

STAFF PHOTO/JOAN RANSBERRY

Phil Bannon and daughter Ashlea take a break during Progressive Conservative nomination meeting at Brother Andre Catholic High School in Markham Saturday. Mr. Bannon won the nomination on the second ballot. Oct. 10 is provincial election day in Ontario.

Bannon stays on council

It's still Whitchurch-Stouffville deputy mayor and Councillor Phil Bannon.

Even though Mr. Bannon won the Conservative nomination for the local riding for the fall provincial election, he will continue to carry out deputy mayor duties and represent Ward 2 on Whitchurch-Stouffville council.

However, if Mr. Bannon wins the riding of Oak Ridges-Markham on Oct. 10, he must resign from his municipal post.

In the event that voters send Mr. Bannon to Queens Park, Whitchurch-Stouffville council will have two choices: hold a by-election in Ward 2 or appoint someone as a councillor to the ward which includes Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake, town clerk Michele Kennedy said.

In the 2006 municipal election, Mr. Bannon defeated Justin Altmann.

—Joan Ransberry



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Gun control, rural funding big with Tory candidate

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while the Oak Ridges-Markham New Democrats have yet to pick a candidate.

Today (Thursday), Mr. Bannon is off to a three-day Conservative policy convention in Toronto. There, he expects to get a handle on what issues are expected to be front and centre in the Oct. 10 provincial election.

"Overall, I'm going to wait and feel it out," he said. In the meantime, Mr. Bannon will continue to focus on a pet issue.

"I'm big on the province's urban and rural responsibilities," he said. "I don't feel there is equal distribution when it comes to

funding. Urban areas get money for infrastructure such as roads, yet rural areas are often left out."

A retired police sergeant with 32 years with the Toronto Police Services, there's no reluctance to speak about guns and youth. Mr. Bannon suggests a team approach involving the federal and provincial governments handling on guns.

"We have to get the guns out of the hands of our children," he said.

Oak Ridges-Markham was left vacant when MPP Frank Klees shifted his interest farther north to be acclaimed as the Conservative candidate in Newmarket-Aurora. Provincial ridings are being realigned to be the same as federal ridings for the next

election.

"Traditionally, this area is Conservative," Mr. Bannon said.

With a population of 167,000, Oak Ridges-Markham is the largest riding in Canada, taking in all of Whitchurch-Stouffville, parts of King Township and Richmond Hill and Markham.

Mr. Bannon is on his second term on Whitchurch-Stouffville council. He lives in Ballantrae with his wife Janice. The couple has two grown daughters.

In the last Ontario election, the Liberals, led by Dalton McGuinty, won a majority government with 72 seats, compared with 24 for the Conservatives and seven for the New Democrats. In 2003, York Region elected three Liberals and two Conservatives.

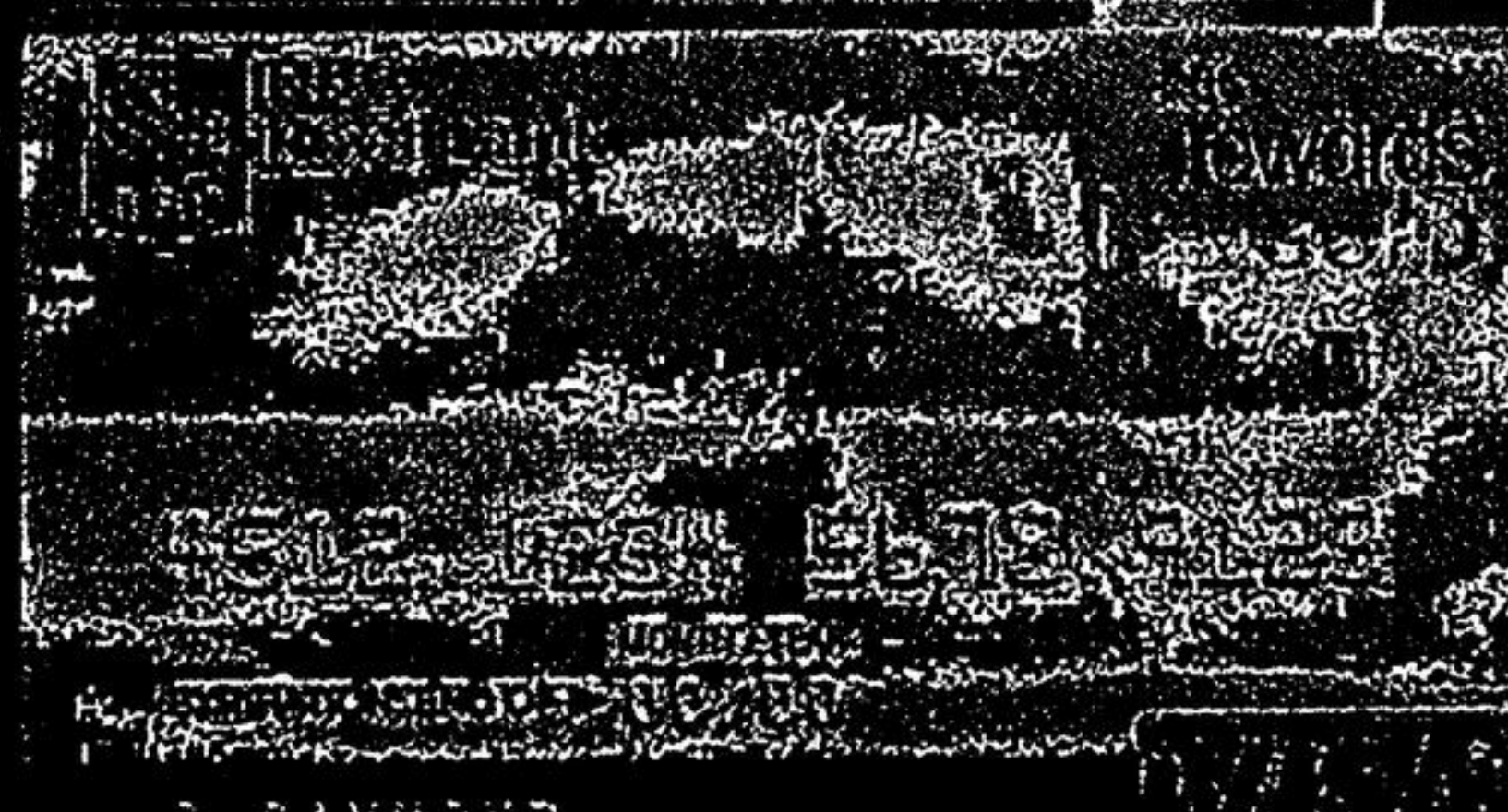


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