

Blaze destroys Blazer

Halton Hills Fire Protection and Prevention Services personnel doused a car fire on 10 Sideroad and Fifth Line Saturday at 6 a.m. The were no injuries in the blaze which destroyed a 1999 GM Blazer. Damage is estimated at \$10,000.



Photo by Donovan Gaudette

Rural-themed all-candidates debate draws sparse crowd

LISA TALLYN
Staff Writer

Urban sprawl and the Greenbelt were just two issues on the minds of area residents who took the opportunity to question local provincial candidates at a meeting Thursday evening.

No sparks flew between the five Wellington-Halton Hills candidates at the event, which drew about 40 people, and was hosted by the Halton Federation of Agriculture at Halton Place.

Area resident Antonio Rodrigues was the first to take the microphone asking candidates what they plan to do about urban sprawl.

Green Party candidate Martin Lavictoire stressed the Green Party is concerned with sustainable growth.

"We're paving over some of our fine agricultural land, I definitely want that to stop," he said.

"Your land should be worth just as much as green space, as farm land, as water recharge areas, as is new development," said Lavictoire.

NDP candidate Noel Duignan said, "we need to look at how we develop our land."

He said currently the developers control what happens to land. "We need to stop that, we need to put regulations into place to make sure we stop urban sprawl," said Duignan.



TED ARNOTT

Giuseppe Gori of the Family Coalition Party said there are many problems that come with growth, and stressed Milton "is growing incredibly."

"The solution is not going to happen very soon," said Gori. "What this is is long-term planning and our solution would be to decentralize."

Marg Bentley said she was offended by urban sprawl and the Liberals have taken action to combat it with the Greenbelt.

"It is to preserve the environment... it is also to slow down urban sprawl because it will force the areas that are built up (to)

become denser," said Bentley.

PC candidate Ted Arnott said the Liberal government's Places to Grow Plan has been a concern for Halton Hills council and Wellington because Queen's Park is telling them how fast they have to grow, without an infrastructure plan or plan for how it's going to be paid for.

"The best way to preserve farmland is to preserve the farmer, to ensure the farm family can make a living on that piece of property," said Arnott.



NOEL DUIGNAN

supported a full environmental

assessment for the new line.

Duignan, Bennett, Arnott and Lavictoire all supported the assessment and Gori said the production of energy should be decentralized to where it's used, eliminating the need for the line.

Halton Federation of Agriculture president Lorna Wilson asked about compensation for farmers whose property has been devalued because it's in the Greenbelt.

"There should be compensation for farmers who have had their land devalued by the Greenbelt," said Bentley.

Arnott said his party called on the Liberals to bring forward a compensation plan, but the government refused.

"Our party is committed to bringing forward a land conservation challenge fund as well as tax incentives for conservation easements," said Arnott.



MARTIN LAVICTOIRE

The candidates were asked by area resident Sandy Grant how their parties would help Halton Region pay for the infrastructure required as a result of the Places

to Grow plan.

Arnott said, "it's incumbent" upon Halton's MPPs to work with regional council towards a solution to that problem.



GIUSEPPE GORI

"The Development Charges Act needs to be immediately reformed and drastically," said Lavictoire.

He added the Green Party would reinstate the authority of municipalities so they can charge what they feel it costs for growth.

Duignan agreed.

He said the Province also has to ensure there is proper planning being done at every level.

Duignan also called for limiting the size of big box stores.

"I think local government is the most important government," said Gori.

Bentley said, "municipalities certainly can't absorb these costs alone, and they're not going to have to."

Candidates were also asked about coal-fired power plants and how farms should be assessed for taxation.

Before the meeting began a representative of Elections Ontario explained the referendum question and the two types of electoral systems— first past the post and mixed member proportional— voters will be asked to choose from on Election Day.

Candidates to meet Thursday

The Georgetown University Women's Club will hosting an all candidates meeting for the riding of Wellington-Halton Hills Thursday, October 4, in preparation for Ontario's 2007 Election and Referendum.

The meeting will be held in the John Elliott Theatre at the Cultural Centre, 9 Church St., 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

An impartial speaker from Elections Ontario will explain the referendum in a short talk before the debate begins. Candidates will answer questions on policy. Look for a full report Friday on *The Independent & Free Press* web site at www.independentfreepress.com.

the HYDROPOOL 2007
fall in love
hot tub inventory reduction event

Backyard Touch
318 Guelph Street
Georgetown
905.873.8835

HYDROPOOL self-cleaning hot tubs
Creating Time For What Matters.