

Krantz hopes to be known for his 'common sense'



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Gord Krantz was honorary conductor during the 50th anniversary celebrations at the Halton County Radial Railway Museum. He attends a lot community events as mayor.

There's little dispute that the face of Milton has changed since Mayor Gord Krantz took office in 1980. By the end of his current term as mayor, Mr. Krantz will have served 41 years in the public sphere, 26 of those as mayor.

As he looks back on his career, he would like to be remembered as someone who looked at the big picture, and as "an individual who used a whole lot of common sense," he said. "I understand that policies and guidelines and all those fancy adjectives are important, but I don't hear the word common sense used that much."

Mr. Krantz's common sense has told him that Milton has to grow to survive, and he sees nothing wrong with that.

"At the risk of sounding philosophical, we were the best kept secret in Ontario, maybe even the country, with regards to our location," he said.

Milton is in close proximity to GTA, major highways and other transit corridors. Mr. Krantz always wanted Milton to have its fair share, or more, of industrial and residential growth.

"We've come into our own," he said. "People would ask 'where's Milton?' People know where Milton is now — especially in the business world."

Controversy over growth

Critics have suggested that under Mayor Krantz, Milton's growth has spun out of control — that he's allowed developers to run roughshod over the town and favoured urban development over rural concerns.

But he's unapologetic when it comes to his decisions regarding residential and industrial growth in Milton. "If you don't deal with growth, it will deal with you. I want to be in control of things, rather than it controlling us."

He insisted that Milton dictates the terms of all new development, and it's a win-win situation.

"New growth should pay for itself," he said. "But we are challenged every now and then, but as far as

we're concerned new growth is paying for itself." "We have now, in my opinion, a really good workable plan without the courts dictating to us what we have to do," he said. "We did it on our terms."

The projection for 2021 predicts Milton's population will reach 106,000 people. He said the growth is "phased and staged" by the Region, and reflects reasonable growth over the coming decades.

"I'm working at least 20 to 30 years out," he said. "There will be several challenges along the way, like the infrastructure."

But he said he likes the challenges, and it's those tough decisions that make his job rewarding.

"I can hardly ever think of a time I've come to work and not enjoyed it," he said.

Being a visible figure in the community is also something that keeps him running.

"It's important for me to be part of the social fabric," he said. "Socializing as a leader in the community is important. We're a family."

He tries to stay a part of that family by attending birthday parties, weddings, anniversaries, street parties and community events whenever he can.

There are people in the community who love to see Mr. Krantz among the crowd and town events, but others wouldn't mind if he left.

"Not everyone's always been in love with me, and I know that," he said.

He recalled the Mohawk racetrack was strongly opposed by many in the community, but he feels he would make that same decision again.

"You have to take a stand and hope for the best," he said. "Do I have a crystal ball hidden under my bed that I take out and polish every morning and look at it? No. But I like to think I'm a bit of a visionary and don't have my head in the sand."

"Anyone who says they've never made any wrong decisions in their life is someone who never made any real decisions."

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