand. It may not be that you have a bus every hour like in the city, but there should be something available each day that you can call to get a ride.”

Vision for the future

Meirik wants to bring all Algonquin Highlands residents together. “We need better cohesiveness between our full-time and seasonal residents. We’ve got to see a change in our poverty numbers. We can’t have these things happening. It’s an embarrassment and a shame that this is going on in 2022, so we’ve got to help, as a municipality, any way that we can. If that means propping up [some social programs], so be it... This is the most beautiful place in Ontario, and we have to do what we can to keep it that way.”

Focus for 2023 budget

“I would commit to no more tax increases. We have a surplus; we need to look more carefully line by line at what’s being



Algonquin Highlands ward 2 candidate Amber Meirik wants to bridge the divide between full-time and season residents. *Submitted.*

budgeted and maybe change our focus and priorities. One of the things I would want is more open communication, getting input from the community and then moving forward to know what their priorities are.”

Amber Meirik the candidate

“One of the main reasons I’ve chosen to put my name forward is because I feel there is a little bit of accountability missing in the current council. I will strive to be an accountable voice in Algonquin Highlands, by listening to all taxpayers in the township.” Meirik says she will confer with the community on all major decisions. Having been a seasonal resident for several years, she plans to move here permanently later this year.



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Richards wants County to keep two hospital sites

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Sabrina Richards has lived in Algonquin Highlands full-time since 2020. She owns and operates the Big Hawk Lake Marina. Prior to that, she worked as a consultant for big business, specializing in logistics. “I arranged international shipping, worked with various government bodies, from the federal government to customs to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, even down to the provincial level and the Ministry of Natural Resources.”

Algonquin Highlands

Richards said public parking is a huge problem. During the marina’s busiest days in the summer, she said it wasn’t unusual for families to have to park up to three kilometres away. “Our parking situation is extreme, and it has been for a very long time. It goes back decades and has not been addressed,” she said. “A lot of residents were upset too about the closure of the Hawk Lake [waste transfer station] ... The reality is, a lot of people feel they have to take their garbage home with them, because [other dump locations] are too far away.”

Amalgamation

Richards is not in favour of amalgamation. “I think the four lower-tier townships have a lot in common, which allows us to collaborate well together. We have a lot of the same needs, but we also have some differences, and some of them are significant. So, maintaining our sovereignty without losing sight of the bigger picture of togetherness is important.”

Health

Richards believes Haliburton County can maintain two hospital locations. “Even if you were to combine all HHHS operations into a single facility you’re still not going to have enough staff if we don’t start attracting more workers to come here. And part of the problem with attracting people is where are they going to live? We have nowhere. It’s a vicious cycle.”

Housing

“We need to review some of our bylaws

that are prohibitive to things like tiny homes – that could make a huge impact on getting more affordable housing into the market. To put up rows of townhouses, apartment buildings, takes two, three years. We’re past waiting, we need immediate solutions.” She believes the township needs to bring more second stage housing online. “There’s no plan for people who are living in affordable housing units. There’s no way for them to progress, so they just stay there. But because our inventory isn’t growing, we run into issues like we’re seeing now where there’s just not enough [units] to go around.”

Poverty

Richards said she lived in extreme poverty during her late teens, often struggling to make ends meet as a young, single parent. She doesn’t know how she’d cope today if she had to do it all again. “There are so many gaps that people are falling through. There’s not enough support given to help people who are headed towards a dire situation. Some of the things that helped me no longer exist for people ... we can’t just sit here as a township and say, ‘it’s the province’s responsibility’. We need to take action.” She mentioned the possibility of hosting job skills courses, possibly partnering with organizations such as SIRCH.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Richards was disappointed with where County council landed with its shoreline preservation bylaw. “For it to have taken that many years to come up with a document that doesn’t protect our shorelines is very disappointing. Septics and fertilizers are the biggest predators to our lakes, but there’s nothing about them in there. That would have been the first place I started. What we’re left with is, essentially, a building bylaw. Some will say that’s better than nothing, but I would have preferred they finish ironing out the problems before moving forward.” She wants to see the issue revisited by the next County council.

Short-term rentals

“Short-term rentals pose a great drain on our services. There are usually noise complaints, further bylaw issues... I

would like to see a bylaw come in to address the concerns of neighbouring properties. There’s a difference between renting your cottage out to pay your property taxes each year versus having a place listed on Airbnb every night of the year. We need to distinguish that... This issue is taking away from our resort businesses, it’s taking away from our housing stock.”

Transportation

“There could be a main line, say from Dorset to Dysart, but even that I think would be underutilized. Smaller vans may work, but again, it boils down to workers. We don’t even have enough bus drivers to effectively run our school groups, so that’s a problem. I think it’s great that we have some volunteer supports, like the people who give their time to drive people to health appointments. I think we’re going to need more of that, because I don’t see [a transportation system] coming to fruition.”

Vision for the future

“Algonquin Highlands needs to build community together. We have a lot of seasonal populations that greatly affects our permanent population. We want them here, but we don’t have enough employees at our businesses to support increased population when it comes in. We don’t have housing to put people in... We need to address these things if we want to continue to grow.”



Algonquin Highlands ward 2 candidate Sabrina Richards believes parking, housing and garbage disposal are major issues heading into this month’s election. Photo by Mike Baker.

Focus for 2023 budget

“I’d like to see parking finally get addressed. People have waited an extremely long time and I think that needs to be a priority for the township this coming year.”

Sabrina Richards the candidate

“I definitely have a love for the area, that’s why I’m running. Since moving here, I’ve noticed there’s gaps in services and issues that aren’t being addressed and I think I can step into a councillor role and help to move things forward,” Richards said.



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Simpson running to ‘give back to the community’

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Napier Simpson is a retiree who spent the bulk of his working life running business development in the corporate world. He also spent some time working for the provincial government in the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. “I’ve got very advanced critical thinking skills; I can cut to the chase on complex matters very quickly. I also consider myself a consensus builder, which is less about talking and all about listening. We need to find out what [our community] wants us to achieve.”

Algonquin Highlands

“The biggest and most important issues relate to our biggest budget items. So, safety – running of the fire department, EMS, those sorts of things are very challenging these days. Volunteerism is falling. The environment is always a concern for me. As our population grows, we put extra pressures on our lakes and our lands, our roads and our services.” Simpson wants to focus on maintaining roads across the township, and spoke of possibly revisiting the closure of the Hawk Lake waste transfer station.

Amalgamation

“As long as people continue to expect services that are similar to what’s available in the city, then amalgamation, things are headed in that direction. I don’t know whether that will be full amalgamation, or more municipal partnerships, but working together with neighbours is one way to solve some of the issues around fire, community safety and policing.”

Health

“Haliburton County is a big, big territory. While the hospitals may not seem far apart, the Haliburton site covers east heading to Bancroft, while Minden covers to the west and north. Can we afford not to have two hospitals? ... that wouldn’t be a municipal decision. It would be a

massive transition to try and go to one hospital.”

Housing

“A municipal council can support initiatives brought forward at the County level, but there is no real budget [for housing] in Algonquin Highlands. There is no authority to do anything about social housing at the municipal level,” Simpson said. He noted a lack of municipal services, such as sewer and water, limits the township’s options for development.

Poverty

Simpson believes attracting new businesses to Algonquin Highlands will help to bring jobs to the community. “Dimensions Health Centres, there’s been some resistance against it, but it’s created 23 new jobs, they’ve spent over \$20 million. That’s good for lots of things in our community.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

After watching County council discuss its new shoreline preservation bylaw for several years, Simpson said he sees the benefit in having an overarching policy that promotes lake health. “It’s a good start. Could it be made stronger? Undoubtedly. This is the first step of many iterations of this thing. It’s been years in the making so let’s work with it and modify it so it best suits the community and the environment.”

Short-term rentals

“They’re a double-edged sword. The short-term rental market allows people to come into the region, so that’s the good side. The bad side is there are some bad apples that cause issues for everyone else.” He said he’s in favour of licensing short-term rentals in the County, with punishments doled out to owners who circumvent municipal rules. “Short-term rentals are here to stay, now it’s about finding a way [to live with them].”

Transportation

“Public transit is a real challenge. A municipality has nowhere near the [financial] muscle to solve a problem like this. The County has a real challenge too.” Simpson said it might take some outside the box thinking to come up with feasible solutions for the Highlands, such as one recently undertaken in Innisfil. “Rather than developing a new transit system, they entered into a public-private partnership with Uber that has worked well.”

Vision for the future

“We want critical services supplied, and we want a happy, safe, comfortable community where we know the environment is protected and it’s safe for our residents,” Simpson said. “As we go forward, there’s been discussion about a community safety and wellbeing plan, which wraps in policing and vulnerable people. So, taking more of an interventionist approach to help the community before things become a problem. I think that’s important.” He also sees potential in the township developing a watershed council, “to protect the environment more holistically”, referencing a similar program operating in Muskoka. “That would help protect the thing that many people come up to see and play on, and that’s our lakes.”

Focus for 2023 budget

“The first budget will always be a learning curve... I’d like to go back to the basic needs and say ‘what are the core things we’re delivering?’ and go back to each of those department heads and find out



Algonquin Highlands ward 2 candidate Napier Simpson believes his background in business development would bring a unique perspective to council. *Submitted.*

what the priorities are. Council has a tight budget. If we can make a few things a little more efficient, then maybe that opens up doors for us elsewhere,” he said. “We want to make sure we’ve got a well-run township.”

Napier Simpson the candidate

“We own an old farm around Stanhope that has been in the family since 1954, so I’ve got a fairly deep connection to the Highlands,” said Simpson, noting he splits his time between Algonquin Highlands and Goderich. Asked how he would provide effective leadership as a part-time resident, Simpson said, “In terms of being at the council table, I’ll be there. I looked at the meetings for 2022 and I was [in Algonquin Highlands] for all but one of those. Then, between telephone and email, people will find a way to communicate with me when they want to.”



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Minden Hills



McKelvey has 40 years of municipal experience

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Tammy McKelvey started in municipal government in 1980 as a receptionist for Anson, Hindon and Minden. She worked her way up to payroll clerk, accounts payable, deputy clerk, treasurer. She was clerk, treasurer, tax collector at one point. She was the first CAO-clerk for Minden Hills. She was the CAO of Dysart et al. She ended her career as treasurer for Algonquin Highlands in 2019.

Amalgamation

“I am a proponent. However, the service delivery review is rolling out. I want to see it rolling faster. My first priority would be building and planning departments. It’s ridiculous that a County the size of Haliburton has five official plans, four zoning bylaws ... it’s just so inefficient.” Asked how it could be sped up, she said, “I think we need to focus the priorities on it...start putting the staff resources where they need to be to make it a better place, make it more efficient and effective.”

Health

“We need to collectively lobby for additional funding. The paramedic service, where they started doing the home check-ins, is wonderful. There’s going to be more need for that sort of thing. We can’t have ambulances going to Lindsay for CAT scans and staying for a whole day because they were sent out on another call there. So, the long-term benefits of providing a CAT scan to our local hospital really will provide us with some financial gains at the other end, but it’s a big expense. It will also help attract doctors. They want that sort of diagnostic equipment. It will be a terrible decision to have to make if one of the hospitals has to close... Having said that, I can see where the cost of running two hospitals is not sustainable.”

Housing

She’d like amendments to the zoning bylaw to allow for secondary houses on larger pieces of property. In town, she’d like to see infilling some of the larger lots that are serviced with sewers and water. “I’d like to see opportunities for people to sever those ... Change the mindset of what we can do to provide affordable lots for people to build on ... Tiny houses is definitely another issue we need to look at.”

Poverty

“I would encourage employers to provide a living wage to their workers, starting with the township. The lack of student hiring for the township is a poor image in our communities with the lack of garbage collection and grass maintenance. These young people can’t afford to work for minimum wage and I feel the township



Tammy McKelvey is vying to be councillor-at-large in Minden Hills. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

needs to be a leader. Paying wages over minimum wage usually results in a wage subsidy from the province as well. We need to encourage the development of community gardens and provide space on municipal property. Lack of housing, and affordable daycare, is adding to the poverty levels.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“The entire economic engine of our area is the lakes. If we don’t protect those, we will have nothing here. I am a strong proponent for lake protection. I think the shoreline preservation bylaw needs to roll out. Let’s try it. Let’s see how this is and commit to reviewing it so it is a living document that can be changed if things need to be tweaked, but let’s try it out first before there’s any decision to change.” She also thinks the septic reinspection program has to continue and properties requiring remediation followed up on.

Short-term rentals

“Short-term rentals have to be regulated. It’s no longer just people renting out their cottages for a couple of weeks to help subsidize the cost of having it. It’s becoming a business. It’s taking away the enjoyment of the lakeside lifestyle. The County’s initiated that process. I think we should probably not re-invent the wheel. Lake of Bays is a good place to start. They have a process in place and we could probably utilize that and put it to work in Haliburton County.”

Transportation

“Public transportation in an area so spread out with a limited population – I don’t see it being in the foreseeable future. You can run a bus from Minden to Haliburton, great, how many people are off all of the other hundreds of roads that can’t utilize it? It’s a critical infrastructure that’s needed. Can it be feasible? I question whether we can. The County has tried pilot projects and tried to come up with a solution.”

