An Uplifting Story

The Gardener of the Living City

Andrii Zvorygin · Candidate for Mayor of Owen Sound

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Story framing: This true story follows Andrii's path from faith, family, farming, and practical service into a public calling: helping build a living city within a living county through transparency, participation, and compassion.

The gardener's calling began with family, heart, and land, then widened toward a city and county longing for clear truth, shared responsibility, and compassion strong enough to become practical service. The soil needed care, roots needed room, neighbours needed a way to take part, and many people had yet to see what could grow there.

He got a little land in the city so he knelt, placed his hand on the earth, and he prayed:

"Creator of all life, teach me how to serve this place."

Then he quieted his mind and listened. In that stillness, the answer rose within

him: begin with love; tend what has been entrusted to you. He learned to trust that the Creator was already at work, even when the work began humbly and provision was still unfolding. He learned to act from faith, trusting that small acts of love could become steady service.

He began at home. He cared for his wife and children, tended soil, tools, water, fences, roots, relationships, and his own spirit. He learned that service began with the people entrusted closest to him, and that love had to be practised in daily patience, provision, forgiveness, and care. He began to recognize the divine life within himself as one branch of the living vine, rooted in the Creator and joined to all creation. He learned to let go of resentment, allowing the vine's living waters to flow through him and wash them from the window panes of his heart, so the Creator's love and light could shine more brightly. As he did, he began to recognize that same love and light in family, neighbours, colleagues, customers, public officials, staff, and strangers.

As he grew, people asked for help with computers, records, websites, communications, and local systems. So he tended those as well. In gardens and offices alike, he listened first, found the root of the trouble, restored what could be restored, made confusing things clearer, and strengthened what needed support. He learned to stand upright in love: honouring the dignity and freedom flowing through each branch of the living vine, speaking truth clearly, offering help faithfully, and allowing others to choose.

His little property became full of food-bearing plants, but the need around him reached far beyond one fence. So he learned to propagate, package, sell plants at local farmers markets, and ship them across the country, helping households grow food security, resilience, and living abundance where they were.

When civic concerns arose, he followed each thread through the proper channel: city, County, Province, or federal office, wherever responsibility truly lived. He met residents, businesses, councillors, public officials, staff, and service groups. He studied reports, attended meetings, wrote letters, traced patterns, and built practical solutions.

In this work he learned to offer truth as a seed. A seed must be planted in season. So he spoke with courage and gentleness, offering truth when hearts were able to receive it, and living it before demanding it.

As a programmer, he had learned to understand systems, human cognition, and the hidden logic behind visible problems. Where others saw isolated complaints, he often saw connected data points: needs, causes, tradeoffs, incentives, constraints, and openings for repair. So he carried the same work outward. He interviewed people seeking municipal, provincial, and federal office, and convened conversations with leading scientists and engineers around the world, drawing together knowledge about energy, resources, food, infrastructure, manufacturing, and the long transition ahead.

He also learned discernment. As a branch of the living vine, he knew he was worthy of divine insight, and he learned to test every message by its fruit. If a message led toward fear, pride, control, contempt, or division, he let it pass. If it led toward love and light, humble courage, respect for free will, care for creation, and service to the divine life within all, he received it with gratitude and walked deeper into love.

Through that synthesis, he saw both the gap and the path. Many public promises were built around what people hoped the future would provide, while the scientists and engineers were pointing to the limits of the energy, materials, food systems, infrastructure, and manufacturing capacity communities actually had to work with. He saw that good policy had to be grounded in reality: what the future could reasonably support, what local people could build and maintain, and what forms of life would remain viable as surplus energy declined.

His letters and advocacy had tangible

effects. Across different levels of government, he saw ideas he had raised enter public conversations, policy changes, investigations, funding directions, and new ways of doing things. Yet the largest gap remained deeper than any single program. Communities were still being pushed into smaller and more expensive units that many people could never afford, often despite neighbours and residents speaking up for healthier, more grounded ways to live. The deeper need was for homes and communities with enough room for health, family, contribution, and belonging.

He saw that the path began by blessing the now: recognizing the good already present, strengthening what was already working, and cultivating the seeds of the future already growing among the people. The 2026–2030 term could lay the groundwork: rebuilding trust, strengthening neighbourhood participation, preparing local food and service capacity, and helping residents practise shared responsibility before the deeper global tests of the 2030s. But a change that large needed more than private service and outside advocacy. It needed someone willing to help change direction from the mayor's chair, with a voice for Owen Sound at Grey County Council, where land, housing, services, and regional provision are shaped.

