

Aurora Votes 2022: Sandra Humfryes seeks re-election in Ward 1



As the number of names on Aurora's Municipal Ballot continue to climb, this week The Auroran begins its traditional profile series of all candidates looking for a seat at the table. This week: incumbent Sandra Humfryes, who is seeking election in Ward 1.

Since she was first elected to Aurora Council in 2010, much has taken place ? but there is ?still a lot to be done,? according to Sandra Humfryes, who is seeking her fourth Council term in Ward 1.

Ms. Humfryes filed her nomination papers last week, stated she was ?really excited? for the future of Aurora and wants to see ?some of the incredible initiatives that were launched? over the last two Council terms be brought to fruition, particularly Aurora Town Square.

?I am really looking forward to seeing Aurora Town Square come to fruition with some of the visions that we really believe in in terms of the types of attractions that will be coming to this Town through the performing arts centre, to Town Square activities, and all to really focus on downtown revitalization and really see it come to a certain point where there's lots of traction and people from other municipalities come to Downtown Aurora as a destination.

?I am also really excited about the ward system in general. Politics is very personal to me and what I mean by that is I love working with people who have concerns, problems, want to see improvements in the Town, or want to volunteer. I love to work with residents and help them with whatever their issues or concerns could be. I really thrive on personally helping to make a difference in people's lives.?

In the term of Council that has largely drawn to a close, Humfryes was among the lawmakers who voted to adopt a ward system to replace the outgoing at-large system of government where, up until 2018, Aurora residents voted for six Council members to represent the community as a whole.

Now, as the system changes to residents getting to vote for one mayoral candidate to represent the entire community and a council

candidate to represent one of six wards, Humfryes says it will allow those who are ultimately elected to form a more personal relationship with voters and the communities they hope to represent.

"It is to build those personal relationships with the residents and really understand what they want to see in this Town, what their concerns are, and help them get to a point where their concerns or ideas are listened to and come to fruition," she says. "I feel that going from an at-large to a ward system will allow more of that focus and the opportunity for those ideas to be really understood.

"You're more focused now but that doesn't necessarily mean you're only focused on Ward 1 because that is absolutely not true. Ward 1 will be where a resident can reach out to a Councillor, but overall it is absolutely imperative for me to make sure our Town has the right recreational spaces or services and I believe it will be the best of both worlds. I am really excited about building those personal relationships with the residents and, if elected, I really hope I can make a difference for them in their day-to-day lives."

Humfryes says she has chosen to run in Ward 1 because, as a resident of the area, these day-to-day concerns are something she shares. Another facet of her decision to run in Ward 1 is the number of heritage resources in the area, a subject which she has always been passionate about.

"I have run on heritage and that is something I absolutely honour and respect," she says. "I have a bond with all areas, don't get me wrong, but my connection with heritage is strong and I just felt it was the right fit for me."

As a long-serving member of Council, Humfryes has served alongside two mayors and several councillors and this, she says, is a sign that she "gets along with everyone" to move the important business of Aurora forward.

"I really truly respect ideas around the table," she says. "I listen to them, and that helps me make the fulsome decision. You listen to residents, you do your research, then you listen to perspectives around the table. [As a Councillor] you look at large issues when you're discussing issues of the Town and then when you focus on your areas it just provides almost like a subject matter expert [for your ward] so that you understand those local areas, those local issues, and what the impact of some of the larger areas of Town will be on those areas. If anything, it will enhance our knowledge of the impact of larger changes to our designated wards.

"Whoever is elected and gets that ward to look after, you're truly responsible for that area dedicated to the ward you're accountable for the residents and they have someone to go to. Over my 12 years in politics, many times I get asked by the newcomers to our Town, 'Who is your Councillor? Who do I go to?' I think it will build that relationship the one-on-one, you start to know each other and it becomes a good relationship and advocacy for that Councillor, for sure.

"I hope I can earn that honour."

The series will continue next week.

By Brock Weir
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