Vision for the future

“We really need to work on the government structure and make sure it’s running efficiently and effectively. The decision-making has to set priorities that are going to benefit the majority of the ratepayers. We will never be able to do everything for everyone. We need to make sure people can safely drive down our roads. Long-term, I’d love to see lots of things for kids. I’d love to see a waterpark. I’d like to see a downtown so when people come from the other areas with their kids to the waterpark they’re going to spend some money in town. I don’t like to see how people have to drive to Bobcaygeon to go to a waterpark. Swimming pool...we missed the boat. We are “arena poor” and now we have to make sure it becomes useable and bring events to it.”

Minden Hills

“Minden Hills has a lot to offer. The village has water and sewer, which makes

for tremendous development opportunities and housing. I think priorities need to be set for our limited financial resources. One per cent on the levy is \$97,000 so we need to look at it from that perspective. Roads are going to be my number one priority and housing is so important. It’s affecting everybody here.” As for debenturing for roads, McKelvey said the long-term costs must be offset by the benefits. She does not agree with borrowing money for operational costs. Asked what could be done to expand the tax base, she said they have to help existing businesses, ensure basic garbage collection and grass-cutting downtown so it’s attractive. She said it would be hard to attract industry, so it will have to be residential growth. She wants more diversion at the landfill: hard plastics’ recycling, periodic shredding of confidential documents, and a Beer Store bottle return run by service clubs.”

Tammy McKelvey the candidate

“Municipal government has been my passion for most of my life. I have almost 40 years’ experience and think I can bring a lot to the table. I will hit the ground running.” She said she has the experience to ask the right questions and understands the legislation. “I don’t have that learning curve ... I think my background, experience and financial strength can really help. I think my team player skills and bringing the council together and making sure there is really good dialogue at the council table and encouraging that discussion” will help.

Chaulk says he wants to work for a better future

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Trevor Chaulk moved to the County 17 years ago and opened Chaulk Woodworking 15 years ago. As a businessperson, he said, “we have to understand people, how to motivate them, and financials. My strengths are in problem-solving ... but most important, good leadership and humility.” He added, “The business is at a point now where it’s working, pretty steady and consistent. I don’t work as many hours as I used to. I do want to see other people grow within the community and, in the aftermath of COVID, people are looking for leadership, accountability, and hope.”

Amalgamation

“In some ways, I’m for it. In some ways, I’m not for it right now. In Haliburton County, there’s still very distinct us versus them mindsets between townships, cottagers versus locals. We have to get on the same page. The amount of work that needs to be done now in individual townships, we’re not ready for it. Do I believe amalgamation will save costs? Yes.” However, “It’s no different than when a larger company swallows up a smaller company. The staff that have been there 30 years are saying, ‘this isn’t the way it works’. And the upper management is saying ‘this is the way it’s going to work’ so there is going to be a lot of conflict in the early stages. Eventually we will be in a position where it will be supported, but we are not there yet.”

Health

“Staffing is a critical thing, housing is a critical thing, because we can attract all the doctors, nurses and administration staff but if they have nowhere to live, no entertainment or night life aside from recreation, we might not attract and retain these skilled professionals.” He said they have to find creative ways to get and keep staff since they are competing with the rest of the province. Asked for his ideas, he said, “it’s business growth and development.”

Labour

“We have to fix a labour shortage before we can fix a business shortage. You’re not going to attract more business here if there are no workers. If we want to have light to medium industry, which is year-round, steady, good-paying, how do we attract that when there’s no workers or industrial area in Minden?” Asked for a solution, he said it is something he wants to investigate. “In the Official Plan they do not talk about any industrial areas. I want to find out what municipal lands are owned and what the municipality can do to develop and promote it. If we can get more light to medium industry, then we also provide better-paying jobs.” He emphasized that tradespeople are needed.



Trevor Chaulk is running for councillor-at-large of Minden Hills. Photo by Lisa Gervais.

Poverty

“The living wage in Haliburton County is \$19.42 an hour.” He said other factors come into play but, “we all know that is still not enough. Ten years ago, you could do that but we cannot do that anymore. We cannot have a majority of the workforce in the minimum wage sectors.” He said he knows people willing and able to work but one problem is a lack of affordable daycare, with long waitlists.

Housing

“We have to talk about people’s perception on what is affordable...because you are going to have different tiers of affordability. We do need low-income rental housing. We also need market rate affordable housing for the workforce, and for seniors downsizing. We can look at our bylaws and allow multi-residential on a smaller scale. We can allow homeowners to create apartments in their homes. We can allow duplex and triplex construction. Smaller-scale units, which can go up faster. We can’t wait three years for decisions and then investors walk away because they’re tired. We need to find faster solutions. We only have a three-to-five-year window to get this balanced or you’re going to have more and more people leave the area.”

Transportation

“How do we solve transportation issues when you work on a lower-tier pay scale? You cannot afford the high rent, heat,

grocery prices and have a vehicle and insurance. It’s not doable. How can we encourage people to come out of poverty if we can’t get them trained. If we can’t provide schooling?

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said the intent of the bylaw is “just”, but he thinks there are gaps. For example, he said there is a lot of wording giving discretion to the director. “It seems one-sided where it’s protecting the County.” He added if the County or township has to do work on land within 20 metres of the high-water mark, they do not have to go through any permit approvals and there is nothing to ensure inspections after the work is done.

Short-term rentals

“I’m for and I’m against.” He said they have to be identified as casual or a business. If businesses, he said they have to follow certain guidelines according to environmental and local laws. He said they should be registered and licensed if operating solely as businesses. He said it will protect neighbours and the environment.

Vision for the future

He would like more industry to bolster the taxation base. “We want to redirect wasted money to priority projects.” He added, “I have no intention of disrupting heritage.

But as society is changing, mindsets are changing, new people are coming into the area that have different wishes. We have to balance everything as much as possible because we’re going to be serving many different cultures now, many mindsets. So, we have to integrate and monitor the growth.” He added the County has done a good job of attracting retirees and tourists. It has led to booming summers but bust winters. He added, “we have to find creative ways to create a year-round stable economy and need to attract and retain younger families.” He said their spending drives the economy.

Minden Hills

“There are a lot of issues from big to small.” For example, he said people want public washrooms unlocked. He said roads and waste management are a concern. Chaulk added the downtown core needs improvement, and to be more vibrant. He cited other issues such as safety and well-being, a lack of policing, drug issues, and homelessness.

Trevor Chaulk the candidate

“I’m a forward thinker. We cannot just look right in front of us and deal day-to-day ... we have to have a vision... What can I do for the community? I thought I could run for council ... My biggest fear, in the next five to 10 years, if we don’t get on top of some of these topics right now, and aggressively get on top of them, this area can be in severe trouble.”

Ingram thinks tiny homes can bolster housing stock

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Ingram served as parks manager, arena attendant, water and sewage worker and environmental property operations manager in Minden Hills until 2019. He said he learned how to balance spending public money with completing new projects. “Council allowed me throughout the years, through my budgets and grants and other initiatives, to go ahead and do those projects. And we’ve done a lot.”

Amalgamation

He said some services, such as roads and bylaw, could be combined, but is hesitant about amalgamating governments. “I really don’t like the idea of a County council as I feel the public’s input will be lessened, they won’t be able to speak out as much. It would mean more work for County-level councillors, which means I would say probably with amalgamation you’re going to see increases in councillors’ and mayors’ wages.”

Health

He said he likes the current system of two hospitals. He said Minden Hills has a doctor shortage. “It’s definitely an issue we need to talk about. I know because I’ve hit [the ER] a few times over the years. You wouldn’t believe how many people are coming from Lindsay and further out because our emergency room is so fast.... I know that at a funding level, it puts us at a disadvantage because we’re dealing with people that aren’t actually living here.”

Housing

“I’m only one person, but I can certainly bring the thoughts to the table. I like the idea of small homes. They’re affordable. Again, they just need to be regulated.” He said Minden Hills needs provincial help to regulate and increase housing stock.

Poverty

He said housing and short-term rentals both intersect with discussions about poverty. “We have to bring ideas to the table, like small homes, like encouraging people that have cottages to adapt them for apartments. I know a lot of people



Ivan Ingram is a candidate for ward 1 in Minden Hills. *Submitted.*

in town who have basements that are completely empty.” He said he’d support changing zoning bylaws to encourage secondary suites.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said he supports the bylaw as it stands but said there’s room for improvement. “I don’t think it’s done. I think we need to spend a little time on enforcement to get some idea of what we’re looking at and what’s happening.” The bylaw outlines plans for multiple new staff to conduct enforcement operations and process applications.

Short-term rentals

He acknowledges short-term rentals are important to homeowners but said they could be taking housing from long-term residents. “I’m all for them if they’re regulated. The problem I have is a lot of these short-term rentals are renting them out without the awareness that there are maybe 10 or 15 or 20 people coming to that residence.” He said he’s

also concerned about the impact on septic systems.

Vision for the future

He said he sees the town growing more in future years, and sees housing remain a concern.

“I want Minden to be a place that people want to come and visit and stay, use the local amenities, support local business.” Ingram said he’d like to see the Minden BIA re-formed and have council representation, and maybe open up online surveys to solicit community wishes for the downtown. He said he’d like to see more sidewalk sales and other special events.

“I really don’t know what the single answer is to help these people [downtown]. Again, if you make the downtown more accessible and more inviting, people are going to come there, no matter whether there’s a Dairy Queen out on the bypass and liquor or beer store, they’re still going to come in and want to walk [by the river] and interact with the local people. These businesses depend on them.”

Minden Hills

He said multiple projects in Minden Hills need attention, such as the water system. He said he does not support using debentures for capital projects, as Minden Hills did with the arena and multiple ongoing road reconstructions. However, he said the work needs to be done, even if it means a rise in taxes. “I don’t think avoiding it is the answer.” He said he feels like Minden Hills can be “more aggressive” with the province for more funding for projects like waterworks.

Ivan Ingram the candidate

“I think if you talk to anybody I dealt with, in the 31 years I worked [at the township]... they’d be quite happy with what they received from me or what I did for them. I’m not bragging but that’s what I was paid to do... This town has allowed me to buy a home. It’s allowed me to live here. It paid my wages. I want to give back... I want to help the town grow. I want this County on the map again. And we’re just not doing it right now.”

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Minden roads a primary concern for Johannessen

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

“I’m a people person. I love people, I can talk to anybody, anywhere. I’m not afraid to do that. I’ve owned a business. I’ve rented. I’ve been a landlord. I’ve worked in the restaurant business for years. I just feel for the people and want to make Minden the best as we all can.”

Amalgamation

“I like [the County and municipal structure] the way it is at the moment. So, I’m not sure. I’ve had people say that they don’t want it. But it’s something I would have to talk to somebody that’s more educated than I am on this.”

Health

She said healthcare issues are related to a labour shortage that is prevalent everywhere, including local businesses.

“One year we had a lot of kids, but they seem to go back to university and not come back home. There just isn’t anybody looking, wanting to work? I’m not sure what they’re doing. That’s again something I would have to sit down and really talk to somebody about that has education on this.”

Housing

She said she favours working with builders to increase housing by adding flexibility to housing options. “Our town is getting bigger. There are lots of people and it seems that people are leaving and coming back, but they don’t have anywhere to go.”

She added that long waitlists for housing provide difficulties. “That’s a long time and people are living in tents and trailers that aren’t equipped for winterizing and stuff. I hope that things can get better.”

Poverty

She said she’s been researching the issue and local organizations seeking to address poverty.

“If we can maybe do more fundraising to donate to them, or to other causes.” She said she favours improving education tools and gave examples of fundraising through public art, or relaxing rules around farming on private properties. “It’s really sad to see people living in



Shirley Johannessen is a candidate for ward 1 in Minden Hills. *Submitted.*

tents or not being able to afford food because they need heat or stuff like that. So, hopefully we can rise up and do better things all together as a community.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

She said she understands the opposition to the bylaw but said lake and fish health are a priority.

“I’ve seen a couple of places where I live in [that have degraded shorelines] and it doesn’t look as nice as it used to. So, I believe that it should be kept, to a certain point, natural.”

Short-term rentals

She said short-term rentals “give people a place to go and maybe help the landlord or the owner,” but said she doesn’t support increased regulations as long as renters are abiding by existing rules and not discarding garbage on roads or letting off excessive fireworks, for example.

Transportation

“When I had a business, it was in Algonquin Highlands, and it was hard for people to get to work if they didn’t have transportation.” She said she heard ideas about using school buses for public transportation. “It’s something that I would have to learn.” She said she could imagine supporting a County-wide transport system, but said rentals and affordable living pose a big concern too.

Vision for the future

“I’d like to keep some of our history here. Again, just be here for the people and continue with what’s going on, but better things. I think some things have gotten lost over the years and like to bring things back.” She specified things that have gotten lost include roads, communication surrounding the arena construction and issues with the landfill.

Minden Hills

Johannessen said roads are a chief concern, as well as boat launches such as the currently non-existent launch on

Bob Lake or the currently closed Minden village boardwalk. “People come into town to use it when they come to visit and that’s supposed to be a highlight and [they’re] not able to use it.” She did not provide details on alternative funding models or budget changes which could finance these projects.

“Again, that’s something I would need more education on. What I’ve heard is the roads seem to be a tough thing for people. I’m not sure, we can probably cut back a little bit on something, but I don’t know if that’s the answer.”

