

Outgoing Mayor Jeremy Williams seeks Dufferin-Caledon Conservation MP Nomination

Written By JASON OBERMEYER

Despite being defeated in the Oct. municipal election, outgoing Orangeville Mayor Jeremy Williams is looking to continue his political career by announcing his intent to seek the nomination for the Dufferin-Caledon Conservative MP candidacy. Making the announcement on Monday, Nov. 12 at the Nifty Nook Restaurant with family and supporters, the town's outgoing mayor announced his intent to make the jump to federal politics.

"I've always been upfront about my ambitions for higher office," he said. "My dedication to our community remains unwavering." He added, "I know that everything I've done up until now has led me to this point in time."

The outgoing mayor is looking to succeed long-time Conservative MP David Tilson, who announced earlier in October to retire come the federal election next year.

He revealed had he had known of Tilson's intent to retire, "I would likely not have run for mayor at all."

Williams was first elected as an Orangeville councillor in 2010, and come the 2014 election, secured the mayor's seat. After heading what he called a "fractious" council these past four years, he lost his bid for another term in the Oct. 22 municipal election, coming in third place with 1,477 votes, while Darrin Davidson garnered 2,914 votes, and mayor-elect Sandy Brown secured 3,413 ballots. "I wasn't particularly happy with the last council and their priorities, and judging from the election, most in Orangeville shared that opinion."

However, Williams is not deterred, describing the experience as a "baptism of fire" that gave him the drive, tenacity, strength, and tools needed to serve on Orangeville and Dufferin County council and beyond. "I have the knowledge and experience to do great things in our riding."

So far Harzadan Singh Khattrra and Kevin Weatherbee are the only other ones approved as potential Dufferin-Caledon Conservative candidates.

"Bolton struggles to find a downtown identity. Caledon's challenge to preserve its rural heritage, the impact to its ambulance service, and Shelburne's growth pressure in sewage and water supply constraints," were some of the things outgoing Mayor Williams talked about at his announcement. "Our focus must be on Canadians first."

He described Orangeville as being "in the best shape it has been in its history," with its economy having "never been so strong," and Dufferin-Caledon is unique by being "rural at heart," but "close to the city."

He noted he was "disheartened" by Weatherbee and Khattrra deciding to seek the nomination before Tilson's retirement announcement, particularly referring to alleged social media posts from Weatherbee that he says undermined his mayoral campaign. "While I am surprised Mr. Williams chose to make myself the focus of his announcement, he is free to do so," said Mr. Weatherbee in a statement following Williams' announcement. "It is up to the members of our party to decide with their votes who they think is best suited to represent our party in the next election. They can decide for themselves if they believe Mr. Williams' divisive approach is what they want to represent our party here in Dufferin-Caledon in the next election."

The deadline for completed candidacy application is Nov. 30.