

## ELECTION 2010: Where your council candidates stand on the issues

### Questions:

### Is the town too far in debt? If so, what should be done about it?

### What projects should the municipality tackle

### What is the most pressing issue in your ward, and what are you going to do about it?

#### KEN FERDINANDS WARD 1

The town incurred debt with the understanding future development charges would cover about 78 per cent of principle and interest on major projects. Civic enhancements benefit present and future residents. These projects were undertaken with a 25- to 30-year view. We were able to get 25-year financing at a favourable rate.

Whitchurch-Stouffville now has over \$175 million in assets. The time has come for us to review our programs and our priorities. We need to define our understanding of core services. The days where we can be all things to all people are over. A program review with recommendations would be a priority.

Access to services is important. The concentration of facilities in the urban area is understandable. Residents don't expect equity in every respect; however, there has to be a recognition there are a variety of means in delivering equity. We have to work smarter to make sure that civic government continues to be relevant to rural residents.

#### TANIS HARGRAVE WARD 1

Yes, the town is in debt due to over-spending on capital projects over the past four years. There needs to be a tighter control on capital expenditures and a closer monitoring of operating costs. We need to practice fiscal restraint and accountability to the taxpayers.

Unification and connectivity of the rural wards with the urban wards. Council meetings should be scheduled in wards 1, 2 and 3 twice a year, giving residents the opportunity to connect with the town.

The most important issue in Ward 1 is the fact the Ballantrae fire hall is not 24/7. After 7 p.m. every evening it depends on volunteer coverage. The fire hall in Stouffville went over budget and a portion of it could have been spent providing full-time services in Ballantrae.

#### PHIL BANNON WARD 2

The town has encumbered a significant debt load during the past four years. A clear majority of this debt has been dedicated to much needed investment in leisure services facilities, arts and culture and infrastructure. Top priority for council over the next four years is fiscal restraint and accountability in managing this debt.

Full-time fire service in Ballantrae and Gormley. Municipal services in the 404 corridor, establish confidence in industrial and commercial markets to encourage private investment. Preservation of the old high school site as a town park, expanded leisure facilities, library, seniors and youth centre.

Develop Ballantrae Corridor Plan. Plaza featuring food, postal, financial and medical services. Retirement home, sidewalks at Hwy. 48 and Aurora Road. Transit access. Build neighbourhood park and manage stewardship plan for Musselman's Lake. Implement street light project and leash-free dog park.

#### MAURICE SMITH WARD 2

The current debt and debt service can be managed if properly controlled. To do this we must fulfill the current approved development permits quota by stimulating industrial development, creating jobs and consequently, residential development, in order to pay it down.

In addition to my plan for improved service at the Ballantrae fire hall and a review of our library facility requirements, the implementation of the Musselman's Lake Stewardship Plan is critical.

Service at the Ballantrae fire hall is the most pressing issue. The current council accepted a report which effectively delayed, until at least 2014, the implementation of 24/7 full-time staff at this location. I am opposed to that delay. This is the most important of the five issues in my platform.

#### HUGO T. KROON WARD 3

Yes, any debt is too much. Debt can be in some circumstances, necessary. In fewer instances it can be acceptable, but should never be called "good". That latter mindset is what gets us into financial trouble and is one that needs to change.

Ultimately, the residents should decide what the municipality should provide next. But only when they have been given all the information regarding costs and financing can a decision be made. There is no value in mortgaging our future for an unnecessary or unsustainable current project.

That issue is whether the residents are receiving value for their taxes. As one of the chronically underserved wards, it is especially significant. If elected, I will ensure all residents are made aware of all issues and costs involved and make certain their input is considered before decisions affecting them are made.

#### CLYDE SMITH WARD 3

No. Most will be paid by development charges as homes are built. The rest can be paid down without raising taxes. The "mortgage" for town hall is cheaper than paying rent. Not providing facilities residents need is not an option for me - nor is raising taxes to simply avoid debt.

Several projects need to be looked at over the next four years, including expansion of various leisure/fitness facilities to keep up with demand. The first priority to me is a new seniors centre. Funds have been included in the capital forecast and development charges will help pay for it.

Keep taxes low while keeping service levels high. This involves many things: ensure residents get timely support from the town when problems arise; develop Gormley industrial area to increase the business tax base; offer classes in rural facilities; 24/7 fire coverage for all; high standards for garbage/recycling.

#### ALEXIS K. ADAMS WARD 4

Yes, we are in debt. It is important we pay off this debt as it inhibits us from working on other projects that are important. We must put our fiscal house in order to be able to give the services to our residents they deserve. Debt over \$35 million is not acceptable.

We should not rush into tackling new projects. We should be looking into the funds we have available. Only projects that are needs should be addressed. Review and prioritization of all projects are of the most importance so that we will not put the town in further debt.

