



Chamber host local candidate debate

By: Alex Hilson

The Halton Hills Chamber of Commerce held a debate last Wednesday at the Club at North Halton with local candidates standing in the upcoming Ontario Provincial election. Incumbent Ted Arnott from the Provincial Conservative Party, Ted Rodgers from the Ontario Green Party, and Jon Hurst from the Ontario Liberal Party were present. Diane Ballantyne from the Ontario New Democrat Party was absent due to work commitments.

The debate started after a breakfast buffet and networking. The event focused on the platform of each party from a business perspective. Candidates started with opening statements talking about their party's stance on various issues. Questions were then taken anonymously from the audience for candidates to answer. Candidates took on topics ranging from legalization of cannabis to the minimum wage increase and their stance on public transit in Halton Hills. After the question period, candidates gave closing

speeches and talked with business owners in an informal meet-and-greet.

Melanie Frazer, the Chair of the Chamber, thanked all candidates for their participation. "We know that it's not an easy job and it takes a lot to put your name on the line."

Dave Rodgers, from the Green Party, true to form, wanted to focus on the environment. "Water is particularly important here in this riding. One of the things the Greens have in their platform is they want to manage water as a public trust in our communities. And people have a priority over other uses. Then you have agriculture. There's a cascade with water bottling fairly low on the priority list."

Meanwhile, Acton's own Jon Hurst made his defence of Kathleen Wynne, the Ontario Liberal leader, his key take away and reminded those in attendance that a vote for him not only garnered Wellington-Halton Hills all his years of experience as a Halton Hills municipal councillor, but also with Wynne as the best choice for Premier.

"I'd really like people to do two things," said Hurst.

"Take a close look at the accomplishments of the Liberal Government. A lot of people don't like the leader, Kathleen Wynne, and I don't know why. I think she's done a good job. Like the free tuition for low income families. That's huge. And then I want them to take a look at Doug Ford and understand what you'll be getting into with him as a Premier. He doesn't hold a candle to Kathleen Wynne."

Ted Arnott, from the Conservatives, had his own stance on the party leadership question and wanted voters to remember that, when all is said and done, it's not about politics but about working for the constituents.

"The leadership question is something people should consider, as well as the platforms, as well as local candidates," said Arnott. "I've served for 28 years in the Legislature. I have an extensive record of what I've been able to achieve, and I hope to do more and be re-elected. But most importantly, I'm accountable to all the people of Wellington-Halton Hills. Collectively. My constituents are my boss."

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