

Three Halton Hills candidates running for Regional Council

BY GLORIA HILDEBRANDT

The first three declared candidates who want to represent Halton Hills on Regional council are Jane Fogal, Clark Somerville and Drew Riedstra. Mrs. Fogal and Mr. Somerville are hoping to move on from their Town council positions. Mr. Riedstra is a newcomer to politics.

Mrs. Fogal is running for Wards 3 and 4, and says: "I believe that six years of working as a local councillor have prepared me for the added responsibilities of representing Georgetown at the Region. I know most of the Regional councillors and department heads, and I am aware of the issues Regional council is facing."

Her priorities at the Region will be developing new affordable housing and dedicated housing for seniors, and negotiating a servicing plan for the 401 industrial corridor. "A large portion of our property taxes goes to the Region, and it is important that we receive services in proportion to what we send," she notes.

Mrs. Fogal is married and has two children at university. With an MA in sport psychology, she has worked in recreation. Her community service includes being a board member of the Bennett Health Care Centre and Coté Terrace Seniors' Apartments, and chairing the Friends of the Old Seed House Garden. In her free time, she cycles, sails and plays squash.

"Improving our recreation facilities was my main focus when first elected," Mrs. Fogal says. "I'm most proud of getting approval to twin the Alcott Arena and build the new recreation centre in Georgetown south."

Currently in a second term as Halton Hills councillor for Ward 1, Mr. Somerville reveals: "I received calls of encouragement from both Ward 1 and 2 residents asking me to consider running for the Regional seat. With Rick Bonnette running for the mayor's seat, I thought it would be a natural transition to run regionally."

Mr. Somerville's achievements in office

include bringing growth to Acton and working with Conservation Halton on greenlands strategy and land acquisition to protect forests within the watershed. At the Regional level, Mr. Somerville would like to work with the Town of Halton Hills on the development of the 401 corridor. "Also, once the Official Plan review is passed, I want to see some of the policies implemented," he adds, "including the protection of farmland, the strengthening of the Regional tree-cutting bylaw and an increased awareness of rural traffic concerns."

A life-long resident of north Halton, Mr. Somerville has deep roots in the area as his father and grandfather both had farms in Acton. His grandfather even was a sheriff in Halton. Mr. Somerville works in the automotive industry and, for pleasure, plays golf and baseball, hikes and does gourmet cooking.

Competing with Mr. Somerville for Regional councillor of Wards 1 and 2 is Drew Riedstra, who says: "Halton Hills is the gem of the GTA. I will work to keep it that way."

A resident of Ward 2, Mr. Riedstra feels he can relate to residents of other areas, and believes that most residents of Halton Hills want better planning and development for Halton. He is active in the management of the Georgetown Soccer Club, and wants to see increased Parks and Recreation services for all. Other issues of interest to him are the 401 industrial area, widening both the 9th Line and Highway 7 between Georgetown and Acton, and increasing police services.

Married with two young children, Mr. Riedstra has strong family values and executive experience with the Second Christian Reformed Church of Brampton. He owns a small shipping container business, and has been involved in a family business, raising and selling as many as 1500 chinchillas at a time. "I can provide fresh and invigorating ideas and discussion on many issues," he says.

Who's blooming and who's not

BY KAREN BOOTHROYD

Communities in Bloom is a Canada-wide competition where towns get to strut their floral stuff. The idea of community beautification programs started in Europe and first came to Canada in 1995. Then, only 29 Canadian communities participated; now hundreds do. Communities are divided by population and are judged in eight major categories. This is not just about flowers.

The judge who will be coming to Halton Hills on July 18, 2003, will be looking for all kinds of goodies. How tidy is the community? What kind of environmental awareness is being showcased? How well has Halton Hills conserved its heritage areas? The Urban Forestry category looks critically at the trees lining the streets. Is there a variety of trees? Are they well cared for? Turf and ground cover areas are also put under the magnifying glass. How well are sports fields and public play spaces maintained? Community involvement is examined. The more participation and innovation, the better the rating is. Of course, floral displays and landscaped areas are evaluated - it is about blooming after all. The judges look at the arrangements and choices of colour used in boxed planters and landscaped gardens.

