WHO “NOT” TO VOTE FOR & “WHY”?

This may be the best 14 minutes I’ve ever given…don’t tell my wife; she’ll be jealous.

What hundreds of conversations helped me conclude—and **why** I wrote these articles.

By Nicholas Bozza | Thorold Election Commentary

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The short version

I will vote for Carmen DeRose, Jim Handley, Ken Steeve and Kieron Daniels, in no particular order. I will not vote for Tim O’Hare, Nella Dekker, Mike De Divitiis or Ken Sentance—the councillors I call the UN-FAB FOUR. My reasons centre on independent judgment, performance, clear explanations and accountability. These are my assessments; the article below explains them and the qualifications that matter.

Already voted? You can still help someone who hasn’t.

If this article helps explain concerns voters told me they share, please pass the website link to friends, family and neighbours who are still deciding. You do not have to agree with every conclusion to share it for consideration. Encourage them to read, examine the record and make their own choices.

Please share: https://www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca/

Short on time? Start with the four candidate assessments below, then read the fuller discussion. The cartoon edition offers another quick introduction.

Why I wrote this

After speaking with hundreds of people over the past year, I have found clearer words for concerns I had been struggling to explain. People expressed their dissatisfaction with the UN-FAB FOUR differently; some found the feeling easier to recognize than to describe. **Those conversations helped me understand their frustrations**—and gave me another reason to keep writing this time-consuming series.

This was not a scientific poll. Nevertheless, the concerns were Regional, Relevant and Real to the people sharing them. Three Rs—and I had barely finished listening before it was time to recycle those conversations into something useful. No blue bin required. What follows is my assessment, informed by those conversations and the issues I have examined. Still, considering how much people shared, **perhaps I should have brought a folding couch and a therapy dog.**

One question kept coming back: **WHY do voters keep rewarding a record we criticize, then act surprised when nothing changes?**

That brings me to Annie Lennox, known for Eurythmics alongside guitarist Dave Stewart. Her solo song *Why* includes the line “You don’t know how I feel.” To me, that captures the frustration of residents who feel unheard. The political connection is mine: **WHY** do voters keep making choices they already expect will disappoint them?

As a Leafs fan and a student of psychology, I recognize the puzzle as candidate Ken Steeve put it in his Meet and Greet speech. Where he states, he can not only piece the puzzle together for Thorold but he knows how to assess talent to know who to call to put Humpty Dumpty back together again. His thought, my satire. I believe him as he has the experience and the background to support it. Sometimes the attraction seems to be the drama: even when the team looks good, we find ourselves wondering how they will manage to screw it up this

time. **Yet back we come, just like those damn Leafs. Being a Leaf fan I too should know better!**

I wonder whether familiar political disappointment can have a similar pull. Familiarity, belonging and the hope that *this time will be different* can make another chance feel easier than a change. It reminds me of people who keep returning to casinos while knowing the odds favour the house. **The entertainment—and the feeling of belonging—can become very expensive and overly attractive to a fault.**

That is my analogy, not a diagnosis of voters. But it raises a serious question: **WHY allow politicians who, in our judgment, put power before public service to treat us like circus lions responding to an invisible whip? Our votes give us a say in who holds the chair. We should use them accordingly.**

In my view, this is the most important election in Thorold's history and the most important article in my series. **I urge you to read it twice before making your choices.**

Think of Monday's vote as an early Christmas gift to Thorold. You're Santa, deciding who belongs on the Naughty or Nice list. Unfortunately, there's no milk and no cookies waiting for you—and, courtesy of Seinfeld's Soup Nazi, "No soup for you!" **Apparently, even Santa has to bring his own lunch.**

Voters may choose up to six councillors.[1] I intend to vote for four. My priorities are **independent judgment, the ability to do the job and a willingness to explain decisions.**

You now know WHO I'm voting for. What follows explains WHY not to vote for the UN-FAB FOUR:

Four names. Four assessments. One standard.

Tim O'Hare: too much friction—a political fire hazard

My concern is the amount of division and commotion I and others I have spoken with associate with O'Hare's approach. On the cemetery issue and in the public exchanges I have criticized, **I want to see someone lower the temperature, clarify the facts and bring people toward a resolution and it seemed Handley did just that. And he did it remotely! A nudge towards O'Hare.** My assessment is that O'Hare's approach too often adds friction instead. **Council needs problem-solvers;** taxpayers should not have to bring a fire extinguisher to every disagreement.

