

# Rick Bonnette: Acton native seeks mayor's job

**Age:** 48  
**Occupation:** Humber College instructor  
**Previous (elected) political experience:** 21 years

## 1. What makes you the best candidate for mayor?

"I think I'm the best candidate for mayor because I don't have any wild expectations. I'm not out to build bridges...so I can say 20 years down the road, "I did that."...I do have 21 years of experience, I know how to work with people, I know how to work with staff...I know how to get the best message out to constituents...I have sat on and even chaired almost every key committee there is within the town and the region."

## 2. What are the three main issues the town is facing in the next three years and how do you intend to deal with those issues?

"The first one is growth, in particular Georgetown. Georgetown has really been encroached upon...Brampton just approved 6,000 acres of property for residential the other side of Winston Churchill Blvd., you have Milton coming up from the south...There is definitely going to be growth pressures to expand the pipe up from Steeles Ave... If that happens Georgetown could really lose its identity...How do you deal with it? You have to still stick with the council resolution of 1994 that we don't take lake-based water...Secondly, we have to have strong regional and town Official Plans..."

Second, one is traffic...That is a Halton Hills issue, and that's a southern Ontario issue...What we need is...better roads, and look seriously...at a bypass for Norval or 22 Sideroad...Why not do it now? Money...The town can't do it

alone...it has to be a partnership between the town, Peel and the province...In Acton we have similar traffic congestion on a smaller scale and we somewhat will be addressing that...one of my incentives was to buy that land just north of the four corners in Acton (the old Legion building)...the idea is to tear that down and that will provide 52 parking spaces for Acton...They're also talking about a bypass for Acton...it was scheduled for an environmental assessment for 2009 and I've moved it up to 2006..."

The third issue is the 401 Corridor...We have to get that going...As the mayor you have to be actively involved with the marketing...But why it's so important...there are three ways to sustain ourselves, one is to raise taxes, allow more residential growth, or work on getting industrial growth...we have the lowest industrial vs residential in the GTA, it's 13-15 per cent, a healthy community should be close to 30 per cent...We have to improve those figures."

## 3. The Hwy. 401 Corridor is apparently the town's best opportunity to attract much needed development dollars yet few businesses have expressed desire to locate there at this point. How, specifically would you encourage businesses to set up shop there?

"Advertise...You have to get out to trade shows, you have to get out to other municipalities... One of the best marketing ploys was "Vaughan, the city above Toronto", everybody remembers that slogan...It's going to take money, it's going to have to take sales calls, it might even take a committee of industry reps



businesses to be set up, and get their input...I'm talking about people who have industrial lands, stakeholders...because I'm not the answer to everything, and people in government sometimes aren't in touch with what's going out there...they lose touch...set up a good committee to promote the town for industrial investment...there could be some businesses right here in town that have contacts they deal with...and they wouldn't even have thought about asking them to come to town...communication, networking...that's something that could be quite easily done...in the next two years...we're coming up to some very tight times...we're facing a 10 per cent tax increase...we need that industrial..."

## 4. Town CAO Steve Andrews abruptly resigned in July and yet the town is still paying his contract. Many residents have questioned why the town would continue to pay someone who resigned their position and believe they have not heard the whole story. Please comment.

"I think you know we have had legal advice. I think most people are reading between the lines what happened. A person (asked), 'How can a person get paid?' I said it's a contract that was there, he said that would never happen in the private sector. My answer to him was, yes it does happen—the chairman of Nortel—he resigned about four months ago...there's over three or four million shareholders of Nortel, do you think they know what the buyout was?...It didn't cost the town anymore money, we're not losing money because we didn't hire anybody, we just moved everybody up."

# Where he stands on...

**Smoking bylaw:** I support the town smoking bylaw in July 1 to be 100 per cent non smoking.

**Pesticide use:** I support the direction we went. I think we went too fast too soon. We went from 50 parks down to only six that are being sprayed...I think there is such an emphasis on the pesticide use and yet in the big picture it's only about .0001 per cent of all the land in Halton Hills...

**Rural garbage pickup:** I don't think it's going to go. Anyone I talk to in the public doesn't want it. There's a few little pockets of support...It will be a public decision, from the surveys to give input.

**Town tax increases:** Ten per cent is unacceptable. The public can see where their money is going... two per cent fire, two per cent roads, it's the 6 per cent we're going to have fight (over).

**Sign bylaw:** I think there has to be some flexibility. It was an ugly sign bylaw, it was to get rid of the ones in disrepair, the ones that were a safety issue. It's not going to please everybody, but the merchants, a lot of them need it, they need those signs. There has to be some flexibility but we don't want to get it to where it was, where every plaza had five or six signs.

**Lake-based water for residential growth:** No.

**Council downsizing/full-time councillors:** No. The town's responsibilities are getting more and more, the population is 50,000, we have more meetings than ever before. I can't see it being downsized. No (to full-time council)...

**Road improvements:** I supported the pavement management plan, this is a must...It's a safety issue.

**Recreational opportunities:** I think we're going in the right direction. We do need a park in Acton to expand their soccer fields, baseball diamonds. We're going in the right direction in Georgetown with the 99 acres (Trafalgar Sports Park)...We have the Gellert Centre coming on stream...

