



Peggy Ducharme Candidate Profile – Q & A

1. Tell us a bit about yourself – background (education, career, family life)

- I am a dedicated Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh (ACW) resident with extensive experience within the municipal realm, and experience leading business and community improvement initiatives.
- I live with my husband David and our dog Luna in The Bluffs at Huron ACW neighbourhood.
- I was born and raised in Preston, Cambridge, a short drive to the shores of Lake Huron where my family and later myself, visited often. .
- My husband David Ducharme's family settled in Huron County in the 1840s. His great great grandparents are buried in St. Peter's Church cemetery in St. Joseph. There are many, many Ducharmes up and down Hwy 21 who are all descendants of two brothers.
- My husband is a former agricultural reporter (Voice of the Farmer) and he worked for the federal department of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada for a decade.
- I spent the majority of my career in Ottawa.
- My background includes economic development, strategic planning, project and financial management, business support and community engagement – all within the municipal realm.
- In addition to the many community and municipal boards I served on, I worked on multi-million dollar municipal capital infrastructure projects. I understand community and municipal projects big and small.
- I participated in a successful Ontario Municipal Board appeal and in the development of municipal Official Plans and amendments. I've worked extensively with reviewing zoning and planning applications and bylaws.
- My experience includes working with both urban and rural community leaders. I know, and understand both demographics, not just urban cities, but also small towns and rural areas – thanks to my involvement with the Ontario BIAs Association, where I am a past President and Board member.
- My hobbies are cooking, gardening, walking my dog, golf and yoga.

2. Why are you running in the election?

- I am running for election because I believe I have skills that will be beneficial to the job and the township, and to bring a voice for an area of ACW that is currently not represented on council. Without a ward system, not all sections of ACW are ensured representation.
- I feel the need, purpose and passion to get involved in the community I have chosen to live.
- I am retired, have the time to put in the effort (i.e. read township documents, which, unfortunately many politicians do not), to be well-informed in order to participate and contribute during ACW council meetings, and – as anyone who knows me will tell you – give it my all!

3. What previous political experience do you have (if applicable)?

- As the former Executive Director of a major Business Improvement Area (BIA), a local board of the municipality, in downtown Ottawa, I worked within a political environment throughout my career. I engaged daily with municipal councillors, city departments and community; and served on numerous boards including the Ottawa Board of Trade (Chamber), and Ottawa Tourism.

4. How have you been involved in the community over the years? (Service groups, volunteer, coaching, committees, boards, etc.)

- Since moving to ACW and The Bluffs four years ago, I helped form The Bluffs at Huron Community Association and create their constitution as Director Communications on their Board of Directors, and developed the community's website. I also held an interim Communications position on their Social Committee and am active, along with my husband David in producing numerous social events raising thousands of dollars for The Bluffs community.
- In the winter of 2025, I organized a petition that successfully opened 900 metres of Highway 21 from Blyth Road to the entrance of The Bluffs at West Coast Way during winter road closures. The road is now open so that residents can lawfully return home during a winter highway closure.
- I now want to be involved with the broader community, which is one of the reasons why I'm running for township councillor.

5. Why do you feel you are set apart from the other candidates?

- As I mentioned earlier, I have worked within the municipal realm – with councillors, and city hall bureaucrats. I understand the functioning of the municipal system to hit the ground running.
- I don't come with a history of entrenched opinions or long-standing biases. I intend to look at this township as it is, its pluses and minuses, work with my fellow councillors and do what is right for the entire ACW community.

6. Why should constituents vote for you?

- I want people to vote for me because of what I can bring to the table:
 - A fresh perspective built on numerous years of municipal experience, both from within the system, and as a community advocate.

- I will offer a clean slate to start a new beginning working with the knowledge of ACW staff, a new council, and a community willing to get involved in doing what's best for ACW.
- I bring a wealth of experience, and a new and clear perspective. I will take each issue on its own merits and what is best for everyone in ACW.
- I believe in community – and not “us vs. them.”

7. If elected, what would you put on the agenda first?

- Due to 2027 county budget timelines, the first item I would put on the agenda is to revisit the cancellation of the Huron County Clean Water Project and seek options for supporting water-quality and stewardship work in our township.
 - The program was highly successful and widely used by landowners here;
 - While not directly responsible for lake and beach water quality, the Project targeted sources of bacterial contamination (including E. coli) that contribute to beach closures on Lake Huron.
 - Without this cancelled program how are we ensuring water safety and quality?
- Next, I'd request a review to update the 2023-2028 Corporate Strategic Plan to reflect the new council's priorities.

8. What are the three highest priority local issues you would like to focus on if you were elected? Why? How would you attempt to remedy these issues?

- As mentioned, I would consider the end to the Huron County Clean Water Project as a priority to see if there are any alternative avenues that ACW can explore for our residents.
- Based on a recent poll I conducted, I would focus on the top three issues identified by residents, in the following priority order: 1) taxation/spending, 2) roads/sidewalks, 3) water protection.
 - I would review the 2027 budget looking for cost savings to recommend.
 - I would review the capital infrastructure schedule to request any changes that would prioritize road and sidewalk repairs, and
 - I would seek ACW council's support to request Huron County reconsider reinstating its Clean Water Project and/or seek options for supporting water-quality and stewardship work in our township.

9. What are your values, and values/priorities within this community? (want to find what your vision of this community is and how you intend to use your position on council to contribute to that vision).

- Building on our township's history, my vision for ACW is centred on creating a balanced environment where growth and essential services go hand-in-hand with fiscal responsibility.
 - I believe that true leadership means working alongside every family, senior, cottager, entrepreneur and farmer to ensure every ACW voice is heard equally and fairly, with respect and integrity”.

- I see great opportunity for ACW, and a need to embrace this opportunity, as other levels of government are creating programs and making decisions that could eventually affect ACW.
 - If ACW is prepared for these changes, it can be proactive to better "steer its ship" to its best advantage, rather than be reactive and negatively impacted by imposed changes.
- Based on responses from the poll I conducted, I will champion discussion on the following projects of importance submitted by residents:
 - To advance ACW's Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan for an Active Transportation corridor (pedestrian/cycling) along hwy. #21 between the G2G trail (at MTO Road/Airport) and Point Farms Provincial Park (and Goderich Sunset Golf Club).
 - Improve Internet Service/Connection.

10. If elected, what do you hope to accomplish in this position in four years?
How will we be able to measure success halfway through your term?

- Ideally, I'd like to see ACW improve the infrastructure in our villages to attract community services and visitors by utilizing Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) and other government programs/tools.
 - Success will be measured by applications approved and visual improvements.

11. Anything else you'd like to say to the voters? Or your supporters?

- I am here to represent you, not myself, not developers or lobbyists. I have municipal process and municipal service delivery experience to help me ask the right questions. This includes community consultation and advocacy (on your behalf). I am knowledgeable in reading and understanding planning, transportation, zoning and bylaw documents in order to make informed, timely decisions. I also have strong project and financial management experience with million dollar budgets.
- We are a township with active farms, cottage owners, businesses, retirement communities and a bevy of villages and hamlets from Auburn to Zion Beach. Every part of this township, including along the lakeshore, deserves fair, balanced, responsive and accessible representation on council – this is my pledge. Every sector of the township deserves fair and equal representation.

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