

Deputy Mayor Alnwick Haldimand

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Municipal Elections

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What distinguishes the role of deputy mayor compared to a councillor in your mind?

While all members of our Council share the same responsibilities under the Municipal Act, the Deputy Mayor plays an increased leadership role especially around setting the tone, and attending events when the Mayor is unavailable. As your Deputy Mayor, I will continue to be your trusted voice who stands up for the community.

How would you describe the township's financial picture and what would you specifically recommend be done during your term on council?

The financial picture in Alnwick Haldimand is currently ok but headed in a concerning direction. The Roads Needs Study and the OSIM report outline what work needs to be done for our roads, bridges, culverts and ditches. More money is needed to maintain this infrastructure. This means that the incoming Council needs to be serious about getting the finances in order with a sustainable plan to ensure future stability. First, the township needs to complete our Asset Management Plan. This is essential to ensure we are grant eligible, and that costs are minimized by making ongoing repairs rather than costly replacements. Council needs to review service levels and conditions of all assets. Challenging discussions and decisions will need to happen. With the recreational facilities we are fortunate to have many community members willing to step up and assist with developing future plans and finding revenue sources. With the affordability crisis impacting our residents (28% accessed a food bank last year), the incoming Council will need to rely on better use of existing money within the budget. Having sat at the table during the last budget, I know that there is money that can be better utilized. Tax increases need to be kept at the cost of inflation. Being grant ready is essential.

How would you characterize the relationship between residents, township staff, and politicians giving specific examples providing detailed recommendations of possible changes to concerns you raise?

My experience is very mixed. We have many wonderful people doing wonderful things! We had a fantastic celebration of outstanding members of our community at our Canada Day Civic Awards event. At the door, I hear good things about our roads crew and library staff. On the other hand, there is more anger and frustration now than at any point in my 34 years in this community. There is frustration about how decisions are made and implemented. People are sad to see some of their beloved facilities not receiving the level of care that they received in the past. There is concern about a lack of transparency and the tone of discourse. Leaders set the tone within an organization. Electing people who respect their role as a member of council as outlined in the Municipal Act matters. That is, it is important to elect people with a commitment to and understanding of their role in setting policy, financial stewardship and as a representative of the community. Responsible, respectful representation is what we need. I commit to bringing responsible, respectful representation into every meeting and interaction.

Name one or more specific actions you would take to address voter's concerns related to community safety?

Community safety is provided primarily through our fire department and OPP. The EMS services are co-located at the Roseneath Fire Hall. These are properly funded by the township and serve us well. Another component of safety is a sense of connection with neighbours. Programs through the library and at our community centres are important in bringing about these connections. In order to implement these programs, I will work with the other members of Council to update policies to strengthen the working partnerships between the library and recreation department, as well as community providers and the recreation department. Updates to the volunteer involvement policies for both Advisory Committees and working groups such as Adopt-a-Park/Facility will provide the township with increased resources through the generous gifts of time and talent of residents. The result will be expanded opportunities for more programs which will increase people's sense of well-being.

How would you address the creation of affordable housing, giving three specific items you would introduce during your term on council? How many units would you want to see created by the end of your term?

1. Through my efforts in this past term, the foundation is in place to move ahead with changes to the Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw early in the coming term. These include determining opportunities for four-season land leases and smaller units including duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes.
2. Another opportunity being investigated is moving forward with Communal Services for Septic, which would allow for gentle intensification in hamlets. Ideally, it would be used to build a new facility similar to the wonderful Haldimand Court Apartments which has been providing affordable units for seniors for over 40 years. In 2025, I organized an information session for planners, politicians and builders to learn more. Provincial money is being made available to support these initiatives.
3. At a minimum, Alnwick Haldimand needs to meet its commitment to the Northumberland Housing Strategy of 3 units per year. Given that the housing crisis has worsened since the strategy was developed in 2016, and the 2021 census put the number of inadequately housed people in AH over 300, we should aim much higher. Being willing to act on the crisis is the biggest need. Words must turn into actions.

How would you implement the More Homes Built Faster Act locally. giving two examples?