For the Town of Halton Hills, its participation has been like a Cinderella story. The Town first entered the competition two years ago, and Dawn Falls has been on the town's committee since its inception. It started with no budget but tons of enthusiasm. Ms. Falls says that the mindset was, "What can we lose?" The committee members worked like fiends to pull it all together.

Ms. Falls laughs as she says: "We planted the Civic Centre gardens four times. We had these voles tearing it up. They were everywhere. They were running over our feet." The community went all out, and it was rewarded with top points in its division. No one was more surprised than Ms. Falls. As a Community in Blooms judge herself, she says, "The judges love Halton Hills because of our enthusiasm and our community spirit and our vision for what we are trying to do."

In the past, both the Town of Halton Hills and the Town of Milton have participated in Communities in Bloom. Jennifer Mirosofin, a long-time member of the Milton Horticultural Society, was actively involved with Communities in Bloom for the Town of Milton. She comments: "Milton did quite well in the past. There are a lot of enthusiastic gardeners in town." However, when asked about Milton's participation in the program this year, Joy Anderson of Milton's Community Services Department responded: "No, we are not participating this year. The Town of Milton participated for three years." Ms. Anderson added that the Town of Milton "has not signed up for the program because of the significant resources needed." The growth Milton is experiencing may explain some of the Town's reluctance to take on this project. At present, Ms. Anderson's department is busy developing and expanding a number of parks, and she states, "Staff are very busy with these projects." Although the Town of Milton cannot commit to a future date for participation in Communities in Bloom, it can be assured that, when it does, the Milton Horticultural Society will be behind it 100 per cent.

TALK of the TOWN

A monthly feature from the Town of Milton

Touring...through the construction zone

Summer has arrived and with the warm weather comes the clamor and clatter of construction on the roadways, parks and facilities in and around town. Fasten your seatbelts as we guide you through the "construction zone."

Main Street East (at James Snow Parkway)

We begin our tour at James Snow Parkway and head west on Main Street, where the recently completed two-year construction is just a dim memory as we navigate the new four-lane thoroughfare with ease, surrounded by new landscaping.



Thompson Road (at Main Street)

Approaching Thompson Road, we can view the construction site on the south side of Main Street for the 27-acre addition to Lions Park that will be ready for use in 2004. The site will include a major lit soccer field, an unlit soccer field and a lit slo-pitch/softball diamond. In addition, a permanent skate park facility will be ready for avid skateboarders in September. Amenities will also include additional parking, new trails/landscaping and a children's playground.

Approaching the intersection at Main Street, a glance to the north reveals the final construction stages of the newly widened four-lane Thompson Road with new walking/biking pathways on both sides of the street, new traffic signals and enhanced landscaping.

Wilson (at Main Street)

Continuing westbound to Wilson & Main, we observe the work underway to widen the roadway to accommodate new turning lanes, a centre median and new traffic/pedestrian signals. This work will also set the stage for the future extension of Wilson Drive, south of Main Street, into the Central Business District.

Rotary Park

The next stop is Rotary Park, where the pool will be closed this summer during construction for the first redevelopment phase, which includes a new pool with ramped entry and spray features as well as four 25-metre swimming lanes. A new pool building, covered pavilion area, pathways, trails, landscaping and other park amenities will eventually complement the site.

Derry Road and Commercial Street

As we head south on Ontario Street approaching Derry Road, we catch a glimpse of the bright blue walls of the new Milton Sports Centre. The first phase of this project is expected to be ready for occupancy in September, with the grand opening scheduled in November of this year. This comprehensive facility will house two arenas, banquet and meeting rooms and will also be the new home for the Milton Springers Gymnastic Club.

Other places around town...

Drumquin Park (Derry Road & Trafalgar Road)

This park redevelopment will be underway this fall with the relocation of the existing BMX Track, the addition of a new entry drive and parking areas as well as landscape improvements. Two new slo-pitch/softball diamonds will also be constructed to replace the existing ball diamonds.

CN Bridges

Heading out of town, we can see three freshly painted CN bridges with their distinctive blue and white design. They can be seen on Martin Street (north of Steeles), on Steeles Avenue West (west of Bronte) and Main Street West (west of Bronte).

Fountain and pond

If you are entering Milton at the Regional Road 25 exit this summer, you may notice that the fountain and surrounding pond have been drained for reconstruction to improve water quality and quantity control in keeping with Halton Conservation Authority regulations.

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