Rookie Councillor Tim O’Hare Involved in the Oldest Profession in the World? — Part 2 of 5

Article prose word count: 2,004 | Estimated reading time: 10 minutes. Headings included.
Comic, captions, continuation notice, sign-off, appendix charts, sources and disclaimer excluded.

A story about my Pa (analogy)

Let me begin about four years ago, before the 2022 municipal election, when Tim O’Hare was a rookie candidate rather than a rookie councillor. First, a story about my dad will help explain the comparison I want to make. The title is a joke about salesmanship, not an allegation of sexual conduct.

My dad, Nicola—God bless his soul—was born on February 7, 1922. At about 92, he was still living at 14 West Street North, near Broderick. That neighbourhood brings back memories of the Thorold I knew: unlocked doors and everyone was safe, neighbours watching out for one another’s children, and Halloween treats you could accept even if they were homemade. The owners of Mr. Donuts at the Pen Centre lived on the southeast corner of Broderick and Collier and handed out fresh doughnuts at Halloween. We would eat them under the lights on Collier Road and return a few times that night. When they asked whether we had already been there, we would say, “Not us,” with doughnut powder all over our mouths. They would laugh.

Then, as I like to joke, someone let the cat out of the bag that Thorold was a stopover on the way to heaven, and everyone moved in. My concern is that celebrating population growth does not answer the questions about how well that growth is managed. In my view, Mayor Ugulini has not adequately addressed the supporting infrastructure that growth requires.

I compare it to a body carrying more weight than is healthy: size alone does not mean health. Overweight and obesity can increase the risk of type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, stroke, fatty liver disease and mental health problems. These are increased risks, not inevitable outcomes. [3] Should I continue?

What problems can poorly managed city growth create? It can strain infrastructure, worsen traffic congestion, overload public services, increase housing and affordability pressures, and raise municipal costs. If capacity and funding do not keep pace, water, wastewater and stormwater systems may come under pressure, emergency services may be stretched, and farmland and green space may be lost. These are potential consequences, not findings that every problem has occurred in Thorold. Should I continue?

Dad was a good man, a devoted husband and father, and a talented gardener. He retired from Fraser Paper at 65 after 35 years as a tow motor driver. He understood sacrifice and helped raise a son with muscular dystrophy who used a wheelchair. Like my mom, he worshipped God and attended church. He came from Italy to build a better life for his family. As I remember the family story, his sister sponsored him. He arrived owing $250 to a family member, repaid the loan, and sent money home while working to bring my mom and eldest brother to Canada. I recall that the family member thought Dad had repaid the interest-free loan too quickly, given that he still had a wife and child in Italy to support. To me, that reflected the work ethic of the good old days.

At 92, Dad still drove in town and enjoyed a smaller garden, but he was tired of cooking and cleaning. A younger neighbour, Tony, helped with the lawn for a few dollars. Dad was grateful, and so was I.

Then Dad told me something that sounded shocking. A younger woman—in her sixties, as he described her—had offered to do whatever he wanted for $1,000. She would stay for 24 hours, overnight included, and cook breakfast. “Anything I want?” he asked. “Anything,” she replied.

I asked, “Dad, did you give her the $1,000?” He paused, looked me in the eyes, and said, sounding embarrassed, “**But son, the house had never been cleaner.**”

There is the punchline: she cleaned his home. Later, Dad asked us to arrange a place at Cobblestone Gardens Retirement Residence on Ormond Street and sell his house. He said his cooking and cleaning days were over. About three years later, he suffered a fall and died. These are my personal recollections of my father and our family.

How I came to support Tim O’Hare as a rookie candidate

I came to know Tim through concerns about development. He was dealing with a proposal on Ormond Street, while I was raising concerns at City Hall about land near DeCew Woods and Richmond, across from the conservation area and near the frog pond. We shared notes and supported each other.

Tim and his wife, Anna, had restored the century building on Ormond Street where they lived, preserving its heritage character. My understanding was that he was a shop teacher and skilled with tools. I had purchased a nearby century building at 36 Ormond Street South, near Haine Funeral Home & Chapel, and renovated it for business purposes into a clinic and the Canadian head office of our medical research institute. We seemed to have something in common.

When Tim O’Hare told me he was running for council, I agreed to help on the understanding that he would be straightforward, exercise independent judgment as a councillor, and not join the group whose support for the Canada Games Park agreement I and many others strongly opposed. Others and I regarded that group as a recurring majority voting bloc and did not want him to fill a vacancy left by councillors in that bloc who were not running for re-election. This is my recollection of our conversation, which I regard as reliable and am willing to affirm under oath. My reference to swearing on my parents’ graves at the Lakeview mausoleum expresses how seriously I take that recollection. **I agreed to take Tim at his word.**

I distributed Tim’s campaign pamphlets in my neighbourhood and others, made a donation in his name to the local Terry Fox Run, and put his election sign on my lawn alongside those of a few other candidates. Some people warned me that he would eventually join the group. I had my suspicions, but wanted to give him the opportunity to fulfil the commitment I understood him to be making. I regarded his subsequent actions as the test of that commitment.

