



StandOurGround.ca NEWSLETTER

Issue 012 - July 2026

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**Save our
Communities
from Urban
Sprawl!!**

StandOurGround...

announces their:

Russell Township All-Candidates Bilingual Municipal Meeting

Date: September 15, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Location: Russell Arena
(1084 Concession Street)

Join us for a respectful
community meeting where
candidates for Russell Township
Mayor and Council will present
their views and answer questions
from residents.

présente son :

Assemblée municipale bilingue de tous les candidats de la Municipalité de Russell

Date : 15 septembre 2026

Heure : de 18 h 30 à 21 h 30

Lieu : Aréna de Russell
(1084, rue Concession)

Joignez-vous à nous pour une rencontre
communautaire respectueuse où les
candidats à la mairie et au conseil
municipal de la Municipalité de Russell
présenteront leurs points de vue et
répondront aux questions des résidents.



Candidate's Responses

This October, residents will head to the polls for the Municipal Election. In our June #11 **StandOurGround** Newsletter we prepared three questions for those seeking elected office. We invited candidates to provide written responses to these questions. **Councillor Charles Armstrong** has responded to these questions and below we are providing his answers.

I wish to respond to the three questions **StandOurGround** asked in its recent Newsletter, Issue 011.



Councillor Charles Armstrong

Q1. Why did council approve construction of high-end houses across the township leaving owners with unmanageable mortgages today?

A1. *This is a complex issue. In our two-tiered municipal government structure urban planning is the primary responsibility of the United Counties of Prescott and Russell (UCPR), our upper tier government. The UCPR produces an Official Plan and that plan delegates some powers to the lower-tier Township of Russell. The UCPR Council approves allocation of residential expansion to lower-tier municipalities, based on historical growth, and the Township approves the local densities of each subdivision through its Official Plan and zoning by-laws. I believe the Township has always agreed to the urban boundaries and density suggested by the subdivision developers.*

Historically the Township has developed based on large single-family detached dwellings. This has resulted in a low urban development density and relatively high-value homes. This must change to a more balanced medium density development with more new homes being row housing and apartment dwellings. The current trend is towards more affordable row housing and apartments, but this has been developer driven and not Township planned development. In my opinion, the Township needs to take more control of development and amend its Official Plan and zoning by-laws to force an increase in urban densities.

I cannot comment on the manageability of the mortgages of property owners; this is not something the Township can directly influence. I can say I do not support a bail-out of property owners who may find themselves in difficulty.

Q2. Why did the over-ambitious council approve construction of an elite regional hockey tournament sports complex and then have to shrink certain aspects of it to stay within budget?

A2. *I was elected in a by-election in 2024 and was not a member of Council when the significant decisions were made with respect to the new recreation complex. In addition, most of the significant decisions were made in closed session, so the details are secret. Apparently, the cost of the complex was escalating and Council decided to reduce the size of the facility to contain the cost growth. Additional cost cutting measures may also have been taken, but there is no public acknowledgement of if or what they are. Note that even I, as a current Council member, cannot see the discussions and decisions made in closed session before I was elected.*

I will give my opinion with respect to the complex and its funding over the next few years as this is what the next Council, 2026-2030, will have to grapple with.

The under-construction complex consists of three arenas, an indoor pool, and a community centre on a site near the Sports Dome and Embrun commercial district. It is intended to replace two arenas, an outdoor pool, and a community centre mostly divided between the Embrun and Russell village cores.

All property tax money contributing (euphemistically called the "municipal contribution") to the existing facilities is allocated to the operation of the new rec complex. The existing facilities must close or additional money, including additional property taxes, must be found to keep the existing facilities open.

The building is expected to cost about \$86M. This is in addition to the cost of acquiring the land and bringing a share of services (water, sewers, gas, etc.) to the site, and road construction. The Province of Ontario gave us a grant of \$10M, and development charges, paid by developers and added to the cost of

new homes, will cover 58% of the “mortgage”. Since 2018 an additional 1%, compounding each year, has been added to our property tax bill to fund the complex. This continues in 2027 tax year before levelling off without future increases. User fees will be charged, and the three arenas may, eventually, make a little profit, but the pool and community centre are forecast to be perpetual money losers.

