Review colours: Blue marks documented points. Red marks unresolved claims or recollections requiring verification.

Rookie City Councillor Tim O’Hare — A Record to Defend

Part One of Five — Background Before His First Election

Article dated Sunday, October 11, 2026

Background

Coverage: approximately 2018 to October 24, 2022

Article word count: approximately 1,821 | Estimated reading time: 10 minutes

Charts, source references, disclaimer and additional review material are excluded from the word count and reading estimate.

This first article in a five-part series examines Tim O’Hare’s background and public involvement from his reported arrival in Thorold around 2018 through his first election to City Council on October 24, 2022. It covers his career and family background, heritage committee membership, community advocacy and involvement in the Ormond Street development dispute. The John Brown House dispute is included as context, with the limits of the evidence about either O’Hare’s involvement made clear. Later reporting is used where it describes this earlier period; subsequent activities and unresolved concerns are retained at the end for review.

Tim O’Hare was first elected to Thorold City Council on October 24, 2022. He is serving his first term and is seeking re-election in 2026. 2022 election coverage (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/meet-your-newly-elected-councillors-5999876)

Career, Residency and Family

Career: In his October 2026 candidate statement, O’Hare describes himself as a retired high school teacher, curriculum leader and cabinet maker. The statement does not identify his former school, subjects taught or any theatre work. His statement does not specify his academic credentials. That omission does not establish that he lacks a degree or teaching qualifications and I have not verified his particular qualifications. His teaching assignment is supported by the school record cited below; an omission from a candidate statement is not evidence of missing credentials.

Thorold residency: A September 2022 profile reported that he had moved to Thorold four years earlier, placing his arrival at approximately 2018. He was reported as 63 at the time, making him approximately 67 now during the 2026 election and 71 at the end of a second term if re-elected, depending on his birthday and if he can successfully defend his rookie Councillor record.

He finished third in 2022. I recall a Facebook image in which he wore a crown after being elected among the eight successful council candidates. This recollection has not been checked against the original post. However, that result came before he had a council voting record for residents to assess. This election gives voters an opportunity to compare his original promises with his decisions during his first term.

Family: In his October 2026 candidate statement, he describes himself as married to Anna for 39 years, with two children and a grandchild. His wife, Anna O'Hare, is listed by the City as chair of the Heritage Advisory Committee. The couple previously lived in Toronto.

Election and Council Term

Election/term	Details
2022 election	Elected with 1,930 votes, finishing third among council candidates.
2022–2026 term	His first council term runs from November 15, 2022, to November 14, 2026.
2026 election	Listed by the City as a certified council candidate seeking re-election.

City of Thorold: 2022 poll-by-poll results (https://www.thorold.ca/en/city-hall/resources/poll-by-poll-results-for-web--final.pdf)

Campaign Priorities Before Election

Before his election, O'Hare helped organize neighbours opposing an Ormond Street development that he considered unsuitable for the neighbourhood. His 2022 campaign emphasized responsible development, heritage protection, affordable housing for seniors and young families, green space and tree preservation.

Ormond Street Development Dispute

Tim opposed variances for a proposed six-storey, 40-unit apartment building at 16 Ormond Street South, the former Riganelli's Bakery site. The Ontario Land Tribunal heard the appeal on July 5, 11 and 15, 2022, before his election. The Tribunal granted him party status as a neighbouring property owner who had participated in the Committee of Adjustment process and retained a planner. He represented himself at the hearing.

Event	Findings and limits
March 17, 2022	The Committee of Adjustment deferred its decision for further review of the parking study.
April 6, 2022	The developer appealed the Committee's non-decision to the Ontario Land Tribunal.
July 2022	Tim participated as a self-represented party and called planner Stephen Bedford. The Tribunal recognized his interest as a neighbouring owner.
Evidence	**The Tribunal identified discrepancies between Bedford's written report and oral testimony and gave his evidence little weight. This was criticism of the planner's evidence, not a finding of misconduct against Tim.**
December 2, 2022	**The Tribunal approved the four remaining requested variances. This outcome followed the election, but concerned the pre-election dispute.**

The developer subsequently alleged that Tim's participation extended a planned one-day hearing into three days and claimed that the City spent approximately $100,000 opposing the application. These were the developer's allegations, reported in December 2022; they were not independently verified costs or Tribunal findings that Tim acted improperly. Tim said the dispute concerned neighbourhood compatibility and that he accepted the decision.