Many others and I have referred to Mayor Terry Ugulini jokingly as our “Night Mayor” and “Spendolini.” My joke about collecting retirement money to send him to the Betty Ford clinic for a “tax-spending addiction” was satire, not a claim that he has an addiction, needs treatment, or that an actual collection exists. My remarks about his haircut and untidy hair in photographs were also satire.

He is my neighbour and, in all honesty, an excellent one. Top shelf! When I built a shared fence with neighbours, including Terry, he was a gentleman and easy to deal with throughout. My assessment of his municipal financial decisions is very different from my experience with him as a neighbour. I promised there would be no political talk over the fence and have kept that promise for the four years since the last election. Establishing that trust mattered to me. I also recall telling him I would stop calling him “Frado” if it bothered him, and that he replied, “Do whatever you want.”

The election sign came down

Tim and Anna O'Hare brought pamphlets to my house, and I delivered them while out walking. I was also supporting other candidates. This was four years ago, before I registered as a third-party advertiser for that election.

Shortly afterward, Tim called and said he needed to speak with me. When he came over, I recall him saying that people he was working with thought it was not a good idea for me to distribute his pamphlets. I interpreted that as a sign that he was allowing others to influence his relationship with a supporter.

I told him that if other people's objections determined whether I could distribute his pamphlets, those same people might object to his sign being on my lawn. People whose views I respected might object as well. To be consistent with his reasoning, I suggested removing the sign. He appeared uneasy but agreed without hesitation and was a true gentleman about it. I interpreted the exchange as a sign that others had considerable influence over his campaign, although that did not establish who was making its decisions.

I promised I would not work against him or try to reverse the support I had already encouraged. I also said I would still vote for him as long as I felt comfortable doing so. I kept my word.

I would have felt taken advantage of had I continued displaying the sign after being told my help was unwelcome, although Tim delivered the message gently. My understanding was that he still wanted my support, but some supporters objected because I had criticised what I regarded as majority bloc voting by former Ontario Paper workers, including the mayor, Ken Sentance and others no longer in politics. I also included Nella Dekker in my criticism of that voting pattern.

That experience left me questioning the inclusiveness I later associated with his public message. However, I wanted to give a first-time candidate room to make difficult choices and learn, as I had done with my staff. I thought it fairer to judge him after the election than demand that he choose between supporters. In my view, that would have been as unfair as the pressure I believed others had placed on him. I saw potential in Tim and told him so; stepping back seemed the right decision.

I later came to believe the objections were connected to people associated with the group I criticised. That remains my understanding, not an independently established finding about who directed him or evidence of a secret arrangement. I decided not to spend further time trying to prove who was involved.

I remember telling Tim that I supported him because of the skills I believed he had shown during the Ontario Municipal Board hearing. I did not know the whole file or the earlier negotiations. I later came to think that he had pushed those negotiations too far, but that is my assessment rather than a finding established here. I was not supporting him for his fighting skills; I was already supporting another candidate for that quality. I recall him replying that he could fight and be very aggressive. That differed from the approachable, "aw-shucks" manner I had seen and liked. My later concern was that his forcefulness became associated with the voting alignment I criticise, rather than the independent approach I had expected.

With six council seats available, people I have spoken with wonder whether any of the four councillors I describe as the UN-FAB FOUR will be re-elected and whether those who return could form new alliances. Some speculate that one or two might return at the very most; those views are not a verified forecast or proof of recruitment. A large majority says only one. I ask which one, if any at all? My housekeeping and mice metaphors express my concern that replacing only part of the group could leave the same pattern in place. The earlier cancer comparison was also a metaphor, not a medical description of any person. If any are re-elected like before, will they recruit the other side to continue the pattern it seemed to have happened this term with both Tim O'Hare

and Mike De Divitiis apparently changing their alignment so it is a fair question? Others ask maybe they didn't flip as they were already on that side but did not reveal that during the campaign to gain votes from both sides. That too is a very constructive thought for us all to consider.

I spend time on these articles to share information, research, opinions and my way of assessing council's record. Readers are free to agree or disagree. If they consider that material before voting, I regard my purpose as fulfilled. My joke that the articles will self-destruct five seconds after the election results is a Mission: Impossible reference, not a literal claim.

To be continued in Part 3 of 5, released alongside this article.

Nicholas Bozza
Registered Third-Party Advertiser — City of Thorold
nbozza@go2cai.ca
www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca

Satirical cartoon [5]



Satire expressing the author's opinion of a perceived voting alignment. Shared votes alone do not establish coordination or improper conduct.

Appendix B — Councillors described as the UN-FAB FOUR

The mayor is added below as an associated figure in the author's commentary. His inclusion does not change the four-councillor meaning of the UN-FAB FOUR label.

UN-FAB FOUR is the label others and I use, having heard it from Thorold residents, to describe a perceived recurring voting alignment during the 2022–2026 council term. In my view, that pattern continues. **It is not an official caucus or proof of coordinated conduct.** I have heard the description for years, and some of my informal inquiries produced unanimous agreement among the people I asked. Those conversations were not scientific or representative surveys and do not establish the views of Thorold voters generally.

