

FEDERAL ELECTION

# Liberals choice of middle class, Philpott says

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with special needs.

The Liberal platform also revolves around the middle class, according to local candidate Dr. Jane Philpott.

This includes cancelling income splitting and other tax benefits for the wealthy, building on the child tax benefit and investing in clean technologies.

As a doctor for almost two decades in Stouffville and now Markham, Philpott has heard a lot about people's problems and they're not all medical.

"There's no better preparation for understanding the people of Markham-Stouffville than listening to them day after day for 17 years," said Philpott, who opened her campaign headquarters in downtown Stouffville last winter.

"In Markham-Stouffville if you're looking for change, I'm really hoping you will look to me," she said.

The NDP have stated it is open to a coalition with the Liberals, but the Liberals are resistant to the concept.

People may be clamouring for change, but incumbent and Conservative Paul Calandra said his party is staying the course by continuing to focus on the economy, safety and security.

Between tax credits and grants, Calandra said a number of manufacturers in Markham have been able to transition to a new form of manufacturing, while the high-tech sector is rebounding. In Stouffville, the European Trade Agreement will give local farmers access to larger markets, according to Calandra.

The home renovation tax credit will become permanent, which, he said, will benefit local small businesses.

"Markham and Stouffville has weathered the global downturn really, really well," he said.

When Harper kicked off the election campaign this past Sunday, it became the longest, potentially the costliest and, according to Calandra, most likely the norm.

"Democracy is expensive, for sure," he said.

"It's important they're done fairly and properly and there's a cost," Calandra said of elections.

The only ones benefiting from the longer campaign is the Conservatives, according to Hines and O'Brien.

"My true thought, the Conservative government, they're trying to use their financial might to sway Canadians," Hines said.

"I don't really think there's a real justification for it, that bothers me as a taxpayer," O'Brien said, adding the longer campaign only benefits the party with the most money and that is not the Greens.

"We're severely disadvantaged that way," he said.

All four candidates for Markham-Stouffville reside in Stouffville.

With files from Torstar News Service



STAFF PHOTO/JIM MASON

Liberal candidate Jane Philpott opened her campaign office on Main Street in downtown Stouffville last winter.

## New riding a lot smaller

In 2013, the federal election riding boundaries were re-drawn.

Oak Ridges-Markham was renamed Markham-Stouffville and re-aligned accordingly.

The purpose of the re-alignment was to divide the province into electoral districts "as close to the average population as reasonably possible," according to the Electoral Boundaries Re-Adjustment Act in late 2012.

The new riding now consists of Whitchurch-Stouffville and a part of Markham lying easterly of a line described as follows: commencing at the intersection of the northerly limit of said town with Hwy. 48; thence southerly along said highway to 16th Avenue; thence westerly along said avenue to McCowan Road; thence southerly along said road to Hwy. 407; thence easterly along said highway to the Rouge River; thence generally southeasterly along said river to the southerly limit of said town.

In re-aligning the electoral boundaries from Oak Ridges-Markham to Markham-Stouffville, the voting population has gone from around 320,000 to somewhere between 110,000 to 120,000, according to MP Paul Calandra.

## EVEN SPLIT

The Conservatives and Liberals are currently sitting at two apiece when it comes to riding victories in the former Oak Ridges-Markham.

The Oct. 19 election, complete with new boundaries for the Markham-Stouffville riding, will be the tiebreaker.

Liberal Lui Temelkovski won in 2004 (51.73 per cent) and in 2006 (47.06 per cent). He defeated Conservative Bob Callow both times.

Paul Calandra won for the first time in 2008 with 42.24 per cent of the vote. It was a narrow defeat over Temelkovski who earned 41.52 per cent of votes.

Conservative Calandra once again beat out Liberal Temelkovski in 2011, this time with a much larger margin. Calandra earned 51.12 per cent of the votes, while Temelkovski garnered 28.26 per cent.

## Green candidate at home

It wasn't until his parents got involved with the Markham-Unionville Green Party did Myles O'Brien contemplate his own interest in politics.

The Stouffville resident ran for the provincial Green Party in Markham-Unionville in 2011 and 2014. Long-term, he said he wanted to run in the municipality where he lives, hence, his decision to run for the federal Greens this election.

O'Brien felt his strengths – listening, understanding and getting to know people – transferred well into politics.

Before earning a masters degree in environmental studies from York University and taking a job with the Town of Richmond Hill in its environmental division, O'Brien spent a year as a musician in Vancouver and two years teaching and travelling in Mexico with his wife Geetha.

They also lived and worked at an organic farm near Erin, Ont. and travelled through India. They moved to Stouffville seven years ago and have three children.

O'Brien is a director of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Community Energy Co-operative Board and was a founding committee member of the Downtown Stouffville Farmers' Market.

– Sandra Bolan

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