

Editor's note: Minden Hills ratepayers will elect two councillors in Ward one. Four people are vying for the job.

Bradley ready to serve the public in Minden Hills

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Bradley worked in labour negotiations and mediations. He said being on council requires similar skills. "My answer to a problem is not no, it's how are we going to solve this problem? And how are we going to solve it if it's something that has to go before council? How are we going to actually have a majority of council support something? So, it's about building bridges, it's not about building fences." He unsuccessfully ran for council in 2018.

Amalgamation

"I'd rather see, first, amalgamation of as many services...shuffling the money around in a way that makes it most efficient. For example, there are three levels of snow plowing, there's municipal, County, and contracted highway. So, there are three teams of snowplow hours. I'm not sure that's the most efficient way to do it."

Township staff are currently working to implement certain recommendations in a service delivery review conducted by StrategyCorp.

Health

"The bottom line is [two hospitals are] here. This is a provincial thing. And you know, tell Laurie Scott and Jamie Schmale and all of the upper levels of government, neither of those two ER's is up for discussion unless you want to build a Haliburton County emergency room and, if they do, we'll find out where you're going to do it, make sure it's central and make sure it's funded."

Housing

He said he'd support donating land for housing projects, and collaborating with the province to pave the way for more housing. He said he'd want affordable housing to be centrally located.

"Even two people working two jobs can't afford to rent a whole lot of places around here."

Poverty

He said improving wireless connections would encourage companies to set up base in Minden Hills and provide better paying jobs. "I think the council has a role, whether it's tourism, in shining a light on the fact that this is a beautiful place to be and live."



Ward 1 candidate Richard Bradley. Photo by Sam Gillett

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said he supports the bylaw, but that he's curious about how it will be enforced, and what exemptions will be honoured. "As long as it is seen to be reasonable and fair to people who are building, modifying, or even developing new lands, it's going to be fine."

The new bylaw spells out that new staff will be responsible for enforcement of the bylaw at a County level, and specifies what activities are exempt.

Short-term rentals

"It's not new, the fact that people have rented their place for a week a year because they've been offsetting the expenses of having a property. It's just new that you can do it on the internet." He supports regulating but not "to the point of stifling" short-term rentals.

Transportation

He said he likes the idea of public transportation in Haliburton County.

He said people who may use the service should have a say in the routes and the price should be aimed at lower-income people.

"There's no point in having a bus people can't afford."

Vision for the future

He said he'd like to see downtown "rejuvenation", which might mean community safety zones, or more lines painted on parking spots.

He said he'd like to see the township take an active role in deciding what to do with vacant land. He said he'd like to engage business owners and downtown residents. "How are we going to make this downtown a place where people want to be from eight in the morning, Monday morning, till eight in the evening, Sunday night?"

Minden Hills

He said addressing roads is a main focus for the municipality, and "going back to core services a municipality can control." He said tax increases are a must in order to finance road improvements and suggested using reserve funds in order to do so. He also said raising taxes more could be difficult due to the current high rate of inflation.

Richard Bradley the candidate

"When I talk to people, when people say what is your platform, my platform is to be your voice... To advocate for your needs, whether it's your roads, whatever it may be. And, again, it comes down to our community's need." He gave the example of Bob Lake's boat launch. "Bob Lake needs a boat launch, somehow, some way. And I'm not saying I have the answer. I'm saying I need the answer from them so we can get it done. Because how can you have a lake without a public boat launch?"

He said being proactive is his primary goal.

"I worked pretty much my whole career in labour negotiations, certainly have learned about arbitration and litigation when required, but it's not what I prefer, but I am now retired, I'm here full-time, I was lucky enough to buy the family cottage, where I live, and where I will draw my last breath. I've been married for 36 years, I have four kids and two grandchildren. And I think it's just my time, hopefully to give back now that I have more time. And I want to listen to people and help them with their encounters with municipal government and make positive changes where that's possible. And reasonable."



WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT SHORELINES?

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Grozelle wants public to be able to trust council

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Mike Grozelle runs his own construction business. He was an executive for the Royal Canadian Legion in Kinmount for six years, and also worked as a firefighter training officer and licensed mechanic. “I’m aware of the issues surrounding planning and building...I drive on these roads, we pay tax dollars here, I have lots of friends and family and I talk to a lot of people in the area.” He unsuccessfully ran for council in Ward 2 in 2018.

Amalgamation

He said he heard amalgamation is “well in motion” in Haliburton County. “I want to know how the people of Minden are going to benefit from having just the one level [of government] so if it’s cheaper to run at one level, then we’ll take a look at that. Right now, I think we have bigger issues to deal with just here in town.” [Haliburton County is not in the process of amalgamating, however, specific township services are enhancing collaboration efforts to unify service delivery.]

Health

He said amalgamating Haliburton County hospitals would mean too much travel time for patients to receive care, and doesn’t think it’s a good idea. He added that Minden Hills and the County should look at new ways of attracting nurses and staff to work in the Highlands.

