# Advice to a First-Time Council Candidate: An example addressed to Gurinder Kaur

Commentary | October 7, 2026

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This article offers constructive advice to first-time council candidates, using Gurinder Kaur's website as an example. My aim is to help candidates demonstrate their strengths and give voters a stronger basis for choosing. When candidates improve their case, they also challenge their competitors to do better. Voters benefit either way.

I reviewed Gurinder's five main campaign pages as I would a job application. Explain what you bring to the table and why voters should trust you with public decisions. If assessing your qualifications becomes a job for the voter, the work has been handed back to the person you hope to serve. Make your case easy to understand.

## Give credit for what is there

Gurinder, congratulations on having a website. That gives voters a place to examine your ideas and contact you. The Home page recognizes education as a provincial responsibility and proposes partnerships. Publishing your case is a worthwhile first step toward openness. [1, 4, 5]

Your website can help turn campaign effort into voter confidence. Strengthen the introduction with evidence of experience, judgment and results. For a responsible job, I would ask an applicant for those details. The same questions can help a new candidate show what they have to offer.

## What does "educator" mean here?

The About page describes a career in classrooms and learning spaces. It does not identify institutions, specific job titles, dates of employment, subjects or age groups taught, degrees, or professional teaching credentials. [2]

That leaves practical questions. What educational work has she done, and for how long? What formal training supports it? If she is presenting experience as a schoolteacher, what teaching qualifications does she hold? If her role is another kind of education, what was that role and what did it involve?

Missing website details do not prove missing qualifications. Define your professional role so voters can assess it without guessing.

## A biography needs examples of responsibility

The About page does not provide a dated employment history or named examples of organizations led, projects completed or achievements delivered. Its account of family life also does not say how long she has lived in Thorold. [2]

In an interview, I would ask: how will you make this organization better? What have you managed? Show me a time you developed a plan, worked through difficulties and achieved a result. Why should my expectations be lower because the responsibility is an elected one?

A first-time candidate cannot supply a council voting record. That is understandable. They can still offer examples from employment, volunteering, community work or other responsibilities. Two or three well-explained examples would tell me more than several general descriptions of leadership.

An example should identify the situation, the candidate's own role, the action taken and the result. It should distinguish personal responsibility from participation in a group. Voters need enough detail to judge the relevance of the experience without requesting private personnel records or information about students.

## Show the connection to Thorold

Show your local involvement: organizations you have worked with, projects you have supported and what you learned about Thorold. Length of residence alone would not decide my vote. Knowledge, relationships and engagement help demonstrate the contribution you could make.

Listen to residents and bring what you learn back to your website, which is effectively your résumé for voters. Which concerns changed your priorities? What did you investigate? Update your proposals and connect them to a practical road map. Make the most of those conversations: show people that you listened and explain the solutions you would pursue.

## Admire others, but make your own case

I recall you describing Nella Dekker as your idol at the first candidates' night. Admiration is your choice, but show voters your own judgment. My October 6 article raises questions about Nella's record that I believe still deserve answers. [8] What do you admire, and where would you disagree? Give yourself credit for the courage to put your name forward, too.

Build your own identity. My understanding, based on Facebook material described to me, is that Nella Dekker has appeared in MPP endorsement material or photographs. In my view, such appearances can invite voters to read party allegiances into a municipal campaign. Work constructively with other governments while keeping Thorold's needs ahead of party colours and retaining the freedom to question proposals.

Assess any grant by its terms, matching costs and continuing obligations. Conditions alone do not prove partisan influence. Show us that your decisions would serve residents, whoever offers support.

## Strong families: compassion needs a practical plan

Your platform supports families, childcare advocacy and more programming. [3] Compassion matters. But who would disagree with supporting families? The test is how you turn that intention into action without neglecting existing needs.

Niagara Region is the designated childcare service system manager. [6] Explain Thorold's proposed contribution: planning, premises, partnerships or new spending? Which partner delivers it? What existing service or delayed project would compete for those dollars?

