

Urban bias on council, Ward 3 candidate says

BY HANNELORE VOLPE
Staff Writer

It's a four-way contest in Ward 3 in the Nov. 13 municipal election.

Hugo Kroon, M.J. Perry and Sophie Angelis are running against incumbent Clyde Smith, who was acclaimed in the 2003 election.

Elections should be fought on ideas, rather than single issues, Mr. Kroon, a Gormley resident, believes. He fears if someone who focuses primarily on one issue is elected, constituents who aren't affected by that issue are in danger of being ignored.

A politician's personal agenda has to go on the 'back burner' and you have to focus on what residents want, Mr. Kroon said.

Having a lively contest in each ward and for the mayor's chair are important to him.

"Democracy isn't served by (acclamations)", he said.

The self-employed landscaper has been honing his keen interest in local politics by attending Whitchurch-Stouffville council

meetings and believes all the issues affect everyone in the municipality. That means council and residents should be informed about the issues, whether they pertain specifically to their ward or not.

Mr. Kroon and his wife, Linda, have three daughters. Kyla and Krista attend Stouffville District Secondary School, while Erica, the eldest, attends college and works locally.

Living in the Gormley area has given Mr. Kroon a strong sense of the separation between the interests of Stouffville and the rural community. Many residents he's talked to feel that most of council's focus is on Stouffville's downtown core and rural residents can feel short-changed.

"They look at their tax bill and the services they don't get," Mr. Kroon said. "Council discusses facilities, parks, sidewalks and curbs, and (rural residents) say, 'I am lucky my road is plowed.'"

He's found that about half the people he's talked to don't know who their local councillor is — until they have a problem that

need to be resolved.

As a small businessman for most of his life, he's become familiar with bureaucracy at all government levels.

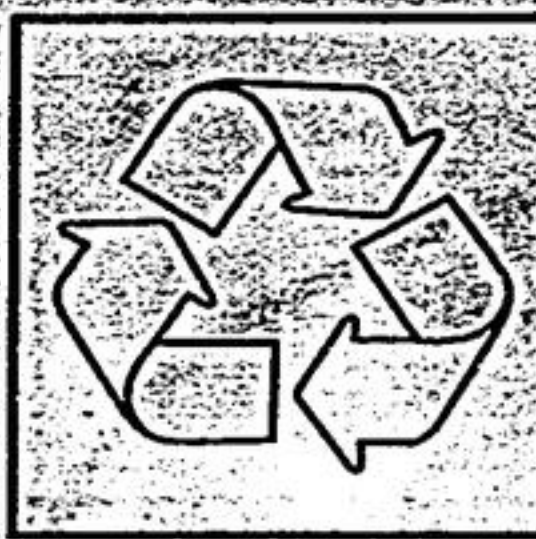
If he's elected, he'll encourage council to review all the town's finances at the beginning of the new term. Armed with more information, council members will have a better idea of what can realistically be accomplished.

Accountability is also a priority.

Mr. Kroon is interested in preserving local history and having the town take a step back from development to assess what new growth it will allow and how it will affect the municipality.