I applaud residents who take an interest in development affecting their neighbourhood. In my opinion, the unsuccessful outcome raises questions about the strength of the case advanced and whether negotiation might have produced a better result. I recall Tim telling me that he tried to negotiate personally with the developer but was unsuccessful.

I have also been told that an earlier developer offer was more favourable to the neighbours than the eventual Tribunal outcome. I have not obtained the written offer, the proposed terms or evidence showing who authorized its rejection. Without those records, I cannot establish that Tim rejected a better deal on the community's behalf. The relevant body in this 2022 case was the Ontario Land Tribunal, not the former Ontario Municipal Board.

My draft notes referred to costs exceeding $200,000 and suggested that Tim forced the City to incur them. Neither assertion is substantiated by the records reviewed. The December 2022 news report attributes an approximately $100,000 cost claim to the developer; that figure also remains independently unverified. City invoices, legal accounts and authorization records are needed before assigning a cost or responsibility to Tim.

The Tribunal lists a participant as "A. O'Hare." The abbreviated name alone does not establish that this was Anna O'Hare. The Tribunal describes Tim as a neighbouring property owner, but I have not checked the property title to establish the full ownership details.

Sources: Ontario Land Tribunal decision issued December 2, 2022 (https://www.omb.gov.on.ca/e-decisions/OLT-22-003399-DEC-02-2022.pdf); December 12, 2022 reporting and developer's allegations (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/ormond-street-developer-wins-case-at-ontario-land-tribunal-6232577).

Teaching and Woodworking Experience

Teaching: Lakeshore Collegiate Institute's published teacher-room list identifies "O'Hare Timothy" with the assignment "Tech (Wood)" in room 122. This supports his woodworking teaching background and is consistent with my recollection that he told me he taught shop. The list does not establish his academic credentials or the detailed accounts of student mentoring supplied in earlier notes. [1]

Student relationships and limits of the research: In the publicly accessible sources reviewed for this article, I found no substantiated report or finding of inappropriate relationships between Tim O'Hare and students. I also found no evidence substantiating the claim that he moved from Toronto to escape such trouble. I therefore have no factual basis to make or endorse that allegation. This describes the limits of the research; it is not a comprehensive background clearance. (Research limitation, not a finding in a cited source.) In my opinion, the idea of candidates obtaining police background checks at their own expense merits discussion. This is a policy suggestion, not a statement of current eligibility requirements or an implication of misconduct by O'Hare.

The broader descriptions of lifelong friendships, a “safe haven,” extensive after-school mentoring and former students’ career choices have not been independently verified. They should not be presented as established facts without identifiable firsthand accounts or specific published sources. The supplied Globe and Mail link could not be verified and is not relied on to support those claims. (Verification limit; no supporting testimonial has been established.)

Woodworking: A 2019 article about restoring his historic Thorold home describes him as a schoolteacher with woodworking and cabinet-making experience. It discusses his restoration skills but does not identify the subjects he taught. Home restoration profile (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/restoring-the-munro-home-to-its-former-glory-1618788)

John Brown House and the Heritage Dispute

Date	Reported events
Before 2020	According to owner/developer Anthony DiFruscia’s later statement to council, he had been approached years earlier about heritage designation and declined. The house at 205 St. David’s Road remained identified as a potential heritage property without formal designation.
June 2020	DiFruscia proposed 15 bungalow townhouse units, requiring demolition of the house. Questions about its historical significance brought the heritage committee into the process.
Later in 2020	The committee supported designation. Historian Sarah King Head’s assessment found that the house had historical value and met designation criteria. DiFruscia opposed designation and told council that it threatened his family’s finances.
November 2020	**Council unanimously rejected the committee’s request. Councillors raised concerns about fairness and the timing of designation during the development process. The heritage decision was separate from the townhouse development application.**
March 2021	Architectural Conservancy Ontario recorded demolition of the house as underway.
July 6, 2021	The committee minutes identified in my research list Anna and Tim O’Hare as members. This establishes membership by that date, but does not establish their participation in the 2020 dispute.
November 2021 onward	A November 2021 report lists Anna and Tim O’Hare as members and Craig Finlay as chair. Anna appears as chair on the 2023–2024 roster. These later records do not establish that she chaired the committee in 2020.

