



StandOurGround.ca NEWSLETTER

Issue 015 - September 2026

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Save the Date!

Russell Township All-Candidates Bilingual Municipal Meeting

Date: September 15

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: Russell Arena

Coffee, tea and
desserts provided by
the Big Bite Bistro
(1128 Concession St.)
and Barb Mann.

Meet the Candidates

As the Russell Township municipal election approaches, **StandOurGround** is providing residents with brief biographies of the individuals running for municipal office. We believe voters deserve an opportunity to learn more about the people seeking to represent them, including their backgrounds, experience, and community involvement. These bios are intended to help residents become better informed as they consider their choices in the upcoming election.

Charles Armstrong

My wife, Élise, and I moved to Embrun in 1991 and have raised our three children here.

I had a career as an officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, in the Royal Canadian Engineers. I traveled while my family enjoyed a stable life in Embrun. In 2011, I retired from my 37-year career.



Charles Armstrong

Upon retirement I became active in such community groups as EcoEast where I was a member of the Board of Directors and finally President. I am currently a member of the informal **StandOurGround** group and a volunteer at the St. Jacques Parish Church.

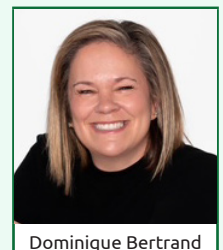
Since retiring I was active in politics and was a member of Township Council committees. I was elected as a Russell Township Councillor in the 2024 by-election.

I have a Bachelor of Science degree in physics and mathematics from Collège militaire Royal de St Jean in Québec and I am bilingual.

Dominique Bertrand

I'm proud to call Russell Township home. Having grown up in Embrun, I have deep roots in this community and a strong connection to the people.

Throughout my career in education, I served as a school principal, most recently as principal of Russell High School. In that role, I learned to listen, solve problems, manage



Dominique Bertrand

budgets, make difficult decisions, balance competing priorities, and work collaboratively. I also co-owned an organizing business, where I learned to understand people's needs, find practical solutions and follow through.

Now retired, I'm ready to put my experience and energy toward serving our community. Becoming a municipal councillor has always been part of my plan, and I have prepared for it through my career and community involvement. I have served on the Township of Russell Library Board, the Interlude House Board, the Russell Coyotes Hockey Association and the Embrun Recreation Committee.

I promise to listen, think, then act.

Lisa Deacon

Lisa Deacon is a bilingual mother of two young boys, raised with the values of hard work and community in rural Southwestern Ontario. A first-term Russell Township Councillor, she has provided evidence-based, solutions-oriented leadership on complex municipal issues. Her time on Council has included collaborative and measurable committee leadership related to equity, youth well-being, affordable housing, and library services.



With a career spanning non-profit leadership, tech, data, and community development, Lisa mobilizes her practical experience in service of local residents, property owners and businesses.

Lisa brings people together, turns pain points and opportunities into action, and champions accessible and more responsive government to deliver for the public.

Embedded in community as a volunteer, Lisa is running to continue building a strong, sustainable and connected community for families today and for the future. Please visit deacon4russell.ca for an overview of Lisa's Council record and campaign commitments.

Nick Gallagher

I'm Nick Gallagher, and I'm grateful to call Russell Township home.

My family and I moved here six years ago, and since then, Russell has really become home for us. What I love about this community is the people. It's a place where neighbours look out for each other, people get involved, and there's a real sense of community.

Professionally, I've spent over 20 years working on infrastructure and development projects in both the government and private sectors, including housing, community development, and local and major transit initiatives. I've been involved in projects from the early planning and financing stages through to implementation and delivery, and have worked with many different people and organizations along the way.

I'm running for Council because I want to give back to the community I'm proud to call home. I believe my experience can be an asset to Russell, but just as importantly, I want to be someone who listens, understands the everyday concerns of residents, and brings a practical, transparent approach to Council.

I believe Russell has a great future ahead, and I'd be honoured to help build that future together.



Jamie Laurin

I am proud to have served the residents of Russell Township as an elected Councillor since 2006. During that time, I have gained extensive experience in municipal governance, financial oversight, planning, infrastructure and community development.

