

WARD 1 COUNCIL BY-ELECTION - THESE ARE YOUR CANDIDATES



Pauline Russell took this photo of gravel truck traffic, travelling through through the heart of downtown Acton on Monday morning.

Truck traffic dominates Ward 1 all candidates meeting

By **Melanie Hennessey**
Special to The IFP

What should be done to solve Acton's truck traffic problem?

This was the question of the hour at the second Ward 1 all-candidates' meeting held Thursday evening.

The session, hosted by Heritage Acton at the Acton Town Hall, brought together about 50 residents and six of the seven by-election candidates: former town councillor Terry Jackson, real estate agent Norm Paget, retired school board manager Mike Albano and social media strategist Sue Walker, along with consultant Robert Bedard and local farmer Geoff Maltby, who both ran in last year's municipal election. Waldo Paquete, a former Ward 4 candidate and Georgetown resident who's running in Ward 1 this time around, was not in attendance.

While the candidates were questioned on everything from urban gardening to preserving heritage buildings, many in attendance asked the council hopefuls to respond to the community's concern about truck traffic, like Hillsvie Active Living Centre President Dave Maloney. He told the candidates that the centre's members are frightened by the number of trucks coming through town.

Bedard said the ultimate answer is to create a bypass, with Walker and Albano sharing similar sentiments.

"A bypass is the way to go," said Albano, noting the issue doesn't solely fall on the Town's shoulders. "Both the municipal and provincial governments will have to be involved."

And Paget said, "It's a matter of working with council to address this issue and come up with a solution that works for everyone and keeps our streets safe."

Jackson noted that truck traffic is a longstanding issue in Acton— one that she dealt with when on council 34 years ago.

Since Hwy. 7— a road commonly used by trucks— is a provincial highway, Maltby said "there's not much we can do about it except make the road safer."

Local resident Patricia Lee questioned the panel of contenders on how they would ensure Wallace St. isn't utilized as a bypass for trucks that could come from the proposed Hidden Quarry in nearby Rockwood. She also suggested the truck route designation

A by-election will be held in Ward 1 (Acton) on Monday, Sept. 21, to fill the vacant seat after the death of longtime Councillor Mike O'Leary.

The Independent & Free Press has asked the seven candidates two questions (200 words allowed for each answer), so voters can make an informed choice.

Candidate Waldo Paquete did not respond to *The Independent & Free Press's* request for information.

WARD 1 VOTERS can vote at the Acton Arena or the Acton Town Hall Centre, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 21. Info: 905-873-2601, ext. 2330 or 2333 or go to www.haltonhills.ca

Mike Albano

Occupation: Retired Aug. 31, 2015 from the Upper Grand District School Board as the Manager of Information Technology

Previous political/municipal experience: none



WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1?

I am running as a Councillor because I would like to give back to the community. Being recently retired I have the time and energy for the role. I have been a longtime resident of Acton for over 50 years and I understand the issues and concerns our community is currently facing. I have the leadership and organizational skills to be a Councillor, I am hardworking and open minded, team player and fiscally responsible.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING THE WARD?

There are a number of major issues facing Ward 1 that are all important.

1. Affordable housing for seniors and economically disadvantaged families
2. Traffic flow through Acton. The proposed Hidden Quarry without a bypass will become a serious traffic problem
3. Lack of jobs and new development. New development will create new jobs and economic growth

Terry Jackson

Occupation: not submitted

Previous political/municipal experience:

Former Town Councillor, Provincial constituency liaison - Halton 1995-2014.



WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1?

The ability to win an election as best candidate and perform the duties of a town councillor are not the same. I believe I have run a very good campaign, knocking on almost every door in the Ward, speaking to as many people as are interested, and demonstrating my knowledge based background on the issues and concerns that people have. I strongly believe that my experience as a town councillor and as a liaison with the provincial government, helping people navigate often confusing government services, gives me a unique background ideally suited to the job at hand and the circumstances of this by-election. I have years of involvement with public institutions here in Acton and I am able to be effective in the job immediately as I have no learning curve.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING THE WARD?

First we need to provide people with services they need and can afford. At the doors, what emerges in our conversations is how much people like the type of community we have and how much they want to maintain it. The biggest issue in this campaign is providing Acton with a competent representative at Halton Hills Town Council. We have unique issues in Acton and we have to have someone who can take the lead and be vocal enough, and engaging enough, to make sure Acton issues are not sidelined. I am very aware that our 'needs' change and that some 'wants' become 'needs' so being flexible is necessary; all the while keeping a close eye on property tax levels.

Robert Bedard

Occupation: Self-employed business consultant

Previous political/municipal experience:

- Rotary Club of Acton – President, 3 years
- Rotary District 7080 – North Halton Cluster – Assistant Governor
- Acton Curling Club – Board of Directors – 3 years
- Heritage Acton Board of Directors – 4 years
- McKenzie Smith Parent Council – Vice-Pres – 2 years, Pres – 2 years
- Robert Little Public School Parent Council – 3 years



WHAT MAKES YOU THE BEST CANDIDATE FOR WARD 1?

I offer a number of attributes that make me the best candidate.

I have a strong business background, wherein I ran a 200-person organization, and was responsible for the delivery of services— on time and on budget. I know how to read financial reports; I know how to ask the tough questions in order to get to the base understanding of tough issues.

Balanced with my business approach, is a strong desire to work with people for the betterment of our community. I have developed numerous direct relationships with different groups within our Ward through my numerous volunteer activities. These relationships help me understand some of the many different diverse needs within our community; and these interactions help me to understand how decisions made at council will impact our community.

I understand that as a community we have a number of challenges, some are more immediate, some are longer term. Ensuring that council considers our long term challenges too— so that it is not left to our kids to resolve our problems— is part of my objective in getting on Town Council.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BIGGEST ISSUE FACING THE WARD?

The ward currently faces a number of challenges. Some are recent developments and are getting a lot of attention in the immediate timeframe. For instance, the development of the Hidden Quarry is top of mind for many. The fact that the Town has minimal influence in the decision making process, and yet will be impacted is frustrating. This also illustrates the need for a longer term view of this issue. It's my view that the Town needs a longer term plan for how to address truck traffic through our community; particularly as volume is likely to only increase in the future.

On a more social level we have the challenge of helping members of our community find the type of housing they want or need, in order to stay within the community, they have called home for years. It's frustrating that as demand is increasing, the opportunities to meet that demand within the ward are diminishing. Finding a solution is going to take some creative thinking and partnerships on the part of Town Council. Applying creative thinking to challenging problems is why I do. It's my bread and butter.

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