## Traffic calming: where, why and at what cost?

Your platform proposes traffic calming, lighting and sidewalk repairs. [3] Which streets, what evidence and what cost? Would residents be consulted? Most importantly, how would you reduce speeding while protecting access for fire, police and ambulance vehicles? Require emergency-services review and assess response-time effects before choosing measures.

Speed cushions can reduce the impact on some larger emergency vehicles, but they do not guarantee delay-free passage for every vehicle. [9] Explain the design, alternatives and any remaining trade-off. Safer streets and timely emergency response must be assessed together.

## STEM: explain the benefit and who pays

STEM means science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Your website proposes educational partnerships; it does not establish a personal record of delivering STEM programs. [3] If you have that experience, explain your role, qualifications, participants and results.

Municipal recreation and library services can complement education. [7] The question is whether this proposal meets an unmet need. We already support public education: what additional benefit justifies municipal resources? Who delivers the program, who pays and how will duplication be avoided?

## Savings and business growth: show us how

Your platform proposes spending reviews, business attraction, grants and preventative maintenance. It gives no costed implementation schedule. [3] Identify an example of suspected waste and explain how you would assess it. Which obstacle to business investment would you address first? What net benefit would taxpayers receive?

Maintenance may prevent larger bills later, but what investment is needed now, and where does it rank? A grant is not automatically a bargain: what matching funds, conditions and continuing costs come with it? If funding ends, can the project sustain itself?

## Give enthusiasm a road map

Rank your first three priorities. Identify costs, partners, delivery steps and a measure of success. One councillor cannot promise every outcome alone. Explain what you would seek through council and what requires others' agreement. I welcome enthusiasm, but leadership needs answers and a road map.

## Turn accessibility into a practical commitment

The About page promises local office hours, accessible budget explanations before votes and replies to residents. It does not specify an office-hours schedule, reply target or publication timetable. [2]

How often would you meet residents? What reply time is realistic? Where would explanations of major decisions be published?

The campaign offers an e-mail address and a contact form that opens the visitor's e-mail application. Readers are therefore given a route to ask questions. [5] My concern is that basic qualifications should already be available to every voter, rather than supplied only to those who know what to ask.

## What I would ask Gurinder to add

Add a concise profile with education, credentials, roles and dates; examples of achievements and responsibility; local involvement; and ranked priorities with costs, delivery steps and milestones. Ask experienced candidates: "What do you wish you had known before your first election?" Use what you learn to strengthen your presentation.

Show us independent judgment: when did evidence change your mind? How would you explain abandoning a popular promise that proved unaffordable?

## The voter should not have to do the candidate's explaining

Election is not literally a hiring process. Relevant experience takes many forms; no particular degree should decide who deserves a seat. My comparison expresses the standard of information I expect.

Explain why voters can trust you with this responsibility. Replace broad descriptions with evidence. These are gaps in the published presentation, not proof that you lack the ability to serve.

Gurinder, please take this as encouragement to put your best foot forward. You may have more to offer than your website currently shows. Make those strengths visible. With only six councillor seats available, a clearer case could improve your chances of earning a seat at the table. Whether you win or challenge others to do better, stronger competition benefits voters. I wish you the best of luck.

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## Source notes and scope

Website reviewed October 9, 2026. Review covers the five main campaign pages; it does not assess Instagram, private conversations or other campaign material. Missing information means not found on the pages reviewed. The website can change. Questions and hiring comparisons are the author's opinions.

[1] Home: https://gurinderforcouncil.com/
[2] About: https://gurinderforcouncil.com/about
[3] Platform: https://gurinderforcouncil.com/platform
[4] Voter Information: https://gurinderforcouncil.com/voter-information
[5] Get Involved: https://gurinderforcouncil.com/get-involved
[6] Ontario: Childcare service system managers
[7] Ontario municipal councillor's guide, section 5: Municipal organization
[8] Nicholas Bozza, Politics Changes People - Why I Believe This Is Thorold's Most Important Election, dated October 6, 2026. The candidates' night remark is the author's recollection.
[9] City of Toronto, Traffic Calming: designs and emergency-services review. This is an example, not a Thorold-specific assessment. Facebook mention: the author's account; the specific post has not been independently reviewed.