

Advocate and councillor Iafrate carries the Liberal banner in the next election

By Mark Pavilons



A Vaughan councillor is hoping to continue her advocacy work as this riding's next MPP.

Marilyn Iafrate, in her second term on council, the opportunity presented itself to represent my residents as well as the great communities in King at Queen's Park.

This new riding of King-Vaughan is exceptional because of its diversity, she pointed out. This diversity includes the natural and cultural environments as well as urban vs rural landscapes.

As the councillor for Maple and Kleinburg, I have spent seven years equally balancing the needs of urban and rural communities. This experience will serve me well in meeting the needs of King residents. I fully understand the importance of protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt lands as both environmental features cross Maple, Kleinburg and King while tempering the pressures of development.

During my tenure as a councillor, I have learned to nurture partnerships and use those partnerships to benefit the taxpayers I represent because in today's working environment you don't achieve success on important matters on your own. I never make promises I can't keep and I am always direct and honest about expectations.

Iafrate said her tenacity is the single most important skill she never stops making my case for an important community issue until she succeeds.

Tenacity will serve me well as I embark on representing the critical needs of local residents in matters of public health, education, support for special educational needs children and adults, home care for seniors and a myriad of other important issues that affect residents' quality of life.

Iafrate said she's familiar with King and she spent many years in the early 1990s working with King City residents and STORM (Save The Oak Ridges Moraine) fighting the NDP government of the day from building the largest landfill in North America at the border of Vaughan and King. In 2014, she worked with Councillor Debbie Schaeffer to promote improved GO service for King and Maple.

Iafrate also served King Township residents as a federal returning officer when King was part of the federal riding called Vaughan-King-Aurora.

I know this region for its quaint towns, prized horse farms, the best farming soil in Ontario and its natural beauty created by the Oak Ridges Moraine.

I do know that King residents are concerned about unbridled development and disingenuous developers and worry about the protection of their farmland, heritage communities and the natural environment. I have worked ceaselessly in both Maple and Kleinburg to protect heritage districts today for tomorrow.

Development, she stressed, is an issue for the entire riding and this is where she's spent the last 18 months working with a group of like-minded elected officials from across the GTHA to lobby for Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) Reform.

I have spearheaded the recommendation that would require developers to respect a municipality's approved Official Plan and not be

allowed to amend it for a set period of time. This will preserve the integrity of the public process that created the Official Plan and bring stability to the municipality. My other recommendation that professional advice and financial support be provided to qualified residents/community groups was also included in the draft legislation. Passing of Bill 139 will be a big win for residents who live in the shadows of unscrupulous developers. I remain steadfast on the need for this historic legislation change and I continue to lobby various Provincial Ministers to make this happen before year end.?

Making the move to the provincial level will allow her to lobby on behalf of all municipalities to be granted the same revenue generating tools that only Toronto has been afforded.

?It is fundamentally unfair for residents outside of Toronto to not be able to benefit from these special privileges that have the potential to limit or reduce property tax increases. All Ontarians must be treated equally when it comes to property taxes. In addition, this is the time to go after foreign investment. With so much financial instability across Europe and other parts of the world, investors are looking at us to invest their funds in a safe and growing economy.?

Since announcing her candidacy, she's been well received by people of all political stripes ?because they know the work that I have done in the community both as an advocate and volunteer for over 25 years and for my accomplishments in the last seven years as I served them as their councillor.?

She chose to represent the Liberal Party in this election because she believes they have the best interests of the working class at heart. ?Providing free tuition for families who qualify, minimum wage going up to \$15, taking immediate action in reforming election contributions, cutting hydro rates by 25% and reforming the OMB is to me, reflective of a government that is listening. Can more be done? Always, but in a fiscally responsible manner.?

Iafrate's experience extends to the Vaughan Public Library Board; chair of the Code of Conduct and Councillor Expense Policy Task Force; member of the Mackenzie Health President's Community Advisory Committee; member of a variety of TRCA sub-committees, and past budget chair in Vaughan.

?I firmly believe in integrity, accountability and transparency and I have adhered to these principles in everything I have done in public office and they will continue to guide me in the future.?