

Barb Shaughnessy to run for Dufferin-Caledon MP seat

Written By JOSHUA SANTOS

Barb Shaughnessy will run as a candidate for the Member of Parliament Dufferin-Caledon nomination.

The former regional councillor for Ward 1 filed her documents recently. She waits for an evaluation and interview but said that will happen in the New Year.

'I've been an advocate and a voice for community for a long time, said Shaughnessy. It's something that I have a passion for when it comes to representing people. Everything about the position to me is perfect for me at this time and point in my career of serving the public.'

Shaughnessy ran for the mayor's seat this year placing second with 4,976 votes. Incumbent Allan Thompson was elected to his second mayoral term with 7,392 votes and Kelly Darnley, former CEO of the Caledon Chamber of Commerce obtained 3,925 votes.

Shaughnessy was at the tail end of a municipal election campaign when David Tilson announced his retirement after a sixth consecutive term as MP.

'It's something that tweaked in me that I thought would be an interesting and a natural evolution from what I had been doing,' said Shaughnessy.

'I think the advantage for me is the fact that I have knocked on so many doors throughout Caledon and you have a much better understanding of where people are at from a political perspective, what their needs and wants are, their concerns and things they're not happy with or that they are happy with.'

Kevin Weatherbee, former chief of staff for Dufferin-Caledon MPP Sylvia Jones, Harzadan Singh Khattri, owner of Orangeville Taxi and Jeremy Williams, former Mayor of Orangeville are the three other candidates vying for the vacant MP seat.

Shaughnessy notes running for a federal nomination is different than running for a municipal seat.

'You have to go out and get people who are willing to support you at the nomination meeting, said Shaughnessy. Anybody that is running, that is their focus to go out and get members to say 'yes I support her' and they show up at the meeting whenever it's held.

'You put your papers up to the federal party (and then) it has to back to the local riding (where) you do that whole interview process, said Shaughnessy. I still have to go through that.'

While the makeup of a federal riding is far greater than that of a ward, Shaughnessy said Caledon and Dufferin are similar in its needs and how they look.

'You have Orangeville, a large urban area, with somewhere around 30,000 (people). (That's) the same thing in Bolton, Caledon, said Shaughnessy. Then you're made up of a lot of agricultural areas and of course I grew up in the agricultural area in Caledon.

'Then you have the wonderful little villages and hamlets. We'll call Shelburne a village because I think it's around 8,000 to 9,000 people which is comparable to Caledon East or Mayfield West.'

Shaughnessy has been reaching out to residents from Mono to Grand Valley hearing their thoughts and concerns.

She said all three levels of government, federal, provincial and municipal, all work together yet they are different.

?I think what people in the grassroots of any riding (think) is they don't feel they have a big enough voice when they get up to the higher levels of politics, said Shaughnessy. I want to assure those people that they do have a voice. That their concerns are going to reach Ottawa.?

?A member of parliament doesn't necessarily grow out of the grassroots. Quite often they come in from various sectors. I just think coming from the grassroots, you have a better understanding of the people and the people in your riding, which makes you a little more unique.?

She was first elected into public office as regional councillor for Ward 1 in 2014 gaining 1,442 votes defeating Richard Paterak and Jim Pattison in 2014.

?I have that advantage over others who have not gone through that process. I have been in two campaigns now personally, running as regional councillor in 2014 and running as mayor, campaigning in 2018. I think I have an advantage and my name is well known because of that.?

She was mulling the idea of running as a candidate for MP after residents said they didn't want to lose her voice. She also declined the option of running as Chair for the Region of Peel.