Then, when his mind grew still, the call became clear: "You have been of much service. Now it is time to step up and be of public service."

So he accepted the call with humility and courage, ready to keep serving among the people and to help tend the whole city from the mayor's chair and the County table.

From that calling, the campaign took shape around three living pillars.

Transparency: clear truth in public life, so trust can grow.

Participation: every person invited to offer their gifts, so the whole city can share the work of care.

Compassion: dignity, patience, and kindness in disagreement, so healing remains possible.

Participation also needed a practical shape. People can care best for neighbours they actually know. A local area of about 300 people is small enough for a Local Representative to listen, notice needs, connect helpers, and keep trust alive. Ten such local areas form a ward of about 3,000 people, large enough to share tools and organize projects, yet small enough to remain human.

Now that nominations have closed and he is on the ballot for mayor, the work is becoming public and practical. The platform has been substantially fleshed out, with proposals responding to residents' major concerns. It remains a living platform, updated as new concerns arise, better information becomes available, and residents contribute ideas.

With the candidate field now set, the focus shifts to helping residents see which Council candidates share these priorities and can work cooperatively. The longer-term goal remains a seven-Ward Council, supported by Local Representatives who help neighbours organize, solve local problems, and bring concerns and ideas to their Ward Councillor.

He offers a simple promise: practical skill and compassionate service belong together, so people can receive steady care and a city where everyone can belong, participate, and live with dignity.

The goal is service: a living city within a living county, where Owen Sound and Grey County can feed themselves, house their people, reconnect thousands with the soil, and shine as a light for the world. A place where land, homes, food, work, and neighbourly care come back within reach; where people become rooted in place, skilled in practical responsibility, ready to serve one another, and able to live with dignity.

And all who see that vision can say, "That is the kind of place where I want to live."

Andrii Zvorygin for Mayor of Owen Sound

A practical voice for residents, local communities, and the long-term wellbeing of our city

What I am hearing at the doors

Residents want clearer information, reliable follow-through on roads and maintenance, safer neighbourhoods, practical action on homelessness and addiction, and real ways to shape the city's future.

Platform focus

Transparency: trust City Hall

Residents deserve to know what City Hall is doing, what each service costs, and whether decisions are carried through. Andrii created HelpOS.ca to make agendas, transcripts, decisions, local issues, and public discussion easier to follow. City Hall should publish service-level finances and track decisions through completion, helping identify efficiencies that reduce property-tax pressure.

Participation: stronger local representation

Residents deserve a nearby contact for local concerns. Owen Sound would keep its at-large election; after 2026, seven Councillors would each take responsibility for one geographic Ward while representing the whole city. Smaller Local Areas could agree on Local Representatives to connect neighbours, hold annual gatherings, and organize practical help. Local skills, shared stewardship, and import replacement can reduce costs and keep City spending local. Approved work would use logged, living-wage hours.

Compassion: practical paths forward

Restore downtown for family, civic, and commercial life by moving concentrated meal and support services to accessible peripheral locations closer to where people experiencing homelessness already stay, while keeping food, assistance, housing, and voluntary recovery available.

Affordable homes and communities

Residents need homes they can afford. Pursue a vacant-home tax to return empty homes to use and protect tenants from excessive rent increases. As Mayor, Andrii would also sit on Grey County Council and propose a common planning framework to restore a legal path for affordable rural communities, with local municipalities retaining approval authority.

Local production and jobs

Keep more spending, skills, and jobs local by helping businesses produce what residents and public services already buy. Publish recurring City purchasing and repair needs where practical.

Participating independent candidates

Residents need a Council that can cooperate and get practical work done. These independent candidates share principles of transparency, participation, and compassion while remaining responsible for their own decisions.

Mayor candidate: Andrii Zvorygin
Deputy Mayor candidate: Scott Greig
Council candidates: Thomas Arakal and David William Schinbein

Local Representatives

Residents can step forward to serve their Local Area. Formal roles would begin after Council approves the responsibilities, hours, and accountability rules.

Why Andrii is prepared

- Advanced local concerns through municipal, County, provincial, and federal channels
- Programmer and systems thinker who builds practical tools
- Runs a registered farm and nursery while managing technology, records, websites, and communications

Ways to help

Share this. Send a concern. Suggest a candidate. Become a Local Representative. Host a lawn sign. Volunteer. Endorse. Donate.

Contact

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