Some voters I have spoken with also question how he responds to people who have offered advice or disagree with him, including former mayor Mal Woodhouse. My understanding is that O'Hare sought Woodhouse's advice before winning his first term. My point is simple: **asking for someone's help, voters expect you to treat them respectfully. Even when you disagree.** For me, the question is whether his approach builds the trust needed to do the job. I am not satisfied that it does.

My satirical election-day menu: no soup—and no vote—for O'Hare.

Mike De Divitiis: private interests and an uncertain political direction

De Divitiis has publicly described himself as a long-time business and commercial property owner.[4] I also understand him to have development and student-housing interests, and I recall him discussing development interests at council meetings. Those additional descriptions reflect my understanding; reference [4] supports the business and commercial-property description. My concern is how voters can clearly understand the relationship between private interests and public decisions. Property ownership is not itself evidence of wrongdoing. It does, however, make clear explanations of relevant interests and decision-making especially important to my confidence as a voter.

I want enough disclosure and explanation to assess independence, rather than an expectation that taxpayers will simply assume everything is fine. My concern is about confidence in judgment and transparency; I am not

asserting a proven legal conflict. **I respect business experience. I also expect the public interest to be unmistakably in the driver's seat. His first term has not given me the confidence I need to support another.**

His move from the mayoral race to the councillor race also leaves me questioning the clarity of his political direction.[5] Changing races is his choice; it is my choice to find it unpersuasive. Mayor? Councillor? I would prefer a clearer destination before buying the ticket. Some people I spoke with also questioned how independently the four would perform without a reliable voting alignment. I share the concern that a majority can make weak individual scrutiny less visible. **Four matching votes are not four explanations. Each councillor still has to demonstrate independent judgment.** Taken together, my concerns about his outside investments and what I understand to be his residence outside Thorold leave me unconvinced that returning him offers taxpayers the representation I want. The residence point is my understanding, not a claim that he is ineligible to serve.

On my satirical election-day menu: no soup—and no vote—for Mike D.

Nella Dekker: confidence in judgment and readiness

My concern with Dekker is her judgment and readiness for the demands of the next term. This is an assessment of performance and suitability for office, not a personal attack on her intelligence. **I want councillors who can examine complex information, ask searching questions and explain their own positions clearly.**

The decisions and responses I have criticized constructively in this series have not given me the confidence I need to support her again. That is my conclusion, and readers should test it against the record rather than accept it because I say so. **Familiarity is not a qualification for automatic renewal.** A council seat should not come with a "same again?" button.

On my satirical election-day menu: no soup—and no vote—for Nella.

Ken Sentance: experience, accountability and questions about potential conflicts

Sentance has disappointed me and some voters I have spoken with because we expect experience to produce clearer answers about the intersection of public responsibilities and outside roles. The concerns I have raised involve school board connections, employment, the non-profit housing lease and earlier decisions involving the non-profit housing corporation. My standard is straightforward: **identify the relevant relationships, explain the decision-making role and show how the public interest was protected.**

I also want a clear accounting of the financial controls surrounding consultant payments and anticipated grant funding: who authorized the expenditure, what work was purchased, what funding was secured and who carried any risk. These are questions about oversight, not a finding that Sentance authorized an improper payment or personally benefited.

Experience should help a councillor explain complicated matters more clearly. It should not leave taxpayers feeling they need a detective's notebook just to understand who did what. Until I am satisfied with the explanations, I am not prepared to offer another term on the strength of his experience alone. **Too many of my questions about potential conflicts of interest remain unanswered to my satisfaction.**

On my satirical election-day menu: no soup—and no vote—for Ken Sentance.

Looking for the executive summary? Start here.

For this article, the usual executive-summary space on the website will carry the cartoon edition. Each cartoon will have a short explanation. Start there if you prefer a quick visual introduction, then return to this article for the argument, context and qualifications.

A relationship cannot run on unlimited chances and blind trust

Have a seat. The recurring concern I heard was a loss of trust. People described feeling overlooked, disappointed and tired of asking for explanations. My conclusion is that a political relationship cannot improve when voters feel the conduct that damaged it is never properly acknowledged.

At some point, voters stop asking **why** they keep being disappointed and start asking **why** they keep offering another opportunity to disappoint them. Refusing another term is a legitimate electoral judgment. **Nobody owes an incumbent permanent access to their vote.** Re-election is not a loyalty card: four years in office does not earn a free fifth coffee and another term.

The reaction is not the original problem

Several conversations returned to the same frustration: residents felt their reaction had become the issue, while the decision that caused it disappeared from view. They wanted answers and felt they were being asked to defend **why** they wanted them.

