

New Tecumseth Votes 2018: Meet your Ward 7 Candidates

By Wendy Gabrek

The Times of New Tecumseth and Adjala-Tosorontio continues its Meet the Candidates series with the candidates for Ward 7 Rural Tottenham. Three candidates are vying for a single seat - John Forbes, incumbent Shira Harrison McIntyre, and Dave Wood - in the hopes of representing the needs of constituents at municipal council.



Shira Harrison McIntyre



Dave Wood

As this series draws to a close, with just Ward 8 and the School Board Trustees to go, we hope you'll find yourself more informed, and able to make better choices on October 22.

We send the candidates 14 questions. Two candidates responded. Here are their answers, printed verbatim.

Dave Wood

Full name: Dave Wood

Town of residence / Length of time in New Tecumseth: I have been a resident in New Tecumseth since June, 1981, living in both the rural and urban areas of Tottenham.

Primary reason you are running: I believe that I can make a difference in addressing issues, working through problems, and getting things done. I take a proactive approach, listen, demand answers, and look to resolve problems. I retired in April, 2017 and started attending council and planning meetings to gain a better understanding and appreciation of what is involved in being a councillor in New Tecumseth. Being retired, I now have the time that I believe is necessary, to devote to this position. After 36 years of volunteering in various capacities in the community, always willing to help and do my part, it is time to take on a larger role and

represent the south part of New Tecumseth as a councillor in Ward 7. I have the business knowledge and experience, along with my willingness to work hard and dedicate myself, to see the Town of New Tecumseth, specifically the south, manage its growth and prosper. I am prepared and willing to give the time to listen and voice the opinions of the residents in Ward 7 and take action to get things done.

Hard Work, Never Quit.

Campaign slogan: WE, THE SOUTH, NEED OUR VOICES HEARD!

What are the most important challenges facing the community? These issues must be resolved immediately and an action plan with specific timelines put in place with constant and continual follow-up every two weeks at council meeting s- Internet high speed connectivity in rural areas, landfill operation at the TAC Airport and other rural locations, and drinkable town water for the Deer Springs Community residents and all of Tottenham. These three issues, in no specific order, must be addressed and corrected. We have gone on long enough without action being taken. We need to get projects completed. Residents want action. I will be that person to get things done. Whatever time is required to complete, I will be working full-time to resolve these issues.

Other concerns are:

- The town bylaws- they need to be enforced or fines increased or both, especially for corporations that ignore our laws.
- Illegal dumping of soil/ landfill and not knowing what is in that soil/ landfill operations are major concerns for the environment. Putting truckloads of land fill on properties for profit must stop- NOW!
- With my university recreation background, I will assist in having the Trans Canada Trail repaired/ completed. It is wonderful seeing people of all ages that use it daily from the 4th Concession south (you can go all the way to Palgrave), whether they walk, run, cycle, enjoy the wildlife, ski.
- We need to work with the OPP to reduce speed levels on the rural roads and improve safety. More OPP presence through road patrols, enforcement and education are required.
- A transportation plan within the Town of New Tecumseth- both urban and rural so that the residents can easily travel in and around our great town.

What do you cherish most about this community? The dedication and commitment that our volunteers give to this town. New Tecumseth has numerous (far too many to mention) programs that are run by volunteers that care about our community and are proud to call New Tecumseth home, whether it be related to health, sports, arts, youth, seniors, education, etc.

Thank you to all the excellent volunteers that support all the areas within our community!

What type of leader will you be? I am the type of leader who is ?Hands-On?, not afraid to dig in. I am proactive, not reactive, a team player and a team leader. I will always take the time to listen and try to understand the issue before responding. I will demand answers, look to resolve to everyone's satisfaction, and will face problems head on. I have always been and will continue to be very active within the community.

What are your priorities for change in our municipality in the short term? Accountability to the residents of Ward 7, what are we doing to get things done?

I have attended council meetings for over a year and the biggest issue that I have with this council is what is being done (or not being done) to have projects completed. We are hiring consultants, paying them huge dollars, and then not taking action on their reports.

