



# Elect **ALAR SOEVER** For Mayor

## The Town of The Blue Mountains

### Who is Alar???

That is the question being asked all around our Town these days, along with “How do you say his last name?”. Well, that’s him in the picture, and his name is pronounced just like it’s spelled, “SO EVER”.

You might recognize his name, as he was the founder and editor of the Citizens’ Pages, and the founder of the Citizens’ Forum. Now that he is running for Mayor, he has passed on those initiatives to others in order to avoid any appearance of conflict of interest.

Alar has been coming to the Town of The Blue Mountains (“TBM”) for over 60 years. He grew up spending his summers at the family cottage at Christie Beach that his father, a carpenter, built with a friend in 1955, (they each owned half, two bedrooms each). While his father worked in Toronto, Alar, his mother, and sister, spent the entire summer at the cottage, often joined by two or three families of friends and relatives.



**Growing up at Christie Beach**

This was a simpler time: an outhouse (no running water), the Georgian Trail was still a railroad, and the Lora Bay Golf Course was Hoggard’s Farm. Kids played and built forts in the bush, and made wooden rafts to pole around in the bay. (Yes, they were allowed to use hammers, axes, and saws).

It was at Christie Beach where Alar developed a love for the area, as well as an interest in rocks and fossils. This led him to pursue a successful career as a geologist, and later as a mining executive.



**With his team in Mali**

Although he worked in many parts of Canada, as well as overseas, Alar found no place he would rather settle down than right here in the TBM.

Once his two children went off to university, Alar bought a home down the beach from his family cottage, and moved here in 2009. By this time he was the chief executive officer of Wallbridge Mining in Sudbury, so he split his time between Sudbury, Toronto, and his home at Christie Beach. Currently, he is Chairman of the Board of Wallbridge and also sits on the board of Carube Copper. He has also served on the advisory boards of two university research centres and the Ontario Geological Survey.

During his career Alar has had the opportunity to work with individuals, management teams, Boards of Directors, and community groups all over the world. He has learned that being open and honest with people, listening to them, and working with them rather than against them, goes a long way towards resolving the most difficult of issues.



**Chairing Citizens’ Forum**

Since moving back to the TBM, Alar has worked to improve communication and community engagement by founding the Citizens’ Forum and the Citizens’ Pages. He has also been involved in fundraising and the initiative to bring curling back to The Blue Mountains.



**Leading a Board Discussion On Site**

Alar’s local knowledge, his leadership ability, and the unique combination of skills and experience he has gained by working with diverse groups of people around the

world equip him with the tools required to be an effective mayor.

## LOCAL KNOWLEDGE – WORLDWIDE EXPERIENCE



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## Why I am running for Mayor – For Our Community

Several years ago, if you had told me I would be running for Mayor of the Town of The Blue Mountains, I would said “Not a chance. Why would I want to do that?”

However, over the last few years I have come to realize that if things keep going the way they are, one day I might wake up and find myself not liking the place I have always thought of as my home. I feel compelled to do my part.

Far too many decisions, are being made in secret, behind closed doors, from the restructuring of the Library to the sanctioning of Councillor Seguin. People are not being told what was going on and are feeling ignored.

With the support of a small group of people I started the Citizens’ Pages to provide people with information, and the Citizens’ Forum, as a place where people could bring their questions and concerns.

One long-time resident wrote to me saying: *“At one time, before all these people moved here, we looked at our area very differently. People lived, worked and played here, raised families, kids went to school here, and people were buried here.”... “It’s a terrible thing when the locals would find it better to move. A wise person said, might as well keep working, just become a taker, sell out, then die elsewhere.”*

Another resident wrote: *“We are beginning to feel that the rest of the Town of The Blue Mountains has abandoned the residents who live in the Craigleith and Village area... that the problems we have can be solved by just moving away and letting the tourist businesses take over. After all, we’re just complainers.”*

Pretty strong words! Clearly these people are hurting and feel abandoned by the changes overtaking our community.

Over the last few years, I have met and have come to know many passionate and talented people who care and want to contribute to building a better community. It is these people who inspired me, and convinced me to run for Mayor. Some of them are running for Council. With a new Council, and your support and involvement, we can work together to heal our Town, and build a community where all people feel welcome.

None of us want to wake up one morning and find that we no longer like the place we call our home.

## MY PRIORITIES

- **REBUILDING TRUST** - I will work to rebuild the trust that has been lost between the community, Town Staff, and Council. I will make sure that you are informed and consulted before decisions are taken that affect your community and your lives.
- **RESTORING RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT** - I will work with the new Council and Town Staff to set clearly defined goals and measures of performance for both Council and Staff. We will manage your tax dollars responsibly and provide you with the details of how your money was spent.
- **MANAGING CHANGE WITH YOU** - The rapid growth our municipality is experiencing is forever changing our Town and its social fabric. I will work with you, the new Council, and Town Staff to ensure that our Town remains a great place for everyone to live, work, run a business, raise a family, and retire.

WORKING WITH YOU FOR OUR COMMUNITY



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## **REBUILDING TRUST**

Trust is something that has to be earned and there is a lot of work to do to restore the trust that has been lost due to the way the library issue and the Michael Seguin affair were handled in secret, behind closed doors.

Not only did the public lose trust in the Council, but a member of Council was quoted in the press as saying the public "cannot be trusted for the type of comments or concerns they might put forth".

**I WILL** work with Council to restore your faith in your local government. Council and Staff work for you, the citizen. We represent your interests and we need to work together.