That is the pattern I have been trying to describe. When a taxpayer asks a difficult question, the useful response is an explanation. **Treating the questioner as the problem does nothing to restore confidence.** Asking where the money went should not require a permission slip and a character reference.

A mistake repeated is a decision.

That is my judgment about repeated conduct, not proof that every disputed decision was deliberate wrongdoing. But repeated disappointment changes how voters assess the next promise. A promise becomes less persuasive when residents believe the same concerns will return after election day.

Some people described reaching their breaking point, only to feel shamed for finally expressing it. Others felt that forgiveness had become an expectation rather than an opportunity to do better. Those are residents' perceptions as relayed to me, not findings about anyone's private intentions.

Communication, transparency and accountability should not be things taxpayers have to beg for. We should not feel like dogs waiting for a treat called an explanation. Sit. Stay. Pay your taxes. Good taxpayer. Now stop barking about the bill. Public representatives serve the community; the community does not exist to keep representatives comfortable.

Meet taxpayers in the middle

A fair question is **why** residents should keep walking the entire distance toward an answer when they feel their representatives will not take a step toward them. **Understanding a councillor's position should not require accepting that position without explanation.**

The hardest conversations are often the most necessary. Avoiding an uncomfortable discussion does not resolve the issue dividing people. It leaves the frustration in place. **Unanswered questions are remarkably poor at taking a hint and going away.**

That is **why** questions about Canada Games Park, the cemetery issue and other decisions keep returning in my conversations. I have discussed these matters in earlier articles. Here, my point is about the continuing demand for understandable answers, rather than a new allegation about any particular vote.

If the UN-FAB FOUR are tired of hearing the questions, imagine how tired taxpayers are of feeling they still need to ask them.

People can disagree with my conclusions. But disagreement is no reason to dismiss the underlying expectation: explain the decision, accept scrutiny and take responsibility for the result.

Public office is service, not possession

I also remain troubled by what I regard as O'Hare's treatment of former mayor Mal Woodhouse. In my view, the conduct I am referring to was unacceptable. Readers should judge the underlying exchange for themselves; my assessment is not a substitute for seeing it.

Contrast that with a Facebook post I recall from Jim Handley, featuring a baby photograph and a joke about having been a baby at one time, but never a crybaby. I took it as a useful reminder that seeking public office means accepting the voters' decision. That is my interpretation of the joke, not a statement that Handley expressly made about this election. To me, it suggests the attitude I want from anyone seeking office: if voters choose someone else, **accept it, move on and keep rooting for Thorold. Community service should survive the loss of a council seat.** My impression of the UN-FAB FOUR is that retaining influence has become too central to their political identity. That is my assessment—not a prediction of their conduct if defeated. Nobody should need a furniture-removal crew to separate a public servant from a council chair.

Handley wants to serve; he does not have to serve. In my view, he is a gentleman and an outstanding community volunteer. I also value the contributions of his father and James Symons. Their community service deserves respect, and Thorold is fortunate to call them our own.

A council seat belongs to the public to assign for a term. It is not a personal possession. There is no municipal homesteading provision for a favourite chair. To be clear, I am voting for Jim Handley; his experience is a major reason I endorsed him.

Feet in cement, hands out for yet another term for the UN-FAB FOUR it seems…

Now let us be candid. The political picture is still developing, but this could be quite a Kodak moment. Do voters need these four particular UN-FAB'd councillors returned to office? Or have we become too accustomed to the idea that familiar names must remain in place? **I do not accept that Thorold's future depends on returning this foursome.** In my imaginary council golf tournament, they do not even yell "FORE!" before sending another matching vote down the fairway. Perhaps my fictional City Hall needs an "UN-FAB FOUR ALERT": taxpayers, keep your heads up. **That is a golf joke, not a real municipal warning or an AMBER Alert.**

Some people I spoke with saw a group more concerned with retaining influence than rebuilding trust; some described it as a power trip. Those are perceptions, not established motives. I can say that I do not want a council where a perceived bloc appears more important than independent judgment.

My cement image is a metaphor: four councillors planted firmly in their positions while taxpayers wait for movement. It captures the frustration I heard—the sense that explanations were treated as optional and residents were expected to get over it.

If your feet are set in cement, do not call it a willingness to meet voters halfway. That is not a platform. It is a patio. And in my imaginary City Hall permit search, naturally, there is no paperwork for it. I'm kidding: there is no actual patio, permit allegation or records search.

Some residents described feeling manipulated, betrayed or emotionally worn down. I report those feelings as feelings. They do not establish intentional abuse, a conspiracy or a private plan.