The current financial forecast, presented to Council at the June 22, 2026, meeting, indicates the complex will demand about \$4.2M in property taxes in 2027. To put this in perspective the 2026 municipal property taxation is a total of \$21.6M. Looking at things another way: current property tax contribution to the existing facilities is \$582K and in 2027 the new complex will demand \$4.2M. About 19% of our property taxes next year will go to funding the rec complex. This will represent about a 4% property tax increase, or a reduction in other municipal services, or a draw on some reserve funds, or some combination of all of these. This is a very difficult budget decision for the next Council.

The financial situation is forecast to improve over the next 5 years but the rec complex is always expected to be a major draw on property taxes.

Q3. Why did council massively expand the industrial park without first confirming adequate water supply leaving businesses with the high cost of digging their own wells?

A3. Again, the decision not to provide water services to the industrial park development was made long before I was elected to Council. I did attend Council meetings as a member of the public observing the meetings and can speak about what I remember of the decision.

The Vars Industrial Park is in the Township of Russell and located on the south side of Burton Road between St Guillaume and Eadie Roads. The Township is the developer of the industrial park providing roads, storm ditches, electricity, natural gas, etc., but **NOT** municipal water or sanitary sewer services. Lots are sold to individual enterprises and they provide private water (wells) and sanitary sewer (septic systems) services.

Council discussion revolved around the cost of providing the services to the industrial park, and the time it would take to recoup the investment through user fees and increased property taxes, when the property values increased due to the availability of the services. An additional concern was how to ensure that existing property owners could be required to pay the user fees, as their properties currently do not pay such fees and these property owners have invested in private services.

In the end Council decided that the return on investment was too low, the time to recoup the investment too long, to justify the large investment into providing municipal water and sanitary sewer services to the park. The result is that expansions of the industrial park are based private services.

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your questions. I also look forward to the September all candidates debate.

Freedom of Expression

If the person who has been removing **StandOurGround** newsletters from local establishments needs more copies to give out, please let us know. If the purpose of removing them is to suppress our message, please be aware that freedom of expression is protected in Canada.

We recognize that not everyone will agree with our views, and we welcome respectful discussion. If you disagree with any of the opinions expressed in our newsletter, please send us an email. As long as your submission is respectful and appropriate, we will gladly publish your response in a future newsletter, with your name or anonymously—your choice.

Healthy debate and the open exchange of ideas help build a stronger community.

Candidate's Questions

We have prepared four additional questions for those seeking elected office. We invite our readers to submit their own questions for candidates. Questions can be sent by [email](#) or submitted through our [online form](#). Candidates are encouraged to provide written responses to these questions. We will publish their replies in our newsletter to help residents make informed decisions before Election Day.

- 1 With infrastructure and other township expenditures at an all-time high, what is the projected tax increase for next year?
- 2 Why did council for years allow ammonia from township sewage beds to pollute the Castor River in contravention of permits?
- 3 Why did township council appoint Mr. Tarowski as Mayor instead of calling for a democratic vote?
- 4 Will Council seek to prohibit demolition of heritage buildings in the township?

In the News . . .

Our readers often send us articles they believe will be of interest to the community. One recent article by **Jonah Grignon** in the July 14, 2026 edition of [Farmtario](#) entitled "*Managing an urban-rural split in Ottawa City Hall*" examines the growing tension between urban expansion and the protection of farmland in the Ottawa region. It notes that while the city's official boundaries extend well into Eastern Ontario, many rural residents feel their concerns are not adequately represented.

The article quoted **David Brown*** (Councillor - Ward 21 Rideau-Jock).

"We have vast tracts of land that have been cleared and are perfect for building but they're also perfect for growing Ontario's food supply."

"Developers are now offering the city higher and higher prices to owners for agriculturally zoned land. Some are now going to the province, asking for expansions to urban boundaries."

"God isn't making land anymore, so what we've got is what we've got. And if you're going to pave over Ontario's food supply, I think we're going to be in a pretty rough way."

These are important issues for communities such as Russell Township, where decisions made today will shape the future of our agricultural landscape for generations to come.



Councillor David Brown

*We asked permission from David Brown's office to reuse his words in our article.

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.

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