



News Advertiser offers its picks for mayor, council, school boards

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Election day looms for voters in Ajax to choose the men and women who will lead their municipal government for the next four years. Candidates have formed their positions, debated their points and made the effort to make a difference in the community. Following are the candidates whose enthusiasm, ideas and experience the News Advertiser believes would create the best municipal council to lead Ajax over the next term of office.

Mayor:

Incumbent Steve Parish has a strong green vision for the Town and continues to work toward seeing it realized. He should be given an opportunity to shape the agenda locally, push for expanded public transit across the region, provide insight and leadership into development and chart Ajax's direction over the next four years. However, the mayor must embrace and encourage a greater diversity of opinion on council and have far more open public debate on issues affecting residents. His efforts and leadership have earned him another electoral mandate, but even the most consistent winners need a strong and effective team behind them, a team that is willing to question, contest and identify alternatives.

Ward 1 Local Councillor:

Marilyn Crawford served most recently as a school board trustee -- and as a former board chairwoman -- and brings a fresh perspective and impressive work ethic to the council table. She's enthusiastic and knowledgeable, knows procedure and protocol and has experience on committee work, characteristics that will benefit the incoming council. She's ready to serve and will do well in expanding the scope of debate in Ajax.

Ward 2 Local Councillor:

As a by-election winner in Ward 2, Renrick Ashby has served for two years on ward issue and proven he's an effective representative of local constituents. In that context, he should be given the opportunity to build on recent experience and serve for another term. His efforts on diversity issues have been impressive, but we encourage a greater effort to engage the community over the next four years to inform, build consensus and keep constituents engaged.

Ward 3 Local Councillor:

Marsha Jones Dooley brings small business experience to the table and will act as a voice of fiscal conservatism on Ajax Council. She's expected to keep a keen eye on Town expenditures and taxes, and bring fresh ideas to the table related to attracting and retaining jobs in Ajax.

Ward 4 Local Councillor:

Incumbent Pat Brown has the sort of depth and experience that every municipal council needs to bridge past and future. She's served constituents consistently well over the years, knows the issues inside and out and works to maintain ties to Ajax's rich heritage. We trust her skills at the council table -- and her keen common-sense touch -- will continue to serve Ward 4 and the larger community well. She should be returned so she can continue to provide the solid foundation of an effective, active and more responsive council.

Wards 1 and 2 Regional Councillor:

A fresh face and a fresh perspective is needed at Durham Regional Council, found in the candidacy of Khari Gaynor. He's been deeply involved in the community through the Town's diversity and community engagement committee, Neighbourhood Watch and other initiatives. His compelling commitment to engage Ajax residents after the election underscores his belief in the importance of keeping the electorate engaged throughout a term

of office. That approach will serve constituents -- and their interests -- well at local council and at regional meetings.

Wards 3 and 4 Regional Councillor:

Incumbent Colleen Jordan's years of experience and deep knowledge of issues have served residents well and she should be given the opportunity to build on her impressive record of representation. She's held various political positions, having served for several years as a school board trustee, thoroughly knows local and regional issues and articulates her position well. She can provide one of the links between deep experience and fresh perspectives brought by newcomers to the council table.

Public School Board

Wards 1 and 2:

Former school principal Risa Sanchez has developed a keen sense and deep knowledge of student and school needs and offers that to public school board ratepayers in Ajax. She's expected to hit the ground running at the board table, bring her insider's knowledge and first-hand experience. She should grow well into the trustee position and will represent local stakeholders well.

Wards 3 and 4:

Donna Edwards has demonstrated that she is dedicated to public education, having served on school community councils at the elementary and high school level, as well as a member of the board's Special Education Advisory Committee for more than a decade. She also chaired the committee for the past five years, and should be given the opportunity to translate that experience and success to the board table.

Catholic School Board

Two at-large positions:

A balance of enthusiasm and experience are offered with Karen Valentine and veteran trustee Janice Oldman. Ms. Valentine has volunteered extensively in the community on various committees and has a solid understanding of the issues affecting Catholic school students in Ajax. Her energy can be channelled towards achievement with the assistance, insight and support of the venerable Ms. Oldman, who has been a Catholic board trustee for 19 years. Few people know more, or have served longer, than Ms. Oldman, who still brings energy and vitality to the role.

-- *Ajax News Advertiser*

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