

Area council candidates discuss issues in Ward 2 at two meetings last week

By Bill Rea

A community activist and a long-time incumbent are squaring off to see who will occupy the area seat for Ward 2 on Caledon council after next month's municipal election.

Yevgenia Casale and incumbent Gord McClure had two chances last week to put their positions before the public at candidate sessions. One was last Tuesday and was hosted by the SouthFields Village Residents' Group, the other was the following evening, put on by the Cheltenham Area Residents's Association (CARA). McClure stressed his family roots in the community, dating back to 1836, along with his eight years on council.

"It has been an exciting time to be on council," he said.

He also pushed the need for more recreation facilities in the ward, including another arena, as well as more shopping areas and facilities for seniors.

Casale said she's lived in Caledon about five years. She also published a community magazine.

Casale said she made the right decision about having her children grow up where there's a sense of belonging; where the community plays together and gets together in tough times.

She added Caledon is changing and needs fresh ideas.

McClure also commented on the restrictions placed on lands in the area, such as the GTA's East West corridor. The study of that corridor restricts growth, he said. He also pointed to how land use plans governing the Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine make things hard on farmers.

"There are too many restrictions upon us," he said.

He also addressed the recent issue of the proposed parking lot at the Cheltenham Badlands. "He said it might not be a bad idea if the Town charges for the parking.

Casale commented Ward 2 is a large area with diverse issues, including those involving development. She also said farmers and residents on Old School Road are worried about cyclists in the area. Addressing recreation issues, she said the question is who pays? She also pointed out there are a number of community events with a lot of volunteer support.

"We're making do, and we will make do," she said.

Both candidates said they would consider their council duties their full-time job. Casale said she's a stay-at-home mom who got involved in community building.

"Community building has turned itself into a full-time, non-paying occupation," she said.

McClure is a farmer, but he said he has three sons who run the operation and they encouraged him to run.

Addressing the issue of holding the line on taxes while providing services, Casale said Caledon needs to be more business friendly. The issue of an upcoming review of Caledon's Official Plan was raised in Cheltenham. McClure maintained the hamlet should retain its rural character, with little expansion beyond what's already in place. Casale said the possibility of development comes up a lot, with some for it and other against. She said middle ground needs to be found.

One of the people at the Cheltenham meeting asked what the candidates would do if Santa Claus gave the Town \$500,000 to spend on Cheltenham at budget time.

McClure said he's have the parking lot at Charles Haines Memorial Park (next to the Cheltenham Fire Hall) paved, as well as the hill heading down into the hamlet. He said his grandchildren drive every year in the soapbox derby at Cheltenham Day. "The left side is slower than the right side," he said.

He also said there are playground facilities for little children, but something is needed for the bigger youngsters.

Casale said she'd get the community to tell her what to do with the money.



Yevgenia Casale and Gord McClure spoke at two candidate sessions last week in the race to be area councillor for Ward 2