November 17, 2026

Questions about your Thorold endorsement
When Does It Become Election Interference?

To interfere or not to interfere, that is the question (Shakespeare spin).

Under 1,700 words | Estimated reading time: under 6 minutes (times may vary)

A note to readers about the bonus post-mortem

Writing this letter to Jeff Burch changed how I want to close out my Thorold election series. Today, November 17, I'm publishing the letter as its own article. I'll follow it with the bonus post-mortem in two parts.

Tomorrow's installment will be an easy read. I'll take you through the details that matter in a straightforward way. In the final installment, I'll share what I've been saving for last and show how it all fits together.

Stay tuned. We're almost there.

Jeff Burch, MPP
Niagara Centre
By email: jburch-qp@ndp.on.ca

Dear Mr. Burch,

I am writing as a Thorold resident, taxpayer and registered third-party advertiser in the 2026 municipal election. You publicly backed Nella Dekker in October 2022 and again in September 2026. In my judgment, your 2026 endorsement was a mistake. As Thorold's MPP and the Ontario NDP's municipal affairs critic, your support carried particular weight. I am asking you to explain what you hoped to accomplish and whether any campaign assistance accompanied it.

In your 2022 Facebook post, you described Ms. Dekker pitching in at Thorold events, called her a "strong City Councillor" and explicitly asked voters to support her re-election. In your September 30, 2026 post, you appeared with her beside her re-election sign, praised her as hard-working and community-minded, and said you were "always happy to support her." Both posts focused on Ms. Dekker. Some residents told me they understood your renewed support as approval of the wider group of councillors they call the UN-FAB FOUR. I also heard that you may have canvassed door to door with Ms. Dekker. Did you? If so, when, and in what capacity?

The council record your endorsement brought into the race

On October 3, 2023, council defeated a motion seeking an outside legal opinion on the Canada Games Park lease and advice on obtaining relevant financial records. **The vote was 5–4.** Ms. Dekker, Mike De Divitiis, Tim O'Hare and Ken Sentance voted against the motion alongside Mayor Terry Ugulini.

When a household bill looks off, most people ask to see the details and reconcile the charges. Thorold taxpayers deserve the same opportunity with a long-term commitment involving public money. That motion would have sought outside advice on the lease and on how council could obtain the records it needed. **Did you agree with Ms.** Dekker's vote? If you had concerns about the motion as written, what other way would you support for residents to see the financial records and understand what Thorold is paying for?

All four councillors were re-elected, and they now hold **four of the six councillor seats**. If they vote together, they can carry an ordinary majority vote even when all seven members, including the mayor, vote. That voting alignment was already a matter of public concern in Thorold. As the local MPP, I

believe you should have anticipated that some voters would hear your endorsement of one candidate as support for all four.

Some voters may have carried their trust in you or the NDP over to the other three candidates. The posts and the election results cannot tell us how many did so or whether it changed who won. What did you expect your endorsement to accomplish? Did you consider how it might affect the balance of votes at City Hall?

The standard your own supporters can expect

In May 2026, you argued that people who live in a community should make local decisions through the representatives they elect. You also criticized provincial changes that, in your view, weakened municipal oversight and gave residents too little opportunity to weigh in. I took those principles seriously. They are why I expected you to explain how backing Ms. Dekker served local accountability after her vote against seeking an outside opinion.

Your party demands answers from the Premier about how public money is spent. Thorold taxpayers are asking for the same thing. When you publicly back a councillor who voted against this motion, your own supporters are entitled to ask how you reconcile that endorsement with the case you make for financial scrutiny and local decision-making. A voter can support the NDP provincially and still object to a provincial endorsement in a Thorold council race. Many Thorold taxpayers who have spoken to me think you should have stayed out of that race. I agree.

Your endorsement also left constituents to wonder whose support they were seeing. Were you speaking for yourself, for the Ontario NDP, or in your capacity as MPP? Residents who backed other candidates still depend on you to represent them at Queen's Park. **They deserve a clear answer about the role you and your office played.**

Some Thorold residents believe the city's best defence against forced amalgamation is to show that it can manage its finances well and make sound decisions on its own. They want an independent review of the Canada Games Park agreement to determine whether Thorold could save money or recover any payments it should not have made. Some believe the amounts could run into the millions. That is a question for the records and an independent review. Do you support that scrutiny for Thorold, and where do you stand on forced amalgamation? Do you agree with the UN-FAB FOUR's decision to vote against seeking outside advice on the agreement? **It's hard to drive the NDP bus forward with the transmission in reverse.** At least that's how it works in Thorold.

