

Newcomers challenge incumbents in council race

BY DANIEL SCHWAB

Fourteen candidates in the municipality's four wards have been busy campaigning since the end of September.

In Ward 1, two councillors will be elected.

Bill Arps, a newcomer to politics, will join John Garinger and Nick Spidalieri in challenging incumbents

Morley Bowman and Randy Voakes for the positions. Robbie Shepley will appear on the ballot but is no longer campaigning.

In Ward 2, one councillor will be elected. Incumbent Richard Meloche will square off against Randy McCloskey and Jamie Shepley.

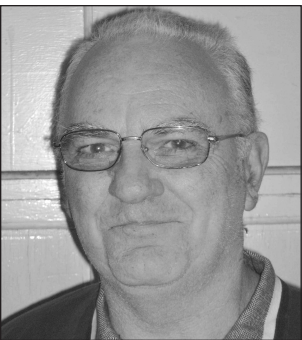
Two councillors will be elected in Ward 3. Ron Rogers, Daniel Inverarity and Paul Innes will challenge incum-

bent Percy Dufour. Ward 3 councillor Bill Caixeiro is not running.

In Ward 4, Peter Timmins is acclaimed.

The Essex Free Press spoke with the candidates to find out what the pressing issues are in each ward. Responses from candidates in Wards 1 and 2 appear in this week's edition. Responses from Ward 3 and 4 candidates will appear in next week's newspaper.

WARD 1 (Two to be elected)



BILL ARPS

A week after he filed his nomination papers, Bill

Arps, 59, pulled a disc in his back which has hindered his ability to campaign door-to-door. But Arps, who's owned a fully-licensed garage since the 80s, is still advocating for change and improvement in the municipality.

For one, he's concerned about the price of utility bills and is suggesting Essex go after a single-pad arena only. Arps believes the new

Ice Track complex planned for construction in Tecumseh will absorb some customers from Cottam and Maidstone.

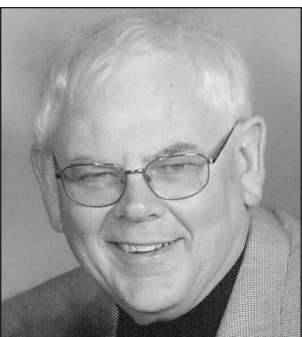
"I don't want it to turn into a white elephant," he said. "I would like to see a necessity-only arena. No bells and whistles."

Arps is also a firm believer in full disclosure from the next council. He'd like to see its expenditures be made

available to residents. He is a new face in municipal politics and said he will provide a fresh perspective.

"I'm not a politician," he said. "If elected, I'm not going to favour one person over another. I want equality among residents."

Arps would like to see more residential development in Essex and more of a diversity in local business.



MORLEY BOWMAN

Morley Bowman, 63, has 19 years of council experience. The incumbent is retired from Pitney Bowes of Canada.

"The bottom line is, to keep moving forward and

upgrading the infrastructure," Bowman said. "Roads and storm sewers. Constantly moving forward."

Bowman suggests the arena project be built in stages. He is in favour of two pads, but says only one should be built first.

"Let's see how the Ice Track will play out," he said. "We might not need a second pad. This gives us time to make adjustments."

Bowman considers Memorial Arena to have three or four years left of

service before major improvements need to be made.

Keeping a lid on taxes but still being able to provide services is a goal to be reached for the next council, Bowman said.

"Regulations on roads are changing and we have to make adjustments and be prepared," he said. "Over the years, we've done it with pretty tight budgetary items as far as personnel go."

Bowman said there also may be a need to add more personnel to administration,

adding that legislation such as the Freedom of Information Act has added a lot of work for the municipality.

Bowman also said the next council has to make the best use of federal and provincial funding.

"You have to have a plan in place," he said. "Much like we've done with grants in the last year. Hanlan Street in Essex was reconstructed with sidewalks and bike paths. You have to be ready to go when these things come up."



JOHN GARINGER

John Garinger, 66, is a retired teacher at Essex District High School where he still coaches basketball. He was the recipient of the

Essex Citizen of the Year Award in 2003, and is a former secretary of the Kinsmen Club, executive member of the Royal Canadian Legion and director of the Essex Athletic Association.

"I've been a chair or committee member of every major project in town from the arena to the recreation centre," he said.

Garinger said amalgamation in 1999 "tore the hearts out of towns." He is in favour of residential growth but doesn't want it

to happen too fast. He wants to maintain a feeling of belonging among residents in the municipality.

"There is security in this place," he said. "You're a part of something."

He is also advocating light industrial growth in the area.

He favours a cost-effective arena, even if it means having only one ice surface. He suggests council look at applying for grants from higher levels of government for the project.

He would also like to see

council hire an economic development officer on a trial basis to help revitalize the downtowns of Essex and Harrow, including an expansion in banking and health services.

Garinger, a former chair of the town's Parks and Recreation committee, says with proper development in the south end of the municipality, the winery and tourism industries have the potential to become the new "Niagara Region."



NICK SPIDALIERI

Nick Spidalieri, owner of

Nick's Hairstyling on Talbot Street, was a five-year member of council 20 years ago. He has been a member of the Kinsmen Club for 17 years and spent 19 years on the board of the Essex 73's hockey club where he formerly served as president.

Spidalieri considers a strong business sense to be one of his main strengths and says he would take a "common sense" approach

to municipal politics.

He is in favour of building an arena in Essex "as long as it's affordable and not a burden on tax payers."

"Minor hockey people are 100 percent for a new arena and I'm one of them," he said. "But you also have to think of the older generation. I do feel our taxes increase every year. The town has to keep a lid on taxes - it has to come to a

halt. Between utilities and taxes, people are falling over backwards."

Spidalieri would also like to see a growth in downtown businesses and industry.

He also thinks bickering over the north-south issue needs to come to an end.

SEE WARD 1, PAGE 7

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