

## Gaertner, Aurora's longest-serving Councillor, won't seek re-election this fall



Wendy Gaertner, currently Aurora's longest continually-serving member of Council, will not seek re-election this fall.

Gaertner, who was first elected in the 2004-2006 term of Council, and has represented Ward 3 since the adoption of a Ward System since the 2022 Municipal Election, confirms that municipal election was her last.

"I have done my best to support residents with their concerns and to make Council decisions with both their best interests and the Town's financial health in mind," she says. "It has been the most stressful and underpaid job I have ever had, but also the most interesting. I have loved the privilege of being a Councillor in Aurora."

Councillor Gaertner has long considered her future on Council.

Just last week, she told The Auroran she was still weighing her options.

"I am trying to decide if I want to be on a future Council that may continue to have democratic decisions overturned by a Mayor, where money is spent on decisions that I do not consider in our taxpayers' best interests," she said, referencing Strong Mayor powers, the ability given by the Provincial Government to Heads of Council in dozens of Ontario municipalities to advance Provincial priorities. "I feel that I have a responsibility to my residents. I would consider stepping down if someone steps forward who I believe is capable, who believes in transparent decision-making, and spending tax dollars as if this was their own money."

That person, she believes, is Aurora resident Nikki Alber, an educator and co-founder of the non-profit group Jewish Families Connected.

"I am confident that she would serve with integrity; and be a strong, effective voice at the Council table, always keeping the best interests of Aurora residents at heart."

The 2026 Municipal Election Campaign is expected to formally get underway on Friday, May 1, the first day in which eligible candidates are able to register for their place on the ballot.

Of the incumbent members of Council, only Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson has confirmed his intention to seek re-election, with the balance of Council stating they were either keeping their intentions close to the chest before registration opens, or still weighing their options.

Community members beyond the Council table, however, have also confirmed their runs.

In Ward 1, currently represented by Councillor Ron Weese, community builder Lauren Hanna says she intends to put herself forward as a candidate.

In Ward 2, Aurora community volunteer Connor Logan, a graduate of the University of Windsor, who previously stood as a Liberal Party of Ontario candidate for the Windsor area in the last Provincial election, and has worked for MPs Leah Taylor Roy and Rob Oliphant.

Wendy Gaertner, who holds a degree in Sociology and was first elected on the heels of her volunteer work with the youth drop-in program Hot Spot, has seen many iterations of Council since that first campaign, told The Auroran when she threw her hat back in the ring in 2022, she often found herself in the minority when it came to Council decisions.

These differing views were just good for democracy.

"I don't think you get re-elected four times without people having a pretty good idea of what you stand for," she said. "My over-arching goal is to listen. We are elected to help our residents and our businesses to create the very best community we can."

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