

Candidates comment on proportional representation

By Bill Rea

Dufferin-Caledon's candidates in the June 12 Provincial election were contacted during the last week for their spontaneous responses to some predetermined questions.

Their responses are presented here in alphabetical order.

Do municipalities in aggregate producing areas get sufficient value for that resource?

Liberal candidate Bobbie Daid said there needs to be an aggregate review, looking at the environmental issues, as well as the economics.

'Are we seeing the value coming back to our municipalities?' she said needs to be addressed.

'No,' said Progressive Conservative Sylvia Jones, who said municipalities should be getting more money per tonne of material for hosting the operations. She added the government has the authority to implement that, without needing legislation. 'It doesn't take a legislative change.'

Jones also pointed out that only the host municipalities get a percentage of the tonnage fees. She would like to see something for municipalities that have the gravel trucks haul the material along their roads to help with the upkeep.

Libertarian candidate Daniel Kowalewski said he has not looked into this issue yet.

'No,' replied Green Party candidate Karren Wallace.

She said there's a fee of 11 cents per tonne charged to aggregate producers and only about half of that goes to municipalities. Citing Melancthon, where she lives, Wallace said the amount the Township gets in one year wouldn't pay for the paving of one kilometre of road. The charge in England, she added is about \$6 per tonne.

'I would say no,' commented New Democrat Rehya Rebecca Yazbek, also pointing to the necessity to sustain agricultural land.

Would you support proportional representation in the legislature?

'I think any sort of proportional representation is important,' Daid said, although she also observed this is a huge riding with diverse needs, so she didn't think it would be needed here.

'Nope,' said Jones, who pointed out there was a referendum on the issue on the ballot in the 2007 election. 'The voters said 'not necessary.''

She added she believes communities should choose their representatives. 'Proportional representation does not allow that,' she observed, adding leaders would be able to impose reps. 'I don't believe that's right.'

'Yes, I would,' Kowalewski replied.

Wallace said she hasn't done much research on this, so she declined to answer.

'If it's going to shake up the blue or red parties, it's not going to happen,' she did say.

'Yes,' said Yazbek. 'I believe in proportional representation. I think that the party does too. I think it's more democratic.'

Would you support the reinstatement of photo radar?

'I don't think spy cams in general are the way to monitor traffic,' Daid commented, as she pointed to the need to work with other community partners, like law enforcement, to see that the job is done equitably and better.

'I haven't spent enough time on whether there's value in that,' Jones said.

'I'm a firm believer in people following the rules of the road,' she added, but pointed out there are other issues like distracted driving, and the need to enforce those rules. 'You need police on the road patrolling.'

'No, I would not,' Kowalewski said.

'Speeding is a problem and it's dangerous,' he added, pointing out there are always exceptions to rules, and photo radar is indiscriminant. 'This is something that would require a human judgement call.'

Wallace pointed out red light cameras are in use.

'We're on camera all the time and I never got the argument that it's just a cash grab,' she observed, adding if one is caught speeding by a police officer, they get a ticket on the spot.

'It's a fee,' she added. 'You don't have to pay if you don't speed.'

'I really don't think that's an issue that's even on the table or being considered,' Yazbek said.

Is the Provincial Sunshine List out of date?

'It definitely needs to be re-evaluated,' Daid replied.

Jones pointed out the list has demonstrated the number of people making more than \$100,000 per year is up by 200 per cent since the Liberals came to power, as she said people want to know where the money is being spent.

?It's not about the price,? she said. ?It's the type job that's in that 100,000 and over type of range.?

Jones also said getting rid of the list would be a step backward in terms of transparency.

?I would say no,? Kowalewski said, pointing out the people on the list are paid taxpayers' money. ?It's important for them to know where their money's going.?

Wallace commented that people who make \$40,000 or \$50,000 would probably say it isn't.

She commented that maybe the list should keep up with inflation, although she wondered how a figure would be arrived at.

She did agree it helps people get a handle of costs of government.

?There's value in it,? she said. ?I can't say if it's out of date.?

Yazbek said the average family income is about \$104,000, and she didn't see that as being ?super wealthy.?