Ward 4 has several issues with safety. There are no sidewalks along Elm Street and Glad Park, excessive speeding along Bloomington Road, unacceptable traffic control regarding merging on to Hoover Park from Mostar. I would enter discussions with public works to solve these problems.

#### SUSANNE HILTON WARD 4

We have known since 2003 that the town would need to borrow to build infrastructure. Mortgages ensure that both current and future residents will share the costs. The debt that we have is manageable and affordable while keeping taxes low. We will contain the debt level by carefully assessing future projects.

We have to move quickly to provide facilities for both seniors and young people. Leisure programs and facilities for our growing diverse community need to be expanded. Continuing to upgrade roads and provide sidewalks is an essential (and expensive) necessity.

Several roads require rebuilding, sidewalks and traffic calming to improve driver, cyclist and pedestrian safety. I have consistently fought for improvements in response to residents. I have managed to get Rupert and Knights Place completed for 2011; Elm planned for 2011, with Glad Park 2012 and Fairview 2013.

#### ANNE PRIDE WARD 4

Four years ago we had no debt, today we are \$28 million plus another \$10 M for town hall. Every capital expenditure went way over budget. I own a business and know the importance of a balanced budget. I will work with council to pay down our debt while maintaining services and controlling our taxes.

Our seniors have been promised space in the new town hall. I suggest they receive free bus fare as it's in such a remote location. We need an indoor soccer pitch, but only if it will not put us further in debt. It should be in a central location community. I commit to help raise funds for the facility.

In Ward 4, hard services are most important. Repair of roads, additional sidewalks and reduced speed on residential streets is needed. I will stay on top of all these issues and get them solved. Increased taxes are always a concern. I will watch your tax dollars as if they were my own.

#### RICHARD BARTLEY WARD 5

The debt is very manageable. We can't keep encouraging new businesses and residents to invest in our community if the town is not going to invest, too. We as a council made many good decisions in moving this community forward. The community was becoming stale and stagnant; many residents agree.

I think we need to focus hard on the seniors. We need to get them a proper facility that is user friendly and something that they can be proud of. The downtown needs to be high on our priorities i.e. working with existing businesses and attracting new ones.

Traffic seems to be a concern with the residents in Ward 5. Motorists need to obey all traffic signs and speed limits. We need to refocus on all traffic lights. i.e. too many, out of sync or both? I would like to see more police presence in the community as a whole.

#### IAIN LOVATT WARD 5

Council has taken on our debt too quickly. By straying from the town's strategic plan, we have front-end loaded our capital costs, banking on future home sales and development charges coming into the town. That's an unnecessary gamble and risk council has taken. God forbid a slowdown in housing sales.

We need to complete projects already in progress. We need a trail(s) connecting the Stouffville Reservoir to Bethesda Sports Fields. We need Memorial Park completed with a new skate park and basketball courts. We need to attract entrepreneurs to invest into downtown and we need a financial audit.

The terrible condition of the roads in the south end of Ward 5 and communication are big issues I have heard from residents. If elected I will change the lack of communication residents have had with their councillor by implementing Ward 5 Town Hall Meetings, three or four times a year.

#### JIM MCCRON WARD 5

Yes we are. The residents are facing a large tax increase because of the massive debt brought on by certain members of the previous council. As a council, we must put the town's needs in front of wants. We simply have to stay on a dedicated budget from now on.

There are many projects I would love to see come to fruition. A new indoor soccer facility, a seniors center or a new curling rink. These are projects the residents have stated to me while canvassing the past few months. We need to budget accordingly, solicit developers' donations and fundraise.

While canvassing, the residents of Ward 5 have stated a concern for water retention ponds, traffic on Main Street, road resurfacing and lack of representation. If elected, it will not be status quo. These and all concerns of the ward will be addressed in a timely manner without fail.

#### ROB HARGRAVE WARD 6

The town is in debt. The majority is development related. What needs to be done is to monitor all future capital expenditures. Are they needed at this present time and can they be pushed to a later date when the tax money has been properly accrued for building them. Need to review operating cost on all facilities.

Need to look at the present state of the town's senior and youth services. The town needs to build a new seniors centre. There should be public meetings to have the seniors' input for the location and design. Youth centre should be looked at as well. All current facilities for youth should be reviewed.

A major concern is traffic, from flow to parking. I would like to see the formation of a traffic committee to be a watchdog for speeding and parking issues. Need to review what is working in other municipalities and see if these techniques can be implemented in Stouffville.

#### JOANNE IANNUZZI WARD 6

Yes. Any distance into debt is too far. I will work to ensure the current debt is paid off as soon as possible.

Memorial Park and the recreation area to the south of the Lebovic Leisure Centre.

Memorial Park and the recreation area to the south of the leisure centre, because it is central to Ward 6 and so close to downtown. This includes sourcing costs to keep the outdoor pool open, and resurfacing the tennis courts and addressing pedestrian and vehicular safety in getting to and from the park.