**Rumours of town staff discontent:** I think in any organization you're always going to have conflicts...You want to have an environment where people look forward to going to work rather than looking forward to going home. That's something we have to look at, but again I think your opening line was "rumours".

**Public transportation:** No, we can't afford it. No new programs.

# Where he stands on...

**Smoking bylaw:** The right way to go, short of the province doing it.

**Pesticide use:** If we can discourage the use of pesticides for esthetic purposes, great...What we're doing today on pesticides is, you get the ban, you don't get the follow-up, you don't get the remedial work that has to be done...

**Rural garbage pickup:** No. I've got well over 100 no's to it (the survey). Not only that, also the hamlets are saying we don't want it...The question has to be asked what can we do to take another look at it?...

**Town tax increases:** No way (to proposed 10 per cent increase), absolutely not...The town has established priorities in its budget...road pavement management that's going to take a fixed piece of tax.

**Sign bylaw:** I think the right move was made in taking it off the table...We didn't do our homework.

**Lake-based water for residential growth:** No, not today. If we bring in the pipe we'll have the same problems Brampton and Mississauga did.

**Council downsizing/full-time councillors:** The more elected representatives you have...allows more participation by residents...I don't know if we're quite ready yet for a full-time council. I don't think we are.

**Road improvements:** Yes, certainly the old area, a big need. We have only so many dollars to stretch...maybe...do some repairs, fix the drainage, fix the little problems...

**Recreational opportunities:** In many respects we may be serving yesterday's needs...We're building the Gellert Community Centre now, it's got a pool, it's got a meeting room, it doesn't have all the opportunities it should have, it's not a proper community centre yet...

**Rumours of town staff discontent:** I hear discontent, people grousing...It's hearsay...If it's a human rights issue, that's serious, is it being attended to?

**Public transportation:** I have always argued that seniors...in Acton and Georgetown can't get back and forth very readily, there's no scheduled services...We're not big enough to afford a public transportation system...And we don't need it at this stage...If it means we have to have...a taxi scrip system, some sort of subsidized service that gets seniors that fit the criteria around...We should absolutely look at it...

# John Day: Council veteran vows 'accessibility'

**Age:** 56  
**Occupation:** Landscape architect  
**Previous (elected) political experience:** nine years

## 1. What makes you the best candidate for mayor?

"I'm honest, I am open-minded and I have a willingness to learn. I'm a good listener, I'm a consensus builder. I work well both with community groups, the larger community, or the neighbourhood or the individual. I'm accessible. I will make tough decisions when it's necessary but never at the taxpayers' expense...I believe we need a vision for the future...I believe in putting my values on the people in the community, our environment...and local prosperity...be it the existing businesses and industries... or building something for the future in the 401 Corridor..."

## 2. What are the three main issues the town is facing in the next three years and how do you intend to deal with those issues?

"I'll set budget aside, because I believe budget is going to underlie everything. It's always there.

Youth is a big one (issue) in my mind...There are different aspects to the youth...access to sports facilities, outdoor sports facilities, the quality of those facilities...We need to provide better access to our facilities and make our facilities more playable and more usable...Another aspect for youth, look at the Georgetown Fair incident...I have been a strong proponent of providing youth with other opportunities...youth centres...we have to establish core funding for our

youth...

Second issue...is environment...I look back at some of the issues we dealt with...Arbor Valley subdivision...council approved that. The key fundamental question that was never answered was...where is the valley? Did we do enough when we were doing the Official Plan review... when those decisions were made (back in the 1980s)? I don't believe we did...As a result we have to look at sub-watershed planning...The other piece I will fold into environment is agriculture...We the urbanites have a desire to protect those farmlands...the rural landowners...they have to share that passion if we're going to save them...how can we ignite the passion in them..."

Third issue I would say is local prosperity, and I'm not putting these in order...The idea of being able to live and work in one's own community is right now a dream...We've got to help our industries to grow. We've got to create and cultivate those opportunities. The 401 Corridor will be a big start..."

## 3. The Highway 401 Corridor is apparently the town's best opportunity to attract much needed development dollars yet few businesses have expressed desire to locate there at this point. How, specifically would you encourage businesses to set up shop there?

The first thing that's being done for us is the servicing...A mayor going to different areas perhaps can



be the best salesperson. I think there are other things we need to do however...We need to build the economic development office, whether it's contracted or whether there's an economic development commission... We pay \$12,000 a year, as we're part of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance, I don't know what benefit we're getting from that today. Maybe that's

something we need to take a hard look at...The other things I would do, I look at the region, they have a very strong economic development office, they're connected nationally and internationally...maybe we're not taking advantage of it enough yet...

## 4. CAO Steve Andrews abruptly resigned in July and yet the town is still paying his contract. Many residents have questioned why the town would continue to pay someone who resigned their position and believe they have not heard the whole story. Please comment.

You know how the (council) vote went, 6-5, and you saw the people who were in there. That's the sort of public comment I can make at this time, you know what happened, on a 6-5 basis, and I was on the five side if you have seen the names. As for the reasons it was dealt with in camera...because it's a personnel issue. I can't comment much further than what you have already heard... Nobody likes the departure of a CAO... My hands are tied on this one..."