

## Wendy Epworth's opening statement at all-candidates forum, Nov. 12

I grew up in Middle Sackville, just down the road actually and whether you grew up here, discovered this place through Mount Allison or life just brought you here, this has always been a wonderful place to live and grow. This area seems to have a way of drawing people in.

When Dave and I returned to Sackville after finishing my degree at Dalhousie University, we knew that we were here to stay. We bought a little house in Frosty Hollow with a lot of woodland. We live in Frosty Hollow for a reason, not just because it has low taxes, although that was a definite plus when we bought the house, but we wanted space, privacy, a big garden, animals, all of those things that come with living in the country. We need to celebrate and protect all of the things that make living here special.

We need to grow in ways that suit our different wards and in ways that benefit the whole of Tantramar. We need to invest strategically with the effects of climate change in mind. We need to leverage our municipal budget so that we can do more with the funds that we have. We need to ensure that our corner of the world maintains the reputation of a wonderful place to put down roots, to work, to raise your family and to enjoy community.

There is a challenge ahead of us forging the new Town of Tantramar and a lot of questions that we don't yet have answers to. We need to recognize that there are a lot of differences represented within this town, but there are also many shared values and common goals. We need a mayor and a council that amplify what binds us together and to recognize our unique differences. We need to move forward in this shared responsibility and focus on positive, actionable strategies.