

Area councillor candidates discuss issues at couple of meetings

By Bill Rea

The two men in the running for the Ward 1 area seat on Caledon council have had a couple of chances to face each other over the last couple of weeks.

Incumbent Doug Beffort and challenger Paul Revell have participated in a couple of meetings, including one hosted by the Caledon Chamber of Commerce, as well as sessions hosted by the Alton Village Association and the Village of Inglewood Association.

Addressing the issue of helping business, Beffort said he would want to meet regularly with the Chamber of Commerce.

"I would certainly reinvent that right away," he remarked, adding the Chamber needs a stronger role in tourism.

Revell commented that red tape is a big issue, adding it's time it was cut. He also said communication and accountability are big issues too.

On the issue of the number of Town contracts that go to local businesses, Beffort pointed out the Town has Mercedes vehicles in its fleet, but there are no Mercedes dealers in Caledon. Provincial legislation governs some of what the Town can do in this regard, but he also called for common sense.

Although being an area councillor is considered a part-time job, Beffort pointed out it's also the closest government position to the residents.

"I create my job and work a minimum of 40 hours per week," he said.

Revell agreed the position is important because these councillors are in the area. He also argued that much can be accomplished by area councillors if they just listen to the people.

Beffort stressed at the Chamber meeting that he helps people with local issues.

Addressing growth, he said "it's here and it's huge," and it needs to be managed.

"I think there are a lot of issues we need to talk about," Revell observed. "I listen to people, I'm accountable and I'm practical."

Addressing economic development in the ward, Revell pointed to the GTA East West Corridor and the highway proposed for that area (informally known as Highway 413), observing that could represent billions of potential dollars in development. He stressed the need to talk to people and developers to make sure it's a fair deal all around.

"We need a vision long-term for the future and that involves everyone," he said.

Beffort said economic development around Inglewood has to be in keeping with what the residents want.

One woman in Inglewood observed there had been a lot of talk about improving quality of life, asking the candidates to define "quality of life."

"Security," Beffort replied.

"Trust," Revell said.

The finances of the Town were on the minds of some of the people in Inglewood, with observations that the Town wins awards for budgeting, but there are problems with the process. There had also been concerns raised about the amount of money the Town puts up for Caledon Day.

Beffort said there was \$42,000 for Caledon Day that was all covered by donations.

Revell wondered why council had funding cut for the Chamber of Commerce.

The future of the arena in Inglewood was raised.

Beffort suggested there could be a curling facility set up there.

Revell said small communities deserve to have their small arenas stay open, even if they're not economical.

The issue of how to deal with an aging population came up in Inglewood.

Beffort observed that when new communities are built, seniors' development should be required as part of them.

Revell said he believes in putting kids, adults and seniors together because that makes a community.

Dealing with red tape, Beffort said it's not good enough to just get through it. He said he would be recommending exit polls be taken of people at Town Hall to see what their issues are.

Revell said he's heard of hundreds of issues that are not getting resolved, and he favoured a system of tracking people's issues as they work their way through Town Hall.



Paul Revell and Doug Beffort fielded questions in Inglewood last week.