THOROLD ELECTION POST-MORTEM | PART 1 OF 4

The Result and the Opportunity

Thurs, Nov 5, 2026 | By Nicholas Bozza | Thorold Election Commentary
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I apologize in advance for the length of Part One; it provides background for first-time readers.

THOROLD HAS ELECTED A SMALLER COUNCIL, with the four re-elected councilors whom some voters refer to as the UN-FAB FOUR occupying four of its six Councillor seats. Many people who have spoken with me believe we missed an opportunity for stronger scrutiny. The question now is whether the returning four we are discussing will use their stronger position to earn confidence through **transparent governing**. When council business becomes so complicated and time-consuming that taxpayers struggle to follow it, scrutiny can suffer—and who is measuring that loss of scrutiny? Some voters I have spoken with worry that this leaves a council majority with too little oversight. That is a concern about the effect of complexity, not proof that anyone deliberately created it. That concern also informs my discussion of amalgamation later in this series. I want to introduce the issue from the outset. But it does make one wonder. Some ask whether the UN-FAB FOUR were requesting blind faith from voters without asking for it.

The result we have to work with

The voters have spoken—well, at least those who voted have. **But did the result tell the whole story?** I will discuss participation and the limits of what the result tells us later in this series. Many people I have heard from remain very disappointed. I also reserve the right to examine what it means. An election settles who gets the job; it does not settle every question about how they have done it in this current term or what they will do in the coming term.

O'Hare, De Divitiis, Sentance and Dekker have all been re-elected. Carmen DeRose and Kieran Daniels complete the six Councillor seats. In my imaginary Miss Universe department, Handley is first runner-up: if a winner cannot fulfil their duties, someone can reach for his number. According to Handley, in a recent conversation, he first joined council through a vacancy during Mal Woodhouse's time as mayor—a poetic connection.

For readers joining me here, UN-FAB FOUR is a satirical name used by many voters who have shared concerns about a perceived voting alignment among those four returning councillors. It is not an official caucus. Agreement on a vote does not, by itself, establish that anyone received instructions or surrendered independent judgment.

Next term, if those four agree, they can carry an ordinary simple-majority decision when all six councilors vote. Particular rules, absences and conflicts can change that calculation.

Fewer chairs should not mean fewer answers—unless, as some taxpayers might put it, that is the unsaid plan. Unfortunately, the furniture cannot enforce that.

POLITICAL OPINION, SATIRE AND ILLUSTRATIONS

This article contains political opinion and satire. UN-FAB FOUR is a satirical label by voters for a perceived voting alignment. It makes no allegation of an official caucus, secret agreement, unlawful coordination or criminal conduct. Comments about motives are interpretations. Informal taxpayer conversations and the attributed livestream estimate are anecdotal. The cartoons use invented scenes, dialogue and caricature. They depict no actual statements or events and imply no endorsement. For corrections or a response, email nbozza@go2cai.ca.



Political satire. Imagined scene and dialogue.
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The opportunity as many saw it

Many voters I spoke with wanted a council with more independent scrutiny and a stronger willingness to explain difficult decisions. Many regret losing Handley's experience and questioning voice. Some feel Thorold chose poorly in re-electing these four; that is an assessment of the outcome, not proof that everyone who voted differently misunderstood the assignment. But did some voters lack information they needed? More on that later. [2]

I also saw Ken Steeve's experience as a very senior manager at the Darlington nuclear plant as an asset. As I understood his description, he managed several substantial projects simultaneously, with demanding standards of precision and ongoing monitoring. Many people I spoke with see losing both his contribution and Handley's as a real missed opportunity. In my imaginary pageant department, they are waiting in the wings. No sashes required.

In my view, shared by others I have spoken with, Anthony Longo's departure after moving away was a huge loss for Thorold. I wish him well. Some voters told me that returning all four members of the alignment who I have constructively criticized made stronger scrutiny feel almost impossible. Some question their willingness to not explain; others ask how they can judge their ability without seeing fuller explanations this current term.

One question stopped me: would the same decisions have been made if councillors had been required to explain them fully? That is a taxpayer's hypothetical question, not proof that any particular decision was improper. Still, it deserves thought. How can residents assess performance when they feel the explanations leave them two steps behind, struggling with too many variables and complications? Was this their design?

"An educated consumer is our best customer." What about voters?

Sy Syms, whose clothing-store advertisements many of us remember, had a memorable slogan: "**An educated consumer is our best customer.**"

Before the election, an older Thorold fellow offered his municipal version: voters need all the information, thoroughly explained. Without that, he argued, council was **"UN-educating"** the taxpayer—a mischievous play on UN-FAB. He predicted all four would be re-elected.

I laughed at his prediction. **I owe him an apology: he called it.** Next time I see this fellow, who is over 80

and whom I occasionally bump into, I may ask for his favourite lottery numbers.

Readers should test my arguments against the records, just as they should test a councillor's explanations—or opinions offered on the street—wherever those claims can be checked.

That older fellow brought to mind the late Gilda Radner's Saturday Night Live character, Roseanne Roseannadanna, whose familiar refrain was: "It's always something!"

His point, however, was the exact opposite.

"With these four, **it's always the same thing—because it works!** It's like a patented formula."
In his view, he also said: there was always a poor excuse for a poor explanation, and each time there seemed to be a little less explaining. Eventually, he said, voters get worn out asking the same questions and feeling unheard. He reckoned that fewer than ten people watched most meetings live online. He figured this gave the four plenty of room to carry with much too much latitude.