Long-term? We must deliver, to the residents, projects and programs on time and on budget.

We need open lines of communication, honesty and transparency.

What are the biggest fiscal challenges in our municipality, and what do you envision as the best way to address them?: We do not need to spend \$15-20 million on a new Administration Centre for New Tecumseth. There are projects that must be completed- water for Tottenham, Tottenham library, Beeton arena/ community centre, infrastructure improvements.

Having a wish list such as a \$15 million Administration Centre and having an architect design lavish drawings to complete it, is somewhat excessive. I believe that one could be built at half the cost, maybe not as extravagant. We need to understand our requirements, short and long term, and get them completed ? on budget and on time. Wish vs. Need has a cost that we cannot afford. I agree with a new Administration Centre but not at the cost of other, more critical projects.

What is your perspective on the best way to collaborate with other levels of government to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for our area? I think that the Town is strong enough to handle its own issues with support from other levels of government. I would not give away control of our water to Simcoe County. We need to be accountable to our residents and reduce the amount of intervention into our issues. Waiting a year and a half for important decisions is not satisfactory.

I don't think that we research the grants thoroughly that are available from all levels of government. We could improve our facilities or programs without having to raise taxes constantly to the level that we have been.

How do you envision communicating with a constituents? I will ensure that I make the time to meet with residents that have an issue or concern that needs to be addressed. I will respond to emails within 24 hours and texts as soon as I can. The telephone is still a vital tool in communication to make sure that both parties understand what is being requested. I will ensure that I will be available to handle all types of requests.

I will send monthly reports to all interested residents, via email, where we stand re. priority programs and updates on programs planned for the future.

I also believe that the executive team should table a report with updates on progress that has been made at every council meeting. This report should also appear on the Town's website.

What will you do to continue to be involved with the community should you not win? I have been actively volunteering in the community for the past 36 years ? coaching, president of numerous organizations, member of Parks and Rec Committee, founding father of TNT Express Football, helping at Our Town Food Bank.

I have coached over 35 teams and over 600 young men and women. I believe that I have been a strong mentor, for decades, to the

youth of our community.

I currently coach at St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Tottenham and assist at Our Town Food Bank.

I thoroughly enjoy volunteering/ coaching and take great pride in doing so. Should I not win this election, I will continue to do just that.

Shira Harrison McIntyre

Full Name: Shira Harrison McIntyre

Town of Residence: Colgan, Ward 7, New Tecumseth

Length of Time: Since 2002

Primary reason you're running: I had a strong mandate from the residents of Ward 7 when I was elected last term. I have dedicated myself to the job and enjoyed serving the public for the last four years. I spent my time on Council speaking to the issues that matter to the residents of Ward 7 and acting on the list of priorities on which I ran. These included: road improvements, Site Plan agreement for Tottenham Airport to control the fill site, Master Transportation Plan, high speed Internet (now being installed to the residents on Highway 9), Council transparency, and low tax increases. I also made sure that the rural constituents continue to have a voice on Council by advocating and achieving rural representation when we undertook the ward boundary review. My priorities this time are: to keep fighting for improving the roads and road safety, closing the TAC site to fill in May 2019, increasing access to high speed Internet in the area, and seeing the water connection to Tottenham completed. I am running to be councillor because the residents of Ward 7 need a dedicated leader that is not compromised by special interest groups or the political influence of developers.

Campaign slogan: Make Your Vote Count

What are our most important challenges facing the community? New Tecumseth and surrounding towns are facing unprecedented pressure for massive housing developments. We must manage and control growth to save our forests and farmland. The increase in population has made the roads busy and unsafe. We need to deal with this problem and prevent potential tragedy. We are close enough to the GTA that it is financially viable for dump trucks of illegal fill to find their way here. We need to protect our land and residents from the illegal importation of fill coming from Toronto.

What do you cherish most about this community? My husband and I enjoy living in New Tecumseth and are raising our two kids here. We cherish the friendly, caring, and thoughtful people who live here. We work, study, and play in this beautiful rural and small town community. New Tecumseth has great local shops, sports teams, restaurants, arts and entertainment.

