

Regional Councillor Mario Russo confident in Town staff, Council as term begins]

By Zachary Roman

Mario Russo says he's ready to work together with his Council colleagues to do good things for the people of Caledon.

On election night, October 24, Russo was surrounded by family and friends at his campaign office on Queen Street South in Bolton.

He said Caledon was kept in suspense as other municipalities' voting results came in poll by poll, while Caledon saw no results, and then a big block of them all at once.

This block turned out to be votes cast at advance polls, said Russo.

Results looked favourable for Russo, and he was feeling confident in the campaign he and his team had run. Eventually, all the votes came in, and when Russo found out he'd won, there was a cheer in the room.

‘It was a sweet feeling,’ said Russo, who received 3,365 votes.

He explained his campaign team was essentially just his immediate and extended family, as well as some good friends who chipped in when they had time.

Russo said the beauty of municipal politics is there's no party system; that when you're campaigning you're at the door representing yourself. Russo said he was proud his team hit around 15,000 houses in Caledon during the election.

‘In the last few weeks, I was out two times a day,’ said Russo.

Caledon's Council was sworn in on November 15, and Russo said it was time for them to get straight to work as there was much paperwork and training to do.

‘Town staff have been phenomenal. We've had an opportunity to do a little bit of orientation with all the other (Council) members. At this point in time, I have a good feeling,’ said Russo in a November 25 interview. ‘I'm always very cautiously optimistic that we're going to keep working together, and that's going to be our goal, to work together and do good things for the people of Caledon.’

Russo said he's been extremely impressed with the intelligence and work ethic of Caledon's Town staff and that it's a good thing Caledon residents have experts on their side. Russo said Caledon Council, along with all other Councils in Ontario, are trying to understand the implications of the Province's Bill 23.

‘With some of the implications of that bill, we may have challenges with planning the way we want to plan,’ said Russo. He explained the idea of streamlining and getting more houses on the market is a good one, but he does not want to see it happen without the appropriate infrastructure alongside it like roads, public transit, and community health.

‘Our residents are going to be holding the bag in the future if we don't look at this with a lens of what's the best thing for them,’ said Russo. ‘We're all understanding that there is a housing crisis, and we need to bring houses on stream very quickly. But very quickly doesn't mean that we do it in an irresponsible manner.’