Shirley Johannessen the candidate

“Obviously, this will be a new venture for me and no, it’s not an easy one. I want to be the voice and help people out and communicate with people and work together as a town and as a team and keep going for our town that we love so much....This is where I’ve chosen to continue to live and work and I’ve just had so many people come forward, especially when they saw my name, and thought that I would be good because they know I can talk to people and that I care.”



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Grozelle wants public to be able to trust council

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Mike Grozelle runs his own construction business. He was an executive for the Royal Canadian Legion in Kinmount for six years, and also worked as a firefighter training officer and licensed mechanic. “I’m aware of the issues surrounding planning and building...I drive on these roads, we pay tax dollars here, I have lots of friends and family and I talk to a lot of people in the area.” He unsuccessfully ran for council in Ward 2 in 2018.

Amalgamation

He said he heard amalgamation is “well in motion” in Haliburton County. “I want to know how the people of Minden are going to benefit from having just the one level [of government] so if it’s cheaper to run at one level, then we’ll take a look at that. Right now, I think we have bigger issues to deal with just here in town.” [Haliburton County is not in the process of amalgamating, however, specific township services are enhancing collaboration efforts to unify service delivery.]

Health

He said amalgamating Haliburton County hospitals would mean too much travel time for patients to receive care, and doesn’t think it’s a good idea. He added that Minden Hills and the County should look at new ways of attracting nurses and staff to work in the Highlands.

Housing

Grozelle was on an affordable housing committee. He said there is provincial money available to finance housing projects, but it’s difficult to access or negotiate. He said the County or Minden Hills could look at purchasing land that could be developed. On the question of balancing ecosystem preservation with housing, Grozelle said it’s worth sacrificing certain environmentally-protected areas if there is a high return on housing options.

Poverty

He said bringing new businesses to Minden is key to increasing prosperity. He said council’s role is to make it easier to develop new businesses. Specifically, he said this could mean encouraging



Mike Grozelle is a candidate for Minden Hills ward 2. Photo by Sam Gillett.

the planning department to devote staff members to speed up business developments. He said that process could start by having an independent review of why certain planning files have taken so long to get processed, such as the Rockcliffe.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I don’t think it’s clear enough what you can and cannot do.” When asked to specify, Grozelle said he’s worried neighbours will end up calling enforcement officers on neighbours even when they’re not breaking the rules, for example cutting down dead trees. “I don’t think we have to hire bylaw enforcement officers. I think we just need to educate them and most people... they want to comply with the rules.”

Short-term rentals

He said property owners should be responsible for controlling noise and other issues surrounding their short-term rentals. According to Grozelle, cottage rentals likely aren’t the reason long-term rental

options are so hard to find since cottages are also used by their full-time owners.

Transportation

“There has to be something but I’m not sure that we have to do it at the municipal or County level, the problem being I don’t think the ridership is there. So, it would have to be funded by us almost completely.” He said there are “far bigger” issues the township must deal with.

Vision for the future

He said he wants “people to trust us again.” He said bringing new industries to town is a must in order to keep Minden Hills’ population from dwindling. He said the first step in streamlining processes in order to attract new businesses would be talking to staff to find out what issues can be solved. Grozelle said he believes councillors are currently not allowed to speak with staff. He has not asked councillors or staff if that’s true.

Minden Hills

He wants to see people trust Minden

Hills council. He believes there is a lack of transparency around some financial decisions, such as a Wessel Road cattle grate, which was quoted at more than \$250,000, but ended up costing around \$45,000. Staff delivered a public report on why the grate ended up costing a quarter of the price in spring 2022. Grozelle said that’s an example of when Minden Hills should award tenders to local businesses. “I want to make sure the taxpayers know what we’re spending the money on, where the money is coming from, and why we’re spending it. I want to see those jobs awarded to people here.” He did not specify how he’d communicate capital spending to taxpayers differently than Minden Hills’ 2022 budget did.

Mike Grozelle the candidate

“The heart of the campaign is getting transparent and gaining the trust back. That, to me, are the two main things. If we’re going to make a decision as council, everybody in town should know what it is and why we voted the way we did.” He said he has fresh ideas about bringing new businesses and people to Minden Hills.



WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT...?

TUNE IN TO WHAT ARE WE DOING? THE HIGHLANDER’S NEWEST PODCAST ON ALL PODCAST APPS AND AT [THEHIGHLANDER.CA/PODCAST](https://thehighlander.ca/podcast)

Bradley ready to serve the public in Minden Hills

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Bradley worked in labour negotiations and mediations. He said being on council requires similar skills. “My answer to a problem is not no, it’s how are we going to solve this problem? And how are we going to solve it if it’s something that has to go before council? How are we going to actually have a majority of council support something? So, it’s about building bridges, it’s not about building fences.” He unsuccessfully ran for council in 2018.

Amalgamation

“I’d rather see, first, amalgamation of as many services...shuffling the money around in a way that makes it most efficient. For example, there are three levels of snow plowing, there’s municipal, County, and contracted highway. So, there are three teams of snowplow hours. I’m not sure that’s the most efficient way to do it.” Township staff are currently working to implement certain recommendations in a service delivery review conducted by StrategyCorp.

Health

“The bottom line is [two hospitals are] here. This is a provincial thing. And you know, tell Laurie Scott and Jamie Schmale and all of the upper levels of government, neither of those two ER’s is up for discussion unless you want to build a Haliburton County emergency room and, if they do, we’ll find out where you’re going to do it, make sure it’s central and make sure it’s funded.”

Housing

He said he’d support donating land for housing projects, and collaborating with the province to pave the way for more housing. He said he’d want affordable housing to be centrally located. “Even two people working two jobs can’t afford to rent a whole lot of places around here.”

Poverty

He said improving wireless connections would encourage companies to set up base in Minden Hills and provide better paying jobs. “I think the council has a role, whether it’s tourism, in shining a light on the fact that this is a beautiful place to be and live.”



Ward 1 candidate Richard Bradley. Photo by Sam Gillett

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said he supports the bylaw, but that he’s curious about how it will be enforced, and what exemptions will be honoured. “As long as it is seen to be reasonable and fair to people who are building, modifying, or even developing new lands, it’s going to be fine.” The new bylaw spells out that new staff will be responsible for enforcement of the bylaw at a County level, and specifies what activities are exempt.

Short-term rentals

“It’s not new, the fact that people have rented their place for a week a year because they’ve been offsetting the expenses of having a property. It’s just new that you can do it on the internet.” He supports regulating but not “to the point of stifling” short-term rentals.

Transportation

He said he likes the idea of public transportation in Haliburton County. He said people who may use the service should have a say in the routes and the price should be aimed at lower-income people.

“There’s no point in having a bus people can’t afford.”

Vision for the future

He said he’d like to see downtown “rejuvenation”, which might mean community safety zones, or more lines painted on parking spots. He said he’d like to see the township take an active role in deciding what to do with vacant land. He said he’d like to engage business owners and downtown residents. “How are we going to make this downtown a place where people want to be from eight in the morning, Monday morning, till eight in the evening, Sunday night?”

Minden Hills

He said addressing roads is a main focus for the municipality, and “going back to core services a municipality can control.” He said tax increases are a must in order to finance road improvements and suggested using reserve funds in order to do so. He also said raising taxes more could be difficult due to the current high rate of inflation.

Richard Bradley the candidate

“When I talk to people, when people say what is your platform, my platform is to be your voice... To advocate for your needs, whether it’s your roads, whatever it may be. And, again, it comes down to our community’s need.” He gave the example of Bob Lake’s boat launch. “Bob Lake needs a boat launch, somehow, some way. And I’m not saying I have the answer. I’m saying I need the answer from them so we can get it done. Because how can you have a lake without a public boat launch?” He said being proactive is his primary goal. “I worked pretty much my whole career in labour negotiations, certainly have learned about arbitration and litigation when required, but it’s not what I prefer, but I am now retired, I’m here full-time, I was lucky enough to buy the family cottage, where I live, and where I will draw my last breath. I’ve been married for 36 years, I have four kids and two grandchildren. And I think it’s just my time, hopefully to give back now that I have more time. And I want to listen to people and help them with their encounters with municipal government and make positive changes where that’s possible. And reasonable.

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Sayne wants politicians to know their communities

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Pam Sayne is seeking a third term. She's been on the Rural Ontario Municipalities Association (ROMA) board. She has a community organization background, in the housing and poverty sectors. She recently retired her home inspection and energy audit business. She has continued her studies and is working on a book.

Amalgamation

With the service delivery review, Sayne said, "We're looking at efficiencies; how we maintain our roads; how we purchase products; how we enforce bylaws. It's silly to have one bylaw on one side of the lake and another bylaw on the other side of the lake. Those are things that really require some kind of amalgamation. My concern is how do we continue grassroots representation? How do we make it so politicians are still accessible on a one-to-one level and hear what constituents have to say."

Health

"I think Renfrew County has a very good approach. They have a system where you call one number, and they help assess where you should call next. That's been extremely successful. Bureaucracy is confusing, and it's really difficult for people to understand which department or organization will provide what they need."

Housing

"The first thing we need to do is make sure we have accessible washrooms for people. That's both for tourism as well as for people who have no home. There are organizations but we really need to link with what they're doing as a municipality and find mutual supports. We have to do it as a community together. Having said that, we are working on options, changing some provincial legislation, through ROMA that will make it easier for us to create housing locally. For example, we have the downtown area where we can

have intensification, but we can't put more housing into rural areas because of our zoning. We need change that allows us to do more cluster housing, for example. Now, every single house needs a separate septic and water system. With clusters, neighbours could share a system that is maybe municipally-owned or run but is done for a rural environment."

Poverty

"(Council is) missing a lot of the major issues that are coming forward." She has been asking for a report on local trends. Sayne said she was on the organization that brought the women's shelter to Minden. She noted the living wage is \$19.42 in the County. She thinks it is probably more post-COVID. She said minimum wage does not meet the need and also talked about the cancellation of the guaranteed income supplement program. She thinks we have to support those making a living from the arts. She said municipalities should supply basic needs. Asked how, Sayne said, "you have a place to live, can afford food on the table, can take some pride in getting ahead." Pressed on how to do that, she said encouraging more housing, which will create local jobs people may not need a car to get to.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Sayne said, "it's needed so we have guidance. That's what's going on, on one side of the lake is happening on the other side of the lake, for example. I have seen situations where there's been over 100 feet or more of clear cutting and levelling where forest used to be. I've seen where people only have 60 feet of shoreline allowance, and that's their cottage and their land and everything. So, how is this going to affect them and the fear of that. I think the bylaw is a very good start. I think the problem is fear mongering about it." She said she can understand people worried about enforcement and the County will have to make it work. Sayne said they also need to ensure groundwater health.

Short-term rentals

Sayne said the province should be helping municipalities because they are being forced to hire expensive consultants to deal with short-term rentals. She added STRs are being taxed the same as residential but they are a business and should be paying a commercial rate. "That's where the province has to step in. That's where money would come from to enforce bylaws." She added, "short-term rentals have taken away much of our housing stock. They have increased the number of bylaw calls. We pay for the OPP so the more calls we're getting, the more increased that's going to be for the OPP." She said she also gets complaints from people living near short-term rentals.

Transportation

"We had some volunteers make recommendations to County council for transportation. Their recommendations were turned down in favour of putting \$50,000 aside every year towards transportation. That fund is growing each year. We need to do something sooner. We really need to put in electric vehicles. We could do that as a demonstration project. Looking for more money or demonstration projects to get off of fossil fuels is an option. It is not easy to cover our rural areas. There have been some really good examples of Uber being used. There are some options out there. We need to really act now and get something going and let the demand steer how those policies change what we are doing."

Vision for the future

"We'll understand each other better, better understand needs and wants and how we all can contribute to getting what we need out of this community." She said post-COVID, people are rethinking what's important in life. "We're beginning to realize that money is not the most important thing in life. We need to be happy ... focus on our neighbours and caring for each other and our environment."



Pam Sayne is seeking re-election.
Photo by Lisa Gervais.

Minden Hills

She is running again because she feels there's unfinished business. "I was often the lone voter in this council the last four, and even eight, years. I want to get back to where I think business should be. We've done things, and put our resources into the arena, which I think really sapped the energy out of so many other basic issues that we aren't covering well enough. That includes the condition of our boardwalk, the epitaph and bricks are cracking, and making our downtown accessible for wheelchairs. Council did approve the CIP (community improvement plan) to help businesses but it hasn't been well-used and understood. We need to renovate the downtown and make it more attractive and start taking care of basic issues, such as roads.

Pam Sayne the candidate

"I have the know-how, skills and ability. I know how to get things done. I sit on the ROMA board, which influences the province. I'm very optimistic about the future and want to take all this energy and know-how and put it to use in my community. I think we need healthier leadership. We need to get our egos out of the work and understand our communities better."



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TUNE IN TO **WHAT ARE WE DOING?** THE HIGHLANDER'S NEWEST PODCAST.
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Hertel an 'issue focused' candidate

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

"I come from a long history of public service and law enforcement. I think our primary purpose in law enforcement is to understand, respect and serve people in the best way. I've been in emergency management and the fire service (as a volunteer) for almost six years with the City of Kawartha Lakes. I've gotten to meet people and gotten to know them, not just the firefighters, but people around the area and understand what their concerns are and what their goals are."

