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9am - 6pm**

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Ward 3 candidates say they'll be voice for rural concerns

By **JASON MISNER**

The Champion

All four candidates running for Ward 3 councillor pledged to be publicly accessible and act as the voice of their constituents during an all-candidates meeting hosted by the Halton Federation of Agriculture Thursday night.

Some 70 people jammed the Lions Hall in Campbellville to listen to and participate in the meeting leading up to the November 10 election.

The four candidates are Ken Keates and Cindy Lunau — incumbent Ward 3 councillors — as well as Rick Matchett and Jan Mowbray.

There are two Ward 3 spots on town council.

Questions were asked by a three-person panel followed by inquiries from the audience.

The first question was what the candidates' philosophy would be in dealing with issues that affect the largely rural ward.

A common response was making sure residents were consulted with first before voting on anything.

The spending of Mohawk Racetrack slots revenue in Campbellville, the issue of sanding in the winter, the condition of Guelph Line bridge, well water quality and protecting rural interests were themes that resonated throughout the meeting.

On the issue of preserving the quality of well water:

- "If we destroy the water, that resource will not be there for future generations," said Ms Mowbray, noting she reuses left-over kettle water as a means to conserve.

- "It's our most valuable asset. I'm all for peer reviews of plans (to take water from the ground)," said Mr. Keates.

On the issue of dealing with concerns from residents moving into the rural areas, like about noise from agricultural operations:

- "When you choose to live out here, you choose the environment you're moving to," said Mr. Matchett.

- "By maintaining land-use policies with large tracts, we will find less confrontation (in the rural areas)," said Ms Lunau.

Things got a little tense when a member of the audience demanded to know if the candidates would oppose Mohawk's development proposal of a 10-storey 196-room hotel and golf course.

All four said they couldn't say yes or no to the proposal until they've received all of the necessary information.

Residents were generally impressed by the candidates' comments, but at least one felt an issue remained outstanding following the meeting.

Linda MacLeod said she was "pleased with what I heard," but she wanted to know if the candidates had any ideas about addressing eco-tourism in the rural areas, like through biking and hiking.

"I didn't hear that," she said.

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