

OPINION

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Editorial

What we want from our provincial government

Dalton McGuinty, Ernie Eves and Howard Hampton think they know what residents of Ontario want in their next government.

The leaders of the province's three major political parties are telling Ontarians what they'll do if they have power after the next election.

That election is expected to be called for early this summer or the fall.

What do residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville, where the suburbs of Toronto meet the small town, want from their provincial politicians?

Here's what we think.

- Health care is the number one priority with residents, be they seniors, young singles or families. The approved expansion of Markham Stouffville Hospital is welcome news for current residents and thousands that will move into Stouffville and northern Markham in the next 10 years.

- More money is needed to reduce wait times in the emergency wards of our area hospitals. The delays keep ambulances off the road and frustrate the ill, the injured and their families, let alone staff.

- Education is near the top of most lists. Politicians are advised to have school construction keep up with growth. Reduce class sizes, keep teachers in the classroom and not on strike and continue to test our students province-wide.

- Gridlock affects all commuters. Another freeway to Toronto from York Region, as hinted at by Oak Ridges MPP and Transportation Minister Frank Klees, would ease some of the pain. So would additional public transit. Getting more people on buses and trains and out of their cars helps traffic flow and the environment.

- This area of Ontario is primed for more urban sprawl. It shouldn't be build up existing communities, but leave green space between towns and cities. It's good for the environment and it maintains or creates a sense of community with residents.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Honest, folks there are no election plans

The Ernie Eves non-election campaign rolled into sleepy little Bloomington, Ont., yesterday morning.

Don't be misled. An election hasn't been called. Resume your normal lifestyles. Put down those pencils, people. Do not prepare to vote.

S-u-u-u-re. Right. The only thing missing from this being a campaign stop was the "Vote for Ernie" signage.

Bloomington, you don't say? Yes, the four corners of houses, a church and a cemetery at the Ninth Line and Bloomington Road five minutes up the road from Stouffville.

If the Premier is, as accused, all-corporate and big business, this was not in the script. Bloomington will never be mistaken for Bay Street.

Ernie Eves graced Whitchurch-Stouffville soil for the first time, at least as premier, to open the Bloomington Cove long-term care centre. Those who knew the nursing home as Green Gables wouldn't recognize it with its new look and larger digs. It's York Region's first all-dementia-care facility. And anyone with family or friends suffering from Alzheimer's disease or similar troubles knows the need for this type of facility.

An opening worthy of a visit from the leader of the province. Or maybe it has something to do with the hairstyle?

The last time a dignitary of this note came to Bloomington it was another species of the slick-backed male variety.

Coincidence? Love or hate the action movies of Steven Seagal, he was in Bloomington, checking out Magic Hill Haunted Adventure for a movie shoot.

Ernie Eves came to Bloomington; his agenda not as clear, allegedly.

Everyone knows a provincial election is coming. It has to, by law. You've seen the Conservative TV commercials. You've seen much more of your premier and his main competitor, Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty.

Not three days go by without a news alert that Oak Ridges MPP and Transportation Minister Frank Klees is doing something newsworthy.

There was Frank in photos e-mailed to our newsroom, posing with area athletes at the Canada Games in New Brunswick. See Frank in another group shot of area seniors, games athletes.

"We just wanted to let you know that Frank Klees is speaking to our business club, seniors group or church social," say the callers from seemingly unsuspecting community groups.

But there's no election planned, folks.

Letters to the Editor

The Stouffville Sun-Tribune welcomes your letters.

All submissions must be less than 400 words and must include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Stouffville Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space.

Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@ymg.com

Planning doesn't encourage residents to use sidewalks

Re: Taking a walk, editorial, March 4.
 I agree it is wise to encourage as many people as possible to get out of their cars and walk for a change.

Too bad Whitchurch-Stouffville council doesn't agree.

It seems to have a habit of approving as many stores and buildings as possible that require driving to and from with the car spreading them out over acres of parking lots outside of the downtown approving a drive-through window in virtually everything, and by doing so making walking almost impossible.

It seems to me a drive-through in a donut shop or fast food joint to pick up a heart attack in a paper bag is an endeavour as contrary to the aim of good health as one is likely to encounter.

Not only that, but your average denizen of the drive-through traffic jam tends to be the one who would benefit most from the exercise of walking.

Don't let that stop you from coming up with good suggestions, Mr. Editor, because it won't stop council from shooting them down.

HUGO T. KROON
 BETHESDA

Public school system celebrates equality

Re: Lost Out, column by Jim Thomas, March 11.

As far as I know there is no Christian school system. There is a public school system and a separate school (Catholic) system.

The public school system may leave a lot to be desired, but no child is denied because of disability, race or religion. Included in this is whether or not the parents can afford to send their child or children to a private school, be it Christian or other. I choose the public school system for precisely these reasons. My children shall benefit from knowing we are all equal and should celebrate our similarities and our differences, be they religious or other.

To compare Stouffville Christian School with the public school system is absurd. The problems of Stouffville Christian School are their own and not those of the poor, general public who send their children to public school.

TRUDI APRILE
 STOUFFVILLE

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