Then came his explanation for always explaining himself:

"I don't want to owe the UN-FAB FOUR royalties for using their formula!"

That was his satirical assessment, of course—not an actual patent or royalty arrangement. **At first, I thought his thinking was a little crazy. Crazy like a fox.**



Political satire. Invented dialogue. No actual patent or royalties alleged.
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Representing Thorold or controlling its decisions

Here is the concern running through this series, expressed by many people in our discussions: **the effort to secure another term by the so-called UN-FAB FOUR appeared much stronger than their effort to explain the last one.** That left many of us questioning whether the priority was representing Thorold or controlling its decisions for the sake of holding power. That concern about motive is an interpretation, not an established fact about anyone's private intentions.

That is how many others who have raised these concerns with me interpret the gap between campaigning and transparency. Voters cannot read anyone's mind. What they can examine is a motion, a public message, an explanation and the result that followed. Where an explanation is missing—or, as some describe it, "**intentionally complicated**"—they can keep asking for one, even when they feel an adequate answer never comes. That description reflects their interpretation, not proof of deliberate obstruction.

My earlier articles asked about Canada Games Park, development decisions, potential conflicts,

communication and the difference between public involvement and measurable achievement. Those questions do not disappear because the people concerned won. Nor does winning prove that voters endorsed every decision, rejected every criticism or had enough information to assess what was at stake. Many people I spoke with felt that transparency during the term was extremely inadequate.

Some voters may have valued experience, personal assistance or different priorities. Some may have disagreed with those voters I spoke with. An honest post-mortem has to leave room for those explanations.

What would change this assessment

A fair examination needs a way for the conclusion to change. When voters say the opportunity was missed, it is worth explaining what could persuade them that this council can deliver the improvement they wanted.

For voters who have raised these concerns, the answers seem [lost but not found]. For those I spoke with, improvement starts with councillors voluntarily explaining the difficult parts of their record. They can identify the information available when a decision was made, acknowledge what was uncertain and show what they would do differently with hindsight. Admitting that a proposal needed improvement is not a surrender of authority. It is evidence that someone is still learning while using it.

Voters also need to distinguish a decision they dislike from a decision that was never adequately explained. Council may choose an option they oppose and still provide a coherent public-interest case. Conversely, a project they like can proceed through a process that deserves criticism. Applying that distinction is a responsibility I share as a commentator with taxpayers assessing their representatives.

The people talking politics in Thorold's coffee shops are not a scientific sample of the electorate. Their frustration matters, but I will not describe it as a unanimous verdict. This series is an invitation to examine the record, including for people who supported the four.

The stakes reach beyond personalities. When council commits public money, residents live with the consequences after the signs have been removed and the campaign pages have gone quiet. A stronger council should make those consequences easier to understand before the commitment is made.

That is the opportunity still available, which I call Mission Possible. I call it this because it is an actual [CHOICE] by those elected. We cannot change the Councillor result by writing about it. We can make the expectations for the next term **[crystal]**—with a nod to the courtroom exchange between Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson in A Few Good Men.

Four parts and a fair chance

This series follows four steps. Today's Part One, The Result and the Opportunity, establishes what changed. Friday's Part Two, How the Campaign Worked, examines presentation, familiarity and the limits of what the result can tell us. Saturday's Part Three, A Smaller Council and a Larger Test, considers voting strength, costs and oversight. Sunday's Part Four, Mission Possible —Putting Thorold First, sets out what could earn confidence now.

The working conclusion of many taxpayers who have spoken with me belongs here at the beginning: many people I have heard from believe Thorold missed an opportunity, but the coming term can still be better. Transparency is a choice. **In the view of some taxpayers I spoke with, a repeated pattern of inadequate explanations deserves continued scrutiny and suggests a deliberate approach.** That is their interpretation of the pattern, not an established fact about private intentions. These informal conversations are not a representative poll or a formally conducted focus-group study. The four can change their approach, explain their reasoning and earn support/trust from people who opposed their re-election. Taxpayers would welcome that. What could the consequences be if they refuse? More in Parts Two to Four about this trust issue.

Local autonomy belongs in this discussion, too. Poor performance could weaken the argument for keeping decisions with the current council. That is a political concern, not evidence that amalgamation has been ordered. Niagara Region says the current governance legislation does not itself include amalgamation. [3] Some people I have spoken with nevertheless read the changes as a strong signal of further restructuring.

I am willing to give the new council room to demonstrate improvement. **Room is not a four-year exemption from questions.** In closing, let's not forget that many taxpayers I have spoken with still want the four to explain why fuller explanations were not provided when they felt transparency was needed. Should we just forget this? What does that tell us?



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Tomorrow: the campaign. The result tells us who really won in this election. Understanding why requires a closer examination.

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Sources

[1] City of Thorold — Election 2026. https://www.thorold.ca/council-administration/elections/election-2026/

[2] Nicholas Bozza — They Want to Rule — Voters Want People Who Serve, October 24, 2026. Earlier commentary: www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca.

[3] Niagara Region — Governance changes in Niagara. https://www.niagararegion.ca/government-and-council/council-and-committees/governance-changes-in-niagara/

[12] Ontario — 2026 Voters' Guide, By-elections and vacancies. https://www.ontario.ca/document/2026-voters-guide-ontario-municipal-council-and-school-board-elections/elections