

Downey wins her first political race



Johanna Downey was looking over figures with area resident Anne Livingston in the council chambers election night, as the returns came in.



Johanna Downey

By Bill Rea

There's something to be said for getting an early start, and Johanna Downey can attest to that.

Downey, who declared her candidacy in February, cruised to an easy victory in last Monday's municipal election. She will be the next Regional representative for Ward 2 on Caledon council.

According to official figures released by the Town Monday, Downey collected 2,465 votes, giving her 80.69 per cent of the total cast. Challenger Mark Radford trailed with 590.

There were 8,824 eligible voters in the ward, meaning a voter turnout of 34.62 per cent.

Downey was among those watching the returns at the council chambers at Town Hall in Caledon East, and figures were very slow coming in. But things were looking good for her once the results were being flashed on the screen. Despite that, she was guardedly optimistic.

"You never know," she said. "I did my due diligence. I feel I did a lot of hard work, but so did Mark."

Downey expressed her thanks to her campaign team.

"They've been working really hard for me for the past six months," she said.

She added she understands there's a lot of work ahead of her, realizing she's going to have to learn the nuances of Peel Region "as quickly as I can."

"Obviously, I was disappointed," Radford commented in the days following the election, "probably more disappointed with the turnout."

"Ward 2 made a choice," he added. "I have to respect that."

Radford said he received a receptive response from the doors he knocked on during the campaign. "I guess I just didn't knock on enough doors," he commented.

Radford didn't rule out the possibility of seeking election again. "I need the next four years to think about that," he said.

The poll results showed a lot of consistency, although Radford showed some strength at the southern voting stations. He got 210 votes at the poll at SouthFields Village, where he lives - good for 27.34 per cent. And he got 22 per cent of the votes at the advance poll, which was held in Valleywood. But Downey had well in excess of 80 per cent at the polls in Cheltenham and Campbell's Cross.