

Dufferin-Caledon candidates respond to questions on issues

By Bill Rea

In anticipation of the June 12 provincial election, the Citizen contacted three of the candidates running in Dufferin-Caledon, seeking their spontaneous responses to predetermined questions.

Repeated attempts were made to contact Libertarian candidate Daniel Kowalewski and New Democrat Rehya Rebecca Yazbek, but they failed to return our calls before press time

The replies of the candidates who did respond are presented here in alphabetical order.

Would you support legislation

requiring the Province to balance its budget, as municipalities are required to do?

‘Yes, I would support such legislation,’ replied Liberal candidate Bobbie Daid.

But she also cautioned that there has to be some give and take on this. ‘An unbalanced budget doesn't mean a lack of responsibility by a government,’ she observed, stating too many cutbacks could prevent real economic growth.

‘Absolutely,’ said Progressive Conservative Sylvia Jones.

She added the main problem is not so much a lack of revenues, but where that money is being spent.

Jones said the biggest spending items for government are health care, followed by education, followed by servicing the government debt ‘I would support legislation that would rein that in,’ she said.

‘Certainly,’ replied Green Party candidate Karren Wallace, who said that should be expected of any household or taxpayer. ‘That's the way you run your home, or you go into bankruptcy.’

‘You can't keep living beyond your means,’ she added.

Is the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) relevant?

‘Absolutely,’ Daid said, adding it will be part of her role, if elected, to work with all relevant stakeholders. She said there needs to be some give, back and forth, at all levels.

‘Yes, it is,’ Jones said. ‘Frustratingly yes.’

She agreed the board, in its current form, is not perfect, but she said there needs to be a mechanism through which decisions can be appealed.

‘I guess that depends on who you talk to,’ Wallace commented, adding those who win before the board would think that's good.

‘There's no transparency around it,’ she said. ‘Who are the people who sit on the board?’

‘Changes are needed, that's for sure,’ Wallace added, pointing out the Province tells municipalities to make decisions, but they have to compete with developers who have deep pockets.

Are MPPs appropriately paid?

Daid said there should be changes, adding there should be a look taken at a reduced pay schedule.

‘I just want to serve the people,’ she remarked, adding some of the perks should go, pointing out federal and provincial members get long breaks, such as at Christmas. ‘We should be working like the rest of the public,’ she declared.

‘We know going in . . . what the compensation is,’ Jones observed. ‘There are no surprises.’

She added MPP salaries have been frozen since 2009, adding it showed their commitment to do their part to bring spending under control.

‘I would think so,’ Wallace replied. ‘They are well compensated.’

‘This is public money. We can't price it out of reach for people to pay for it,’ she added, observing that between paving roads and giving MPPs raises, the roads have priority.

Are High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes a good idea?

‘Yes,’ Daid said.

‘I'm on the road a lot,’ she added. ‘I do find it very beneficial to have those lanes.’

She added there should be more of them across the 400 series of highways.

‘They're not the solution for everything,’ Jones said, pointing to the need for more options for public transit and roads.

‘Goods and services don't travel by GO Trains or buses,’ Jones added, pointing out a manufacturing economy is based on a ‘just-in-time model.’

Goods that are stuck in traffic impact the economy, she concluded.

Wallace said that in her professional life, she has to commute a lot, making much use of the GO Train. ‘That's the best way to go,’ she said.

?I don't think they're being utilized to their maximum capacity,? she added.

Wallace said the transit situation in Toronto needs to be improved to catch GO?commuters heading into the city.