

Mayor notes the qualities of a good councillor

By Mayor Steve Pellegrini

We are quickly approaching the municipal election on Oct. 22 when you will elect your Township council for the next four years. And, while many of us are tired of politics, this is still a very important election as the results affect you and our community directly. I have had the great fortune to lead a stable, cohesive council for the past eight years. We have not always agreed on the issues but we have been respectful of each other and the decisions that have been made by the majority. With Councillor Pabst retiring after 24 years of service, there is going to be at least one new member of a team that has been the envy of the GTA in the way it functions. At a recent all-candidates debate a local resident came up to me and asked, "What qualities are you looking for on your council?" I thought I would share my answer with the entire Township for your consideration as you go to the polls to cast your vote for your next council.

An effective council member will be a collaborator and team player. We need relationship builders who can help to create partnerships to achieve our common goals and to work effectively with those partners. A good councillor does their homework and is a mature, critical thinker who understands the entire impact of their decision (not just for their neighbours or in their ward). They do what is best for the entire Township. A good councillor is approachable for all residents and is respectful of their needs and concerns.

The final, and one of the most important characteristics that a councillor must have, is financial acumen. Municipal finance is not the same as your private finances nor is it the same as business finance. We deal with development charges, grants, user fees, general taxation, reserve funds, cash in lieu, etc. not topics that most people encounter in their daily lives.

It greatly concerns me when I hear promises to "cut taxes." The decision to raise or lower taxes cannot be taken lightly. We are a small municipality with a small budget; for every 1% increase, or decrease, in taxes we lose or gain, \$250,000. A tax cut likely means cutting a service that residents want and need, or not completing a road repair, or not putting in traffic calming measures somewhere, etc. etc. I, and every member of council, pay taxes and we don't like increases any more than you do, I guarantee that! We do our very best to ensure that every tax dollar is used in a responsible and respectful manner.

On a more personal note, I thank everyone in King for the confidence in my leadership and I promise to continue to work hard to improve the quality of life for our great residents and businesses.

Please get out and vote!