Housing

Grozelle was on an affordable housing committee. He said there is provincial money available to finance housing projects, but it’s difficult to access or negotiate. He said the County or Minden Hills could look at purchasing land that could be developed. On the question of balancing ecosystem preservation with housing, Grozelle said it’s worth sacrificing certain environmentally-protected areas if there is a high return on housing options.

Poverty

He said bringing new businesses to Minden is key to increasing prosperity. He said council’s role is to make it easier to develop new businesses. Specifically, he said this could mean encouraging



Mike Grozelle is a candidate for Minden Hills ward 2. Photo by Sam Gillett.

the planning department to devote staff members to speed up business developments. He said that process could start by having an independent review of why certain planning files have taken so long to get processed, such as the Rockcliffe.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“I don’t think it’s clear enough what you can and cannot do.” When asked to specify, Grozelle said he’s worried neighbours will end up calling enforcement officers on neighbours even when they’re not breaking the rules, for example cutting down dead trees. “I don’t think we have to hire bylaw enforcement officers. I think we just need to educate them and most people... they want to comply with the rules.”

Short-term rentals

He said property owners should be responsible for controlling noise and other issues surrounding their short-term rentals. According to Grozelle, cottage rentals likely aren’t the reason long-term rental

options are so hard to find since cottages are also used by their full-time owners.

Transportation

“There has to be something but I’m not sure that we have to do it at the municipal or County level, the problem being I don’t think the ridership is there. So, it would have to be funded by us almost completely.” He said there are “far bigger” issues the township must deal with.

Vision for the future

He said he wants “people to trust us again.” He said bringing new industries to town is a must in order to keep Minden Hills’ population from dwindling. He said the first step in streamlining processes in order to attract new businesses would be talking to staff to find out what issues can be solved. Grozelle said he believes councillors are currently not allowed to speak with staff. He has not asked councillors or staff if that’s true.

Minden Hills

He wants to see people trust Minden

Hills council. He believes there is a lack of transparency around some financial decisions, such as a Wessel Road cattle grate, which was quoted at more than \$250,000, but ended up costing around \$45,000. Staff delivered a public report on why the grate ended up costing a quarter of the price in spring 2022. Grozelle said that’s an example of when Minden Hills should award tenders to local businesses. “I want to make sure the taxpayers know what we’re spending the money on, where the money is coming from, and why we’re spending it. I want to see those jobs awarded to people here.” He did not specify how he’d communicate capital spending to taxpayers differently than Minden Hills’ 2022 budget did.

Mike Grozelle the candidate

“The heart of the campaign is getting transparent and gaining the trust back. That, to me, are the two main things. If we’re going to make a decision as council, everybody in town should know what it is and why we voted the way we did.” He said he has fresh ideas about bringing new businesses and people to Minden Hills.



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Ingram thinks tiny homes can bolster housing stock

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

Ingram served as parks manager, arena attendant, water and sewage worker and environmental property operations manager in Minden Hills until 2019. He said he learned how to balance spending public money with completing new projects. "Council allowed me throughout the years, through my budgets and grants and other initiatives, to go ahead and do those projects. And we've done a lot."

Amalgamation

He said some services, such as roads and bylaw, could be combined, but is hesitant about amalgamating governments. "I really don't like the idea of a County council as I feel the public's input will be lessened, they won't be able to speak out as much. It would mean more work for County-level councillors, which means I would say probably with amalgamation you're going to see increases in councillors' and mayors' wages."

Health

He said he likes the current system of two hospitals. He said Minden Hills has a doctor shortage. "It's definitely an issue we need to talk about. I know because I've hit [the ER] a few times over the years. You wouldn't believe how many people are coming from Lindsay and further out because our emergency room is so fast.... I know that at a funding level, it puts us at a disadvantage because we're dealing with people that aren't actually living here."

Housing

"I'm only one person, but I can certainly bring the thoughts to the table. I like the idea of small homes. They're affordable. Again, they just need to be regulated." He said Minden Hills needs provincial help to regulate and increase housing stock.

Poverty

He said housing and short-term rentals both intersect with discussions about poverty. "We have to bring ideas to the table, like small homes, like encouraging people that have cottages to adapt them for apartments. I know a lot of people



Ivan Ingram is a candidate for ward 1 in Minden Hills. *Submitted.*

in town who have basements that are completely empty." He said he'd support changing zoning bylaws to encourage secondary suites.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said he supports the bylaw as it stands but said there's room for improvement. "I don't think it's done. I think we need to spend a little time on enforcement to get some idea of what we're looking at and what's happening." The bylaw outlines plans for multiple new staff to conduct enforcement operations and process applications.

Short-term rentals

He acknowledges short-term rentals are important to homeowners but said they could be taking housing from long-term residents. "I'm all for them if they're regulated. The problem I have is a lot of these short-term rentals are renting them out without the awareness that there are maybe 10 or 15 or 20 people coming to that residence." He said he's

also concerned about the impact on septic systems.

