

Alnwick-Haldimand Township

Alnwick-Haldimand Township Council Candidate



Municipal Elections

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2026 SHELTER VALLEY RD

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Jim McCormack for Council - Facebook and Instagram

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

I attended the 2026 Budget meetings and was disappointed at the process in place and how it was approved. Actuals from previous years and projected actuals were not provided. Line items showed varying increases and in some cases fairly significant yet there were no explanations or rationale as to why. I am confident there is room in the existing operating budget that can be utilized in capital projects. I do support a dedicated infrastructure levy being in place. I would advocate for changes to the budget process. This would include meeting as a Budget Committee to formulate a draft budget prior to being brought forward to Council for final approval. This would include a 2 week period where the draft budget is available for public comments prior to approval and that Council receives all comments. I would request that previous years actuals along with projected actuals be included in budget documents. I would also seek to include rationale for any line items that have increased by \$2,000 or more. Overall I am concerned with the current financial picture however further analysis is required. This may include the need for a review of the most recent audited statements and if necessary a forensic audit. I am also concerned with the lack of success in capitalizing on various grant opportunities and would place this as a high priority to help offset costs.

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?

As I have been speaking to residents during my campaign, it has become clear that residents are discouraged with confidence in our local government. Residents don't feel like their voices are being heard and that decisions are being made with little opportunity for input. Examples include the recent decision to terminate the Integrity Commissioner after the recommendation to release resignation letters from volunteers on various committees. The lack of planning and determining the financial plan for the arena project is another example of this distrust. I have outlined a plan to help repair this relationship and gain back the trust. We must provide the mechanisms to allow for meaningful public engagement. This would include Town Hall style meetings where we engage in conversations on specific topics. It includes adding Question Period to all Council meetings. It means posting information related to important decisions in advance to the final decision to allow for public feedback. It means changing how we do business from a decision making perspective to include proper use of Committee of the Whole prior to final Council decisions. It includes developing policies related to response times for staff and council when enquiries are received. It includes reviewing when and how FOI is utilized and when we should just provide the information. It includes the review of Boards and Committees that seeks input from our community. These are just some of the examples as to how we can regain public trust.

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

Speeding seems to be the main concern I have been hearing. I would propose a review of the Townships contract with the OPP to determine what contractual obligations there are and ensure they are being implemented. If no contractual obligations exist I would support working with the OPP to determine what opportunities exist. I would also look to our Public Works staff to identify what mechanisms are in place particularly in community safety zones but also in other areas where known problems exist to determine what traffic calming measures can be put in place.

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?

I would seek to continue the work of the Municipal Housing Task Force currently in place and look to recommendations being brought forward. I would also want to work with our planning Department to identify what processes can be implemented to seek mixed housing opportunities when developers come forward. I do not have any targets related to number of units. I would be only one voice on Council and identifying targets is not responsible

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

Our municipality is expected to see growth rates continue on the current rate of 1.5% to 2%. Our ability for substantial growth is very limited given the amount of land designated as Oak Ridges Moraine and Agricultural that limit growth. Any growth should be limited to the existing hamlets. Decisions around growth must be targeted and account for infrastructure requirements with respect to existing and new and how that impacts the municipal budgets both short and long term. I do not support the Lakeport Development that had previously been brought forward. I do support a review of our current Official Plan.

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

I do not support Strong Mayor powers. I believe it is unnecessary and damaging to the democratic process of municipal governments.

What specific steps would you take to support local business?

I would first need an understanding of what the challenges are for our existing businesses and how they are related to local government. That could be through organizations such as the Northumberland Chamber of Commerce or the Economic Development department with the County. This could also include a review of any applicable bylaws that create red tape for local businesses whether existing or new.

What are your plans to support recreational facilities and parks?

One of my first priorities would be requesting that the necessary upgrades to Nauwatin Nature Sanctuary are completed by the fall of 2027. In addition I would like to see the park in Centreton on County Road 22 re-opened and that staff work with local sports organizations such as Northumberland Minor Soccer to determine if there is a need to provide pitches at that location. I continue to support our community centres. It was made loud and clear at the December meeting at Fenella Hall that the community wants these facilities to remain in public hands. A review of how these buildings are being used and models on their management need to be explored. This may include bringing back the community centre boards or a hybrid approach. The arena project will be completed in December yet there is still approximately \$2 million dollars to be raised. I support the work being completed by the volunteer fundraising committee. Long term, we need to look at what other projects are required at this facility (ie. AODA Compliance) and determine long term impacts. Another area that requires attention are the condition of our municipal boat launches as there are currently some in poor condition that pose a liability risk. I would support the development of a policy related to Parkland Cash In Lieu versus parkland acquisition when applicable for developments that come forward. These funds can be used to fund upgrades to parks and playgrounds.

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

Ideally we need to align tax increases with COLA. I would set this as the standard during budget deliberations. I do support an infrastructure levy to build back our reserves for future capital upgrades. A detailed review of the operating budget is necessary and I am confident there are efficiencies that can be achieved specifically in the Parks and Recreation budget as well as Fire and Emergency Services. I would support to undertake an organizational review which could also identify efficiencies. The township is not capitalizing on operating and capital grant programs. This also needs improvements. For example, salaries for summer students can be subsidized by up to 50% through grants.

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

Unfortunately the OPP increases are directed by the OPP. Should those increases be unrealistic or detrimental I would propose a review of the contract to look for efficiencies or look at areas where cost savings through cooperation with neighboring municipalities may be possible

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

Review Roads budgets to enhance maintenance and capital upgrades
Change decision making processes for Council to allow more time for review by the public and Council prior to decision making process.
Improve communications and public engagement as outlined in my platform with the outcome to build back public trust.
Complete and utilize the Asset Management Plan to improve infrastructure

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

I retired 5 years ago after a 33 year career in municipal government in the Parks and Recreation sector. My positions included both Facilities Management and Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture. I believe that with my background and experience it puts me in a unique position in comparison to others as I understand how municipal government works. I also understand the role of Council, that being direction through Resolution and Bylaws and staff through implementation. With my strong background in these areas I believe I can contribute to positive changes. In addition, my parks and recreation background included working with user groups, not for profit organizations and the community at large with respect to these services. This also places me in a unique position in that I understand community engagement and how to implement processes that maximize how we can engage with our residents. Besides working with the community I also worked with a large staff group below me along with other departments, other levels of government and Council. I consider myself a collaborator given this background

Not sure what guilty pleasure implies but am assuming an area where I'm not strong. I may not know our community as well as others although this is by design. When I moved here 15 years ago from Port Hope I admittedly did not become involved in the community. This due to volunteer work I had already been involved with in Port Hope and still was but also due to demands of the job I had. But after I retired I did join the Parks and Rec Advisory Committee here in the township which turned out to be the beginning of the journey I am currently on running for Council.

I do believe I have the skills and background for positive change. Its time for a brand new start

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