

## Anna Lozyk Romeo joins race for Mayor



Long-time community advocate, blogger and photographer Anna Lozyk Romeo made it a three-way race for Aurora's top job on Friday morning by filing her papers to be the Town's next mayor.

Ms. Lozyk Romeo was the final mayoral candidate to enter the fray, following first-time candidate Phiona Durrant and incumbent Tom Mrakas who is seeking a second term.

"Today I am filing my papers for the Office of Mayor to lead the next term of Council under the Ward system," said Ms. Lozyk Romeo at Town Hall just after filing her papers.

In addition to her popular Living in Aurora blog and Facebook group, where she has provided her own perspective on the Town's politics over the last two Council terms, she comes into the race as a citizen member of the Town's inaugural Governance Committee.

If elected, she says she will be a policy-driven leader.

"The intent of policies is to make decisions that are consistent regardless of what person is in charge," she says. "If elected, I want to focus on establishing and maintaining policies to ensure that Council decisions are consistent and not just based on popular opinion. I want to go in and review the policies and make them even better now that we're in a Ward system and maybe have to tweak and adjust so they serve the community properly."

"We're approving a lot of stuff that is sometimes based on personal opinion, but it should be based on the policies, debate and facts? good reasons."

Lozyk Romeo, Ukrainian by heritage and raised in Poland, has lived in Aurora for 25 years where, as an engineer, she spent ten years working in a corporate environment, in small business, and even with her own business until she decided to press pause on her day job to raise her son Matthew alongside husband Domenic.

"It was time to get Matthew out in the community and raise him in the community and that's what I did," she says of feeling the need to become more involved in her Town. "I went from raising him and taking photos, then getting into Council chambers?and I voluntarily attended Council meetings for eight years, and that is a clear record [for an average citizen] here in Aurora. I am well-informed with what is going on in our Town through the things I did."

Through Living in Aurora, her community blog with a political edge, Lozyk Romeo has been a strong advocate for the environment and fiscal responsibility. Describing herself as 'an environmentalist at heart,' she says there's 'lots to do at an environmental level because the Town is growing and I think we need to protect our environmentally-sensitive lands to strike the balance between growth and protecting the environment.'

If successful in her bid, this is something she intends to keep a focus on as the Town prepares to finalize its revised Official Plan.

'I am a curious person,' she says. 'When I go into anything I am trying to understand it and not just 'be there.' I was never politically inclined' but it was the Aurora community that pulled me in and I made my own path to where I am today.

'Change is coming from everywhere from different levels of government and we need to know how to deal with it properly. Strengthening our policies'will help us to work with the higher levels of government and strike that balance for the community to ensure that we have a livable [community].

'I respect diverse perspectives. As an effective leader I look forward to encouraging public participation and critical thinking to strategically shape our community.'

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter