

Newsmakers 1994

Merlin Dewing

The past year has not been without its ups and downs for the municipality's Chief Administrative Officer, Merlin Dewing.

He joined the town during a

term in which council meetings were increasingly characterized by infighting and personality clashes. And when councillors weren't squaring off against each other, there was a tendency for some to vent their spleen on staff members.

He castigated councillors for failing to put sufficient emphasis on the state of the roads, saying they were allowing the town's biggest asset to go to pot. He also expressed concern at the extensive use of the park trust fund as a means of balancing the budget in tough economic times.

It may be the best answer in the short term, he noted, but over-utilizing a fund set up for recreational purposes could be disastrous for the future.

Dewing bridled against what he saw as constant interference in budget matters, suggesting that demands for information on financial dealings should require majority approval of council. "It would be better if you leave the administration up to the administration," he remarked.

A policy was subsequently passed which allowed staff to make certain purchases under \$20,000 without council approval, despite vociferous opposition from Ward 1 councillor Ivanka Bradley.

Dewing and his family moved to Uxbridge in June, where they have settled very happily. A self-taught musician with a penchant for folk



and country rock, Dewing performed in the '60s and '70s with Sam Hopper and His

Hoedowners, a well-known country group in Quebec's eastern townships.

Nowadays, he still writes songs and plays for friends and family in his spare time.

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Councillor in Ward 2

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Twinney kept regional HQ in Newmarket

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planted in the town he dedicated his life to serving.

Twinney started his political life in East Gwillimbury in 1965:

When his neighborhood was annexed by Newmarket five years later, he ran for the newly created York Region council seat in his new town.

"This man had a meeting at the Legion hall to see how many people would be his campaign workers. They filled the Legion," remembered friend John Luff, who was all set to lead Twinney's re-election bid this fall.

Not all Twinney's election campaigns were successful.

In 1978 he was defeated by Tom Taylor in a race for regional council.

But fortune smiled on Twinney three months later when Newmarket mayor Bob Forhan was chosen as regional chair, allowing Twinney to become mayor in a by-election.

Twinney's style kept him in

the mayor's office for as long as he wanted to be there; never facing a serious election challenge.

Twinney always fought for Newmarket at regional council, and one of his toughest battles was the fight to keep the headquarters located in his town, instead of being located in the more populated southern half of the region.

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