

Ward 3 and 4 candidates discuss Regional issues at Chamber of Commerce meeting

By Bill Rea

Regional issues were discussed recently by two of the candidates seeking to be Regional representative for Wards 3 and 4 on Caledon council.

Incumbent Richard Whitehead faced challenger Jennifer Innis at a meeting hosted in Caledon East by the Caledon Chamber of Commerce. Candidate Tony Viola was not at the meeting.

Addressing the idea of working with the Chamber to help local business, Whitehead observed that for business to have any chance, taxes have to be kept low. He added that to strengthen Caledon's economy, there need to be partnership with the Town and groups like the Chamber. With industry in the right location, he said that has to be marketed.

Whitehead added he has always wanted there to be a strong relationship between the Town and Chamber.

Innis said there needs to be a fresh approach with the Town's relationship with the Chamber. She observed small and medium-size business is the backbone of the local economy, and the community has to work as a whole to assist it.

Dealing with issues regarding the aggregate industry, Whitehead pointed out Regional council has five representatives from Caledon, where the resource is, and 19 representatives from areas that need the resource. He added the Caledon councillors spend a lot of time at Region keeping their colleagues engaged on the issue.

Innis called for looking at best practices in other municipalities and partner with them. She added the councillors in Brampton and Mississauga understand the reality.

?They need us,? she said. ?I think that in itself keeps them engaged.?

There were some comments cell phone towers going close to homes and schools.

Whitehead said this comes up a lot, adding the federal government issues licences, but municipalities can comment.

He added these towers need to have proper set backs.

But he also pointed out they are needed for better signals, although he agreed that people who have to live near them have legitimate concerns.

Addressing traffic issues, Innis said more work needs to be done on enforcement.

She added Caledon OPP does a good job dealing with hot spots in town, but more has to be done, because people are driving the 80 km-h zones doing 100 or 130.

Whitehead pointed out there are three major highways in Caledon, adding all truck routes go through small villages.

There's been talk about bypasses around some of these villages, but Whitehead observed the Bolton bypass cost about \$100 million, and Peel Region has been looking at something around Palgrave and Caledon East. He said bypasses aren't likely there because of impacts on the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment. It might be more possible to get a bypass around Caledon village.

Innis closed out her comments by stressing her strong work ethic and commitment to her community. She also said she knows how to find workable solutions to problems and provide quality customer service.

She also promised to be a strong advocate for economic development.

?Together, we are the future of Caledon,? she declared.

?Experience counts,? Whitehead maintained, as he told the audience there will be many changes in the coming term. He considers himself a team player and a strong independent voice.