

October 20, 2021

To His Worship the Mayor & Respected Councillors,

I write to you today to express my willingness to serve the community by fulfilling the remainder of the City Council term in Ward 6, arising from the recent resignation of the Ward 6 councillor on October 12th. It would be a privilege to work with you all to represent the citizens of London, and I appreciate the outreach from councillors and support from members of the public over this past week.

In the 2018 elections, I was the second-place finisher in Ward 6 and appeared on 48.8% of the ballots (1st, 2nd, and 3rd choice). In Ward 13, the second-place finisher similarly appeared on 48.6% of the ballots. It would seem we both had near identical levels of support in our respectful ward races. Since the recommendation from the Corporate Services Committee to deal with the vacancy in Ward 13 is to appoint the second-place finisher from the 2018 elections, it follows logically that the same process would apply in Ward 6.

If conditions were different, by-elections to fill these vacancies would be the most open and democratic way to replace vacancies on City Council. Since this was not recommended by staff and there appears to be no appetite by the majority of Council to go this route, the other option is for Council to make appointments to fill the vacancies.

In light of this fact, I encourage City Council to undertake a transparent process that invites the public to apply to these vacancies, and allow City Council to select the two best candidates from the pool of applicants, perhaps via run-off vote. There would certainly be a number of qualified persons who would be interested in serving the community this way.

Given that nominations for the next elections start in just over six months, it would be a wise decision to ensure that anybody appointed so close to an election period publicly confirms that they will not run as a candidate for their seat in 2022: it gives such a Council member an unfair advantage over others who wish to run for a Council seat, by way of being able to claim they are the current councillor in addition to media exposure. Being appointed to City Council at this late stage means doing the work of a councillor, not gearing up for an election campaign.

Should somebody wishing to be appointed also have plans to run next year, it would be best for them to respectfully decline an appointment at this time and file their nomination papers next Spring. I suggest that whoever is appointed to fill the vacancies – no matter the method – be asked to sign a confirmation stating that they will not run, and make it publicly available on the City's website. Recognizing this wouldn't be legally binding, it would act nonetheless as an expression of trust with the citizens of London that an appointee would not use their appointment for political gain in seeking election to Council in 2022.

Another alternative could be inviting former councillors to fill both seats for the remainder of the term. While prior experience would be helpful, it wouldn't necessarily be more advantageous over other qualified persons who could apply through an open process.

Regardless of what decision Council arrives at for their method of filling these two vacancies (or possible future vacancies during this term), it must be universally applied: it would be illogical, unethical, and frankly undemocratic to apply one set of rules in one ward and a different set in another. I urge Council to choose a process that is transparent to all Londoners in order to avoid a potential political scandal that would have a negative impact on the 2022 elections.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Mike Bloxam

cc: Cathy Saunders, City Clerk (for inclusion on the October 26th agenda)