

## Erin councillor Rob Smith announces he's running for mayor

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TOWN OF ERIN MUNICIPAL OFFICE (Advertiser file photo)

ERIN – Erin councillor Rob Smith has his eyes on the mayor's chair in the upcoming municipal election.

The two-term councillor, initially elected to Erin council in 2014, has recently filed to run for mayor in the fall election.

Having started out on the town's environmental advisory committee before gaining a seat on council, Smith said he felt it was the next step for him.

"It's like, you're in a job and it's just your natural progression to move forward," Smith told the *Advertiser*.

"And I'm passionate about my community. My kids were born in town and so the future of the town, it's their town, too."

The Erin councillor said while it won't be easy, he's up for the challenge, recognizing that you can't please everybody.



ROB SMITH

"Unfortunately, government doesn't work the way that normal business works and that's something that I learned early on," Smith explained.

"I don't think you can just walk in and swing the doors and say there's a new sheriff in town."

Through his time on council, Smith said he's had some time to wrap his head around the way things work and going forward the anticipated growth, while a challenge, also presents an opportunity.

While much of the heavy lifting is more or less done as far as the growth is concerned, Smith said, other aspects of it will include factors like economic development and tourism.

"There's going to be a number of things that obviously are somewhat foreign to the way a little town works," he explained.

"We're in a growth area. Luckily, we have a river that can only handle x and that's it, so that determines our growth."

"And it's our job to get it done right because we only have one shot."

Smith said he recognizes there will be challenges to get it right, but he also acknowledges the opportunity needs to be taken.

"There are opportunities and if you don't capitalize on them then I think you'll lose out and you lose out from a business point of view, certainly economic development [and] recreation," he explained.

"All those things are going to be a benefit to everybody that lives in the town."

As the owner and president of Erin Auto Recyclers since 2005, community involvement has been at the forefront for Smith since he got his start in Erin in 2001.

The recycling centre has won an award from the Credit Valley Conservation Authority for protecting the town's drinking water and has also been involved in numerous tree planting projects in the town.

"I've been involved with as much as I can," Smith said. "It's where I live, it's where I've decided to call home, it's where I decided to start a family."

Alls not seeking re-election

Current Erin Mayor Allan Alls has confirmed he will not be seeking re-election in the fall, noting eight years has been long enough.

"It'll be 79 in August, and I think I've had eight good years of it and it's time for a younger man to take over," he told the *Advertiser*.

"I think there's a time to come on the stage and there's a time to get off."



ALLAN ALLS

First elected in 2014, Alls has served two terms in the mayor's chair.

During his time as mayor, Alls said his biggest accomplishment was moving the wastewater treatment plant forward and promoting the town's growth.

"Without some growth old people have no place to retire to and young people have no place to buy," he explained.

"And businesses were falling on the main street because they don't have sewers."

"So we've done that – not just me, the council – and it's, I think, the major accomplishment over the last few years."

Alls added, "We have lots of issues going forward of course with the growth of the town, there's no doubt about it, but it'll work."

"And I'm quite pleased about how things have unfolded in the long run."

During his time, Alts said he's had a great council and staff and the work that's been done has been a collaborative effort by everyone.

Alts said he plans to work "full blast" until his term ends in the fall.

As he approaches the end of his fourth career, Alts said he hasn't decided what he's going to do yet but that he's looking forward to spending more time with his wife and hopefully travelling.

"I'm going to miss it to some degree, because I like being busy," he said of leaving his post as mayor.

"I like being involved and I like working with people.

"But as I said, I felt that this is my time to exit and let the younger man take over, or younger woman."