Campaign resources and the questions Thorold taxpayers want answered

From my experience around election campaigns, professional coaching and communications support can cost more than independent council candidates can afford. A prominent MPP's endorsement can also draw attention that an independent campaign has to earn on its own. Paid promotion, staff time or party distribution would raise further questions about who supplied those resources and how they were accounted for. The Facebook posts alone do not establish that any of those resources were used.

I am asking you to answer the following questions in writing so Thorold readers can assess your explanation for themselves.

1. **Who initiated the endorsement?** Did you offer it, did Ms. Dekker ask for it, or did someone approach you on her behalf or on behalf of the UN-FAB FOUR? Did you act personally, on behalf of the Ontario NDP, or through your constituency or legislative office?
2. **Who produced and distributed the posts?** Was either post boosted or otherwise promoted for payment? Who arranged the content, and who paid any associated costs?

3. **Did any other campaign assistance accompany the endorsement?** Did you, your office, the party or anyone acting on your behalf provide coaching, communications advice, staff time, photos, design, printing, voter outreach, data or other goods or services to Ms. Dekker or another Thorold candidate? If so, who supplied and directed the assistance, who paid for it and how was it recorded? Were any publicly funded resources used?
4. **What did you want a re-elected Ms. Dekker to accomplish? Did you hope to help elect a voting bloc that would advance NDP priorities on Thorold council?** Did you discuss the Canada Games Park agreement, financial disclosure, council voting alignment or Thorold's municipal independence with her or any other of the UN-FAB FOUR candidates?
5. Why would you consider supporting any of the UN-FAB FOUR for re-election after they voted against seeking outside advice on the Canada Games Park agreement, given the potential for savings over the next 32 years or for recovering any overpayments a review might identify?
6. **Are you rooting for Thorold to fail?** What steps would you take to help Thorold remain independent?

Please send your written response to nbozza@go2cai.ca. If I refer to your response in a follow-up article, I will fairly represent your explanation.

Sincerely,
Nicholas Bozza Thorold taxpayer -and-
Registered Third-Party Advertiser — City of Thorold, 2026
nbozza@go2cai.ca

P.S. Jeff, if you think I was too critical of your endorsement of Councillor Nella Dekker and what many saw as an attempt to advance NDP priorities at Thorold City Hall through the councillors voters call the UN-FAB FOUR, who now hold four of Thorold's six councillor seats, I'll give you this much. You both looked good in the photo, and you both had great smiles.

The photo itself was in good taste. The endorsement? Many Thorold residents I've heard from, including people who told me they voted NDP in the last provincial election, thought it showed incredibly poor judgment. Maybe you should have run for Thorold council. Many say your judgment fits right in with the so-called UN-FAB FOUR voting bloc.

As Charlie the Tuna might put it, Thorold wants an MPP **with** good taste. Looking good in the photo only gets you so far.

P.P.S. Jeff, Christmas is coming, and in the spirit of Jimmy Stewart, *It's a Wonderful Life in Thorold*, provided we don't let the Mr. and Mrs. Potters of this town run the place straight into amalgamation. Plenty of Thorold residents smarter than either of us have watched the so-called UN-FAB FOUR voting bloc make what they consider one bad decision after another, with precious little explanation. You stepped into the race to endorse one of them. Did you mean to give all four a boost? Our MP had the good sense to stay out of it.

