

Candidates comment on beer being sold in corner stores

By Bill Rea

The candidates seeking election in Dufferin-Caledon in the current provincial campaign were once again contacted for their spontaneous answers to preselected questions.

Their replies are presented here in alphabetical order.

What procedures are needed to avoid the problems experienced with the gas plants?

‘It’s a lot like the megaquarry,’ commented Liberal Bobbie Daid. ‘Planning at all levels is needed.’

She added the process should start at the grassroots, along with more open communications.

‘To be blunt, the gas plant debacle was caused because proper procedure wasn’t used in the selection,’ remarked Progressive Conservative Sylvia Jones, adding that was followed by political decisions. ‘We can’t keep operating like that in Ontario.’

Libertarian candidate Daniel Kowalewski admitted he’s not familiar with the issue, but expressed his belief that government is not the greatest users of resources.

‘Private industry is a lot better at avoiding such things,’ he said. ‘I feel they do more due diligence to avoid these problems.’

‘No Liberal government, to start with,’ was the quick reply from Green party candidate Karren Wallace.

She also pointed out there are rules regarding election financing, and if the Liberal spent \$1 billion to save some seats in the last election, than would have violated those rules.

‘I would suggest that exceeded the spending limit,’ she said, adding the rules that are in place need to be enforced.

New Democrat Rehya Yazbek said her party is putting forth a plan to have a Minister of Savings and Accountability to see to it that services people rely on are protected. It will be that minister who syphons proposals through the process to make sure scandals are avoided.

Should beer and wine be sold in corner stores?

‘My short answer is no,’ Daid said. ‘I firmly believe in regulations.’

She added she would worry that alcohol could become too easy for young people they obtain.

Jones said this issue probably needs a good debate, but added her party is concentrating more on finances and the economy. ‘You can’t do everything in the first term of government,’ she remarked.

‘I believe so,’ Kowalewski commented, adding government should be limited and not have a monopoly on alcohol, as long as the regulations are enforced so it’s not sold to minors.

‘Liberate our beer,’ Wallace declared. ‘Free our beer.’

She added craft brewers are allowed to sell their products, and store owners are trusted to sell tobacco.

‘No,’ Yazbek said, citing her experience working in retail. ‘We need to have that government regulation on that.’

Should there be more land in the Provincial Greenbelt?

‘It’s sort of take it now or lose it forever,’ when it comes to adding more acreage, Daid commented, adding that considering lands that can be added to it should be looked into.

‘It’s like farmland,’ she observed. ‘Once it’s gone, it’s gone.’

‘No,’ Jones said. ‘The best way to protect agricultural land in Ontario is to make sure farmers are making money.’

‘Freezing land is not the solution because you’re just hurting the people who own it,’ she added.

Kowalewski had no comment.

Wallace didn’t think the problem was a lack of land in the Greenbelt, but more protecting what’s there. ‘If you’re going to have a Greenbelt, then enforce it,’ she said, adding that if development is just going to jump over it, then what’s the point?

Yazbek said the Greenbelt is very important, but she said it needs to be reviewed regularly to make sure the regulations are fair, especially for farmers.

Has all-day kindergarten been a benefit?

?Absolutely,? Daid declared, pointing out it helps parents who might be trying to make ends meet.

She added that investing money in children at this age prevents having to spend money on delinquency later.

?The experts are torn on that,? Jones observed.

She said she put her oldest child into day care because there was no junior kindergarten available, but added some children do better in a home environment. And while she agreed it's costly, Jones said it would disrupt the system to get rid of it now.

Kowalewski said that's a difficult question, pointing out some families have trouble making ends meet, so all-day kindergarten helps. On the other hand, he said if the economy was more efficient, parents would have more time to spend with their kids, which would be better than school.

?That depends on who you talk to,? Wallace said.

It's been a benefit for those who require subsidized day care, but added it's tough on early childhood education workers. She said when government puts in place programs like these, it has to look at all the fallout.

Yazbek said the first six years are fundamentally important in a child's development, and it's very important that be done properly and not by impacting early childhood education workers and others who are involved in that age group.

Are wind turbines a good or bad idea?

Daid said she's in favour of clean energy, also pointing out American President Barack Obama this week has announced his efforts to phase out coal.

?The Liberal government has been a champion in trying to phase out dirty energy,? she remarked.

Daid added more community cooperation is needed, pointing out the current system puts landowners against each other.

?Philosophically, I have no issue with wind turbines,? Jones said, but added a better business model should be used for them, rather than just subsidizing them. She added municipalities need to be able to offer input on these installations.

Kowalewski said they're a good idea.

?Using alternate sources of energy is very beneficial,? he added, saying it's better than being tied to one source.

?It's part of the large puzzle,? he added.

Wallace said they are ?an excellent idea,? but she pointed out government has been forcing them on municipalities without local input, and has set back the cause of alternative forms of energy by two generations. ?You can't shove something down communities' throats,? she said.

Yazbek said her party supports wind turbines, but stressed there has to be a process in which communities are consulted before they are imposed. She said they might not be good for communities, but added there's still a lot to be learned about them.