

July 7, 2025

Hello Council Members and Fellow Guelphites,

I am pleased to put my name forward to fill the empty seat of council for Ward 6 here in the Royal City. This is an open letter for you to get to know some of my story.

I was attending a Resistance and Resilience Guelph organising meeting with MP Dominique O'Rourke and mentioned my intention to seek appointment for the remainder of the term. Her response was "You are well qualified." I believe she was referencing the fact that I have been presenting delegations to City Council since 2019, regularly attending meetings of Council and Advisory Committees of Council since 2020, and was a candidate in the 2022 municipal election - so how did I get here?

It was May 2014 when I moved to Guelph, to a close-to-my-dream turn-of-the-century farmhouse, yet my love for the Royal City began in childhood. Family trips up Guelph Line from Burlington to Rockwood Conservation Area followed by dinner in Downtown Guelph are fond memories. Attending music events at the University of Guelph in high school and exploring the nooks and crannies of 1980's Downtown Guelph provided the next layer of growing love. Through the mid-1990's, new family connections made Guelph a regular place to visit and enjoy the community. Fast forward to 2008, when new friends had me traveling to Guelph from Milton at least once a week, discovering even more amazing things to love about the city. By 2009, I was exploring the various neighbourhoods in Guelph, watching the housing market trends and learning where in Guelph I would most like to live.

Moving here the day the writ dropped for the 2014 Provincial Election and learning that the leader of the provincial party I preferred was the candidate in Guelph, made my choice to move here extra special. The 2018 provincial election was my first formal foray in campaigning politically, outside of grade school Student Council. Being part of the team who helped Mike Schreiner make history sparked something that had been quiet through my early adulthood - a deep abiding feeling of social responsibility. Having gotten to know Mike, and the work he had been doing for years - think the Dolime Quarry - I recognized he would not be able to maintain all the relationships he had built in the same manner because he had a full-time position as our Member of Provincial Parliament. At the next Guelph Greens Annual General Meeting, I put my name forward to become a Director-at-Large on the Executive Committee.

The two years I served as the Volunteer Coordinator on the joint Constituency/Electoral District Association was an excellent introduction to the vibrancy in Guelph. One relationship that Mike Schreiner developed which I felt was essential to maintain was with the Guelph and District Labour Council (GDLC). Attending the monthly GDLC meetings provided me the opportunity to grow my own relationships with members and become more involved in grassroots organising. Whether it was Day of Mourning and May Day events, supporting the Haudenosaunee Land Defenders at Six Nations, walking with Watch Watchers to support the Haudenosaunee Water Defenders, or volunteering at the Labour Day Picnic, working with Labour for the betterment of our social fabric felt right.

My first introduction to municipal life in Guelph was during the early Clair-Maltby Secondary Plan (CMSP) Community Engagement, when Guelphites successfully removed a proposed road through the Designated Cultural Heritage Landscape known as the Marcolongo Farm. Community Engagement was again the key factor to the correct placement of the Community Park in the CMSP, next to Hall's Pond, to provide the greatest number of people the best access to the Provincially Significant Wetland. Participating in the engagement process brought an invitation to become part of the Protect Our Moraine Coalition and work to ensure the Clair-Maltby Area Residents - all the flora and fauna that depend on the wetland and water recharge area, as well as the Heritage Buildings - had a voice. I have continued to follow the CMSP work. It is the largest greenfield development area in the city and has many aspects to consider - water, wastewater, roads, the Natural Heritage System, stormwater management, parks, the Moraine Ribbon - a whole new section of our city, in Ward 6, will be built over the next twenty years.

Volunteering with many grassroots organisations in Guelph has been an essential part of my life here, beginning with when I helped at a clothing swap at Hope House in 2015. Since that experience, I continued with Hope House, volunteering serving breakfast and in the Clothing Market, in various roles at Hope in the Street, and packing backpacks. Volunteer work has become a main focus in my life - Royal City Mission, Water Watchers, Guelph Greens, Protect Our Moraine Coalition, Praise the Ward, Guelph and District Multicultural Festival, Guelph Organic Conference, The Black Owned & BIPOC Markets, Art in the Street, Hillside Festival - the people I have met and developed relationships with through volunteerism are invaluable.