Amalgamation

"I am not against amalgamation of some services, for example, landfills and transfer stations, roads and fire services. There are some efficiencies that can be found at the County level. But, I think it's important to maintain a Township of Minden Hills. People like to belong to something and we've been so disconnected for so long because of COVID. I think if we were to be absorbed into a full amalgamation, losing that is going to hurt."

Housing

"I think Minden Hills could relax some of the bylaws around building to increase our inventory of available housing. For example, letting people separate their properties to build more houses. The town could provide land for these projects to be built. There needs to be a buy-in from all levels of government."

Health

"We can lobby the provincial government to increase our health care funding. I think it's important that we have a CT scanner in one of our hospitals, if not both. The money exists. The ladies' auxiliary raises money." He said there are ways to have it staffed. He said it would help with current ambulance transfers of patients to Lindsay and Peterborough, thus taking them out of the County for hours at a time. He said it

is crucial as the County is gaining more people and call volumes are increasing. Hertel is a fan of the two community paramedic vehicles that do house calls. He would support keeping both hospital sites. He thinks the County could be doing more with physician recruitment and retention and staff housing.

Poverty

"I think there's a role for municipal council. We can bring these issues to the attention of provincial and federal partners." Asked for specifics, he said, "affordable housing, more housing, back to work programs, student programs." Asked how that could be done, he replied, "I don't think municipal government is doing the best they can to advertise what's available. There's a fantastic social network in Haliburton County that helps people with a handout, with job creation, job searches and education. But not everyone knows about them." Pressed for further examples, he said helping churches establish soup kitchens.

Transportation

"An accessible bus for safe transportation between our towns. I'm not saying a fleet of 100 buses, but a continuous rotation of buses that would service our area, including for seniors getting to grocery stores." Told the County has unsuccessfully tried to get a service for years, he was asked what his specific plan is. "I think a rideshare program is something we need to be looking at." Informed the County looked into rideshare and ruled it out, he was asked again for his plan. "I think we need to reopen the book, look at it again, from a different perspective. People need services. I don't always feel that we've worked hard enough for an answer. Not giving up." He said it isn't about money since all public transit loses money.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

"It's a great idea ... it does protect

people's shorelines and the environment." He said some people have misunderstood it and feel it's overreaching. "I don't think it's as bad as everyone has felt about it. From its true sense, it's here to protect the animals, the plant life, the people who live here." However, he said the bylaw is open to interpretation and can be changed. He also thinks there could be better education and enforcement.

Short-term rentals

"I am for short-term rentals because the practices that I've seen with my neighbours, they're responsible neighbours, they do a vetting process before they allow people to come onto the property and they communicate with us." He said that might not be the case with certain out-of-County rental agency sites. "I think there's a way the County could force them to register on the three-strike program, for example, like they've done in the Blue Mountains." He said when they are commercial, they should be licenced. He said he likes the County direction so far, with an open consultation with all stakeholders.

Vision for the future

"We're going to have a boom of people moving here to their residences to break away from the city. I think it's already happened. We need to be better prepared for those things. The housing, the service delivery; landfills, housing, etc., we need to get ahead of it." Hertel said he thinks there's room in the County for those who want a more secluded lifestyle and those who want more of "an urban setting and busy" community. He would like to see more community growth, with more things to get people out of the house. He personally likes the idea of more local businesses contributing to a robust downtown as opposed to larger commercial developments along Hwy. 35. Hertel said he met with the County to ensure the flying of the Pride flag this year. He would like a more inclusive community in future.



Stephen Hertel has been a full-time resident for six years. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Minden Hills

"I see this town growing to not just be a stopover for people. I want it to be a destination." He'd like to see trail improvements, the boardwalk fixed and reopened, sidewalks improvements and better overall accessibility. He'd like road improvements, too. Looking at the 2022 budget, he said he would have liked more money for seniors and youth, housing, and mental health.

Stephen Hertel the candidate

"I've been coming to Minden Hills for over 20 years. I was a seasonal renter, loving the area and appreciating what it's all about; the people, the lakes, the services, they were perfect for us. We moved here six years ago as permanent residents. Running for council has been a goal for awhile. I was already becoming involved with the community and getting some perspective on what people were looking for and what I'm looking for. I love Minden Hills and want to make everyone love it. I want everything to be better, for businesses, for tourists, residents, increasing services, health care, seniors care, youth programs. I want to increase the connection between the community and council, building the trust and the respect and accountability for what we do. I am not politically-based; I am issue focused.

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**Dysart
et al**



Bailey wants to bring new community centre to town

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Tom Bailey graduated with a degree in business and communications from the University of Ottawa. After working in sales for several years, he opened his own construction and carpentry business in Haliburton County in 2021. “After living here for a year, and getting to know a lot of local people and talking about the big local issues and concerns, it made sense to run. A lot of people expressed to me that having some young blood in office would be really nice... I figured this would be a good way to get involved and help ensure Haliburton remains an awesome place to raise a young family.”

Amalgamation

“I’m indifferent. I think it has its pros and cons. Each township has its own quirks. But I do think there are a lot of ways that things can be systemized and efficiencies can be created.”

Health

“I’ve had no bad experiences. I’ve been to the ER twice over the past year or so and was treated very well,” Bailey said. “If you live here and you’re going to have children, you pretty much have to go to Peterborough to deliver a baby. It would be nice for young families to have that comfort level, knowing if they’re going to be delivering a baby, they don’t have to drive an hour and a half, as you don’t know what could happen in that time.”

Housing

Bailey said addressing the lack of available and affordable housing in Dysart et al was one of his main priorities. “If you’re looking for a short-term rental in the area, your options are extremely limited, and those that are available are very expensive. That makes it very difficult to attract someone to come work here, because the cost of living is so high. An obvious solution is eliminating a lot of the red tape [for] getting building permits for multi-unit dwellings or basement apartments.” Bailey said the township needed to take an active role in identifying areas where condos and apartment buildings could be built, and work to bring developers to the community. He said he was “generally in favour” of Harburn Holdings’ proposed development on Grass Lake.

Poverty

“The most logical fix, to me, is creating more jobs in the area... There’s a lot of factors that would prevent people from opening a new business or staying in business in this region. The municipality needs to [address that]. Property taxes are substantially higher here than in other locations. Maybe by providing an incentive to have a reduction on that for



Tom Bailey says he wants to bring a fresh, young voice to Dysart council next term. *Submitted.*

the first X number of years in business would help get the ball rolling, and help the business set their feet firmly on the ground.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I think the bylaw is a little bit extreme. As a cottager before, I am 100 per cent in support of maintaining lake health and ensuring properties are not being clear cut. With that being said... it seems like it was rushed to approval. I think it should be revisited to find a balance between people having autonomy over their property, but also within reason where they’re not doing something completely crazy.”

Short-term rentals

Bailey said he’s in favour of maintaining short-term rentals in Haliburton County. “They represent a huge opportunity for the local economy. I think it would be a really bad decision to eliminate short-term rentals. I don’t think implementing regulations and bylaws is feasible or a good use of municipal time.”

Transportation

“I think something could be done with specific routes and some solid planning. I’d say the whole township needs kind of an overview plan, for transportation, housing, all of its issues. If you have a bus that runs from Haliburton to Minden, and you have plans for housing along the side of County Road 21, then that would make complete sense. If you’re going to put housing 20 minutes off one of the main roads, then [a bus route] is not going to make much sense.”

Vision for the future

“I think just attracting more young families and creating opportunities for young families, while also maintaining a quality place to live in retirement. Circling back here, but a community centre would be huge – the construction would bring a lot of jobs, and then the opportunities a new building would provide. I’m a big hockey fan and seeing the Huskies have a great first year was great. Their games became a real social event. I’d love to see more of that, just local attractions for people to get involved with.”

Dysart et al

“Sustainable growth and development are my top priorities. I think Haliburton has a lot to offer, but there are some areas where there’s a lot of room for improvement,” Bailey said. “Providing a lot of programs and opportunities for kids is a major factor for me too. My wife takes our little boy to Bracebridge for swimming lessons. It’s about an hour and a half drive each way, so that’s not ideal. It would be great to see something like a community centre, with a pool, here in the township. That would be great for young families, but also the older population too.”

Tom Bailey the candidate

“I grew up cottaging on Little Boshkung Lake, so I’ve spent pretty much every summer of my life in the area. Haliburton County became like a second home to me. My main priority is to ensure Haliburton remains a beautiful place, that people want to come, visit and live in.”



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Housing front and centre on Brohm's list of priorities

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

"Haliburton County has been my home since I was six months old. I was raised in the area, went to Haliburton High and since then have owned a business on Highland Street, worked in Toronto and moved back here permanently just about a year ago," Brohm said. "I am quite involved in the community, I feel I have my finger on the pulse and have an idea about some of the main issues we have."

Amalgamation

"You have to be looking at the dollars and cents. Perhaps [amalgamating] brings more buying power for supplies and equipment that municipalities need to run. Consolidating some facilities rather than having each township individually running their own roads department," Brohm said. "I'm a small-town girl, so I like the idea of Dysart being my municipality. If the townships were to amalgamate, that would mean you wouldn't have that connection to your community, to the governing body... I feel that contact and connection is important."

Health

"If you had one larger facility [as opposed to two hospitals] ... you could possibly have more equipment available. One of the things we need desperately in this community is a CT scanner. If we had one here, that would save our EMS a great deal of time from transporting patients to Lindsay or Peterborough," Brohm said. "Nobody wants to lose their community hospital, but we're growing at such a rate with a population requiring medical care... I would really have to look at what the ramifications would be, how a site would be chosen and how it would all be funded."

Poverty

"SIRCH has made a good start, offering training to younger people to give them options they wouldn't have had otherwise. The Youth Hub is also another good operation. We need to show younger people there are other ways to live, and that they can do things for themselves," Brohm said. "Many people are living in poverty, or just on the edge, in Ontario right now. The cost of food and gas makes it even more difficult, so this is a hard thing to address... If we grew and had a few more businesses that would employ some people, that might be helpful."



Pamela Brohm said she would be a "champion of Haliburton" if elected. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

Housing

"Modular homes are a lot less money to build, for people to buy. I heard about a project that was done in Calgary, a young couple who were renting for \$2,000 got into a modular home and it just changed their lives. They could afford to pay their bills, got out of debt and could plan for the future. It got me thinking, that could be a really good idea [for Haliburton County]," Brohm said. She noted she's also seen people transform storage containers into livable units and spoke favourably about tiny homes. "We need to be open to new visions, because the same old, same old is not working anymore. Especially not for your average working family," Brohm said she's skeptical about the proposed Harburn Holdings development on Grass Lake. "It's very important that we protect the environment... and we need to make sure [the proposal] provides to the community what the community needs, and that's affordable housing."

Transportation

"If we had public transportation, it would be easier for people who don't have resources to get around. Some people might want to work but might not be able to get there right now," Brohm said. "I believe it can be done. We need to look at the whole situation, what the needs would be and how we can do this." Brohm said her ideal system would feature a weekly

bus system with pre-determined routes that could help move people across the County.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

"Things had been going on so long that a decision had to be made. We know our environment is critical and we have to protect it... A bylaw was voted in Aug. 24 and will come into effect April 1, 2023. In my mind, that's it. The issue is done," Brohm said.

Short-term rentals

"I believe they most definitely should be regulated. It is the commodification of shelter. It's buying something strictly to make money from it, not to live in it or have it as your own family cottage – that is a business, which puts pressure on our resources, whether it's emergency services, roads. It also allows a lot of people to come in who really haven't got a clue about rural life, they don't know what a septic system is and how you have to be careful with them," Brohm said. "To share a cottage with family and friends is one thing, but to have it up on Kijiji, Craigslist or Airbnb for the whole world to see? I just don't agree with that."

Vision for the future

"The main issue we have right now is housing, that has to be our priority. People that were born and raised here now can't afford to live here. In my mind, that's not how we want to see things. I would like to see sustainable housing projects that are meaningful for Dysart and complements the lifestyle we want to have here," Brohm said. "That has to be the focus. Without more housing, we cannot get the professionals that we need."

Dysart et al

"There are many big issues to work on and to look at... I've taken a look at our reserve funds and think [we can do] better, so that, in the event your playground equipment is beat, you can go to your reserve fund and use some money to replace it."

Pamela Brohm the candidate

"I am passionate about Dysart. I want to see it be the best place it can be. As a councillor, I would be accessible. I am always available, and no call or email will go unanswered. I have no personal agendas here; my sole focus is on making things better for the people who live here."



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Casey wants Dysart to steer clear of amalgamation

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

“My grandson will be the eighth generation on our property. The Caseys have been in Haliburton County since 1867... We have a long history, centuries of looking out for and being in Haliburton,” Casey said. “I own Total Site Services, Casey’s Water Well and Geothermal and Green Haven Estates and Developments – being in business a long time, dealing with people, challenging personalities and complex issues, I feel has set me up well so that I can be an effective councillor.”

Amalgamation

“I’d stay away from it for now. We’ve seen amalgamations in different townships and communities, like the City of Kawartha Lakes, and it was a trainwreck. That community is still scarred over the whole thing,” Casey said.

Health

Casey believes a lot of people, especially healthcare workers, are still burnt out from the pandemic, which is feeding into the staffing issues at HHHS. Regarding the potential amalgamation of the two hospital sites in Haliburton County, Casey said he was on the fence. “If we were to go to a single facility, how would that work? Where would it go? Would the province give us more [funds] to operate? I think this deserves a few more questions and definitely more answers before I can say yes or no on either side.”