Councillor	Position in the author's commentary
Nella Dekker	Included in the group the author describes as a recurring voting bloc.
Tim O'Hare	Included in the group the author describes as a recurring voting bloc.
Ken Sentance	Included in the group the author describes as a recurring voting bloc.
Mike De Divitiis	Included in the group the author describes as a recurring voting bloc.
Terry Ugulini — Mayor	Additional figure I associate with the voting alignment, listed separately from the four councillors. My impression is that the alignment included the mayor until the cemetery issue; the specific vote needs to be identified.

My impression is that Mayor Terry Ugulini is distancing himself from the group as he approaches retirement. I have wondered whether a future political appointment might be a consideration, but I have no evidence of an appointment, agreement or private motive. Public praise for his role in Canada Games Park does not establish any such arrangement.

I wish Terry and his family all the best in retirement: enjoyable travels, good health and plenty of time in his garden. He is a very good gardener with an excellent green thumb and neatly arranged plants. Two green thumbs up, Terry—all the best!

Appendix C — Earlier group identified by the author

I identify the following people as an earlier group called the FAB FOUR, a description I have heard from Thorold taxpayers and voters. **This is my characterisation, not an official caucus designation or a finding of coordinated conduct.** The relevant council term and specific votes need to be identified. The revised chart lists four councillors, two unnamed, and the mayor as an associated figure.

Name	**Position identified by the author Like the NHL's Original Six, this is the group I describe as the original FOUR as many taxpayers did also.**
Nella Dekker	Councillor
Ken Sentance	Councillor
Terry Ugulini	Mayor
Two other councillors — names omitted	The author has omitted their names because they are no longer active in Thorold politics.

Source notes and review checks

[1] City of Thorold, Consortium and Co-Tenancy Agreement, sections 10.1, 13.2, 13.3 and 17, and the Legacy Lease. Supports committee composition, operating-cost allocation and voting qualifications. https://www.thorold.ca/en/recreation-and-culture/resources/canada-games/Consortium-and-Co-Tenancy-Agreement---website-version.pdf

[2] Bernard Lansbergen, ThoroldToday, "City Council still debating 'crappy' Canada Games Park deal," October 25, 2023. Reports the solicitor's explanation of ownership during and after the lease. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/local-news/city-council-still-debating-crappy-canada-games-park-deal-7734304

Where information has not been independently confirmed, I rely on my own recollections and those of others, which I consider reliable. These accounts remain recollections rather than independently verified facts. When I refer to "voting patterns," I mean the perceived patterns that many others and I see; this is our interpretation, not an official finding or proof of coordination. My informal surveys and conversations found that many participants believed this voting alignment existed. In many instances, everyone I asked agreed that they perceived a voting bloc. To me, that indicates a commonly shared concern—not simply a mirage of my own making. Although these surveys may or may not meet everyone's definition of a scientific survey and do not establish the views of all Thorold taxpayers, they do show that my interpretation, and that of others, was shared by many of those I consulted through surveys. **Agreement among participants does not, by itself, prove coordination among councillors.**

Further review: The original approving council vote, the video of public praise, and the source and context of the reported "clown show" remark should be identified. My recollection of that remark comes from watching a video on Niagara Region's website. I have not had time to locate and recheck the recording, so I am relying on my memory; readers may consult the recordings themselves. These editorial revisions do not independently verify recollections or reports from residents.

[3] National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, Health Risks of Overweight & Obesity. Supports the increased-risk wording in the health analogy; it does not establish municipal outcomes. https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/weight-management/adult-overweight-obesity/health-risks

Disclaimer

This draft contains my opinions, personal recollections, interpretations, humour and metaphors, alongside information identified from public sources. Recalled conversations are not verbatim transcripts. Unless expressly documented, my descriptions of motives, independence, inclusiveness or voting alignment are my assessments, not established findings of misconduct. **Shared votes do not prove collusion, and a Facebook restriction does not establish the reason for it.** The family anecdote is my recollection. The "oldest profession" title, jacket comparison, "Night Mayor," "Spendolini," spending-addiction language and cemetery postscript are rhetorical or satirical expressions; they do not allege sexual conduct, a medical condition, an actual treatment fund or a factual message from the deceased. Humour reflects frustration and my viewpoint; it does not substitute for evidence. Readers should examine the cited records and relevant responses. I welcome documented corrections and responses from anyone discussed. This disclaimer does not validate unsupported claims or remove responsibility for accuracy. I am willing to attest to my own recollections, but that is not independent corroboration of another person's words, intentions or conduct.

[4] The director's call, television remake, borrowed jacket and request to Tim are entirely fictional. This passage is a joke and satirical comparison with the Herb Tarlek character; no actual call, production or borrowing of a jacket is being reported.

[5] The 911 cartoon is fictional satire expressing the author's opinion of a perceived voting alignment. It reports no actual emergency or ambulance call and is not evidence of coordination. But it does reflect how many in Thorold view this bloc's overall voting pattern.