This Act has helped get units built in Alnwick Haldimand. Families do take advantage of the "As-of-Right" Units that permits up to three residential units (like a main house with a basement apartment and a garden suite) on most land zoned for a single-family home without needing a local by-law change. The township is streamlining approvals through new software improvements. Ensuring that our processes are easy to navigate needs to be a priority. Also, through the Official Plan and Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw update happening this coming year, the township can look for further opportunities to get the affordable housing built that people need. Single family dwellings cannot be the only easy option. Options for multiplexes, four-season leases and garden suites need to be included and easy to navigate.

What are your views on Strong Mayor powers and their use?

A team is stronger than an individual.
When Strong Mayor powers were first introduced, I made the motion, supported by all of Council, to send a letter opposing the direction and the use of Strong Mayor powers.

What specific steps would you take to support local business?

Agriculture is our largest business. The agricultural community needs to be considered more in decisions. I would look at including Agricultural Impact as a section in all reports. Tourism is our second largest business. Improvements to signage, more electric chargers and a strong connection to Northumberland County's tourism strategy will benefit local businesses. It is my hope that one of the Advisory Committees established by the incoming Council would be a Community Economic Development Committee. I feel that incorporating both agriculture and tourism within one committee will increase understanding and nurture inter-connections that benefit both.

What are your plans to support recreational facilities and parks?

I will vigorously advocate for a strong role for volunteers. This is outlined in Sec. 8 of The Parks Master Plan and aligns with the Recommendations from the Recreation Committee. It is what I hear from many wonderful residents who wish to share their time and talents. Working with the others on Council, I will update our policies to make this happen.

I will strongly advocate for a recreation funding plan that equitably serves the municipality. In the 2025 Budget Survey, residents responded that they were most pleased with fire and the library. Both of these departments operate with three hubs. I believe this successful structure should apply to the Parks and Recreation department too.

I want the arena project to succeed so that Grafton ends up with a highly utilized facility that serves the community well for the next 30 years. I will work with Council, other levels of government, staff, community partners, the library, the Legion, and volunteers to bring more people to the table. I will keep working to get a solid financial plan in place. I will not support an arena plan that drives up costs for the taxpayer. These will be very difficult discussions. I have faith that the incoming Council and our community have the capacity to wrestle through this process and that we will end up with a great community centre in Grafton.

What is a reasonable municipal tax rate or increase? How would you achieve this, giving specific budget areas or line items?

Given the affordability crisis impacting so many in our community, tax increases must be minimized. However, the municipality cannot fall behind thereby increasing future costs for infrastructure deficits. This means increases in close alignment to inflation. This creates a challenge since Alnwick Haldimand has not completed its Asset Management Plan and does not have a plan for closing the infrastructure deficit. Money will need to be found within the existing budget necessitating difficult decisions about service levels. One area where money can be found and utilized for infrastructure is money used to negotiate the first Union contract that will not be required in future years.

What is a reasonable increase to the OPP budget? Give specific services or line items you would adjust to reach this goal?

We will need to see the size of the increase being sought. If it is the maximum of 11% or approx. \$120,000, AH will need to make cuts in other departments. Input from other Council members and staff will help guide my decision. My first thought is that the facility work at the fire stations has been largely completed so that line may have some wiggle room and get us half way to where we need to be.

Name four new initiatives you plan to implement over your term to improve the quality of life for everyone in the municipality?

1. Good governance with a focus on long-term thinking and a meaningful role for Advisory Committees to improve decision making.
2. Asset Management based budgeting to improve financial stewardship.
3. Review of Procedural bylaw to allow for better public participation.
4. Policies that support a meaningful role for volunteers to allow our parks and facilities to operate at their full potential and for Advisory Committees to help Council accomplish more.

How are you uniquely qualified to be elected to council that no one else can provide, but also giving at least one guilty pleasure?

My knowledge and understanding of our community, my trusted relationships with the people I represent, my extensive governance experience, and my term on Council combine to make me the person best positioned to be our Deputy Mayor. I am an incumbent advocating for change, and committing to do better, while providing the institutional knowledge to ensure the changes are targeted and effective.

Guilty pleasure: I love having the children around so that I can build sand castles and ride my sled down the hill.

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