

2026 Wilmot Township Candidate Survey Summary



Groundwater Protection & Private Well Security Briefing

Prepared by Citizens for Safe Ground Water (CSGW)

This candidate briefing standardizes responses from candidates running for Mayor and Council in Wilmot Township. Each entry highlights verbatim quotes addressing rural water security, well interference oversight, and proactive groundwater management.

Core Survey Questions

1. **Protecting Local Water:** How will you use your role as Mayor or Councillor to prioritize rural drinking water security and sustainable groundwater management in Wilmot? 2. **Fairness & Transparency:** How will you advocate at the local and regional levels for independent oversight and full transparency whenever Wilmot private well owners experience water interference?
3. **Proactive Leadership:** How will you push the Region of Waterloo to manage groundwater proactively (such as supporting protective pumping limits and transparent data sharing) to stop water loss before private taps run dry?

Mayoral Candidates

Stephanie Goertz

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"If elected as Mayor, I will advocate to strengthen Wilmot's Official Plan to create better long-term protection for our groundwater, private wells and drinking-water supply."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"When someone's private well drops significantly or goes dry, they should not be left on their own trying to prove what happened, find the information they need, or determine which level of government is responsible."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"As Mayor, I will advocate for Wilmot Township to receive regular reporting on water use and groundwater levels from Regional wells and*

monitoring relevant to our Township."

Kristopher Wilkinson

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"I support responsible development, but growth cannot come at the expense of the water resources our existing residents, farms and communities depend upon."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"The burden should not fall entirely on an individual homeowner to navigate a complicated technical process when dealing with government."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"Where evidence demonstrates that Regional pumping is creating an unacceptable risk to surrounding private wells, I will support adjusting operations and pumping levels rather than waiting for wells to fail."*

Natasha Salonen

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** "When Regional Council considered ending the 1980 Wilmot water-taking protections, I advocated and voted to keep those protections in place. Although I lost that vote, I subsequently brought forward a motion that passed Regional Council ensuring that no additional new amounts of water can be pumped from Wilmot until the updated Regional Water Supply Strategy returns to Council."
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency) :** "One of the most important changes is that the burden of determining whether Regional pumping caused or did not cause the interference now rests with the Region rather than requiring a resident to prove that the Region caused the problem."
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** "Monitoring should function as an early-warning system. Where groundwater levels or other indicators show that the system is approaching conditions that could create interference, that should trigger further investigation and consideration of operational changes before private taps begin running dry — rather than relying solely on data to explain what happened after an interference has occurred."

Clive Woolner

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *Regarding Petersburg well "Wilmot owns the distribution system so I will not allow the region to hook up and use that as leverage to negotiate water taking limits for the entire region."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I will lobby to make pumping reports publicly available*

and monitoring well reports be provided, at no charge, to anyone seeking compensation."

- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"I think our only option is to build the pipeline that was proposed years ago from Lake Erie. Without a long term plan, the local aquifers will be pumped to the point of depletion."*

Ward 1 Candidates

Peter Varga

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"...most importantly I will ensure issues related to rural drinking water are tabled and discussed at Council meetings..."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I will challenge the 'in camera' items that are specifically impacting residents and advocate these issues be discussed openly."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"The accountability for managing groundwater requires full disclosure and 'checks and balances' with quarterly review of consumption."*

Stewart Cressman

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"I will continue to advocate for private well protection and improvements in the Regional Private Well Interference Policy through more granular monitoring well data near impacted wells either current or historic."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"Fairness and transparency described by action noted above as well to ensure those residents with private water and waste water do not pay through taxes or other charges for those who receive these services in the Township."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"Continue to advocate if elected and even if not successful since impact of water pumping through a dry well, a dry spring fed creek and 25 acre cedar swamp has been a first hand experience."*

Kiera Upward

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"I believe that Wilmot Council should advocate on behalf of the people in our Ward and not be quiet when our residents express concerns about their drinking water."*

- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"If a resident is experiencing an issue with their well, they deserve to understand how their concern is being investigated, what information is being considered, what they can do if they disagree with the outcome, and what resources are available."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"If that evidence shows private wells are at risk, I would push the Region to act proactively rather than waiting until residents are left without water."*

