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King City concerns dominate CCKT debate

By Mark Pavilons

There's no question King City is taking the brunt of King's development. Issues related to growth dominated the first of two all-candidates' meetings, hosted by Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT)?last week.
Ward 1 candidates were peppered with questions during a lively debate at Villanova last Wednesday.
CCKT prepared two written questions, sent to candidates prior to the meeting.
CCKT wanted to know how much time the candidates are prepared to give to their role as councillor, as well as their interests in serving on committees and volunteer groups.
Rob?Payne noted he's a financial advisor and as a small business owner he has a lot of flexibility in his hours. The former councillor said he's in a good position to serve. He's interested in getting involved in the library board and Sustainability Committee.
Incumbent Debbie?Schaefer said her council post is her priority. She's retired and noted the job can be hectic and unstructured at times. She's served on the Heritage Advisory Committee, Sustainability Committee and was one of the founding members of King for Refugees.
Sasha Mozaffari recently graduated university with a degree in political science and she's planning on attending law school. She's an efficient multi-tasker and she would split her time between her constituents and her studies. It's a post she takes seriously. She would be interested in the Sustainability Committee and perhaps the Committee of Adjustment.
Jordan Cescolini sees the value in serving his community. He's self-employed in a family business and is committed to providing upwards of 25 hours per week for council work.
Incumbent Cleve Mortelliti said it's considered a part-time job, with peaks and valleys during the course of a year. Council relies on staff for the majority of the studies and recommendations, so council is more like a board of directors. He's part of the senior management team of R.J. Burnside and Associates, and he has a flexible schedule to meet his duties. He's managed his time well over the past term and ?I know the job.?
Kelly Colasanti said as a retired executive, he ?has all the time in the world??to dedicate to the job. He said he's used to working 24/7 and has no time constraints. He's interested in heritage and the public library.
CCKT asked the candidates who should take the lead on planning new subdivisions and communities ? the Township or the developers. CCKT?also wanted to know their vision on housing in King City, Nobleton and Schomberg.
Colasanti said the Township is the local planning authority and should take the lead, but they have to work with developers. Housing has to meet the community's needs and has to fit with existing houses. He'd like to see more townhouses and eco-friendly options.
Mortelliti said the Township follows the guidelines laid out in the Community Plans, but the Province does mandate development through various pieces of legislation, particularly the Places to?Grow Act. There is always room for negotiation with developers, something they do with every application.
Cescolini said there has to be a fruitful relationship between the Township and the developers. He'd like to make sure developers contribute more towards local road infrastructure, to deal with the traffic that comes with new development. He'd like to see smaller bungalows for seniors.
Mozaffari said they have to work together and council should also ask residents what they'd like to see. She would like to allow landowners of smaller parcels to develop housing types.
Schaefer said it's council's job to manage growth, but there are other players in the mix, including York Region and the Province. They have control over their Official Plan and zoning bylaw and they can certainly help shape future growth. There are still gaps and she's like to see a more robust mix of housing types.
Payne said the Township has a vision, the developers have a stake and the Province sets the rules. He supports intensification in core areas, along with mixed use.
Both local and commuter traffic is a concern of residents who asked candidates about possible solutions.
Payne said the King-Vaughan Townline is the only viable option for a ?bypass? and he strongly opposes reviewing the 15th Sideroad again as a route. He said council, York Region and the Province have to work together to help alleviate traffic and he's willing to take on this task as councillor.
Cescolini does support using the 15th as an alternate route, noting the King-Vaughan road doesn't work.
Mortelliti pointed out this is not an election issue and it's a moot point for at least another 10 years.

Colasanti said more studies are needed and the traffic issues have to be addressed.
A Snowball resident wanted to know whether the candidates would lobby the Province to limit intensification to the urban areas.
Mortelliti noted the current rules restrict development to the King City boundaries and nothing should change.
Colasanti said he supports current Greenbelt restrictions.
Schaefer said the provincial Growth Plan is a valuable tool and it sets the parameters for development.
Payne said we can accommodate growth in the legislated areas under the Places to?Grow Act.
The candidates were all asked whether they accepted campaign donations from developers. All said they did not.
A?Warren Road resident, who said he was ?okay with roads and taxes,??asked whether the Township should consider ward redistribution.
Mortelliti noted Ward 1 has grown significantly and said ward realignment may be worth looking at. He did admit it's ?a painful process.?
Payne said he would be happy to start this discussion. A ward redistribution may be warranted in the name of fairness and equity. He said he supports an extra King representative on York?Regional council.
One resident said there's a lack of affordable housing for the more mature residents, many of whom are forced to leave the community.
Payne said while housing is market driven, council should support and encourage a mix of housing types.
Schaefer said it may be necessary for council to consider apartment buildings, and entertaining plans for 4- and 5-storey buildings.
Colasanti said council could mandate that a percentage of new development contain affordable units for seniors.