What type of leader you will be? Proactive: I reach out and engage with people to listen to their concerns and develop practical solutions to problems. I work to see needed change put in place as soon as possible. I take my job as councillor very seriously and don't have time for political grandstanding, false promises or time wasters, as it is a disservice to the public.

What are your priorities for change in our municipality, in the short term. What about in the long term?

Short Term:

- I want to see more public/private partnerships to support big ticket projects.
- To ensure that the TAC site plan agreement is followed and that the site is closed to fill in May 2019.
- Improved road safety through road signage, enforcement and maintenance.
- Completion of the new Tottenham library, which is being located adjacent to the Tottenham Community Centre.
- Ensure protection of groundwater for rural residents and completion of water pipeline to supply Tottenham.

Long term:

- Review of the Emergency Response Systems for Fire, Ambulance, Public Works, Police, Hydro Power to protect and support residents during Extreme Weather Events such as Ice Storms, Flooding and Tornadoes.
- Construction of a facility to upgrade the Beeton Community Center including an ice arena.
- Preservation of significant historical buildings and neighborhoods to maintain the character of our communities.
- The town needs a plan to maintain aging ditch and drainage networks (private and public) that are causing storm water to back-up into homes and fields.
- We need to support farms and home-based businesses with proper infrastructure (roads, signage, Internet, zoning).

What are the biggest fiscal challenges in our municipality, and what do you envision as the best way(s) to address them? The greatest fiscal challenge we are dealing with is housing development, the associated increased demand for services, and the costs in maintaining infrastructure to support a growing town.

We must be work together on council efficiently and creatively to find solutions without having to increase debt or raise taxes. Residents in Ward 7 pay some of the highest taxes in New Tecumseth and we must not be burdened with unfair tax increases. We need to make it a priority to attract and grow businesses in industrial areas in New Tecumseth. This will increase tax revenue and lessen the burden on existing homeowners.

What innovative projects would enhance life in this area?

- The Beeton community centre needs to be built and it requires an innovative approach for financing, which will need to include partnerships with other levels of government and corporate sponsorship.
- Tottenham Conservation Area is a community gathering spot as well as a destination, but it is under-utilized and could be redeveloped. To begin with, it needs to be updated so it better supports current activities and attracts new events.
- When finishing the Trans Canada Trail from Tottenham to Beeton, we need to select a route is not on the road.

What is your perspective on the best way to collaborate with other levels of government to ensure a sustainable and prosperous future for our area?

- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor represent the town at the county and we need them to work together on our behalf to get the best deal for the entire municipality. They must stay abreast of issues and communicate the needs of our residents to the county to ensure that we get the most out of our county tax dollars.
- The change of government at the provincial level is an opportunity for us to have our issues heard and addressed from a fresh perspective. The province needs to take a leading role in dealing with the excess soil from the GTA. This has become an issue for all municipalities surrounding the city. I led the development for an updated fill by-law for New Tecumseth, one that sends a clear message that we are not a dumping ground for Toronto's dirty soil.
- The town needs to take advantage of funding from federal and provincial programs and grants by being proactive and having detailed plans in place. Costs are being downloaded to the municipality and we need to push back. We need to find opportunities for cost sharing with other levels of government.

How do you envision communicating with constituents? I will continue to inform constituents of Ward 7 with a quarterly email newsletter and updated website. My newsletter provides information on the issues being addressed at council, as well as programs and services that might be of interest to residents. I have been told that constituents appreciate my efforts to keep them informed. They often reply to my newsletter with ideas and thoughtful perspectives. I drive throughout ward 7 to meet with residents and to get to know their concerns.

I also engage people on specific issues of concern by emailing surveys or questions. I have made sure that I am easy to reach by phone or email and I quickly follow-up on issues.

What will you do to continue to be involved with the community should you not win? I will continue with my part-time work as the Executive Director and Fundraiser for Next Step, which provides tutoring to adults in literacy and mathematics skills.

Volunteering with the South Simcoe Steams Network to support the restoration of our water