

Stouffville Tribune

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EDITORIAL

McGuinty counting on environment to be Tories' Achilles heel

The provincial Liberals are staking out York Region as a frontline to attack the Tories in the next election.

Their primary weapon? The environment.

Liberal Leader Dalton McGuinty this week promised in a 29-page report he will stop urban sprawl, kill plans already in the works to build houses on the Oak Ridges Moraine, step up efforts to drastically reduce landfill trash and send 2 per cent of the provincial gasoline tax to municipalities for public transit.

The Liberals are betting voters see Queen's Park and Ontario's greedy developers as cronies at a time when people want green-space preserved, sprawl curtailed and action on affordable housing.

Mr. McGuinty is building on the success in Vaughan-King-Aurora in July 2001, when Liberal Greg Sorbara more than doubled the tally for Tory Joyce Frustaglio in a riding that had been firmly committed to Al Palladini.

Certainly, the environmental turmoil has been centred in Richmond Hill, where the Ernie Eves government approved 6,500 homes on the Oak Ridges Moraine, allowing developers to bypass local council.

Of course, the environmental lobby is happy; Mr. McGuinty is promising to stop construction of all 6,500 homes already approved on the moraine.

If the election is called soon, he might get the chance to stop the housing before it's built. That, however, is unlikely. He just may find himself stumbling on the reality of his "campaign" vows.

If the premier waits the full 18 months available to him, the Liberal leader is likely to be dealing with houses that are sold, if not finished.

It may be good election rhetoric to argue the land belongs to "future generations of Ontarians", but developers bought the land and hold the legal deeds.

The land is now approved for residential development and, if the owners can't build on it, they will demand compensation from Ontario taxpayers.

And that may be more than what cash-strapped citizens, particularly those not living in the GTA, are willing to — or can — cough up.

Mr. McGuinty may also find himself negotiating yet another land swap — although, with a promise to create a 600,000-acre greenbelt across the GTA, he won't have much property available to trade to developers.

There's no question the Liberals are promising many things York Region desperately needs: improving landfill diversion rates to 60 per cent, funding for affordable housing, preserving scarce farmland and allocating part of the provincial gas tax to fund transit.

We should applaud the fact these issues are being brought to the table. It means the next election could be fought over issues central to York Region's future.

OPINION



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Home care helps hospitals

As a refresher student nurse, I want to add my voice to those advocating for home care services to be enshrined in our health-care system. The great advantage of home care is it helps relieve pressure on the hospital system.

Patients recover faster in their own comfortable and familiar environment. These services are frequently used by seniors and patients who do not have anybody else to take care of them.

Home care promotes the maintenance of health, reducing the effects of illnesses and disability. It also costs less, compared to health-care facilities. It is time to give attention to and full public funding for home care.

REMEDIOS C. RAMOS
MARKHAM

Garbage at council no solution

Re: Town fed up with teen trouble, Tribune, Nov. 21.

What a wonderful and practical lesson I have learned this past week. It appears whenever I have a problem in Whitchurch-Stouffville, all I need to do is pack it in a garbage bag and present my "views" to town council.

It works great for me... council can expect my garbage from the two schools beside my home, pieces of asphalt from my street, leaves and weeds from my neighbours' lawns, and

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the occasional beer bottle.

Maybe in frustration over the number of folks headed to Tim Hortons along Rupert Street who are too "in need" of a coffee fix to stop at the stop sign at Fairview Avenue, I can include the actual signs. They don't seem to be used.

Seriously, the next time a young person gets charged for possession of marijuana or some other offence, regardless of who their parents are or whether they play hockey, they should spend some quality community service time picking up garbage. A well-worded letter to the courts from Whitchurch-Stouffville council should do the trick.

I've lived here all my life and the problem is the same. Find some experts to give those big minds on council and in the local coffee hangouts some real advice. You might even find them in our midst.

And let's all try not to paint all the young people in this town with a swill brush while we are at it. I still believe "It takes a village (or maybe even a town) to raise a child."

SUE NEUFELD
STOUFFVILLE



Dave Teetzel

Politicians can't compare with power of prayer

Earlier this month, Richmond Hill hosted yet another hearing over strip joints.

In this case, it was about a bid to turn a country bar into an adult entertainment parlour.

About 20 people turned out to voice their displeasure, most seizing on the probability the applicant, Anthony Panza, might be an agent of Riccardo Di Giuseppe, whose previous enterprise, Fantasia, left a legacy of sleaze on Yonge Street years after it closed.

Rev. Ron Pakulat urged council to reject the application.

Prior to the hearings, one of the York Region Newspaper Group papers received a letter from Jim Reid, a Christian gentleman.

"Have we been beaten by the scum of society? Can't our politicians protect us from these leeches? Can't the majority carve out a small community that is sheltered somewhat from the wickedness that is bombarding our culture?" his letter asked.

When Vaughan council held hearings on its adult entertainment policies in the early 1980s, people of faith demanded such establishments be banned, only to be told, "Council can't make rulings based on moral arguments, please confine your comments to planning issues."

Well, it looks like a church in Newmarket has shown all these people how it's done. Newmarket Community Church bought Lookers, the town's only strip club, and is renovating it into a place of worship.

So how did the congregation go about this? For years, they held regular Friday prayer walks, laid hands on the building and called on God to close it.

Pastor Andrew Wynns says that prayer was answered, Newmarket's strip club was closed by divine intervention.

Is that a challenge to other York Region churches in communities with strip clubs?

Why complain municipal politicians aren't doing enough when, according to the Bible, Christians wield power that can move mountains?

Instead of mourning the decline in community standards, should they be holding prayer walks of their own? If they don't like the answers they get from politicians, why not go over their heads?

Clearly, there are those who don't consider this a good thing. They would rather the "religious right" keep its nose out of their business.

But they have no legitimate quarrel with Newmarket Community Church and its supporters. The congregation didn't picket, didn't intimidate, didn't run a publicity campaign.

All those people did was pray.

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