Housing

“There are different levels – yes, we need housing for families... we also need housing for our retired people. Townhomes and condos would work. If we could get people set up, especially entry-level or mid-range, then they can focus on moving up. When our seniors move into a retirement-type spot, that opens a house for the kids looking to start out. It’s all a cycle.” He also believes tiny homes are a “great idea”. Casey says he is pro-development “when it makes sense” and indicated he would be in favour of Harburn Holdings’ proposed development on Grass Lake.



Ward 1 candidate Pat Casey hopes to inspire change in Dysart et al. Photo by Mike Baker.

Poverty

“In terms of a County-wide solution, I don’t believe in handouts.” He believes more needs to be done to prepare youth for the realities of life, and to make sure they’re aware of the opportunities that currently exist in the working world. “If we’re able to facilitate partnerships between the high school and Fleming, to get training programs in place, that helps get them into the system and started on the path of life. I think that’s a grassroots approach we can take to try and ease the problems we’re seeing around poverty.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I struggle with the shoreline bylaw, because there’s already measures in place [to protect lake health]. We already have a tree cutting bylaw, and it’s already policed,” Casey said. “There seems to be a steady erosion of civil liberties. If I buy a piece of property, as long as I’m not starting a meth lab, or making chemicals on it, clear cutting or pouring concrete from one end to the other on the lake, I don’t see the problem if I want to trim [my shoreline] out so that it looks awesome. I want to see a bit of the lake. If I want to put a fire pit down there, that’s

great. Maybe hire some landscapers to help bring the value of the property up. When you’ve got to start going through a permitting process for all of that... that’s a problem for me.”

Short-term rentals

“You’ve heard the story a hundred times where somebody comes up into an Airbnb and the place has turned into a rodeo, where there’s lots of noise and drinking and partying... Nobody wants that,” Casey said. He owns a seasonal property in Trent Lakes, a municipality that has recently started regulating short-term rentals. “They have a three-strike rule and give you an outline of what you’re allowed to do and what you’re not allowed to do,” he said, noting that would be his preferred route should short-term rentals be regulated in Haliburton County.

Transportation

“A County-wide, or even a municipality-wide transportation system is a tall order. In Dysart, we have the Dymo bus and that’s definitely a necessity that has to be maintained, but in terms of transportation for the general public, it’ll be a stretch to make that work with all the other overhead problems the town has,” Casey

said. “If a private enterprise came along and found a way to do it, then hats off to them. I would support that.”

Vision for the future

Casey said he wants to make sure Dysart takes a well-rounded approach to programming moving forward, with options for all age levels. “Activities for our retirees and our kids are important,” he said. Casey would also like to see some investment in downtown Haliburton.

Pat Casey the candidate

“We’ve done a lot in the community, in terms of business and such. There’s an opportunity to have a fresh set of eyes with some good ideas... I have a little more time on my hands now, the kids are starting to do their own thing and the businesses are stabilized, so I have the time,” Casey said. He noted there are several issues he wants to focus on, chief among them eliminating red tape and finding efficiencies where the four lower-tier governments in Haliburton County can work on certain files and issues together.

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McCaig wants to be on council for the long haul

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

McCaig worked in advertising and marketing before retiring in 2020. “I was in charge of marketing for SoftMoc in Canada. I did strategic planning, tactical planning, budgeting. I used to take care of a budget of \$35 million, so I’ve got pretty good experience when it comes to numbers,” he said. McCaig is a former CanoeFM volunteer.

Amalgamation

“You don’t just amalgamate to save money, you amalgamate to improve quality of service. I do think there’s efficiencies to be had, but if you do save in upper management jobs, we need to make sure the savings are reinvested back on to the front lines,” McCaig said. “Amalgamation in theory is good, but we would have to sit down and really plan it out. It works in some municipalities and doesn’t work in others.” McCaig said he’d like to see Wards 1 and 2 in Dysart amalgamated.

Health

When it comes to amalgamating one site over the other, that’s difficult. I sure as hell don’t want to close the hospital in Minden and have someone in Dorset having to come to Haliburton. In health situations, minutes matter, so it’s a very delicate issue. Bottom line, I don’t think we should be closing any hospitals.”

Housing

“We need to lobby the federal and provincial governments. They tend to overlook Haliburton,” McCaig said. With Fleming College recently receiving the go-ahead from Dysart et al council to construct student housing on municipal land in Glebe Park, McCaig believes there’s an opportunity for further development. “Down the road, there’s some potential to do some affordable housing, more in the way of co-op housing and offered up specifically to those from Haliburton first, those in cottage country first,” he said. “If you run sewer lines up Industrial Park Road and attach to College Road, that could be a good area [for some housing].” McCaig said he was against the Harburn Holdings development proposal for Grass Lake.



Ward 1 hopeful Rob McCaig says he’s running in this election for the community. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

Poverty

“Food prices are going up 20 per cent. People are having to make a decision – do you heat your house, or do you eat? Gas prices are going up... We need to lobby the other two governments to get their act together and help our community, because nobody should go hungry, and nobody should grow up poor.” He said one of his priorities would be establishing more community gardens across Dysart et al.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“In theory it’s a good document, but it still needs work. They didn’t address septic tanks, which, if they’re failing, can lead to leaching into our lakes. They didn’t address Airbnbs and how they affect lake populations and people that live around the lakes... I also think we need more policing on our lakes,” McCaig said.

Short-term rentals

McCaig believes short-term rentals do have a place in Dysart et al, “but they should be regulated, no question. We’ve got some pretty good cottage rental companies up here, and they do a good

job. But as far as Airbnbs, they’re not for Haliburton, in my opinion.”

Transportation

“The municipality should partner up with some of the legacy families in this community to put together a bus that comes into town four times a day, and maybe goes to Minden twice, maybe Bancroft twice. That way everybody can get around town,” McCaig said. He believes such a system could be self-sufficient, if handled properly. “We should sell and put advertising on the bus. When I worked in radio, we used to have a promotional vehicle, and we sold advertising, so we didn’t have to pay [for it]. So those buses could and should be paid for by advertisers.”

Vision for the future

“In five to 10 years, hopefully there’s a little less of a pile of splinter groups in the community. Hopefully everybody is working together as a team. We need to get everyone working for the betterment of Haliburton County, and for Dysart,” McCaig said. “We need to think long-term. We need to do strategic plans. We need to look to our community and do more focus groups, and really pull people

together. We’ve got some environmental issues that we need to address as soon as possible, but we also need to look at some social economic situations... There’s a lot of work to be done.”

Dysart et al

“I’d like to keep cottage country, cottage country. I didn’t come up here to live in Pickering, Richmond Hill or Barrie,” McCaig said. “There are some inefficiencies here that need to be looked at. We have crumbling streets... We have to make sure people can get around town as much as possible.”

Rob McCaig the candidate

After coming to Haliburton County as a seasonal resident since the 1980s, McCaig moved to the community permanently in 2020. “This is going to be a full-time gig for me. You have to be accountable to residents. If there’s an issue, you need to act quickly,” McCaig said. “I really want to become deputy mayor, or mayor down the road... I’m not a quiet person. I tend to break through the clutter and I stick up for my rights, and the rights of others. I’m not in politics for me, I’m in it for the community.”



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Korpela wants to make Dysart year-round destination

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Jennifer Korpela spent two years as the acting head secretary at Haliburton Highlands Secondary School during the pandemic. If elected, she said she'll become a full-time councillor. Korpela volunteers with non-profit Walkabout Farms and was a member of the sports wall of fame mural fundraising committee. "I'm an excellent listener. If on council, I would listen to the voice of the community, do my own research and make decisions based on facts rather than hearsay or fear."

Issues in Dysart et al

Listing housing as her number one priority, Korpela said she's also committed to keeping taxes low. "Lots of people are struggling." She also wants the township's next council to focus on waste management. "Right now, we're taking our garbage elsewhere. We're not dealing with our own mess. I'd like to really look at our landfills and see what options we have." Korpela said she also wants to work with stakeholders in the tourism industry to make Dysart more of a year-round destination.

Amalgamation

Korpela said she is against amalgamation. "It just doesn't sit well with me. The most effective government is the government closest to the people. When you move a step away from the people you serve, I don't think that is in the best interest of our communities."

Health

"It may not be a popular opinion, but I do believe we could be a bit more efficient if we have one hospital. To me, the cost of having two separate buildings, two separate staffs – I think it would be very beneficial to our community to have one facility serve as a main hospital, and the other be turned into a full-scale long-term care home." Korpela said having

one facility could help HHHS lobby the province for upgraded equipment, such as a CT scanner.

Housing

"A good majority of our issues, like poverty, labour shortages, all come full circle to our housing situation. That is something the new council is going to have to face." Korpela said the township needs to rethink its zoning bylaws. She would be in favour of people turning bunkies or accessory buildings on their properties into legal rentals. She would like council to look into expanding Dysart's sewage treatment plant, which she believes would open the door for significant development around Haliburton village.

Poverty

Korpela said she's been in touch with the Haliburton Kawartha Lakes Poverty Reduction Roundtable to understand why poverty is so rife in the Highlands. "The group indicated there's 11 different resources that need to be topped up in a community for individuals to thrive. They have identified four key areas and made a number of actionable suggestions on what can be done." Korpela said focusing on food security, employment and education, children and youth, and housing are key.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

"I'm disappointed the bylaw was passed. I think it's full of holes. It's not clear or concise. It's open to interpretation." Korpela doesn't believe it does much to address lake health. "For properties that have already been clear cut, there's nothing in there to renaturalize... I think the bylaw needs to be amended and made a little more concrete, because right now there's not much in there that's enforceable."

Short-term rentals

Korpela accepts short-term rentals have

a place in Dysart. She would like to see them regulated. "There are nuisance, safety and environmental concerns with them... Short-term rentals have become a bit of a commercial enterprise. I think that needs to be tightened up." She would like to see the township hold owners accountable when complaints are made.

Transportation

Korpela is a fan of Dysart's Dymo bus service and believes the township should look into establishing a wider transit system. "If we look at other small communities' steps ahead of us, one being Innisfil. They have a ride share service and the municipality provides discounted rates for people going to town hall, the rec centre or to get groceries. People can also apply for a different level of service where they get four free trips to the food bank each month, or to childcare services... If we speak to communities that have these systems in place, we could come up with a fantastic plan for Dysart."

Vision for the future

Korpela wants to help Dysart meet its full potential. "We want to move forward and get ahead with the times as far as [internet and cell] connectivity, and the medical system, but at the same time we need to hold onto our smalltown charm." She'd like to expand on the municipality's strategic plan, passed by council earlier this year. "It's a bit generalized and open to interpretation... hopefully the new council can massage it and use it to help drive creative solutions for some of our major problems."

Focus for 2023 budget

Korpela said her focus would be on fiscal responsibility and ensuring several "long overdue" projects come to fruition next year. "Replacing the playground at Head Lake Park, I'd like to rework the budget to see if there is a place where we can afford to do that. I'd also like a little bit more money for our roads."



Dysart et al ward 2 candidate Jennifer Korpela said she will be a full-time councillor if elected. *Photo by Mike Baker.*

Jennifer Korpela the candidate

Korpela moved to Dysart et al with her family in 2017. "It was a good choice for us. We've really enjoyed living here and immersing ourselves in the culture of the community... I have a lot of experience dealing with lots of people from lots of different walks of life, hearing their stories and working head-to-head and heart-to-heart with them on issues that affect their lives. Then trying to come up with solutions. That's something I really enjoy doing and is part of my motivation for running."



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Roberts prioritizing housing and healthcare

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Dan Roberts spent most of his professional career in banking and the corporate sector before recently retiring. He grew up in Haliburton and while he moved away for work, always maintained a presence in the Highlands. “I’ve basically spent every weekend in Haliburton for I don’t know how long. I have a lot of long-time friends here from high school that I’ve kept in touch with, so I know what’s going on here. I know what the community is all about.” He feels his background in business would help him come to grips with the councillor position.

Amalgamation

Rather than see all four lower-tier municipalities in the Highlands come together with the County to form one single-tier government, Roberts would like them to work together on several key files. “Maybe we could have one roads department instead of four. Our ambulance service covers the whole County. I don’t see any reason why our fire department couldn’t work that way.”

Health

Roberts believes the province should have focused on establishing one hospital site in Haliburton County several years ago, but that now Haliburton and Minden each have facilities of their own it would be difficult to amalgamate them. “Do we need two hospitals? I don’t think we do. I think we need one good hospital for an area the size of ours, but I’m not sure how we go about doing that now. That would have to be something we were really sure on, that we’ve spent time debating and consulting [with the community].”

Housing

“We need housing, especially affordable housing. It’s going to take a lot of work, not just from council but from the whole community.” Roberts believes Dysart

needs to take a look at its building code. “We have to be a little more forgiving on what we’re doing as far as getting permits and giving people the ability to build houses. We have to speed things up a little bit.” He said he would be willing to take a look at, and keep an open mind about, any proposed housing development that crosses council’s table.

