

## Candidates share passion for Nobleton's future success

### By Mark Pavilons

Uniting new residents and long-time citizens in Nobleton seems to be top of the list on the minds of voters and would-be politicians. Nobleton has experienced a lot of growth and change in the past few years. More than 150 residents, both new and long-term, flocked to the first all-candidates' meeting last Wednesday night, sponsored by the Nobleton Village Association.

The village has a lot of potential and the four men vying to become Ward 2 councillor all want to capitalize on this. From streetscaping to amenities, the village is heading in the right direction and requires a strong voice at council to lobby on behalf of residents.

Their passion was evident in their closing remarks and pitch to the crowd of engaged citizens.

Firefighter David Boyd wants to be the 'pulse' of Nobleton. He has long family roots in the community and he's ready to take what residents tell him and take action to improve the community.

Peter Grandilli said he's listened to residents for the past four years and he's done his best.

'I get the job done,' he said, noting he's always available and ready to help. 'I always put Nobleton first.'

Joe Buscema said the community needs a strong voice and the next four years are vital to the area's development. He is that voice and he will get things done.

Jim Streb stressed democracy only starts at the ballot box and voters need confidence and trust in their elected representative. He reminded residents to 'choose carefully'

Council, he said, doesn't own King Township and neither do developers. 'We own it.' And he has the expertise to 'make it better.'

When asked about the abandoned properties that dot King Road and Highway 27, all agreed it was a local eyesore.

Streb suggested the Township puts pressure on the owners to either improve the lots or tear down these unoccupied dwellings.

Buscema said the community is in transition with a few developments on the go.

Grandilli admitted it's 'ugly' but the Township can't force the owners to do anything with their properties.

Boyd stressed from an emergency services point of view, these structures present a safety risk. If obtaining demolition permits is an issue, he suggested the Township works with the owners to speed up the process.

Nobleton's core came under scrutiny, too, with one resident asking what candidates are prepared to do about fixing it up.

Boyd noted the CIP 'has been approved by council and it contains many local improvements and streetscaping plans, including a program to improve commercial facades. Partnerships need to be forged, he said.

Grandilli said he's been pushing York Region for years, asking for sidewalks and improvements to the core. A regional study is complete and news may be coming regarding improvements to the King Road, Highway 27 intersection.

Streb sees a lot of potential for the village. CIP guidelines do address making it more pedestrian friendly and with some design work and local plantings, the village's aesthetics will improve.

When the Township staff came under fire, two of the candidates shared some concerns, while two others came to the Township's defence.

Streb has been calling for changes to King's council and committee structure, so matters aren't discussed and voted on in the same meeting. He believes staff have too much power in making recommendations to council, which often acts as a rubber stamp. He's opposed to giving carte blanche to staff and wants more power in the hands of decision-makers.

Buscema said residents have told him there's a lack of trust and transparency with the current representative.

Grandilli said King is the envy of other municipalities in York and this council has been transparent. His phone is on 24 hours a day and he encourages residents to bring any concern to council.

Boyd shared in this, noting 'thank goodness' we have qualified staff to make recommendations, some of which become part of the Township's stance at OMB hearings. He vowed to be 'as transparent as I can.'

When asked about the single most important issue facing voters, Streb said his first order of business would be to connect with the other three candidates and secure local talented citizens to provide input about issues.

Calming measures, curbing speeding and a stronger police presence are things Buscema wants to address quickly.

Grandilli noted he will work to secure even more amenities in Nobleton, including more activities for youth and seniors. He urged new residents to come out to local events to get a feel for the community. Improved sidewalks, the community park and splash pad are all coming on stream.

Boyd said from going door to door, he's discovered people want to be more connected and he vows to open the lines of communication.

All of the candidates agreed that more social events in the community will help bring people together. As newer residents become involved in their children's sports events, parents make new friends and ties within the area. Boyd commented that kids are great for breaking down any perceived barriers.

The issue of noise and enforcing the current bylaw was brought up by long-time resident Nancy Hopkinson. She pointed out exemptions to the bylaw are currently handled by the clerk and more are being granted.

Boyd said it requires a balance between the residents and the interests of local businesses. He did say that council has to sometimes go beyond the strict wording of the noise bylaw and work together. The community is a partnership.

Grandilli said he's happy to revisit the process with the new council to ensure the bylaw is being enforced.

Buscema said granting exemptions should be up to council, not just one staff member.

Streb warned about granting blanket exemptions so as not to degrade the quality of life.

One man was concerned about continued pressure by developers, particularly to the west of Nobleton. Many applications end up at the OMB, a fight the Township can't always win.

Grandilli noted Nobleton will grow to 6,500 people and perhaps reach that limit by 2017. Beyond that, there is no more sewer and water capacity to handle any more growth. He doesn't foresee much more development over the next 20 years.

Boyd said through careful planning, the Township can make decisions and be adequately prepared for any OMB hearings.

Buscema pointed out that some things are worth fighting for, and residents need to band together when appropriate.

Streb said it's possible to beat developers at the OMB and we need to stick to our CIP guidelines which strengthen our case.

The candidates provided a brief summary and rundown of their backgrounds and platforms.

Streb, an 18-year resident, said King is growing rapidly and is impacted by two major transportation corridors. Controlled growth needs to be clearly defined through our guiding documents. We need to address our infrastructure needs and at the same time, maintain the small-town character.

With a "perfect storm" of document reviews on the horizon (including the ORM and Greenbelt legislation), King needs experience and knowledge to adequately shape this community.

Buscema said relocating to Nobleton was an easy decision and the relative newcomer enjoys the sense of community. He wants Nobleton to remain small with limited growth and he's concerned about the current traffic congestion. He will push for intersection improvements, traffic calming and safety measures. He also vows to support small business, the backbone of the community, and attract new ones.

He respects the hard-earned tax dollars of residents and he has the drive and passion to get the job done.

Grandilli has lived in the area since 1986 and has been part of the business community for decades. He's worked hard to fulfill his mission of a "greater Nobleton" and these efforts have paid off, resulting in a clear and prosperous direction. His track record includes sewer installation, a new plaza, walk-in clinic, speed humps, new ball fields and improvements to the arena.

"I got it done," he said.

He's made himself available and will continue to help reinvigorate the local businesses. He cares about how tax dollars are spent and he's ready to take on all challengers.

Boyd believes in the power of community.

"It's about you and what you want to see in your ward," he said.

He considers this is home and he wants to be part of something we can all be proud of. He got into the race because he became disheartened about the growing pains. But he's been inspired by his coaching experience and he's sure we can create an atmosphere in the community we can all embrace and be proud of.

Patty Fleetwood, of the Nobleton Village Association, urged residents to get involved in local events, and to contact her about helping out. As one of Nobleton's biggest cheerleaders, she's more than willing to work with residents on any project.