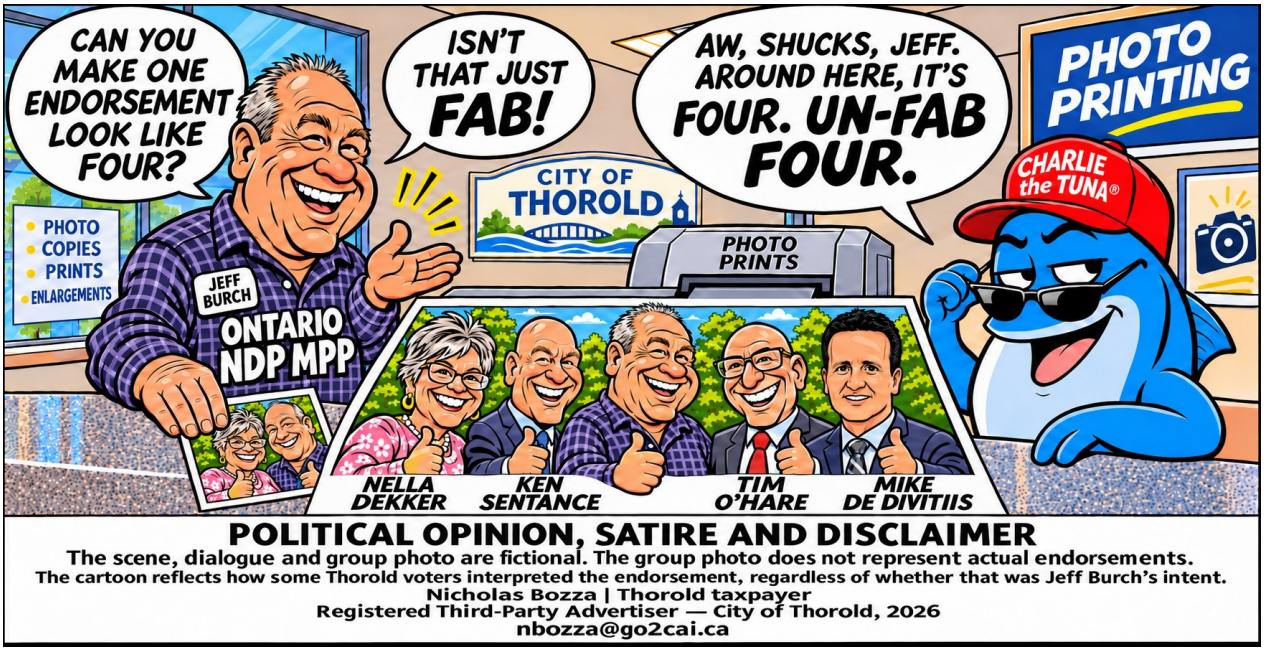
Thank God Clarence, our guardian angel, has earned his wings. He'll need them to keep an eye on City Hall. Come to think of it, you do look a little like Clarence. And you thought I was kidding when I said you looked good.

You could earn your wings, too. **Help Thorold get a clear accounting of the Canada Games Park deal, and I'll put in a good word with Clarence. In the movie, a bell rings when an angel gets his wings. In Thorold, we'd settle for the sound of the financial books opening.**

As for good taste, Jeff, you're an old pro. You know it takes better judgment than it does to look good in a photo. Thorold residents have been patient, and they've been paying attention. Sometimes they just

need a glorified secretary like me to put the questions in writing. **Clarence can handle the wings. I'll handle the minutes.**

P.P.P.S. Jeff, I'll let Charlie the Tuna handle the photo finish.



UN-4th P.S.
Jeff, we both know you can do better.
A good smile makes a picture.
Good judgment earns a vote.
If you want mine next time in Niagara Centre,
show me that judgment when Thorold asks you to help open the books.

Sources and supporting material

- Jeff Burch's Facebook posts dated October 19, 2022 and September 30, 2026, reproduced in my November 16 article, *When Does It Become Election Interference?*
- Thorold City Council minutes, October 3, 2023, item 14.1
- Ontario NDP statement by Jeff Burch on local democracy, May 6, 2026
- Legislative Assembly of Ontario profile for Jeff Burch

For the full commentary, including four satirical illustrations and two photos, see my November 16, 2026 article, **"When Does It Become Election Interference?"** A technical issue on my website caused the article to be listed under November 23, 2026. Visit www.thoroldelectioncommentary.ca

Picture on page 5. See the October 19, 2022 Facebook post on page 5 and the September 30, 2026 Facebook post on page 6.

Jeff Burch's Facebook endorsement — October 19, 2022



In this post, Burch describes Dekker helping at community events, calls her a "strong City Councillor" and explicitly asks voters to support her re-election.

Continue to page 6 for the second endorsement screenshot.

Jeff Burch's Facebook endorsement — September 30, 2026



Burch and Dekker pose beside her Thorold council re-election sign. In the visible portion of the post, Burch praises her as a hard-working, community-minded representative and says he is "always happy to support her."