Poverty

“When I hear people say we’re one of the poorest counties in the province, I find that really disappointing because there is a lot of wealth here. This isn’t something we’re going to be able to deal with overnight. It’s going to take a complete change of thinking.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Roberts believes any bylaw is useless without effective enforcement. “You can put bylaws in all day long, but if you can’t get people to police them, then it doesn’t really matter. I’ve read the proposal and, honestly, I’m not really sure what we are accomplishing here. Most of the people who live on the waterfront take care of their property, they care about the lakes and their shoreline... I’m not sure this was necessary, or money well spent.” Roberts believes the lower-tier townships should have been more involved in the process.

Short-term rentals

Roberts believes regulating short-term rentals could be a good revenue generator for the County and lower-tier townships. He believes there will be issues surrounding enforcement. “One of our biggest issues in the County is following up on things. We just don’t have the manpower. Bringing in another bylaw is great, but it doesn’t address one of the key issues, which is how would we actually police this thing?”

Transportation

Roberts believes Dysart could make a

public transit system work, but only if it operates on a limited basis. “We have a lot of roads in Dysart. I don’t think we could service them all with a bus, but you could definitely service some of the more major areas. Then you see how that goes and build the system from there. We don’t need to have regular routes running all the time, but maybe if you had a bus running at eight in the morning, and then again at four in the afternoon... that could give people the opportunity to run just one car and still be able to get around the community.”

Vision for the future

“Dysart and Haliburton County are kind of a retirement community for a lot of people. I don’t think we’ve done enough over the years to promote industry and trades. We need something to keep our young people here, and they’re key to the future growth of the community.” He said Dysart could be a good landing spot for a call centre, or light manufacturing and technology-based businesses. “To have those companies here, there’s a couple of things you have to do. Tax wise, you need to help them out a little bit. And second, employees need housing. We need to make some real inroads there.”

Focus for 2023 budget

Roberts says Dysart’s next council won’t have any choice but to focus on housing. His second priority is attracting more healthcare workers. “We need to be more diligent with how we’re spending our money, and we also need to work more with the province and the federal government to get grants and bring more money in here to help develop our County.”

Dan Roberts the candidate

“I plan on living the rest of my life here, so I’d like to see Haliburton do well. I’d like my grandson to stay here, and my other grandchildren to be able to move here... I’m not afraid to stand up and



Dysart et al ward 2 candidate Dan Roberts wants to bring 40-plus years of corporate business experience to council. Photo by Mike Baker.

make decisions. Sometimes they’re not going to be the right decision in a lot of people’s minds. You’re not going to please everybody, but as a councillor you’ve got to do what’s best for the community and that’s something I’d focus on.”



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Wood-Roberts seeking re-election in different ward

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Nancy Wood-Roberts considers herself a seasoned municipal politician, having served 14 years on Dysart council. She has also spent 40 years as a frontline nurse at Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS). “I don’t have an agenda to bring to the table. I listen to our community and value consensus-based decision-making.” She believes her communication skills have enabled her to be an effective councillor during her previous terms.

Issues in Dysart et al

“Protection of our lake health and our roads are big issues. We have to have safe roads. We have to have good infrastructure in place to provide safe and efficient services for all of our residents, and that includes broadband service as well.”

Amalgamation

“Amalgamation does not create a smaller government. It creates a more complicated structure. It makes it much more difficult for the public to engage with council. I just don’t think it’s going to work here.” With the County investigating areas where the four lower-tier townships could work better together through its service delivery review process, Wood-Roberts believes waste management and planning departments across Haliburton County would benefit through improved collaboration.

Health

Wood-Roberts believes Haliburton County is better served by having two hospitals. “It’s going to be very expensive to try and do one [hospital] site here. I think the most efficient use of money would be to put in a CT scanner, that way our ambulances wouldn’t forever be on the road transporting people [to hospitals in Lindsay or Peterborough].” She believes the staffing shortages at HHHS facilities can be alleviated by creating more housing options for potential workers.

Housing

“Our essential workers don’t have a place [to live]. Young people with families don’t have a safe space. We need to support sustainable and safe housing development.” Wood-Roberts said she would be in favour of changing Dysart’s zoning bylaw to allow more secondary dwelling units, such as basement apartments. She said at some point the township will need to expand its sewer line to allow for more development in Haliburton village. She believes vacant land along County Road 21 could be developed and turned into housing.

Poverty

Wood-Roberts said she’d like to bring more post-secondary programming to Dysart. “We need to encourage [Fleming] College, or other colleges, to have programs here that are skill-based so people don’t have to leave the community to find other opportunities or learn a trade.” She also believes Dysart needs to continue supporting programs for children living in poverty. “We have agencies we work with together to combat poverty – Point in Time, SIRCH Community Services, the 4Cs Food Bank. There’s no money to be made, but some of our programs are very, very well received by the community.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I think it needs some work. I’ve had many, many people reach out to me with concerns. I do think we need a bylaw, but there needs to be some changes. Right now, enforcement could be very expensive and Dysart taxpayers would be paying 40 per cent of the cost [for policing the bylaw]. That’s a lot of money... And for people who aren’t on a waterfront, I can see why they are totally against [spending that money].”

Short-term rentals

Wood-Roberts believes short-term rentals

that are operating like a business should be regulated. “If I have a cottage and the place beside me is being rented out 52 weeks a year, that’s not a cottage anymore, that’s a commercial enterprise. There should be a municipal accommodation tax on places like that.” She’d like to see the township implement a three-strike policy where, if there are issues with a rental unit or specific owner, Dysart could revoke their license.

Transportation

Due to Dysart’s geographical landscape, Wood-Roberts doesn’t believe a transit system with buses running regular routes would work. “It’s incredibly difficult to provide equal service to everyone everywhere. Transportation systems are never revenue neutral. They come at a great cost to taxpayers... I’m not sure if there would be a big appetite to support such a system [in Dysart or Haliburton County].”

Vision for the future

Wood-Roberts believes the strategic plan Dysart council adopted earlier this year will help guide municipal direction for years to come. “I would like to see that living document move forward, that we follow those principals and guidelines that we’ve set out for ourselves and the community. Dysart needs to grow, but it has to be sustainable and safe. We need to look at how we can improve our services and help all our residents, permanent and seasonal, to enjoy what we have to offer.”

Focus for 2023 budget

“Roads would be a priority. Just driving around areas in ward 2, there are some areas that need brushing, for visibility and safety for pedestrians. Also, I’m not sure housing is going to necessarily be a budget issue, but it’s on the forefront of my mind and is something I will be pushing for.”



Dysart et al ward 2 candidate Nancy Wood-Roberts said her desire to represent more people and become a more well-rounded councillor is behind her move to seek election in ward 2. *Submitted.*

Nancy Wood-Roberts the candidate

Wood-Roberts is a lifelong resident of Dysart. She served as ward 1 representative on council from 1998 to 2003, returning to the role following the 2018 election. She is now looking to represent ward 2. “I just feel to be a more rounded councillor, I need to be able to represent more of the municipality.” She said she is proud of the work she has put in over the past term, having played a pivotal role in the formation of the township’s strategic plan. “My goal would be to improve our service delivery and quality of life for everyone in the municipality.”



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Atkins not impressed by new shoreline bylaw

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Brian Atkins considers himself a professional problem solver, running his own business where he “deals with top-tier clients to address their needs”. He says he’d like to take what he’s learned in his work life and apply it to Dysart council. He is one of the founding members of the Haliburton Waterfront Owners group, who opposed the shoreline preservation bylaw passed by County council in August.

Issues in Dysart et al

“One of the cornerstones of my campaign is solving issues with connectivity. We’re past the point that cell phone and internet are nice to haves.” Atkins said a friend of his passed away earlier this year, noting that, during his time of need, he couldn’t get a cell phone signal. “We need to do everything possible to clear the roadblocks and the hurdles and get [these investments] going. If we want to attract people to the region, you must have strong cell and internet services.”

Amalgamation

“I think it needs to be explored. There’s too much time and energy being wasted by not having everyone on the same page.”

Health

Atkins believes community investment is key to the long-term success of Haliburton Highlands Health Services. “If we were able to chip in a couple hundred thousand dollars for HHHS to buy a piece of equipment, so that [doctors and nurses] want to stay here, then that’s absolutely [what we should do]. To attract these people, we need to invest... If we can do that, the question of having to close a hospital site would disappear, because they will both be utilized and busy.”

Housing

Atkins believes County council needs

to take the lead on identifying areas for large-scale housing development across the Highlands. “There is a lack of action right now. How can you solve a problem when you’re not even looking at the file?” He said the community needed some “quick wins” and promised to consult with staff, both in Dysart and at the County. “I’ll bet a lot of money that there would be solutions just by talking to our staff. We need to engage them and listen to them.” He said he sees “no reason” why tiny homes couldn’t work in Haliburton County.

Poverty

“We need to hang up a sign that says we’re open for business, we’re open to removing roadblocks to get things done in a fast and expedient way. If we do that, the poverty level will start to decrease because people will have jobs. The best way of getting out of poverty is, obviously, to make more money. But if the opportunity isn’t there, you can’t do it. We need to give everyone the tools to allow them to make more money.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Atkins has been one of the biggest critics of the County’s new bylaw. “In the consultant’s report, it says there’s little scientific evidence to the effectiveness of shoreline bylaws. That should have been enough for them to hit the brakes.” His main concern is with the width of the buffer zone between water and undisturbed land, currently set at 20 metres. “It should be five metres max.” He suggests there’s a lack of desire among ratepayers to have a bylaw at all. “I’ve spoken to hundreds of people. You’d be surprised at the number of people that still have no clue this bylaw has been passed... we need to open up the channels of communication so people are aware of what’s going on.”

Short-term rentals

“You need short-term rentals. But it’s

very important to separate the people that are running it as a business as opposed to someone who is renting it just to pay for a new roof. If you’re running it as a business, it needs to be treated like one, and they need to pony up some money and pay the appropriate taxes. They need to kick in their share.”

Transportation

Atkins said he sees the benefit in establishing a municipally-run transit system, but that he’d like it to be self-sustaining. “If it can be run in a net neutral, or even a positive financial position, then we definitely need to explore it. It would allow people to move around the County, we could market Haliburton as a place to do business. We can’t rule anything out at this point, except for running it [at a loss]. We can’t keep going back to the taxpayer and expecting them to pick up the tab over and over again.

Vision for the future

Atkins believes Dysart’s next council needs to do a better job of promoting the community. “We need to write the book on how to attract more people.” He believes the township needs to be more proactive in reaching out to different organizations, such as colleges and universities, to sell the area to recent graduates. “If we can do that, we can be leaders in different fields.”

Focus for 2023 budget

“I want to invest money into things that are going to have a high rate of return. Let’s spend some money and send road crews down for [specialized classes] and teach them so they know how to fix roads and maintain them properly. We can’t keep spending money on the same things over and over again.”

Brian Atkins the candidate

Atkins has been visiting Haliburton



Dysart et al ward 4 candidate Brian Atkins believes Dysart needs to do a better job of marketing itself. Photo by Mike Baker.

County regularly since childhood, purchasing his seasonal property in 2015. “I’m there 95 per cent of the time.” He said his number one priority would be reopening the debate at Dysart council on the shoreline preservation bylaw. “I’ve been on this file since day one. I know the ins and outs. I know all the answers.”



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Evans wants to bring politics ‘back to the community’

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Ron Evans runs an art studio, Indigo Dragonfly, on Kennisis Lake Road, with his wife, Kim. He’s lived in the community since 2009. His professional background is in journalism, live theatre and theatre management. For several years, he’s hosted a weekly show on CanoeFM, 25 O’Clock, under the pseudonym ‘Brother Bill’. He has had a lifelong interest in politics. “I caught the bug when I was 17. I was brought into a municipal campaign for the mayor of Georgina... Nearly 40 years later, this will be my eighth election cycle, either volunteering or working with different government agencies or parties. But this is the first time I’ve been a candidate.”

Issues in Dysart et al

Evans said his number one issue is preserving Dysart’s natural beauty, something he feels props up the local economy. “The preservation of the lakes and surrounding land is everything up here. We’ve already seen what’s happened in Muskoka, their lakes are pretty much toast, and you can’t afford to buy anything there. Kawartha Lakes is the same. If we don’t start doing something, we’re next.”

Amalgamation

“Folks who are actually on [council] might not like it, but I think if the duplication of services is too much then it would make sense to streamline it. I wouldn’t have a problem with amalgamation as long as it’s done properly and all of our needs governmentally are still taken care of.”

Health

Evans would be in favour of maintaining two hospital sites in Haliburton County, though said more needed to be done to attract healthcare workers to relocate to the community. “HHHS [was asking people] to call ahead to see if the emergency department was open over

the summer, and that was an astounding thing to see. I would never think you’d see something like that here.”

Housing

Evans believes Dysart’s next council needs to work closely with local MPP Laurie Scott to lobby for provincial money to help fund new housing developments. “We need more help in this County.” He believes working with Fleming College, or another post-secondary institution, to bring a trades school to the Highlands would also help. “We’re definitely hurting [for people] in a lot of construction areas. Something like a college brings you a built-in workforce to the community.”