The November 2020 reporting confirms the owner’s objections, council’s unanimous rejection and the distinction between heritage designation and development approval.

Additional sources: June 2020 development coverage (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/townhouse-development-on-st-davids-road-draws-criticism-2522679), Architectural Conservancy Ontario record (https://mail.acontario.ca/show_intervention.php?id=110), and November 2021 committee coverage (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/helpers/homeowners-ensure-former-blacksmith-shop-will-never-be-a-townhouse-or-an-apartment-or-a-mcdonalds-4799042).

My Recollection of Remarks at Council

I recall a speaker, whom I remember as Councillor John Kenny, saying that council generally supported the heritage committee's recommendations with little questioning, but that he would withdraw his future support if the committee again tried to impose itself on an unwilling owner.

The speaker's identity, exact wording and meeting date remain unverified. I am presenting this as my recollection, not as a confirmed quotation. The relevant meeting recording is needed to verify the recollection.

Does the Property Owner Have to Agree to a heritage designation?

No. An owner's objection does not, by itself, prevent municipal heritage designation. City Council, rather than the heritage committee, can designate a qualifying property under the Ontario Heritage Act, provided it follows the required process. Owners have objection and appeal rights.

The heritage committee advises; City Council decides whether to designate. Consequently, council's rejection in the John Brown House case was a decision against designation—not proof that the owner's refusal legally prevented it. Seeking designation over an owner's objection does not, by itself, establish improper conduct. Ontario's designation guidance (https://www.ontario.ca/document/designating-heritage-properties/2-designation-process)

Under the current process, the City issues a notice of intention to designate. An objection may be submitted within 30 days of publication. Council must consider an objection and decide whether to withdraw the notice within 90 days after the objection period ends, subject to applicable exceptions. If council proceeds with a designation bylaw, it can be appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal.

The Province provides the legal authority; council makes the municipal designation decision; the Tribunal determines an appeal. These are current procedures. The 2020 dispute predates changes to the appeal process and should not be described as having followed today's exact procedure.

My View: Questions About Process and Accountability

What troubles me and many others is whether the committee made the limits of its authority clear to Mr. DiFruscia and whether council was adequately informed as the matter developed. Council ultimately rejected the recommendation unanimously. In my view, that outcome warrants a closer examination of the committee's communications with the owner and council.

Did the committee clearly explain that it could recommend designation but could not impose it on its own? What discussions took place with council before the recommendation was brought forward? What information was given to the owner about the process and his rights?

To me, the episode raises questions about whether the committee's approach placed unnecessary pressure on the owner. However, the available information does not establish extortion, deliberate concealment or a calculated "power play." Those conclusions would require evidence beyond disagreement over designation and council's eventual rejection.

Likewise, Anna and Tim O'Hare's documented membership in 2021 does not establish what role, if any, either played in the 2020 dispute. That question requires the committee's membership records, minutes and correspondence from the relevant period. Their membership does not establish that they cast a vote on this particular matter.

I am also concerned about the effect of this dispute on a family coping with bereavement. The November 2020 report refers to DiFruscia's late wife. My further understanding that a family member died in July 2020, and that committee members knew of the illness, remains unverified. In my view, the family's circumstances warrant sensitivity. However, committee membership alone does not establish either O'Hare's participation, knowledge or responsibility in the 2020 dispute.

Part Two will return to the period when O'Hare was preparing to run as a rookie council candidate, before examining his subsequent public record. In my view, committee members should explain their positions on significant decisions. However, membership alone, or the absence of a resignation, does not establish responsibility for a particular action.

Additional Material Retained for Review

Later Council Activities

The City-listed council assignments include the Age-Friendly; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity; and Heritage advisory committees, along with the Thorold Museum Board. These assignments postdate the first election and are retained here for possible use in a later part. City council assignments (https://www.thorold.ca/council-administration/council/council-members/)

Work with construction students: An April 2023 report describes his work with Thorold Secondary School construction classes to build two bat boxes and two barn-swallow structures for the Port Robinson Eco-Park. This was work undertaken as a councillor; the report does not establish that he previously taught at that school. Port Robinson wildlife project (https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-takes-steps-towards-protecting-port-robinson-wildlife-6917726).

