

Council begins new term

By Lisa Tallyn
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Mayor Rick Bonnette welcomes Ward 2 Councillor Ted Brown to the 2014-2018 Council.

Photo by Ray Lavender

Halton Hills 14th Council was sworn in at its inaugural meeting at John Elliott Theatre Monday night.

All the familiar faces are back for the next four years minus Ward 2 Councillor Joan Robson, who retired at the end of the last term after serving 14 years. The lone new face at the council table will be former IFP photographer/journalist Ted Brown, who fills Robson's vacant Ward 2 seat.

Back are Mayor Rick Bonnette and local councillors (Ward 1) Jon Hurst and Mike O'Leary, (Ward 2) Bryan Lewis, (Ward 3) Moya Johnson and Dave Kentner, (Ward 4) Bob Inglis and Ann Lawlor. Regional councillors back on the job are (Wards 1 & 2) Clark Somerville and (Wards 3 & 4) Jane Fogal.

Bonnette, Halton Hills's longest serving mayor who begins his fourth term in that role, praised Robson for doing a "tremendous job" and welcomed Brown to the table.

"Ted is well known throughout town as a strong advocate of our community and his experiences and passion for Halton Hills will be invaluable."

Bonnette said he views the fact all incumbents were re-elected "as a strong message that the community agrees with the direction and decisions we are making as a group."

Halton Hills is a great place to live and Council will ensure "we continue to have a quality of life that is second to none," said Bonnette.

Along with opens spaces and recreational facilities, he said quality of life means "employment, ensuring businesses continue to create jobs and new businesses are attracted to our Town as a safe community."

"We must build on this momentum by continuing to emphasize industrial and commercial development in order to bring new businesses to our town and to retain and strengthen the ones we have."

Bonnette said Council knows "we have challenges with traffic congestion. There are no quick fixes to this issue, but we will continue to consider options and engage the community."

He said Council has continued to invest in facilities that enhance the quality of life for residents—pointing to the expansion of Mold-Masters SportsPlex, renovation of Georgetown Library and Cultural Centre and beginning the addition to Acton Arena. He said the Town will continue to apply for federal and provincial funding to offset costs, but it's unclear how much can be counted on.

Council's goal "is to ensure the Town continues to be in a sound financial position," said Bonnette.

He said Council needs to address the shortage of housing for seniors in town and looks forward to working with GO Transit as it makes service improvements in Acton and Georgetown. Council will continue to push for all-day service.

"We have an experienced council, one that has proven it can park its individual egos and focus on making decisions that are best for the entire community. We will continue on building council consensus on most, if not all issues."

Council will have to make some tough financial decisions, he said.

Bonnette said he won't change his style and will continue to battle other levels of government or agencies that develop policies that have a negative impact on Halton Hills.

"Being a wimp is not my style," said Bonnette.

"My door will continue to be open to fresh ideas and suggestions that you may have to improve the quality of life for our citizens," said Bonnette.

Halton Hills Council's next meeting will be Monday, Dec. 15 at the Civic Centre.

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