My commitment to Russell Township extends well beyond the Council table. Over the years, I have enjoyed giving back to our community by volunteering at local events such as the Poutmasters Fishing Derby, coaching minor hockey, football and baseball, and officiating minor hockey. I have also served on numerous municipal committees, including the Planning Committee, Library Board, Environmental Advisory Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, Marionville Citizen Committee and Russell Watch.

These experiences have given me the opportunity to meet and work alongside residents, families, volunteers and community organizations throughout our Township. They have also reinforced something I strongly believe: a strong community is built by people who are willing to get involved and give back.

My professional background in finance has helped me bring a practical and fiscally responsible approach to the Council table. I believe in responsible growth, ensuring infrastructure keeps pace with development, protecting taxpayers, preserving our agricultural and rural character, strengthening our commercial and industrial tax base, and ensuring residents have a meaningful voice in the decisions that affect their community.

I am seeking re-election in 2026 because I remain committed to serving the community I am proud to call home and helping build a strong, sustainable and vibrant Russell Township for today and future generations.



Jamie Laurin

Experience • Integrity • Commitment

*(All five candidates for council have accepted our invitation to speak at the **StandOurGround Russell Township All-Candidates Bilingual Municipal Meeting, taking place on Tuesday, September 15th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Russell Arena.** At the time of publication Acclaimed Mayor Mike Tarnowski has not yet accepted his invitation.)*

Acclaimed Mayor Mike Tarnowski responds to StandOurGround's invitation

The Mayor wrote:

"Thank you for the invitation.

I already have a prior commitment that evening, but I am looking to see whether I can adjust those plans to attend. I will confirm my availability once I have that sorted out.

Since I have now been acclaimed, I will not participate in the debate or question period. Residents will be choosing among the candidates for the four Council seats, and I believe the evening should give them as much opportunity as possible to hear directly from those candidates. For that reason, the discussion and question period should remain focused on them.

Should I be able to attend, I would be comfortable offering a few brief remarks at the start of the event in my capacity as Mayor. Please also let me know whether you would still like me to provide a photo and short bio for the newsletter. I would be happy to send both if they would still be useful.

Regardless of whether I am able to attend, I would appreciate some additional information about the event, including who will be moderating, the format for the evening, how questions will be selected, whether questions will be accepted in advance, and how equal opportunity to respond will be managed.

I would also appreciate some clarification on how the questions will be framed. Two of the candidates have not previously served on Council, while the others have. In my view, questions should be fair, neutral, and relevant to all candidates, without presuming previous Council experience or placing current or former Council members in a different position from other candidates.

For transparency, I have copied all candidates for Council, as well as the Clerk, on this response so that everyone receives the same information.

One small administrative note: now that the mayoral election is concluded, I will no longer be monitoring my election email regularly. For future correspondence, please use my regular contact information.

*Finally, could you please let me know who I am corresponding with on behalf of **StandOurGround**? I would appreciate knowing who my point of contact is for the event.*

Thank you,

Mike Tarnowski, MBA"

StandOurGround's response

StandOurGround sees the Mayor's response to our meeting invitation as evasive. That he would send such an overwrought and contradictory response is peculiar.

The Mayor goes to extreme lengths to say he may not be able to attend because of a previous commitment. He then says how he wants the meeting to proceed. If he does attend, he says he will offer a few brief remarks. He wants to know how questions will be framed and/or selected. Because he has been acclaimed, he says he will not participate in the question period with the candidates, members of the audience or in any debate.

StandOurGround rejects the notion that an acclaimed leader means one should not have to answer questions about what he or she plans to do with millions of taxpayers' dollars over the next four years.

SOG intends the all-candidates meeting to be open, fair, formal and informative. The meeting will follow the widely accepted public debate process and be strictly controlled by a master of ceremonies. SOG believes honest, relevant and reasonable questions should be allowed. SOG welcomes suggestions on how the meeting could run but will have the final say.

As for who the contacts are at SOG? They are the same people who regularly attend and identify themselves in the Mayor's presence at Russell Township Council meetings.

With all due respect.

StandOurGround

StandOurGround.ca welcomes your feedback, counterarguments, photographs, and written submissions for our Newsletter. Kindly inform us if you would like your Letter to the Editor to remain anonymous.

 standourground.ca

 standourground.russell@gmail.com