Previously, I worked as an Administrative Professional. When working for Siemens Water Technologies, I was the only administrative professional in the office. My responsibilities included ensuring worldwide, multi-billion dollar industrial wastewater system projects were brought in on time and on budget, developing forecasts for those budgets, submitting payroll and implementing and enforcing benchmark Compliance Protocols. I learned so much about the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) while becoming a Super User, developing and delivering new Work Instructions and Standard Operating Procedure Manuals, as well as engineer training sessions, when

the company brought in SAP as the new international CRM. SOX required all employees to perform all the duties of their roles based upon the SAP definitions and developing the training gave me an early introduction to conducting remote online training since the majority of the engineers were in Cranberry Township, Michigan. Many of the projects we worked on involved substances listed in the international Chemical Weapons Convention, meaning I needed to fully understand the implications of affixing my signature to the international export paperwork - information deemed to be false, misleading or missing could result in my detention by the Department of Homeland Security. Mitigating the fallout of the tsunami and subsequent nuclear incident in Japan on the tanks being fabricated in Asia was a major success for our department, and resulted in bonuses for the entire division. When the division was divested, I was the last administrative person on payroll. All my American administrative coworkers were laid off on February 29th, while I remained in my role until mid-May. My organisational skills were essential in preparing the shuttering of three local Canadian locations; they wanted to keep me on, but I was unwilling to move to Richmond Hill.

Having companies want to retain me is something that had happened in the past. For a period of about eighteen months, I chose to work as a Temporary Employee. The varied industries I worked in helped me develop the ability to quickly learn the “language” of each industry, and I view the language of municipal government as another industry. A key reason I had many successful assignments was my ability to learn the necessary parts of a role quickly. This ability allowed me to step into roles when there was an unexpected absence in a vital role, such as reception. Two businesses I worked for briefly, contacted me when vacancies became available to ask directly if I would come work for them. In fact, a quarter-century ago this month, I was working at Halton Region Public Health on a short-term contract during the tuberculosis outbreak, tracking and tracing of emerging West Nile Virus and enhanced well-water testing due to the Walkerton tragedy, because the work I did when I covered a two week vacation earlier in the year received outstanding reviews.

After Siemens provided me with an exceptional severance package, I decided to return to school to become a Medical Office Professional. I attained an Honours Diploma with a 95% average and secured a position with a Guelph Family Health Team physician before moving to Guelph. Working within healthcare here introduced me to the difficulties of navigating the system when you live on social assistance, such as the Ontario Disability Support Program. Little did I know I would get the opportunity to really learn the ODSP system as an older adult with a dynamic disability. I have learned that our social safety net has many holes. In discussing the missing pieces, I have developed relationships with unhoused neighbours and become friends with individuals seeking food and housing security in our downtown.

Community Engagement is how I started my involvement with municipal politics and I am passionate about helping others understand how to engage with their municipal governments. Offering workshops on how to sign up to speak with County and Council since February 2024 has been rewarding and eye-opening. Continuing to help Guelphites understand the processes is something I will continue to do, regardless of the outcome of the choice on July 23rd. With 2026 being the next municipal election in October, I plan to work with Educators to facilitate grade 10 civics students in learning how to engage with their municipal representatives.

I have heard some Council Members express their desire to have more diversity around the horseshoe, people with lived experience. I have lived experience being precariously housed and food insecure. I have lived experience as a renter in a city with a very low vacancy rate. I also have lived experience as a homeowner, an entrepreneur and a person of privilege.

I have heard some Council Members express their desire to have a person who understands Governance. As an eight year old, I began attending the Board of Director meetings for Halton Condominium Corporation 41, where my mother was first Secretary, then Treasurer, Vice-President and finally President; Robert's Rules were part of my childhood. I was recently elected to the role of Secretary on the Club Executive Committee with my current Toastmasters Club after serving as the Secretary, Vice-President Membership and Vice-President Education with my former Club, where rules of governance are strictly observed.

I have heard some Council Members express their desire to have the person who fills the vacant Ward 6 seat be a Ward 6 resident. As I mentioned earlier, I am precariously housed, which means I am yet again in the process of having to find a new place to live. Being a Ward 6 Councillor will afford me the opportunity to find an appropriate place to live there.

In closing, I trust you have learned more about me and my dedication to being a City Councillor since making the decision in 2020 to conduct myself "as if" I am a City Councillor. I am confident I have the requisite education, experience and knowledge needed to effectively step into the role of Ward 6 City Councillor in September 2025.

Warmest regards,

Morgan Dandie
 Community Weaver
 Member, Resistance and Resilience Guelph
 Secretary, Bay Street Breakfast Toastmasters Club
 Director, Administration and Government Relations, LilyPads - Housing Solutions