

Burlington's two mayoral

Mayor Ian Baltutis and Mayor Pro-Tempore Celo Faucette

ANTON L. DELGADO

Ian Baltutis

Elon alum and Minneapolis native Ian Baltutis is up for re-election as Burlington mayor

COMING OUT OF HIGH school in Minneapolis, Ian Baltutis '08 had no aspirations to serve in city government, especially not in North Carolina.

Baltutis began his college career studying engineering in New York before realizing his passion for business, which led to his transfer to Elon University.

Even at Elon, Baltutis had no intent on joining the political sphere of Burlington. After graduating in 2008 with a degree in Business Entrepreneurship, Baltutis moved to Mebane where he worked for Honda.

In 2009, Baltutis bought a house in Burlington to work in the city. Baltutis' work as a local business owner led him to downtown Burlington.

"I discovered downtown ... and began to fall in love with the community," Baltutis said. "It didn't immediately pop out at me, but Burlington grows on you."

This involvement through working with local businesses is what connected Baltutis to local politics. Before running, Baltutis considered the difficulty he may have as a candidate not born in Burlington.

"Having grown up in Minneapolis, a big city, it was tough to feel like you knew the whole community. Burlington is an amazing community because I feel like it's the perfect size," Baltutis said. "You have a wealth of resources, a wealth of opportunities. You have access to all the amenities that you would want from a big city without all the headache. I see it as a tremendous opportunity to make a difference."

Unlike both of his mayoral opponents, Baltutis does not attribute his need to make a difference to religion.

"As a public leader, I see it as my role to rise above a single faith and work as that convener to bring people together," Baltutis said. "It's not about my faith as a Unitarian universalist ... what's important is how we bring the whole community together to help us recognize challenges and overcome them."

While originally planning on making that difference by running for city council, Baltutis realized that he could make "a bigger difference running for mayor and contesting that race."

After winning the 2015 mayoral election by receiving 55 percent of the vote, Baltutis began his first term as mayor of Burlington.

Baltutis focused on engaging the Burlington community in more activities that he felt would strengthen the bonds within the city.

"My mission when I first started running for mayor was to always include more people in our community, and to always reach out to more people and make them more engaged," Baltutis said. "We prosper based on citizen engagement-- it's not about what I do as mayor or what any of our city council members do, it is about what we come together as a community and do."

A mission that Baltutis hopes to continue.

"If I get re-elected, I would love to continue that outreach effort, continue to transition the energy of folks getting out to vote and getting engaged in the campaign into initiatives across the city," Baltutis said.

Baltutis wants to not only tackle Burlington's housing problem, but also tackle engaging the community.

"We need to make progress on ... tackling housing, specifically that our affordable housing is of a higher quality than it is right now," Baltutis said.

Improving the quality of affordable housing is a factor Baltutis believes will promote community health and reduce issues with crimes, gangs and drug abuse. According to the Department of Public Safety's most recent annual crime report, for every 100,000 people living in Alamance County almost 3,000 of them commit crimes.

The one person who may stop Baltutis from leading the charge in fixing these issues is his opponent Celo Faucette.

Baltutis has worked closely with Faucette, who served as his mayor pro-tem during his first term.

"[Faucette's] heart is here in the community. He was born and raised here, and he represents a wide selection of the community," Baltutis said. "That perspective is important to have on council."

Baltutis had difficulty in agreeing or disagreeing with Faucette's plans for Burlington.

"Mr. Faucette has chosen not to communicate any clear platform, or to create set of goals that he's written and posted for the public to review," Baltutis said.

Despite the uncertainty of this upcoming election, Baltutis promises to continue to work and improve the city of Burlington no matter what the results.

"If this election doesn't go our way ... we'll continue to do what we've been doing, which is focusing on bringing the folks together to strengthen Burlington," Baltutis said. "I got into politics as a way to enable all this progress and enable our community to become stronger, and if I'm not in politics after Nov. 7, I'll continue to focus on the strength of our community."

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WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS HOW WE BRING THE WHOLE COMMUNITY TOGETHER TO HELP US RECOGNIZE CHALLENGES AND OVERCOME THEM.

IAN BATUTIS
BURLINGTON INCUMBENT
MAYOR

BALTUTIS' GOALS

1. Continue the outreach effort, getting people involved in the campaign
2. Higher quality of affordable housing

PRIMARY RESULTS

53

Baltutis received 53 percent of the votes in the primary

CAREER TIMELINE

2008 - Graduates from Elon University with a degree in Business Entrepreneurship, moves to Mebane and works for Honda

2009 - Buys home in Burlington to work as a business owner downtown

2015 - Won Burlington mayoral election with 55 percent of vote

