

OCTOBER 26TH RE-ELECT

Martin RITSMA FOR MAYOR

 MartinRitsma4Mayor.ca #MartinRitsma4Mayor



MARTIN RITSMA is...Working Hard for You. Delivering a Stronger Stratford.



DELIVERED IN TERM

- ✓ Brought GO Transit service back to Stratford
- ✓ Opened a new warming centre to support our most vulnerable residents
- ✓ Completed road, sidewalk, and sewer upgrades on Albert, Huron, Erie, and Ontario Streets
- ✓ Elected Deputy Mayor twice before becoming Mayor — proven leadership at the council table



RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Maintain an open-door approach with residents, business owners and community organizations
- Continue collaborative, consensus-based decision-making at the council table
- Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous communities and neighbouring municipalities
- Engage youth directly in city planning and decision-making — Stratford's future depends on giving young people a voice, not just services



ECONOMY

- Practice sound fiscal management and responsible asset planning to keep taxes predictable
- Revitalize our downtown core and support local businesses through the Business Improvement Area
- Leverage the Stratford Festival and our tourism economy to extend visitor traffic beyond peak season
- Attract new investment and skilled workers by promoting Stratford as a place to build a business and a life
- Support local manufacturers navigating global trade uncertainty and rising input costs
- Cut red tape and streamline the process to help existing businesses grow and new ones open faster



HOUSING

- Work collaboratively with federal and provincial governments and the construction industry to create affordable and attainable housing
- Address the housing crisis for our under sheltered population
- Work with the Social Service Department and Agencies to create supportive permanent housing
- Promote housing development that meets the needs of Seniors
- Increase rental housing stock



INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Continue to partner with Federal and Provincial governments to ensure City roads, sidewalks and bridges are built and maintained
- Ensure quality services to Stratford residents
- Ensure City Facilities are accessible to all
- Build a 12 unit permanent supportive housing facility on Erie St.



ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

- Continue to support and celebrate residential and industrial responses to GHG reduction
- Expand tree canopy and green space as the city grows
- Improve energy efficiency in municipal facilities and fleet
- Support active transportation — cycling and walking infrastructure — as a lower-carbon alternative
- Pursue provincial and federal green infrastructure funding rather than downloading costs to taxpayers



GRAND TRUNK RAILWAY LANDS (GTR)

- Champion redevelopment of the Grand Trunk Railway lands into a mixed-use hub for housing, jobs and public space
- Build on the advisory committee's community-driven recommendations rather than starting over
- Secure remediation and infrastructure funding through partnerships with the provincial and federal governments
- Ensure any private-sector deal protects the public interest and Stratford's tax base

**FLIP  OVER TO READ MARTIN'S
INCREDIBLE BACK STORY!**

Martin RITSMA

WHO IS HE?

Many of you know Martin as a teacher, principal, coach, Deputy Mayor and Mayor. Some Stratford residents will meet him for the first time in the 2026 election — here is his story, in brief.

EARLY LIFE

Martin was born in 1957 near South Mountain, Ontario, the middle of eleven children of Dutch immigrant parents who arrived in Canada in 1949. The family later moved to a farm north of Stratford in 1972. After early hardship — his mother's death when he was 9 and the loss of the family dairy barn — Martin left home at 17 to live with a local farm family, the Zehrs, finishing high school and university with their support. It was a traumatic time, but it shaped the resilience and compassion that define him today.

EDUCATION & CAREER

At Stratford Northwestern, Martin was active in every sport, regularly hitchhiking 20 km along Highway 19 just to make practice. There he met his wife Kathryn, and together they attended the University of Windsor from 1977 to 1982, Martin in Kinesiology and Education while playing varsity basketball. Returning to Stratford, he taught science, special education and physical education for 20 years before moving into administration as vice-principal and then principal at several area schools, retiring in 2018. In 1983 he founded Huskie Hoop Camp, running it every year for 39 years except during the Covid shutdown, all while coaching a wide range of sports and mentoring students, young teachers and his own children along the way.

FAMILY & FARM

Martin and Kathryn raised two children in Stratford, deeply involved in the area's soccer and hockey with other supportive families and volunteer coaches. Both children grew up to become physicians, and each now has a family of their own — giving Martin and Kathryn four grand-daughters, ages 4 to 11, who keep "Opa" happily busy. The couple has run cash-crop farms together since their marriage in 1982, operating their home farm in Stratford and a second farm just outside the city; agriculture remains one of Martin's deepest passions.

COMMUNITY & PUBLIC SERVICE

Martin's volunteer record runs deep. He founded and ran the St. Joe's Stratford Community Kitchen for over 20 years, is the longest-standing member of the Stratford Agricultural Society, and has chaired the Stratford Fall Fair for several years. He spent 25 years with Shelterlink — which shelters homeless youth and youth at risk — as board member, Executive Director and Board Chair, and currently serves as President of the Saddle Club. He has chaired major fundraising campaigns for United Way, a \$4 million capital campaign for St. Joseph's Church, and the Rotary Complex and Arenas project, and today co-chairs the \$1.2 million Emily Murphy Centre campaign and the "Not One More Night" campaign supporting homeless residents. He served three consecutive terms as a Stratford City Councillor, twice as Deputy Mayor, and has been Mayor since 2022 — bringing that same tireless energy to the role.



My faith is important to me, and I believe we can all carry others when we need to.

— Martin Ritsma



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MARTIN RITSMA RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS MESSAGE