

Lots of farming issues discussed at rural meeting

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Mr. Turner offered a variety of solutions, such as ensuring fair commodity prices so that farmers make a decent living, getting more young people interested in taking over their family's farm operation and having all levels of government ensure any development is 'smart development'.

"We need jurisdictional co-operation in order to get that smart development."

Mr. Carr concurred it's important to get young people into farming. He also pointed to the proposed changes to the Ontario Municipal Board that would give municipal councils more power to determine what developments go ahead, noting he'd rather see local councillors make those decisions.

For Dr. Grice, he said the issue is about infinite growth. He pointed out that infinite growth, whether it be population or economic, "is impossible on a finite planet."

"We've got to shift the way we do economics," he said.

Former Milton councillor and local farmer Lieven Gevaert asked the candidates to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer as to whether they believe landowners' rights should be formally put in place. Currently, organizations like utilities can expropriate land from property owners if it's required.

While Mr. Turner and Dr. Grice both said yes, Mr. Naqvi said yes and no and Mr. Carr said he only supports the concept in principle.

Mr. Carr pointed out that sometimes utilities need land, or the Region may need property for a roads project.

"We do need to have the ability for a region to put a road in," he said.

Mr. Naqvi explained his mixed response by saying he thinks property owners should have rights, but noted sometimes it could conflict "with the social good of society."

Halton Federation of Agriculture director Stephen Baker inquired as to what the candidates are prepared to do to save Country Heritage Park, which recently lost a source of funding after the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) ruled it can't store Toronto Auto Auction vehicles on its rural property during the off-season.

Dr. Grice said he's not sure how much can be done at the federal level.

He added, "Personally, I would do what I can to save things like this."

Mr. Naqvi said he thinks something has to be done with the consensus of all three levels of government.

Mr. Carr said he wants to discuss the matter with Halton MPP Ted Chudleigh and also with local politicians.

"Let's work with people, let's come up with solutions," he said.

Mr. Turner said he thinks it's time the commission gets back to its mandate, noting it doesn't exist to tell people how to park cars. He said the NEC is an agency

that's "completely out of control" and it needs to be "de-fanged" and its members reminded of why they have their positions.

The local party representatives were also asked if they're personally in favour of foregoing further tax cuts for individuals and corporations to help pay for community needs, like transit.

Mr. Carr disagreed, noting "I think some tax cuts are in order, particularly now that we have a surplus."

He added the cuts should go to low and middle-income individuals — something Mr. Naqvi concurred with.

Mr. Turner said he thinks there needs to be more tax reductions, especially for the middle class.

Dr. Grice pointed out the Green Party is the only group talking about 'tax shifting', which would mean a reduction in taxes on activities that are beneficial to society and an increase on harmful things, like activities that create pollution.

The meeting was sponsored by the Halton Federation of Agriculture.

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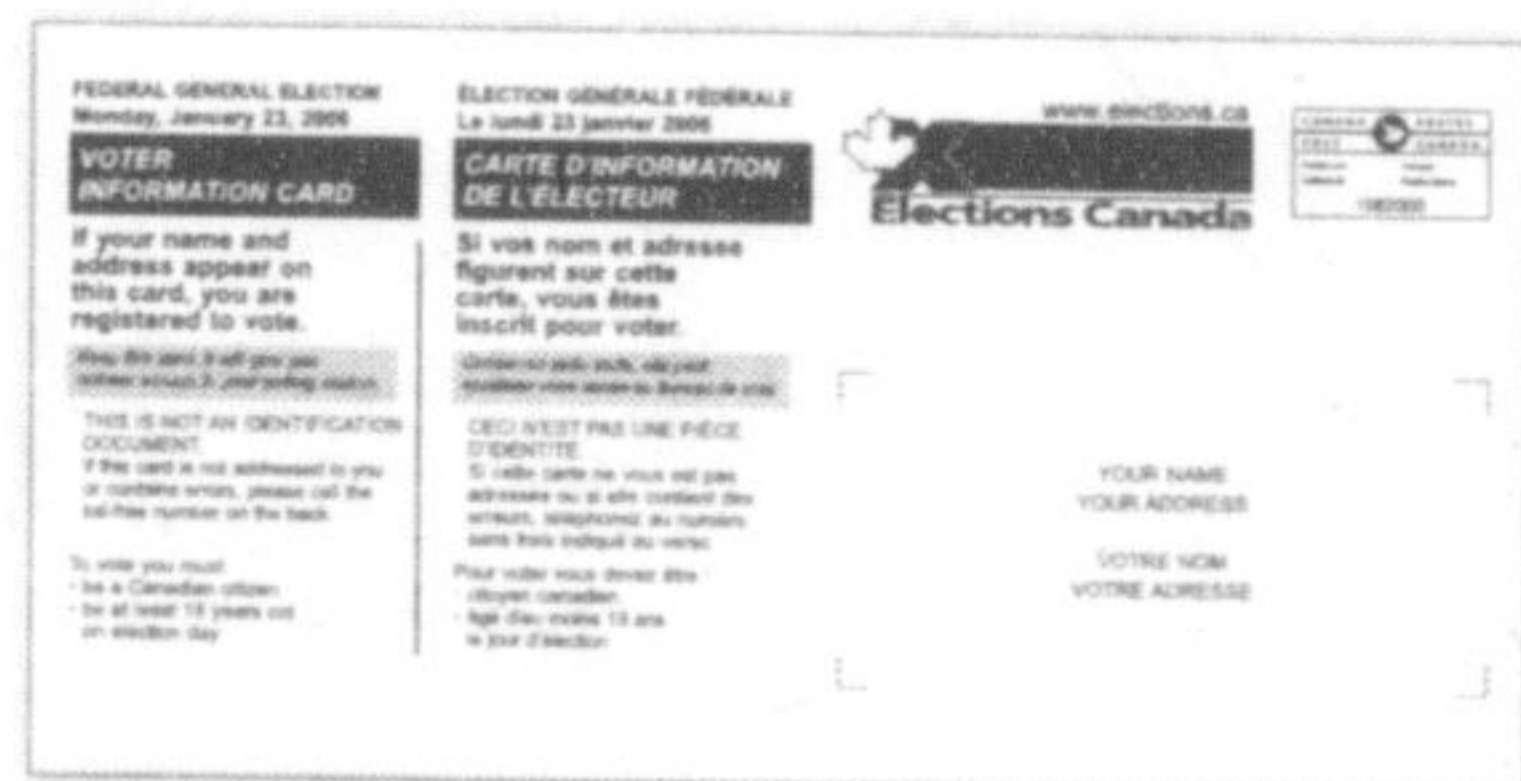


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Liberal MP Gary Carr (left) and Conservative candidate Garth Turner listen to another candidate's views at Wednesday's meeting.



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