Ward 2 Candidates

Alan Dicknoether

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"Consider water protection at the very start of all planning for town growth, new developments, and water use—not as an afterthought."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"The region cannot be the defendant and the judge of any wellwater complaints. It is a conflict of interest."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"As a local resident who has experienced a well running drastically low, I know how financially terrifying water insecurity is—we need strict, enforceable pumping limits to protect our supply."*

Lucy Lantz

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"As a councillor, I would make rural water security an important consideration in Township decision-making and a priority in my advocacy with the Region."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I would advocate for independent assessment when well interference is alleged, clear communication with affected residents, and timely access to relevant data."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"If the available evidence shows that additional protections or limits are needed, I would advocate for them."*
- **Michael Roth:** *No response received by deadline.*

Ward 3 Candidates

Harvir Sidhu

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"Water is one of our most important resources, and protecting the drinking water of Wilmot residents has to be a priority."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I strongly support independent oversight when residents believe Regional pumping has affected their wells."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"Ultimately, residents should not have to lose their water before government takes their concerns seriously"*
- **Tammy Gaudun Gies & Kevin Sundberg:** *No response received by deadline.*

Ward 4 Candidates

Scott Dunstall

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"When development decisions come before Wilmot Council, I will not support growth unless reliable technical evidence demonstrates that sufficient water and wastewater capacity exists and existing residents' water supplies will be protected."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I believe independent technical validation should be required whenever Regional pumping is reasonably suspected and the cause is disputed."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"If monitoring shows concerning declines in groundwater levels or impacts on nearby private wells, the Region must reduce or adjust pumping before residents lose their water."*

Sam Hiemstra

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"As a Councillor for Ward 4, I would do everything in my power to advocate to Council and the Region at large to protect our groundwater supply and ensure safe management in all future planning."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"Private well owners do and will continue to face the brunt of these ongoing water issues."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"I will make sure that my views and those of advocates and*

citizens on the ground in these situations are being relayed to the Mayor, counterparts at the region, and all other elected officials I get to share the room with."

Steven Martin

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"When our Council learned about the large amount of water being taken from the Township without accountability, then we advocated for an agreement regarding reporting and monitoring of the amounts being taken from the township."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"...there are now external investigations available for private well owners to determine the cause of wells going dry. There is now more support in place than there had been."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"I would continue to be interested in supporting our Township's advocacy and supporting active monitoring so that water is protected and available to those who need it."*

Krista Straus

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"Development on the Waterloo Moraine should be carefully managed and limited, such as no major developments on it."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"I have participated at the Regional open houses regarding the new water interference policy and gave input on ways to be more transparent and fair."*
- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"I would also advocate for the Region to work with the Township and residents to come up with pumping limits for the Regional wells in Wilmot, and publicly track when those limits are approached or reached, and develop a community-informed plan for what happens next."*

Jeff Bell

Status: Responded

- **Q1 (Protecting Local Water):** *"Groundwater is one of Wilmot's most important natural resources. It supports rural residents who rely on private wells, local agriculture and our municipal water system, so protecting it has to be treated as a long-term responsibility. As a Township Councillor, I would expect decisions affecting Wilmot's groundwater to be based on current hydrogeological evidence, long-term monitoring and a clear understanding of cumulative impacts."*
- **Q2 (Fairness & Transparency):** *"For residents who depend on private wells, access to*

reliable drinking water is not a minor inconvenience or simply a technical issue. If a resident believes Regional pumping has affected their water supply, they deserve a process that is credible, timely, and transparent... When something as fundamental as drinking water is at stake, residents should be able to understand how decisions were reached and have confidence in the process used to reach them."

- **Q3 (Proactive Leadership):** *"When it comes to groundwater, waiting until a private well runs dry is already too late. The goal should be to identify emerging problems early and act before residents lose access to such an essential resource. I would advocate for the Region to make groundwater monitoring information readily available and to establish clear, science-based operating thresholds that identify when changing aquifer conditions require investigation or changes to pumping."*