The political point remains: when people feel unheard for long enough, they may stop seeking another explanation and decide that the record already gives them their answer. **That is what elections allow them to do.**

Why I kept writing

One recurring sentiment was that voters were expected to understand **why** something could not be done, while their representatives did not seem to understand how being left unserved changed the way residents saw them. Another was that too much energy appeared to go into proving critics wrong and too little into explaining **why** those critics were unhappy.

A healthy relationship with voters requires more than enjoying their support and the authority that comes with it. **Their loss of trust must matter too.** If residents feel hurt or betrayed, brushing that aside will not repair the relationship. To carry the relationship metaphor a little further, some voters sound ready for a separation followed by an electoral divorce. No division of the family silver required—just the end of the term and the perks that come with the role.

Long articles, short summaries—and cartoons

My goal for this series was simple: give people enough substance to examine the decisions and reach their own conclusions. Some asked for shorter articles. Some felt I was talking over people's heads. Others said readers were simply too busy.

I believe serious issues deserve time. I also understand that people have jobs, families, sports, elderly parents, illnesses and adult responsibilities. That is **why** I added executive summaries. **Being busy does not mean someone does not care. Nobody should need to book a vacation day to finish reading about municipal accountability.**

I also wrote with community connectors and trusted opinion leaders in mind—people who could read the detail, assess it and explain it in their own words to others. Then I introduced humour and cartoons to make the central points easier to grasp and share. If a thousand words will not get the point across, perhaps four pairs of shoes in a concrete slab will.

My conclusion is clear: I will NOT vote for the UN-FAB FOUR. I believe Thorold deserves independent judgment, fuller explanations and a fresh start.

Read the record. Challenge my conclusions. Make your own choices. If this article helps you, please share https://www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca/ with someone who is still deciding. Already cast your ballot? Sharing the link is another way to contribute to the discussion before Monday's vote.

Disclaimer & references

Opinion and conversation notice

This article expresses Nicholas Bozza's personal political opinions and voting intentions. Descriptions of conversations reflect his recollections and paraphrases; they are not a representative survey, verified transcripts or proof of community-wide agreement. No anonymous remarks are presented as independently authenticated quotations.

The UN-FAB FOUR is a satirical nickname expressing the author's perception of a voting alignment involving Tim O'Hare, Nella Dekker, Mike De Divitiis and Ken Sentance. It is not evidence of secret coordination, unlawful conduct or undisclosed agreements. Statements about trust, responsiveness and suitability for office are the author's assessments. References to cement, dogs, relationships, golf and an "UN-FAB FOUR ALERT" are figurative political commentary. The golf scene and warning are invented satire, not actual events, official alerts or quotations. References to a folding couch, therapy dog, recycling, casinos, circus lions, Christmas, Santa, Kodak, a patio permit, electoral divorce and the invented "Code Red" movie scene are humour or metaphor, not reports of actual events or professional diagnoses. No endorsement by any named performer, programme, film or brand is implied. The "political fire hazard" heading and "no soup" refrains are satirical expressions of the author's voting judgment, not literal hazards, actual service refusals or statements by the councillors.

References and source notes

[1] City of Thorold, "Registered Candidates & Third-Party Advertisers," accessed October 23, 2026. Confirms candidate spellings, the instruction to vote for up to six councillors, and Nicholas Bozza's listed third-party advertiser contact. https://www.thorold.ca/council-administration/elections/registered-candidates-third-party-advertisers/

[2] Nicholas Bozza, councillor endorsement article dated October 19, 2026, as identified by the author. Available through Thorold Election Commentary: https://www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca/

[3] Background on Canada Games Park: City of Thorold, "Canada Games Park Consortium," which provides access to project records. This article makes no new finding about the agreement's terms or individual votes. https://www.thorold.ca/recreation-culture-community/canada-games-park/canada-games-park-consortium/

[4] Mike De Divitiis, letter to the editor, "More time needed to understand impacts of amalgamation, says councillor," ThoroldToday, accessed October 23, 2026. His self-description supports the reference to business and commercial property ownership; it does not establish a conflict of interest. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/letters-to-the-editor/letter-more-time-needed-to-understand-impacts-of-amalgamation-says-councillor-11946034

[5] ThoroldToday, "Two candidates vie for Thorold mayor as council shrinks to six seats," August 21, 2026. Reports that De Divitiis initially entered the mayoral race before seeking another councillor term. The assessment of that change is the author's opinion. https://www.thoroldtoday.ca/2026-municipal-election-news/two-candidates-vie-for-thorold-mayor-as-council-shrinks-to-six-seats-12692128

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