Vision for the future

He said he sees the town growing more in future years, and sees housing remain a concern.

"I want Minden to be a place that people want to come and visit and stay, use the local amenities, support local business." Ingram said he'd like to see the Minden BIA re-formed and have council representation, and maybe open up online surveys to solicit community wishes for the downtown. He said he'd like to see more sidewalk sales and other special events.

"I really don't know what the single answer is to help these people [downtown]. Again, if you make the downtown more accessible and more inviting, people are going to come there, no matter whether there's a Dairy Queen out on the bypass and liquor or beer store, they're still going to come in and want to walk [by the river] and interact with the local people. These businesses depend on them."

Minden Hills

He said multiple projects in Minden Hills need attention, such as the water system. He said he does not support using debentures for capital projects, as Minden Hills did with the arena and multiple ongoing road reconstructions. However, he said the work needs to be done, even if it means a rise in taxes. "I don't think avoiding it is the answer." He said he feels like Minden Hills can be "more aggressive" with the province for more funding for projects like waterworks.

Ivan Ingram the candidate

"I think if you talk to anybody I dealt with, in the 31 years I worked [at the township]... they'd be quite happy with what they received from me or what I did for them. I'm not bragging but that's what I was paid to do... This town has allowed me to buy a home. It's allowed me to live here. It paid my wages. I want to give back... I want to help the town grow. I want this County on the map again. And we're just not doing it right now."



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Minden roads a primary concern for Johannessen

By Sam Gillett

Qualifications

"I'm a people person. I love people, I can talk to anybody, anywhere. I'm not afraid to do that. I've owned a business. I've rented. I've been a landlord. I've worked in the restaurant business for years. I just feel for the people and want to make Minden the best as we all can."

Amalgamation

"I like [the County and municipal structure] the way it is at the moment. So, I'm not sure. I've had people say that they don't want it. But it's something I would have to talk to somebody that's more educated than I am on this."

Health

She said healthcare issues are related to a labour shortage that is prevalent everywhere, including local businesses.

"One year we had a lot of kids, but they seem to go back to university and not come back home. There just isn't anybody looking, wanting to work? I'm not sure what they're doing. That's again something I would have to sit down and really talk to somebody about that has education on this."

Housing

She said she favours working with builders to increase housing by adding flexibility to housing options. "Our town is getting bigger. There are lots of people and it seems that people are leaving and coming back, but they don't have anywhere to go."

She added that long waitlists for housing provide difficulties. "That's a long time and people are living in tents and trailers that aren't equipped for winterizing and stuff. I hope that things can get better."

Poverty

She said she's been researching the issue and local organizations seeking to address poverty.

"If we can maybe do more fundraising to donate to them, or to other causes." She said she favours improving education tools and gave examples of fundraising through public art, or relaxing rules around farming on private properties. "It's really sad to see people living in



Shirley Johannessen is a candidate for ward 1 in Minden Hills. *Submitted.*

tents or not being able to afford food because they need heat or stuff like that. So, hopefully we can rise up and do better things all together as a community."

Shoreline preservation bylaw

She said she understands the opposition to the bylaw but said lake and fish health are a priority.

"I've seen a couple of places where I live in [that have degraded shorelines] and it doesn't look as nice as it used to. So, I believe that it should be kept, to a certain point, natural."

Short-term rentals

She said short-term rentals "give people a place to go and maybe help the landlord or the owner," but said she doesn't support increased regulations as long as renters are abiding by existing rules and not discarding garbage on roads or letting off excessive fireworks, for example.

Transportation

"When I had a business, it was in Algonquin Highlands, and it was hard for people to get to work if they didn't have transportation." She said she heard ideas about using school buses for public transportation. "It's something that I would have to learn." She said she could imagine supporting a County-wide transport system, but said rentals and affordable living pose a big concern too.

Vision for the future

"I'd like to keep some of our history here. Again, just be here for the people and continue with what's going on, but better things. I think some things have gotten lost over the years and like to bring things back." She specified things that have gotten lost include roads, communication surrounding the arena construction and issues with the landfill.

Minden Hills

Johannessen said roads are a chief concern, as well as boat launches such as the currently non-existent launch on

Bob Lake or the currently closed Minden village boardwalk. "People come into town to use it when they come to visit and that's supposed to be a highlight and [they're] not able to use it." She did not provide details on alternative funding models or budget changes which could finance these projects.

"Again, that's something I would need more education on. What I've heard is the roads seem to be a tough thing for people. I'm not sure, we can probably cut back a little bit on something, but I don't know if that's the answer."

Shirley Johannessen the candidate

"Obviously, this will be a new venture for me and no, it's not an easy one. I want to be the voice and help people out and communicate with people and work together as a town and as a team and keep going for our town that we love so much....This is where I've chosen to continue to live and work and I've just had so many people come forward, especially when they saw my name, and thought that I would be good because they know I can talk to people and that I care."

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