

Mortelliti cares about King; seeks re-election

By Mark Pavilons

Cleve Mortelliti gets



uinely cares about his community.

It's this fundamental fact, and simply that he finds his council job interesting and challenging, that has led him to seek re-election in this fall's municipal election.

King City is the only home he's known and he's proud to have been councillors for the past seven and a half years.

His main accomplishment in the last term is the stake park at the King City arena.

?I know not everyone likes it, but after almost 8 years I know that you can't please everyone. But I was a kid in this town once, and we never had a place quite like that to play in. When I see so many kids each day at that facility, to see my childhood friends' kids play there, to see my kids play there ? I really feel like I accomplished something good for the all the young families with kids in King City.?

Mortelliti is also pleased about the success and growth of the King City Festival.

?King City has never had anything like this sustained for more than two years and we're going into our fourth year. This year the theme is a craft beer and gourmet food truck festival with live music. Check it out at kingcityfestival.com.?

Mortelliti noted that in his 2006 campaign, he said he wanted to help get more seniors' housing. King City now has a 4-storey condo on King Road that many of our long-time residents have moved into. He's also been a strong supporter of the beautification of the downtown core and the Township is now in the process of completing a major street scaling project and the King and Keele intersection, which was the focal point of Christmas in King City. That event as well is another one that brings King City and its merchants into the spotlight during the holidays.

Mortelliti also vowed to bring his land development expertise to bear and protect King City.

When an application for a 49-townhouse intensification project threatened the character of an estate lot subdivision at Keele & McClure, ?I was integral in assisting the local rate payers association in getting the unit count dropped to less than 20 with single family homes instead of towns, so it would be more in character of the existing community. In fact, I drew the plan in AutoCad. Same on Dew Street. I drew that plan also. These are only a couple examples of using my land development skills in defence of our community.?

Growth continues to put pressure on his community.

The growth of King City from a population of 5,000 to 12,000 has only just begun. King City will be literally under construction for the next decade.

Mortelliti said King City already has lack of indoor recreational opportunities for its growing population. ?That's a big nut that needs to be cracked and we have been working over the past four years to crack it, but this one is going to take time, and its going to require a private/public partnership, hopefully with Seneca.?

He stressed the Township has to continue improving its customer service. ?We've come a long way in four years I think, but we still have a ways to go. I mean, primarily what is the Township other than a service provider? People have expectations for higher quality service and I'd like us to win an award for it. There are in fact municipal awards for customer service. I want us to reach for one?

Mortelliti said he really enjoys helping people.

?Whether it's with their water bill, or cutting the grass to clear a sidewalk, or helping with getting dangerous trees cut after an

unprecedented ice storm, or assisting with a pool permit application, or deck application. ?Sometimes these things get bunged up in the system. I like to reach in and pull them out. It makes me feel good to know I was able to help.?

Conversely, he admitted he feels badly when he can't help.

There have been other changes in the community, too.

Mortelliti said his electorate has changed. King City saw little to no growth in the 40-plus years he's lived here. In the past four years we have seen a significant influx of brand new residents who call King City their home.

?They have a different perspective than residents who've lived here for 10, 20, 30, 40 or 50 years. That's a challenge for any councillor. It takes a balance, understanding and open mindedness. The new residents need to know that their councillor supports them as much as the long-time residents. And some long-time residents are having a real problem with all this change and growth, and I understand why.

?But King City is changing, and our heads can't stay stuck in the past. I think the councillor needs to envision and embrace a positive future for King City and work hard to achieve that vision.?

Mortelliti said residents should want a councillor who understands and appreciates King City's past and why its residents have traditionally fought so fiercely protect it.

?I have many friends who've grown up here, like I did, and we chose to stay here or move back here and raise our families here because King City instilled that strong home town feeling in us. It's a place where great memories live and where that feeling of pride that people like Rosie MacLennan and Alex Pietrangelo feel when they represent us at the Olympics, and make us all so proud to not only be Canadian but to be from King City.

?To me, that's the kind of pride a councillor needs to feel for their home town. It can't all be rational and logical; it has also had to be about that feeling in your gut and in your heart. King City may be growing, but what residents can expect from me is an undying and perhaps sometimes irrational affection for my home town.?

The practical part, he pointed out, is that development and growth are the biggest issues facing King City. But Mortelliti knows the ?game??inside and out.

Mortelliti considers being an elected official as one of the highest honours and positions a person in our society can hold. He grew up believing that.

He credits his parents and their determination for giving him the solid work ethic and drive. His father was a successful entrepreneur and his mother earned her PhD in philosophy in her 60s.

?The conversations that my parents engaged me in, conversations about human rights, about constitutional rights, about law, rights and freedoms, about human nature and about art, literature and music, religion ? all of this instilled in me a level of excitement every time an election rolled around whether it be federal, provincial or municipal. I can remember being so proud and so excited to cast my first ballot. I know in my heart that this is an honourable position to hold, to be entrusted by the public to act as their representative and their voice.?

While he loves politics, it has its obvious shortcomings.

He said politics can reveal the darker side of human nature, in both politicians and voters.

?There are lots of things beyond a single councillors' control. Decisions are made by committee, and in this term of council we've had a very strong, very good, very conscientious committee of councillors. All I can truly promise is that I'll bring my heart to the job and continue to do my best for King.?