Poverty

“It’s really hard to do anything that’s beyond short-term. There are some government programs you can go through to get help, but the results aren’t usually as great as you would hope them to be.” He believes it’s unrealistic to expect businesses in the service industry to offer a living wage to workers, pegged at \$19.42 in Haliburton County pre-pandemic. “To me, it all comes back to human infrastructure. Invest in people and invest in the community... We need to do more brainstorming with places like the chamber of commerce to see if there’s anything we can possibly do that we haven’t thought of.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Evans believes the new shoreline preservation bylaw adopted by County council in August is a good starting point. “Is it perfect? No. Did they have to give up a lot of stuff? Yes, they did. But like any bylaw, it can be changed if it needs to be.” He’s concerned about how the bylaw will be enforced in the future. “If you look at how much work [the bylaw officers] would have to do, how many applications they’re expected to have, it simply doesn’t add up. They’re going to need more people to handle this, to manage this.”

Short-term rentals

“There are, potentially, so many legal issues with this... There are so many questions. If you’re renting to somebody that obviously doesn’t live there full-time, who’s responsible for their conduct? And if you are renting regularly, then aren’t you technically a business? Council is going to have to look at this.” He said STRs were starting to become a problem in some areas, notably around Kennisis and Redstone lakes.

Transportation

Evans said he would be open to exploring public transit if there was enough demand from the community. “You can run a transit system at a deficit, because, really, it’s an investment. But there has to be a certain point where you say ‘no, that’s too much’.” He thinks offering a seasonal service, operational during the busy periods in spring, summer and fall, could work.

Vision for the future

“To be a successful municipal government, we have to look at our infrastructure. I’m not talking just roads and internet; I’m talking about the human portion. Our housing system is in rough shape. There’s no place for people to rent. There’s no low-income housing... I’m really hoping the next council is going to take these issues and run with them.” Evans said he would also focus on bringing new business to Dysart, and improving senior services.

Focus for 2023 budget

Investing in roads and other municipal infrastructure would be Evans’ focus if elected, though he wants to make sure Dysart spends within its means. “We need to be cognizant of where we’re spending the big bucks. That would be, I imagine, police and something else like snow removal. Those are things we would have to look at.”



Dysart et al ward 4 candidate Ron Evans holds a lifelong interest in municipal politics. *Submitted.*

Ron Evans the candidate

Evans has lived in the Highlands permanently since 2009, though has been visiting the County since the 1980s. “I really want to take the politics out of the government and give it back to the community and be as transparent as possible.” If elected, he would host regular town hall meetings, or a monthly or bi-monthly basis, to hear the public’s concerns and take them back to council.



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Hughes to focus on creating housing, jobs

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

After working in healthcare for several years prior to the pandemic, Hayden Hughes shifted careers when he moved to the Highlands in 2020. He's now a contractor, specializing in framing. While he's never run for municipal office, Hughes served as the New Blue Ontario candidate in Barrie-Springwater-Oro Medonte in June's provincial election.

Issues in Dysart et al

Hughes said his major concerns heading into this election are housing, transportation and health care. He's concerned about Dysart's senior population and wants to ensure they have the services they need to continue living independently. "The best outcome is to have people aging in their own homes, so that they're not institutionalized, and keep them out of hospitals... the cost of living now is a problem. If the electricity price goes up, and you're on a fixed income with most of your paycheck going to warming your house, how are you supposed to pay for those extra hours of home care, or groceries, that you need?" He believes council should be doing more to support the elder population.

Amalgamation

"I have mixed emotions. I know government is necessary, but I don't like when it tries to overreach, expand or gain power. The amalgamation of things like roads [departments] would be amazing, especially for plowing... But amalgamation of the actual municipalities? I would like to get a bit more information on the area, what the people [want to do]. I'm honestly not sure how I feel about it."

Health

Hughes hopes Haliburton County can continue to support two hospital sites. "Staffing is the main issue. Doctors are needed everywhere. Assuming we're not creating our own doctors here, why would

they choose to come to Haliburton if their spouse can't find a job? If there's nowhere to live? If a doctor or a nurse is single, there's nothing for them to do here. What it comes down to is growth. We need to build our services and grow."

Housing

Prior to purchasing his home, Hughes had major issues finding a place to live in Haliburton. "Trying to find a place to rent was next to impossible... I did some couch surfing, some short-term rentals... you can't even get started with building a life as a young person because you don't have a place to live." Hughes said council needs to work with developers to create more homes in Dysart. He suggested the township should consider expanding its sewage treatment facility, or building a new one, to ensure multi-unit builds can be serviced.

Poverty

Hughes believes council needs to work to bring more business, specifically manufacturing as those jobs tend to pay more than minimum wage. He thinks the township should be doing more to help vulnerable residents. "The amount of money people are going to be spending for heating this winter, it's going to really pinch the pockets of a lot of our constituents... It would be nice if we were able to retrofit some houses away from propane or natural gas... to electrical baseboard heating. I think council needs to be proactive in coming up with solutions, because a lot of people are struggling."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Hughes called the County's recently-adopted shoreline preservation bylaw a "necessary evil". While he sympathized with property owners against the bylaw, he said it was needed to protect lake health. "I don't like a bylaw that restricts people's independence with their own property, but we're just trying to figure out a way that we can protect the water, protect the

native species and kind of balance out the eco-system." He believes the document still needs some work. "There are still a lot of unanswered questions... especially with septic."

Short-term rentals

Hughes believes there are bigger issues. "Our job should be to try to get a better budget to work with so we can do these great things in the future. Where we are right now, it seems like this is going to add expense to our budgets by hiring compliance officers and people to do all the paperwork. I'm not sure if we're ready for that right now."

Transportation

Hughes believes Dysart needs to introduce some mode of public transportation. "There's a lot of people who, right now, can't get to and from work because there are next to no [transportation] options. It doesn't have to be too extravagant; it doesn't have to be creating a high-speed rail, just more access." He said it was especially important to establish more options for people with accessibility issues, expanding on the Dymo bus service Dysart already offers.

Focus for 2023 budget

"The first thing I would do is look at what we currently have in place financially. Then look at how we can grow our income, but also save some money as well." He would lobby to expand Dysart's transportation service for people with accessibility issues. Hughes would like to see the township invest money into hosting more community events during the winter.

Hayden Hughes the candidate

Hughes recently purchased a home in Dysart after relocating to the area from Barrie in 2020. "I want to make this place home for my future family, I want to see it grow in the right direction. I decided



Dysart et al ward 4 candidate Hayden Hughes wants to give back to the community he has grown to love. *Submitted.*

to get involved so I could help steer us in the right direction." Hughes lives in ward 2, but said he decided to run in ward 4 because "it's a beautiful place... it's pretty diverse, has a lot of beautiful lakeshores we need [to protect]."



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Sawyer says County 'overstepped' with shoreline bylaw

By Mike Baker

Qualifications

Carm Sawyer is a mechanic and has owned West Guilford Auto Centre for more than 20 years. He has volunteered on several community boards, including the West Guilford Community Centre and the fireworks committee. He is also a former member of Haliburton Rotary. "I know a lot of people and I talk to a lot of people – that would be helpful if I'm going to help this community."

Issues in Dysart et al

His main issue is the shoreline preservation bylaw, passed by County council in August. "Everybody is so misinformed, and they have no idea what this new bylaw really means. We didn't need another bylaw. Nobody is enforcing the tree cutting bylaw we have in place now, so they're wasting all this money to put another bylaw in, that again, won't be enforced."

Amalgamation

Sawyer said he didn't have enough information to make an informed decision over whether Haliburton County's four lower-tier municipalities should come together to form one single-tier government. "I don't think it'll work, because there's just too much geographic area, it would spread people thin... I'd need to look into it more to give a definitive answer."

Health

"Maintaining two hospitals is very important. If you're in West Guilford and need to get to the hospital, it's a lot quicker going to Haliburton than Minden." He doesn't believe the township can do much to attract more healthcare workers to the community. "It's no different than any other business... This is a huge problem across all Ontario. There just aren't people there for the job. So, I don't know how we're going to fix that."

Housing

"I don't think there is a solution. It's not just Dysart that has this problem, it's every community Ontario-wide and Canada-wide. I don't know how we're going to fix it. We can rally for affordable housing, but council would need to work together. This isn't a one-man thing. We all need to put our heads together. I'm hoping that as a council we can all sit down and be rational and on the same page. Maybe then there will be something we can do."

Poverty

"I don't understand, personally, why there's poverty... Have you been to any grocery stores? Tim Hortons? Anywhere, basically? Everyone has a help wanted sign up... I think we need to look into poverty, obviously. But we need to somehow educate or inform people about the jobs that are out there. We just have to get people connected."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Acknowledging that the recently-passed shoreline preservation bylaw isn't likely to just disappear, Sawyer said he'd like to see more in the bylaw focusing on septic tanks. "I don't agree with what we're doing, but we've got to come up with some sort of compromise." He applauded Dysart council for not delegating authority to the County, believing that's something that should be handled at the lower-tier level.

Short-term rentals

"We've got to look into the short-term rentals and come up with a compromise everybody can live with. I think we could come up with a licensing fee and inspection fee, make sure the septic is being pumped. There are some very good policies out there... I think they need to be regulated, and with the licensing, the income would be great for the municipality."

Transportation

Sawyer doesn't believe a wide-scale public transportation system will ever be feasible for Haliburton County. "Let's say they had someone who wanted to get from Kennisis Lake to Minden, or from Dorset to Wilberforce, how are you going to schedule that? I think there's just too much distance between everyone to have any kind of schedule." He did say a single line connecting Haliburton and Minden, or Haliburton and Carnarvon could work.

Vision for the future

"The last four years, Dysart has been stagnant. We need to get over that. I hope 10 years from now it can be like it was years ago, when everybody had a job, everybody was busy. We really need to get back to that. I know the pandemic set us back a lot, but we will grow. We just need to get everybody busy and try and get everybody getting along again."

Focus for 2023 budget

"Everybody is going to be upset with the budget this year, because everything has doubled in cost. So many things are costing a lot more now... Nobody wants taxes up, but everybody also wants everything done. We have to sit down and figure out what's important and what [can wait]." He admitted the budget process would be a learning curve for him.

Carm Sawyer the candidate

"I have lived in West Guilford my whole life. I only moved once, and that was from one side of my lake to the other... I've raised my family here and am a part of this community." He said he put his name forward after hearing several members of council weren't planning to return, feeling the need to step up for his community. "I think I'd do a great job. I've had a lot of people come in to see me and talk to me. I've had people tell me their concerns, which is important because if I don't know them, I can't take them to council."



Dysart et al ward 4 candidate Carm Sawyer said he put his name in to run after hearing many incumbents were stepping away. *Submitted.*



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Highlands East



Burton to campaign on experience in HE mayoral race

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Served four terms on Highlands East council and six years on Oro-Medonte. Has been a County warden, chair of the Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus, Eastern Ontario Regional Network and Good Roads. He was self-employed (water well drilling) most of his working life. He also sold bottled water. He's a former volunteer firefighter.

Amalgamation

"I've said all along, let's get the service delivery review in place and let's see how we make out with that. I'm fully willing to look at (amalgamation). It's going to take experience and some special people on council to look into it and see what may benefit the municipality and taxpayers. With the service delivery review, we might be able to share staff as that's one of my main concerns right now is getting qualified people that can commit to the municipal sector."

Health

"Are we doing enough? I guess my question back to you is how much is enough? I think we've come a long way with what we're doing. We expect full partnership with HHHS to do what we have to do as far as recruitment. But it's probably never enough. So, there is a line we are going to have to draw." Burton added, "one hospital probably would have been good for Haliburton County. I believe one would have been better if it could have been located in the right spot. I suppose that was the politics of the day." As for lobbying the province for a CAT scan and fundraising for it, he said he is 100 per cent supportive.

Housing

"The province has looked into the Provincial Policy Statement to make housing, especially affordable housing, a little easier to get. For me to try to do some housing with the way the rules and laws are now, I'd be looking at probably a six-plex or a four-plex. That's fine. The septic and well can manage it. I'm willing to look into that if we can find a good place close to the hamlets. So, if people don't have a vehicle, they can walk to get what they need. "I would partner with any of the groups, builders and province to try to get that in place. One of our committees in Highlands East was tasked with reducing the size of our accommodations. We did that and talked about building granny flats etc."



Dave Burton is seeking a fifth term on Highlands East council. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Poverty

"What can be done about food insecurity? Our food hub. We provide in-kind support. We want to make sure people are getting the food they need. I'm very proud of our community gardens and letting people grow their own food."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Burton voted in favour of the shoreline preservation bylaw at County council last month. "We've spent five years trying to wrestle this thing. A lot of dollars have been spent, mostly consulting people and looking to see what the community really wanted. I'm a bit sad that in some places it has become an election issue. I have not heard a lot of negative things. It's the protection of the lakes."

Short-term rentals

"I am adamant that people be safe and accountable. In Highlands East, we encourage STRs for the right reasons. I have a list of pros and cons. It has put stress on our waste disposal, and on our emergency services, police, ambulance and fire. "As for budgeting for enforcement, he added, "we have to do that ... Part of the concern is we have to get the owner or somebody at the place to be able to meet with bylaw or police so we can do something. Numbers [of people

staying] has been a big concern but the County is working on a formula of two per bedroom and maybe two floaters, so a three-bedroom cottage would be allowed eight people, which the septs were probably designed for."

Transportation

"I take a lot of pride in what we've done in Highlands East with the Bancroft Community Transit. We have Hyland Taxi and TOK Coachlines. At the County, we've tried a couple of different things over the years. I actually think if someone can make it work, it will be a bus line such as Hammond."

