

Inaugural Speech November 15, 2022

Ladies and Gentlemen, Council, Staff and Fellow North Kawarthans. I am very happy to be the Mayor of North Kawartha for another term. When I think back to the dreams and goals I had as a kid, serving on Municipal Council or being a Mayor was never one of them. However, I don't believe in coincidence and I believe this is something that I was meant to do. It is a joy and honour to be able to serve my community in this capacity and I can't wait to carry on.

This year's election saw 2 acclamations for Mayor and Deputy Mayor and the successful re-election of our 2 Ward Councillors. Clearly North Kawarthans are happy with the job we have been doing and are willing to put their faith and confidence in our governance for another term.

While only one Council position has changed, I must acknowledge the significance of this change. After nearly 20 years we finally have another woman on Council!

Ruthanne McIlmoyl may be new to Council as our Councillor at Large, but her roots run deep in our community and public service is in her DNA. I don't think it will take her long to find her Council groove, since she has attended almost every single Council meeting these past 3 years.

Colin McLellan is back for a second term as our Ward 2 Councillor and still has my former title as the youngest member of the team. Colin's input is always valuable and often comes from a different perspective or unique angle. The number of times I've said: 'Excellent question Colin!' or, 'Good point- I never thought of that...' are too many to count.

Jim O'Shea is back for his third term of Council as our Ward 1 Councillor. Jim has been an advocate for the Chandos community even before he was on Council, as he spent a number years serving as president of the Chandos Lake Association. Jim is passionate about our environment and is deeply committed to protecting our lakes and forests.

Jim Whelan's service to this community began in the 1990's and he has been one of our longest serving Reeve/Mayors. He was acclaimed for another term as our Deputy Mayor and I wouldn't be surprised if he's going for the longest serving Deputy Mayor title as well. Seriously though, Jim is my mentor. His knowledge, experience and dedication to serving our community has been an inspiration to

me and many others and I consider myself very lucky to have him as my 'wing man' for another term of Council.

As for me, next year will be my 20th year on Council and I still feel just as excited about the future of our community as I did during my first Inaugural meeting back in 2003. Despite the challenges of the past few years, it feels like North Kawartha is on the cusp of some great opportunities and I believe we've got a Council that is ready to work and turn these opportunities into reality.

I know we can achieve great things because we have an incredible support team working alongside us. Our municipal staff are some of the most hard-working and dedicated people I have ever known and the successes we have achieved over the years would not have happened without these folks. I know staff are also excited for our future and to work with this new Council.

Like my first inaugural speech, I'm not going to list a whole bunch of promises and goals that I have for the next four years. That's because, I don't know what kinds of challenges and opportunities are in our future. Just look at what happened last term: A global pandemic, our first ever emergency declaration and the loss of our only grocery store! But we also created a new Township Brand and developed a municipal grant program in support of lake health. We achieved greater safety on Highway 28, new businesses have opened up and our grocery store is being rebuilt. Our community has been through the wringer these past few years and I believe we've only become stronger and more resilient because of it. It's like I always say: 'We cannot stop challenges from arising but we can choose how we respond to them. If we face our challenges with the right attitude and the courage to look for solutions, we will find success.'

So once again I make this pledge to all of you:

With each and every issue that comes before us, this Mayor and this Council will do its 'homework'. We will listen to all community concerns. We will respectfully consider the advice of staff and experts. We will ask for guidance and help when needed. We will weigh and debate the pros and cons and then make our decisions for the betterment of North Kawartha. As your elected representatives it is our duty to use our best judgment in all matters. So thank you for putting your faith in us. This Council is ready to work for YOU.