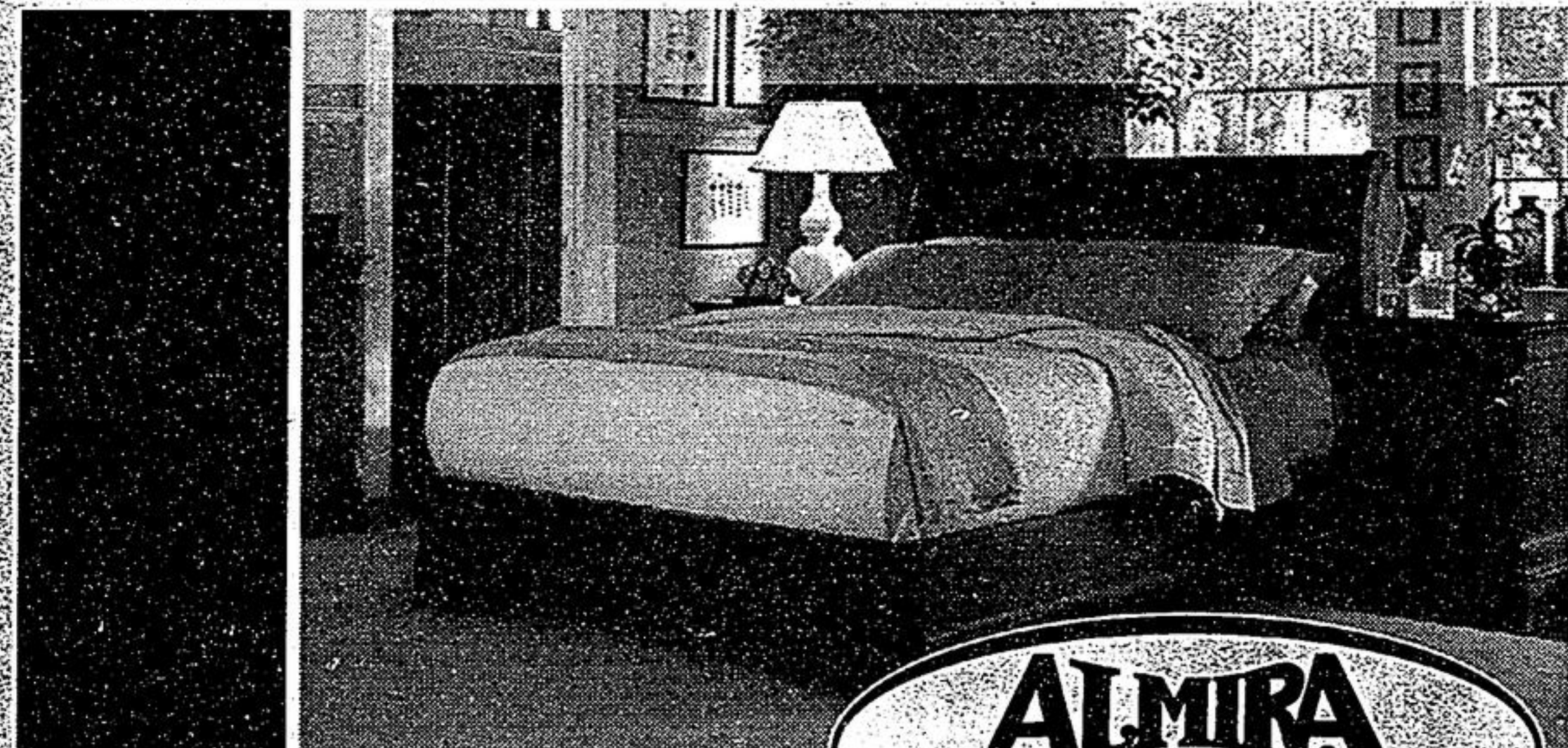
More "people who have lived in the real world" on council would benefit residents, he noted.

Their predominantly rural ward runs between highways 404 and 48 and from the Markham border to Vandorf Road. In the southeast part of the municipality, the ward boundary jogs in along Stouffville and McCowan Roads.



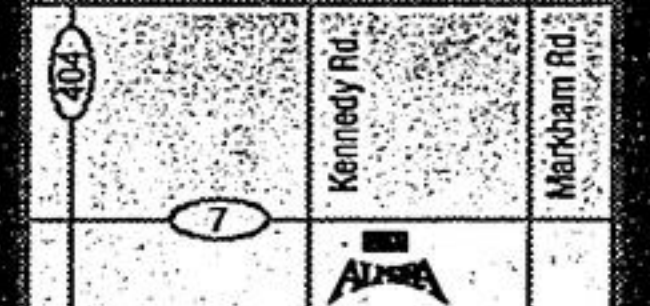
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