Vision for the future

"To help create a vibrant, inclusive municipality and County. We're there to put systems in place and opportunities for everybody. I'm not going to tell you that in 10 years we're going to have a Tim Hortons on every corner or whatever. Nobody can project that. I'm hoping we have in 10 years' time a community that is safe and sound, healthy, environmentally-friendly, and green. But we need experienced mayors to do this. Highlands East and the County grew during COVID. My concern is now that more people are here, we have to find something for them to do, and ensure they're safe, so have [access to] hospitals, landfills, it's been a juggling act."

He said he knows as mayor he has some say over planning the future, "but that will be up to the people that elect us." Our committees, for example, provide valuable insight to council.

Highlands East

"The major challenge right now – and it's going to take experience to do this – is to get us back on our feet after COVID." As for HE's vision, he said, "one thing I would like to do, right after the election, is sit down with council and take our strategic plan and have a look at it. The one we have in place now has been a moving document and I'd like to maybe pull it out. I don't want to say dust it off, after COVID, but let's get focused again to possibly look at a crystal ball and see what might be there in 10 years. Now, it's hard for me to say."

Dave Burton the candidate

"I'm going to campaign on experience. We need experience at County council. I've had people say they hope I can bring that experience and I certainly will. I've prided myself, I have put all my morals, principles, and standards to work doing what I'm doing ... and I find it extremely difficult to step aside. I think it reflects well on me, and my council, that three-quarters have been acclaimed."



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Ellis would bring hands-on expertise to the job

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

The Highlander asked Ellis why she was running for mayor, not councillor. “I thought maybe I could make more of a difference.” She said her background is in human resource management, including finance, payroll, compensation, and dealing with people. She spent 13 years working in the County roads department. She recently helped conduct the 2021 Census and took a casual job at a long-term care home in Bancroft to get out during COVID. She’s also travelled.

Amalgamation

“I don’t think amalgamation is going to solve any problems. The smaller municipalities would lose our voice and service levels and have a tax increase. In the more rural areas, we’d be paying for services that we don’t use, such as water, sewer, garbage pickup. If it wasn’t implemented perfectly and thought through very carefully, I think it could end up being a costly endeavour. I don’t think that’s something we should be moving forward with yet.”

Health

Ellis acknowledges health care personnel shortages. However, she said the County is trying to recruit family physicians and emergency room doctors. She said the province provides incentives, too. She said people can go to regional hospitals to see specialists and avail themselves of telemedicine. Asked whether there should be just one larger hospital in the Highlands, instead of two smaller ones, Ellis said, “I don’t like closing down any kind of health care thing. They should stay open if we possibly can do it.”

Housing

“Homes for People [Places for People] have approached Highlands East in the past. I think that definitely should be revisited. A condominium company met with Highlands East about building condominiums in Cardiff. I would certainly be interested in inviting more interested builders like that. The Ontario government is talking about expediting the process for building permits etc. I think the rental review people should look at some of their policies and give back some more control to the homeowners. I think that would open up a lot more homes.”

Poverty

“We have the food bank. We have the outreach in Highland Grove. So, if you need something, for example, a sofa, it’s close. If you can’t afford to pay, you don’t have to pay. So, as a community, as a whole, they are pitching in to help. But as far as the municipality goes, the only thing I can think of is to encourage people to fill the vacant job positions that are available



Cheryl Ellis is running for mayor of Highlands East for the second time. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

right now.”

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“We’re not the first place to bring that in. I think it’s a good idea. Maybe the 30 metres is a little bit much [The County actually passed the bylaw at 20 metres] but they did the studies and proved it’s the best way to go about the shoreline preservation because of the erosion.”

Short-term rentals

“The County is looking for feedback from the community and listening. They have not moved forward yet. They’re wanting to monitor septic capacities and noise, which is a problem, as is parking. But we do have people monitoring the septic systems, and the cottage associations keep an eye on stuff like that.” She added, “Council and cottage associations should be able to find something that works for both of them.” Asked if she does not think they should be registered and licenced, Ellis said, “my fears about licensing and regulating is how much legality is that going to put on each one of the municipalities? So, we can say it’s safe for you to rent that cottage and then something happens in that cottage. What are the legalities that are going to come back on Highlands East?”

Transportation

“I’d look to other municipalities with similar demographics and see what they’ve attempted. Do the research to see which direction we should go instead of just jumping in blindly. There’s gas tax

funding. I’ve read up on this on-demand service. It sounds like Uber, but it’s not Uber.”

Vision for the future

“I’d like to see the businesses we have stay because I think they’re actually meeting all of our needs. So, as far as bringing any new businesses, we don’t need to. I don’t believe in moving forward that way. I believe in supporting what we have.” As for the population surge, and dealing with it, she said in part, “tell the cities, you’re not gonna’ fix your problem by sending people to rural communities.” She added, “I think if we can sustain what we do have right now it will make everything more prosperous.” Asked for her plan for prosperity, she said, “I cannot because that’s a problem that starts at the federal level and trickles right down to our level.”

Highlands East

“There needs to be a considerable amount of change in the way council thinks.” Asked what she meant, she said, “how they’re looking at things. Instead of basically sitting there, policies and everything, start listening to the people and bringing more of that stuff into the council meetings. I just figured there needs to be more conversations between the community members and the council.” Asked how she would bring that about, Ellis said, “I would encourage all the councillors to listen to everybody and don’t brush them off. If it sounds like something that the rest of us on council need to hear, bring it forward. Everybody’s open to new ideas and let’s all explore everything.”

She said the biggest challenge is post-COVID recovery.

Cheryl Ellis the candidate

“With human resource management, it’s all trained skills that would really be an asset to this position. I know what goes into road maintenance. I was also a volunteer firefighter. I have a feel for how municipalities are run. I have lot of ideas. I would like to see some way to keep our young families in the area. If we keep our young families, we keep our schools, we keep our stores, we keep our towns alive.” Asked how she would do that, she said, “we need more jobs.” How would she help create them? “I think we should go back to the old days. Whenever you could, you only hired within the municipality in which you lived. I know it sounds like discrimination, but there’s still countries that do it. If you’re not a resident there, they’re not giving you a job.” She would also like to see more incentives for training and transportation. “I don’t have experience sitting there and listening and approving and all that, but whenever they start talking finances or grants or legislation, road improvements any of that stuff, I understand a lot. My areas of expertise are more hands-on.”

Dahms brings ‘personal connections’ to Highlands East

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Janice Dahms worked in the hospitality industry and then at a spa in Eagle Lake. She now works at a service station in Highlands East. “I feel I have a good understanding of our community and our people having that hospitality backing then working in the tourism industry.”

Amalgamation

“To some degree, I agree with it. I don’t think every aspect of all the municipalities should be amalgamated. But, for example, shared road maintenance could be something that is taken under one umbrella. So certain services, social services probably would work better as a whole, whereas other things [should be] kept to their own municipalities.” Haliburton County, along with all four townships, has been working to increase collaboration on services such as road maintenance and more since 2021.

Health

“I believe having the two hospitals is beneficial, given the sheer size of our County... it’s ‘is this person now having to drive 40 minutes instead of 20 minutes to get to the hospital?’ The staffing issue is something that’s common everywhere whether it be healthcare or your local restaurant or grocery store. It is an issue that hopefully as time goes on, will start leveling out. But I really do believe that keeping the two hospitals running is beneficial to most people.”

Housing

“I’d like to find out what [Highlands East] can or can’t do. I don’t have access to any of that information at this point in time... In an ideal world, I’d say, let’s take a chunk of land because we have lots of land in this County. Can we not approach developers and create some kind of incentive program to maybe build affordable houses with rent geared to income, like we have a complex in Wilberforce that has been running successfully for a few decades now.” (Information on municipal incentives that can be offered to developers and Ontario’s regulations regarding municipal control over housing developments can be found publicly online).



Janice Dahms is a candidate for Highlands East ward 2. *Photo by Sam Gillett.*

Poverty

“We obviously have our food banks and our heat banks. We need to continue to work with our partners, to have their services accessible to everybody.” When asked to specify what working with the partners would look like, Dahms said she’d like to volunteer or help organizations find other partners in the community to offer services.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I personally am very supportive of it. I do live on the lake as well. I like to see the naturalized shorelines and their preservation. I have seen the total opposite going on as well. I’ve seen people come in and clear-cut their properties.” She said the bylaw is “a work in progress.”

Transportation

“I do believe it’s something really neat to have, in what capacity I’m not exactly sure.” As an example, she said at prior

jobs, such as Sir Sam’s Inn, “people couldn’t physically get up to Eagle Lake from Haliburton. So, to have just any form of a public transportation system to get from A to B to C would be beneficial for everybody.” She pointed to the TROUT bus in Bancroft, which is operated by Bancroft Community Transit, as an example of a community transportation system.

Vision for the future

“I want to see our community continue to grow and prosper, get healthy, recover from the pandemic, and everything that happened to it.” When asked about her role in seeing that growth and prosperity come, Dahms said that could include helping organize new volunteer groups.

Highlands East

“I feel that there hasn’t been [a connect] between the public and the council. I know council has [meeting] agendas and things that they have to do and follow. But I feel there’s not enough community input into what’s going on in council.”

When asked to specify how council could improve community input or communication, she said “I don’t know that... I’ve been watching meetings in the past. But I don’t have enough experience hands-on to know what goes on even behind the scenes of some of the council meetings.”

Janice Dahms the candidate

“I was sort of feeling that things do need to change. Everything has to evolve, always, and nothing is going to change or evolve unless changes are brought forward. So, coming in as a new person into the political scene I’m hoping that I can bring some fresh perspectives, concerns and interests of other people... I’m really hoping that people will get to know me and be comfortable enough to call, email or text with any of their thoughts or concerns, and hopefully, I can address them or at least get them answers if I don’t have an answer for them directly.”

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Lewis wants to be ‘hands-on’ councillor

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Angela Lewis was was a maintenance manager for 15 years and now works at HHHS. “With that goes a lot of the inspections, health inspections, fire inspections, keeping up with codes and keeping compliant with all of the codes.” She also served on Highlands East’s fire committee, where she advocated against the closure of the Highland Grove fire hall. Through that process she said she learned about delegations and council conduct.

Amalgamation

She said she does not support amalgamating Haliburton County, and said she has spoken with many other locals who echo her views. She said Highlands East has already amalgamated, which negatively impacted the community. “There doesn’t seem to be unity. We have to change that.”

Health

“I think we’re doing a pretty good job of it now.” Lewis said the health services may be short-staffed, but she said that’s similar in most industries at the moment. She said attracting healthcare staff may mean enhancing branding of the Highlands as a place to live for nurses or doctors. She did not specify how this could be done differently than the efforts employed by Haliburton County’s doctor recruiter, who currently works part-time to attract doctors to the area.

Housing

Lewis said she’d like to look into the possibility of running pilots of tiny houses, and investigating whether the County can attract apartments or more duplexes. “Even where I work, I see young families being told to go to a shelter. That’s sad.” She said she’d vote to approve housing on environmentally-protected areas or near wetlands, “to achieve affordable housing for working families. They need a place to live.”

Poverty

She said the local economy is “booming. We just need a sustainable industry. We need extra training for people. A lot of times, it’s seasonal work, and you can’t get ahead.” She said to combat this, the township could look at running training sessions out of its community centres to help equip workers with in-demand skills.



Angela Lewis is a candidate for Highlands East ward 2. Photo by Sam Gillett.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

Lewis said the bylaw was needed to secure lake health and healthy habitats. “They did their homework... they spent a lot of time on it. It wasn’t just a decision that they made overnight.”

Transportation

“There’s a lot of people in the community who volunteer for those things. And, so, I think that it [can’t be] publicly funded unless you can get a grant from the government. I just don’t see that there’s a need for it.”

Short-term rentals

She said she’d support looking at licensing short-term rental operators. She said housing shortages may be made worse by short-term rentals, but the local economy has benefitted from rental activity. “When I look at it, the economy is great. But I also talk to people that live beside one

of them. And it’s not fun for them. But there are already noise bylaws enforced.” A noise bylaw for Highlands East is currently being developed.

Vision for the future

“I would love to see our community with all the same amenities we have and more. I’d like the next generation to have the same opportunities that we did. At one time, we had mills, we had industry, people could walk from Wilberforce to go to work and go home and didn’t even need a vehicle.... it would be nice to see those things come back.” She said a first step to achieving this could be hosting town hall meetings where residents can chat about their hopes for the community.”

Highlands East

Lewis said she’d like to see the community add amenities and create opportunities for the next generation. When asked to specify how she could help bring industry and more community amenities, Lewis said the first steps to

achieve that would be to look at planning for the township. She also said town hall meetings could be a valuable way to bring the community together to talk about its future.

Angela Lewis the candidate

Lewis said she’d be a “hands on” councillor. When asked to specify what that means, Lewis gave an example of getting a complaint about how dark one resident’s street was. She went out there to see first-hand and talked to the resident about the issue. “So, if somebody is saying, the roads are terrible, then I’ll grab a coffee and take a drive, and we’ll see how much slops all over me...” she said. “I still work full-time, and I will continue to work full-time. But it’s really important. It’s four years, it’s a huge sacrifice but I’m willing to do it. And I think everybody, as I said, that has put their nomination [for council positions] knows that.”