My communication strategy will be **"Early and Often"**. We will let you know early about any issues coming before us, and then keep you informed as things develop.

**I WILL** hold Monthly "Meet the Mayor" meetings in different areas of the town so that you can let me know what is important to you and we can get to know each other. I will make it easy for you to make an appointment to come and meet with me.

**I WILL** work with Council to:

- Reduce closed door meetings of Council by at least half in the first year.
- Have all closed door meetings recorded and securely archived so there is a record should an investigation be required.
- Establish and maintain a Lobbyist Registry which will provide transparency about who is lobbying our Town's elected and appointed officials and senior staff.
- Set up Advisory Committees on specific issues to tap the huge pool of talent and experience we have in our community.

## **RESTORING RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT**

- We need to elect a Mayor and Council who understand their responsibilities and take them seriously.
- Our Town is a Corporation with assets of over \$200 M, annual revenue of \$31.5 M, and expenses of \$29 M. In addition, last year we also collected taxes for and sent \$16 M to Grey County and \$8 M to the Bluewater District School Board. This amounts to over \$50 M every year.
- Council is the Board of Directors of this Corporation, and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) reports to Council and manages the Town Staff. We will set clear performance expectations and assess the performance of the CAO annually.
- **I WILL** work with Council and Town staff to set clearly defined goals and measures of performance for both Council and Staff.
- All Council votes will be recorded, and we will post the voting and attendance records on our website.
- **I WILL** work with Council to manage your tax dollars responsibly and provide you with the details of how your money was spent.
- We need to better manage our relationship with Grey County. Currently we fund 26% of the Grey County taxation based budget, but have only 12% of the vote on how this money is spent.
- **I WILL** work with Council for reform to see that we get more County spending focused here in the Town of the Blue Mountains.
- Legal costs rose by 452% from \$93,600 in 2013 to \$422,878 last year, while over the last two years capital expenditures were less than depreciation. Our infrastructure is decaying faster than we are replacing it. The past two years Council has allocated taxation year end surpluses to the Legal and Human Resources Reserve Funds.
- **I WILL** work with Council to reduce our legal and other soft costs and refocus spending on infrastructure and services for you and our community.

**WORKING WITH YOU FOR OUR COMMUNITY**



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### **MANAGING CHANGE WITH YOU**

Last year the Town of The Blue Mountains issued building permits with a total value of \$185 M, which included 353 new dwellings. This rapid growth is forever changing the face of our Town and its social fabric.

Many long-time residents feel they are being pushed aside, and that they have been ignored and abandoned by Council. Similarly, recent arrivals who moved here to enjoy a peaceful retirement in an all seasons community, are finding the unique character of the place they have just moved to under threat.

Growth is inevitable, but it must be managed properly, so that we shape our community into what we, and not others, want it to be.

We must clearly convey our vision for our community to developers, businesses, and residents who want to move here, so they have realistic expectations of what they will be able to build and operate here. If their proposals will add value to our community, we should work with them so that both they and our Town can thrive and prosper. If they do not, we should tell them to go elsewhere.

**I WILL** make sure that our Official Plan, Policies, and Bylaws reflect your vision for our Town and that they are enforced. I will work with Council and Staff to make sure that any new development respects the unique character of our Town, and adds to, rather than detracts from, the liveability of our community.

**I WILL** work to find an alternative to five laneing Highway 26 through Craigeith to preserve the unique character of our community.

**I WILL** work to find solutions to our affordable housing, transportation, and labour force crises, so that our Town remains a great place for everyone to live, work, run a business, raise a family, and retire.

### **SOLUTIONS EXIST –WE CAN PUT OUR TOWN BACK ON TRACK**

**The issues we face are not unique. Other places have faced similar issues and have solved them. We must change the way we do things. Fewer expensive consultants' reports and closed door meetings.**

**Instead, lets work together and**

**TAKE ACTION NOW**

**On Restoring Responsible Government:** All we need to do is change our Procedural Bylaw, to provide for more transparency and accountability.

**On Workforce and Affordable Housing:** Whistler took action long ago and now has a resident restricted housing stock of 2,034 housing units. That, has in part contributed to enabling 78% of the community's workforce to live in Whistler. The Whistler Housing Authority is financially self-sufficient, and does not rely on the municipal residential tax base. (2018 Business and Financial Plan – Whistler Housing Authority)

**On the 37% of the water we lose from our municipal system :** Halifax took action in 1999, and they have reduced water losses, saving \$600,000 per year. (City Water Leaks Costing Millions of Dollars. CBC News. (Nov 23, 2011))

### **WATCH FOR MY NEXT TWO MONTHLY INSERTS IN THE REVIEW TO LEARN ABOUT MY DETAILED PLANS ON THESE AND OTHER ISSUES**

### **TO HELP GET ME ELECTED, YOU CAN**

- Share this flyer with your friends and neighbours
- Donate to my campaign ( either online at [alarsoever.ca](http://alarsoever.ca), or by mailing a cheque payable to: ALAR SOEVER FOR MAYOR, 203 Sunset Blvd, P. O. Box 89, Thornbury, ON N0H 2P0
- Volunteer to host a meet and greet for your neighbourhood
- Volunteer to knock on doors

### **TO VOLUNTEER:**

Please e-mail [campaign@alarsoever.ca](mailto:campaign@alarsoever.ca) or call 519-375-6207

Website: [alarsoever.ca](http://alarsoever.ca)

