

## Are you ready?

by SHERALYN ROMAN

It's that time of year when many of us succumb to the apparent need to make resolutions. To somehow change or improve upon some part of ourselves, or our current situation; whether that relates to our health, employment status, our future goals or, as is the case for me, my red wine addiction. On a less personal note, there is another group of people in the community also currently contemplating their future. They are making a list of goals and resolutions, and whether you are successful in managing your own 2026 resolutions, for this other group of people ? they will need your help to achieve theirs. What am I talking about? Are you ready for an election year?

While Premier Ford mused late last year about potential changes to the provincial election schedule, nothing is changing for municipalities. That means October of 2026 will see municipal elections proceed as planned. Voters will be given the opportunity to elect local Councillors, a Mayor, and here in Caledon, two Regional Councillors to represent us not just here at home but at the Region of Peel Council table.

If you've been paying any attention to what's happening in Caledon during this past term of Council, you'll know there is a lot at stake for our future. Ready or not, we're heading into an election year and I'd argue it's never been a more important one for our community.

No doubt you've already seen some social media posts, from one or two sitting Council members, that look just a little too much like an ?election ad? to this viewer. You're probably also starting to hear the rumours about who might be running, and for what position. It's safe to say there will be changes (there always are) but whether those changes occur all the way from the top down remains to be seen. It's also safe to say it has been a tumultuous four years with more than one or two Councillors (and even our Mayor) occasionally ruffling a few feathers along the way. Combined with the previously written about recurring 5-4 vote splits over this past term, it might be that Caledon residents are indeed ready for change.

Do I think, as some have posited, that we need a ?clean sweep?? Absolutely not. There are folks on Council doing good work, who are earnest and try hard, and/or those who do the extra research required to effectively address an issue, sometimes even thinking creatively ?outside of the box? to try and bring about a potential solution to issues that will (not might) have long-term, devastating consequences for certain Caledon wards. But it's up to each of us to decide who those people are, meaning that, more than anything, what we need as we head into this next election cycle is an informed electorate.

With so much at risk for Caledon, with so much growth scheduled to come our way, and a host of issues impacting how we move about our community safely, (with so many illegal truck yards and pits and quarries) it's up to every, single, one of us to stay on top of the issues. As constituents, we need to ask the tough questions of candidates, attend the debates, review the past history of those candidates running for re-election, and pay careful attention to the claims and experiences of any new persons who put their names forward for our consideration.

I have a great deal of respect for anyone who takes an interest in their community. Some of us volunteer in an effort to make Caledon a better place, others play an active role by delegating at Council and staying abreast of current issues by holding Council to account. Finally, there are those willing to go the extra mile and put themselves out there (subject to both the slings and arrows as much as any potential accolades) in a sincere effort to help guide the future of Caledon.

In a democracy, it is up to us voters to decide who is truly being sincere and then vote accordingly. By the way, that means we need to actually get out and VOTE! The municipal government is in charge of your property taxes, waste collection, snow removal, public transit, public libraries, even your emergency services should you require them. In other words ? it is at the municipal level that many decisions directly impacting your day-to-day life occur. It should follow that it is perhaps more important than at any other level of politics, that you pay close attention to those whose new year's resolution might include running for public office.

Are you ready for an election year? Buckle up Caledon, this one matters and I'm thinking it might be a doozy.