My understanding is that an unnamed person helped develop a prototype with an expectation of further paid work, but was subsequently left out when arrangements changed. This account remains unverified; the review notes below identify the evidence needed. This is hearsay relayed to me by a third party. I would need a firsthand account and supporting records before drawing conclusions or returning to it in a later article.

Review of Unverified Concerns

The supplied notes raise a concern that someone other than Tim and Anna O'Hare may be listed as a voter at their address. The entry, person's eligibility and circumstances have not been verified. This does not establish an improper registration or vote. The question is retained for review rather than presented as a finding.

The supplied notes also describe an unnamed person allegedly promised further paid work after building a wildlife-project prototype, then left out when arrangements changed. No agreement, correspondence, named firsthand account or response from Tim has been supplied. This allegation is unverified and concerns a post-election project.

The supplied notes question whether the heritage committee acted without keeping council informed or used its position as a power play. The available records do not establish those motives, or Anna and Tim's participation in the 2020 dispute. Earlier committee rosters, minutes and correspondence are needed to assess the concern. My recollection of Kenny's warning is a reason to locate the meeting recording, not proof of unauthorized conduct. The speaker's identity, exact words and context must be established before relying on that recollection as evidence.

The July 6, 2021 committee minutes cited in the draft should be attached or checked against the official record before publication. The later news roster confirms membership in November 2021 but does not independently verify the July minutes.

Conclusion

My impression is that Tim O'Hare presented himself as an approachable, "aw-shucks" candidate. From my conversations with residents, I understand that some now question whether that image reflects his public record; I share that concern. This first article begins examining the background behind that public image. **In my view, the Ormond Street dispute raises questions about his approach to negotiation and the evidence supporting the case he advanced. The records also have clear limits: the disputed costs and settlement terms remain unverified, and neither O'Hare's involvement in the 2020 heritage dispute has been established.** I invite readers to examine the sources and send documented corrections or additional evidence. The remaining articles will provide further opportunities to assess his public record.

Disclaimer

This article contains my opinions, identified recollections and cited public information. Questions and allegations are not findings of wrongdoing. A committee roster does not establish participation in a particular decision; an unsuccessful planning case does not establish misconduct. Attributed claims about costs or negotiations remain unverified unless supported by records. The absence of a substantiated report in the sources reviewed is not proof that every possible record has been checked. I welcome documented corrections and responses and will correct material errors brought to my attention.

Nicholas Bozza

Registered Third-Party Advertiser — City of Thorold

nbozza@go2cai.ca

Source Notes and Verification Limits

[1] Lakeshore Collegiate Institute, teacher-room list, entry "O'Hare Timothy — 122 — Tech (Wood)." School-hosted document: https://schoolweb.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/lakeshoreci/docs/Teacher%20Rooms%20April%206.pdf. This supports the listed teaching assignment, not personal student testimonials or academic qualifications.

[2] ThoroldToday, “City takes steps towards protecting Port Robinson wildlife,” April 2023. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-takes-steps-towards-protecting-port-robinson-wildlife-6917726. Documents the later student construction project; retained outside the pre-election narrative.

[3] Ontario Land Tribunal, Milski Inc. v. Thorold (City), OLT-22-003399, decision issued December 2, 2022; hearings July 5, 11 and 15, 2022. https://www.omb.gov.on.ca/e-decisions/OLT-22-003399-DEC-02-2022.pdf. Primary source for Tim’s party status, expert evidence and the variance decision.

[4] ThoroldToday, “Ormond Street developer wins case at Ontario Land Tribunal,” December 12, 2022. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/ormond-street-developer-wins-case-at-ontario-land-tribunal-6232577. Source of the developer’s attributed allegations; not independent confirmation of costs or responsibility for hearing length.

[5] ThoroldToday, “John Brown house determined to be a non-heritage site, can be demolished to make room for town houses,” November 20, 2020. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/john-brown-house-determined-to-be-a-non-heritage-site-can-be-demolished-to-make-room-for-town-houses-2896736. Reports council’s unanimous rejection and the owner’s account.

[6] Ontario, “The designation process,” Designating Heritage Properties. https://www.ontario.ca/document/designating-heritage-properties/2-designation-process. Current guidance; not a reconstruction of the exact appeal procedure in 2020.

The supplied Globe and Mail link and broad descriptions of former student relationships remain unverified. No named student testimonial or school archive supporting those descriptions was supplied. The July 2021 minutes and recollected council remarks also require verification against the original records.