

Subject: Re: Candidate Comments for kawarthaNOW

From: Andrew for Ashburnham Ward <andrew@andrewmacgregor.ca>

Date: 2026-09-18, 3:42 p.m.

To: Bethan Bates <batesbethan@gmail.com>

Hi Bethan,

Thanks for taking my response late. I've added my answers under your questions below.

On 2026-07-14 5:56 p.m., Bethan Bates wrote:

Dear Andrew,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Bethan Bates and I am the LJL reporter with kawarthaNOW.

As part of kawarthaNOW's coverage of the municipal election we are reaching out to all ward councillor candidates with a series of questions that relate to upcoming articles where an understanding of your opinion and position is valued.

Responses will be used across a series of articles that focus on ward and issue specific coverage.

Campaign Notes

- Why have you chosen to run for ward councillor?

I deeply love my community, and have invested so much in helping to build it. As a business owner downtown, I have a front row view to all that is great about our town, and to what gripes we levy in how it is managed. My hope is to help govern differently, and foster positive change for the average neighbour, not just the wealthy or the lobbying.

- What is the biggest challenge in your ward?

Ashburnham Ward has seen explosive growth in development following the change of "Downtown Core" to include Hunter Street all the way to the LiftLocks. This is good for housing where fair-market rents are concerned, and good news for the municipal tax base income (hopefully slowing municipal tax rate raises), but introduces its own new slough of problems: 17 storey buildings are being built beside single dwelling two storey homes, infrastructure is not capable of handling all the new car traffic, and neighbourhoods feel entirely ignored.

As a councilor, I am hopeful to direct intensification in an equitable way, making way for a gradual intensification for neighbouring residential neighbourhoods to take part in this economic opportunity.

- What makes you a unique candidate for councillor?

We need councilors who are willing to put in long hours, willing to listen to constituents and change their minds when they're wrong, and who understand the varied needs of residents and business owners. On top of owning and running Dreams of Beans, a community restaurant downtown, I have also sat on the board of the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough. I have an informed perspective on housing, business, social services, policing, and I want to put my network of connections to good use and help Peterborough catch up on some missing pieces.

Key Election Issues

- How should Peterborough approach economic development strategies and opportunities?

Peterborough should be prioritizing addressing economic detractors. Whether public safety, bureaucracy of business permitting, policing, the best areas of focus should be on things we can fix, instead of committing huge amounts of money to legacy projects that will suffer from the same problems.

- What is your position on housing intensification both in established neighbourhoods and city wide?

Intensification is necessary. Peterborough is in a good place where we have more housing unit starts than mandated to qualify for Ontario's building funding program, but the way we advance building projects needs more transparency. An emergent problem is the stark contrast of very tall buildings built with no greenspace immediately adjacent single dwelling homes; this should be corrected by both requiring more green space and by easing restrictions on building heights in neighbouring lots. (Buildings should increase gradually in height across a neighbourhood)

But better still, the City itself should be a key player in the developer scene, building all kinds of housing to manage, especially rent-geared-to-income, assisted living, group housing, half-way housing, etc. The money marked for a sports area could go a long way to addressing the very apparent and economically detracting homelessness that currently challenges our downtown and nearby neighbourhoods.

- Explain your priorities for transportation and active transportation.

Public transportation is a public service, and we should have a bus system that is more accessible, and less expensive. The more we reduce the service and hike the fares, the less people can use it, destining the service for failure.

As a cyclist myself, I would like to see more active transportation network routes, protected bike lanes, safer streets by design.

We should also be planning neighbourhoods around the 15 Minute Village model: that most of what we need should be a short walk away, reducing the need for vehicular travel, and our reliance on fossil fuels.

- What are your financial priorities and how will you balance funding needs across city services?

In business, and in Municipal Finances, you can adjust money in one of two ways: earn more or spend less. Cutting services is a race to the bottom, leaving impoverished families behind as relied-upon services vanish, only exacerbating poverty challenges. Instead, the city should focus on earning more, and not by increasing taxes, but by increasing the tax base. Adding a thousand tax paying homes to the tax base is better than raising taxes on the existing base, and has the benefit of addressing the housing shortage crisis.

- Explain your understanding of and position on the role of ward councillors as neighbourhood-advocates versus city-wide representatives.

It requires a certain amount of accountability to let a Ward elect you to faithfully represent them and fairly the rest of the city. The Ward system unfortunately rewards councilors for NIMBYism, but it is entirely the Ward's advocate's responsibility to raise the concerns of their neighbours, while weighing out the pros and the cons of decisions that will adversely affect them.

- Are there any other issues you want to comment on?

Having worked with Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough, I have seen the value of a Housing First approach to social services. And I've experienced it first hand.

Three years ago, my neighbour drove his truck into my livingroom. While navigating accommodations with my insurance provider, it became evident that within short order my family and I were about to become homeless, despite having literally every advantage and privilege -- I was literally fighting for a roof over my head for my three kids while trying to work full time. The fight to secure housing for my family had me reeling for days. I'm grateful I had to only deal with it once, and not on an ongoing basis, because when you're fighting for shelter every day, there is little energy left over for anything else.

By approaching social services through a Housing First approach, Peterborough is poised to accomplish a lot:

- address housing accessibility and affordability crisis by building rent-geared-to-income housing and other affordable housing
- increase the tax base to ease the burden of tax rate hikes
- reduce poverty crime
- reduce the appearance or perception of an "unsafe" downtown; feelings are real, but violent crime

is down

- put local contractors, builders to work, spurring economic investment

Please respond by Saturday July 18 to ensure inclusion in the first publication of this column.

Kind regards,

Bethan Bates

NB: kawarthaNOW reserves the right to edit responses for spelling, grammar, and clarity to ensure accuracy and comprehension for readers.

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Bethan Bates

LJI Reporter, kawarthaNOW

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-Andrew

705-808-4843

andrewmacgregor.ca