

Di Girolamo, Bonham set sites on Wards 2 and 3 this fall

With three incumbent Councillors opting to not seek re-election in 2026, there will be plenty of new faces on the municipal campaign trail this fall ? but two candidates who stepped up in the 2022 Municipal Election have done so again this year.

Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Inductee Marco Di Girolamo, who first stood for election for Ward 2 four years ago, has once again thrown his hat into the ring for the Ward ? as has Alexandra Bonham, a first-time candidate in 2022, who is once again vying for Ward 3.



MARCO DI GIROLAMO ? WARD 2 CANDIDATE

In his first campaign to become an Aurora Councillor, athlete, coach and business-owner Marco Di Girolamo won the support of approximately 500 voters.

As he weighed whether to run again, he says he felt he 'owed' it to those who placed their trust in him in 2022 to 'give it another shot and make good on the promises that I made to them at the doors ? that I want to help make it a Town for everyone to live in, inclusive, and carry on with the priorities that were laid out in the last campaign? including the revitalization of Aurora's historic downtown core and the protection of stable neighbourhoods.

An additional pillar of his campaign this time around will be an emphasis on community safety.

'Lots has happened in the last couple of years; people are feeling unsafe in their communities, and I think there's a lot we can do at the municipal level to reassure people that we're a very safe community,' he says. 'Over the last campaign, there were a lot of questions [around] Town Square and now that Town Square has been open? it's had some positive reviews, lots of concerts and events for people, there's still a huge need for our downtown to get some work done on it and bring the people back downtown. Think of [Town Square] as an anchor tenant in a shopping centre. You've got the anchor tenant, now we've got to help bring in the rest of the tenants so that we can have a thriving downtown core.'

In his first municipal election, Di Girolamo faced off against incumbent Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who is not seeking re-election. While he doesn't have a registered challenger for Ward 2 at press time, he says the election will come down to 'who they feel is going to represent their priorities on Council going forward and move the agenda of Ward 2 residents.'

"I think people are going to have to make a decision on who they would like to represent them," he says. "Rachel did a great job. She was very accessible, and whenever I called her she answered my phone call. I'm hoping this Council will be more united in their opinions and their views. Last Council seemed to be a bit dysfunctional at times. We just keep moving the agenda of the Town forward, which is stable growth, making sure communities are safe, and making sure that the residents are well taken care of."



ALEXANDRA BONHAM ? WARD 3 CANDIDATE

Life-long Aurora resident Alexandra Bonham has strong roots in the community, and perhaps they're strongest in Ward 3.

Bonham, who works in Fire Safety, is seeking to represent the Ward after standing for election in 2022 and having stayed engaged in municipal affairs and maintaining support in the community.

Looking ahead to this campaign, she says she would like to foster further engagement in Aurora's southwest, and work with the Province to encourage changes to the Ontario Municipal Act to give residents a greater "ability to hold people accountable."

"One thing that hasn't changed at all in the four years [since the last election] is there's not a lot of support in terms of activities," she says of engaging the residents of Ward 3. "They don't have a hockey rink, not really, they don't have a community pool that's close by, which makes it difficult for people that don't necessarily have easy transport, have kids, and things like that."

While engagement is key, so is community "and community is what Bonham says defines her.

She's a member of the Aurora Community Band, has been an active volunteer with the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame, and that community-centredness powers her forward.

"Whether people are 14 years old or 80 years old, you have one thing in common and that's either performing something beautiful, or creating or working towards something with an end goal. You can be completely different in terms of your age, your experiences, your lifestyle, but that is one thing that connects you, and that's exciting," says Bonham of her time on the Aurora Community Band. "It's no different when you're on Council. Everybody's going to come from different experiences, different life choices, different age groups, different ethnicities, the whole nine yards. You're all working towards one common goal. At the end, you all just want what's best for Aurora.

"You're not always going to agree with one another. You're going to have differences, but everybody brings something different to

the table that we can all learn from. I think that is what needs to be looked at ? you need to be able to value everybody's input and views around the table, whether it is around the Council table, whether it's the residents you're representing, or even represent the residents you're not representing.?

At press time this week, three candidates were vying to represent Ward 3. In addition to Bonham, the candidate field includes Nikki Alber, who has received the endorsement of outgoing Ward 3 Councillor Wendy Gaertner, and Robert James Fraser, who ran to represent Ward 6 in the 2022 Municipal Election.

Residents have until August 21 at 2 p.m. to file their candidacy for the October 25 election.

By Brock Weir
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