

Candidates back gallery

Most of the five candidates for mayor were in favour of some form of support for Latham Gallery at yesterday's chamber of commerce debate.

But Don Barker wants facilities such as the gallery, library and museum to show they are a viable entities on their own.

A "proper theatre" in a different location would give the town more bang for its buck than the arts and culture centre, with a small theatre space, being built in the old town hall at 19 Civic Ave., ex-

mayor Wayne Emmerson said. Whomever wins will become the mayor of a municipality that is home to around 28,000 residents.

That number is expected to burgeon to around 40,000 during the next 10 to 15 years.

Around 60 local business owners and residents attended the event moderated by Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason.

After Nov. 13, the new mayor and council will have a four-year term to accomplish their goals. Previous terms were three years.



STAFF PHOTO/HANNELORE VOLPE

Whitchurch-Stouffville mayoral candidates Don Barker (from left), Sue Sherban, Randy Mole, Pamela Courtot and Wayne Emmerson pose before the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce debate at Bushwood golf club yesterday.

Adults let skatepark fall apart: Barker

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Barker concurred.

Both Mrs. Sherban and former Mayor Wayne Emmerson raised funds for youth through golf tournaments. Mrs. Sherban organized a youth council during the last term.

A movie theatre and place of their own without overly close adult supervision is also needed, Mrs. Sherban and Mr. Mole agreed.

A building at the southwest corner of Main Street and the Ninth Line Mr. Mole recently sold would have been perfect for a youth centre, he said.

Working with school boards would also make sense, Mr. Emmerson said, to bring back more after-school activities, such as sports and drama. He wants schools open to the public for longer hours. The town should also provide more playing fields and arenas, he said.

The Memorial Park skatepark, which was put up during Mr. Emmerson's term of office and replaced by a smaller version, was a disappointment to the young people in town, claimed a question to the candidates.

Mrs. Sherban said the skatepark will be moved and improved in future. Ms Courtot was adamant it be located in urban Stouffville within walking distance of many of the young people, so that "parents don't always have to drive their children". She's a strong proponent of forming a sustainable community,

using alternate power, such as wind turbines, and helping residents reduce their electricity consumption.

Mr. Barker saw it through the eyes of the youth, saying, "Finally somebody listened to us" — and then watched the thing fall apart and adults doing absolutely nothing to repair their skatepark.

A co-operative, rather than combative, style of leadership was promoted by Ms Courtot and Mr. Emmerson.

"I want to be the leader, not the boss," Ms Courtot said.

Mr. Emmerson feels it's important to work together with council and staff and have a co-operative partnership between the Stouffville Business Improvement Area and the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

Noting Stouffville used to have one of the largest goldfish factories in Canada and has the largest excavated First Nations village in Southern Ontario, Mr. Mole believes Stouffville has to have a new marketing strategy highlighting its uniqueness.

In her three years as mayor, Mrs. Sherban noted, Whitchurch-Stouffville has had the largest percent of commercial growth (15.8 percent) in York Region in 2005. The tax based has shifted advantageously from 89 percent residential and 11 percent business to 79 percent residential and 22 percent business.

That's mostly due to development, Mr. Mole retorted.

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