

Newmarket-Aurora candidates speak directly to voters at Library

By Brock Weir

All seven candidates vying to be Newmarket-Aurora's next representative in Ottawa stood before a packed house at the Aurora Public Library on Tuesday night, October 8, to make their final pitches to local voters on their home turf.

It was the second all-candidates meeting of the day for candidates from Aurora's north riding, having started the day in King Township participating in a debate hosted by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce.

While the morning event was an altogether more contentious affair, the Library's meet-and-greet was just that, an opportunity to put debate points aside and speak directly to voters on the issues that matter to them ? and why they should have their vote.

Stepping up, in speaking order, were Yvonne Kelly of the NDP, Walter Bauer of the Green Party, Tony Van Bynen of the Liberal Party, Lois Brown of the Conservative Party, Andrew McCaughtrie of the People's Party, Dorian Baxter of the Progressive Canadian Party, and Laurie Goble of the Rhinoceros Party.

Excerpts from their respective pitches are included here.

YVONNE KELLY (NDP)

Canadians are facing many challenges today. We need to break away from the old way of doing things that has brought us to this place. Under previous Federal governments, we have seen an exponential growth in inequality, with the richest households seeing income grow six times faster than the bottom 99 per cent. The profit of banks and corporations have expanded, while 46 per cent of Canadians are 200 dollars away from insolvency. We also face a housing crisis because Federal governments in the 1990s decided that this wasn't the business of government to ensure that people had a safe place to call home. We also have a younger generation that is not going to do as well as the older generation and that is the first time in history that has happened. We have a crisis of our climate that needed our attention, much earlier than today. These are not individual problems. They will not be solved by a tax cut, by a rebate here or a tax credit there. We can only begin to tackle these problems once we implement bold, progressive investments and progressive taxation measures.

As New Democrats, we are not about proposing quick fixes. It took decades to get here. But [it took] previous governments turning a blind

eye to income inequality, tax evasion, an aging population, homelessness and a climate crisis to bring us where we are. To embrace the collective challenges we face as a society, it will take forward thinking, sizable investments in health care, child care, long-term care, indigenous rights and a bold plan to transition to a green economy. It will also take leadership that is willing to stand up to you and willing to stand up to big pharma, oil companies, cellular monopolies, speculators and money launderers. We're at a crossroads; we can continue on as usual or we can be bold and make a new choice. Which will you choose?

WALTER BAUER (GREEN)

The Green Party is a complete platform and I invite you to go to the website to explore. I will focus on climate change this evening. My sister lives in Alberta where they have a successful business that's indirectly dependent on the oil and gas industry. Alberta is looking for an alternate customer [for oil and gas from previous US sales] in China. China's coal is one fifth the cost of Alberta's oil is as dirty as China's coal. The cost to extract and ship over this bitumen is \$74, which exceeds the world's market selling price of \$72. The future for Alberta oil is bleak.

After hearing Greta, my sister declared she was going to vote Green. Today I got a text from my sister saying, "Scary to think that by 2030, all gas vehicles will be eliminated. What's going to replace oil?" Greta's urgency has clearly worn off. My response is, "You're asking the wrong question. You need to be asking, 'What happens when we don't replace oil?'" After that exchange, I began to think of the dynamics. Those that think about climate change fall into three categories: deniers, fence-sitters and the convinced. The deniers, the Conservatives, believe that climate change is real but cyclical and not caused by humans. The fence-sitters, like the Liberals, think the economy is more important than anything else. Among the convinced, we have strategic voters that either are anti-Scheer or anti-Trudeau and fear that voting Green will support the wrong party. The NDP party, burdened by legacy, have voters who are more focused on potential job loss than impending crisis. Then we have the committed Green voters. As an engineer, I know the numbers, I believe in the science. The message is simple; to prevent irreversible climate change, we have to act now.

TONY VAN BYNEN (LIBERAL)

My family immigrated to Canada when I was two years old?with ten kids in tow?arrived in Canada with what might be the equivalent of \$500 today with eleven kids. We settled into an old farmhouse and within the first five years we had our farmhouse burn to the ground at a point where fortunately all the kids were in school and my parents were working, but we didn't have a shred with us when we returned home. What strikes me and what has influenced my life is the fact we had five neighbours take in kids, saying, "Stay with us until you can find a place to stay." Within six or eight weeks, we found an old frame house that the neighbourhood all helped repair and we could finally move in. These are the values I have known to be in Canada, the values that have

brought me to become involved with the Liberal party.

The Liberal Party's focus is on supporting the most vulnerable in our society. They have focused on what is referred to as middle-class families. Middle class families are families with incomes between \$50,000 and \$125,000 and here in Newmarket-Aurora we are very, very fortunate that many of us have incomes beyond that. If you believe in the Canada I believe in, where we should help people who need our support when they need it, then you would be supporting the Liberal party. I have been a banker for 30 years, I understand the importance of a balanced budget. I have been involved as the Mayor of Newmarket for 12 years and I understand what the community issues are. I understand very clearly what Federal policies and Provincial policies?how they effect our community.

LOIS BROWN (CONSERVATIVE)

Every election is important to every Canadian and this election is no different. I bring three attributes to this position: I have served as the Member of Parliament for Newmarket-Aurora for seven years, including six of those as Parliamentary Secretary for International Development. I am a person who believes in the value of hard work and when I am doing something that I love to do, it is not work. I promise to be there for you. Long before politics, I have been engaged in this community in so many ways.

Constituents have a choice in this election. It is a very clear choice. It is a choice between ongoing, double-digit debt for the next four years, or a government that is going to live within its means, make life more affordable for Canadians, and leave the money in your pocket. My commitment to you is to put you first and put the needs of Newmarket-Aurora first, as I did when I was the Member of Parliament before. On October 21, I am asking or your vote to put me back in Ottawa as your strong voice for Newmarket-Aurora.

ANDREW McCAUGHTRIE (PEOPLE'S PARTY)

We're running on a platform of lower, simpler taxes for all Canadians. We plan to balance the budget within two years. We will be ending corporate welfare. We have a plan for sustainable immigration. Thank you all for coming out tonight. I really appreciate everything the community has done while I have been running, from getting me on the ballot, to engaging with me at your doorstep or at the debates. It has been a great learning experience for me and I have really enjoyed talking to you being able to give you the opportunity for something new to vote for.

DORIAN BAXTER (PROGRESSIVE CANADIAN)

If you give me an opportunity to serve you, you will have the strongest voice you have ever had. There will be no shill in my voice and I can assure you of this: in terms of the value I can give you, I am the only

candidate in all these 16 years I have been running, that has legal documents drawn up to show I will return 50 per cent of my salary into this riding to fight poverty. I believe in leadership by example? If you vote for me, you're going to get four candidates for the price of one. I am a Red Tory along with Joe Clark. I am a Blue Liberal. I am greener than the Green Party and as far as the NDP is concerned, our left wing is our socially progressive wing. We can run circles around the NDP with our left wing, our right wing fiscally Conservative.

Let me tell you this: the NDP have a history, and bless their hearts, at throwing money after the symptoms of poverty. We want to eradicate that. I also want you to know that if you elect me, I will be available for you 24/7.

LAURIE GOBLE (RHINOCEROS PARTY)

It is not very easy to have the Rhinoceros Party recognized by anybody. Most people consider it to be a joke, although it is a legitimate party recognized by Elections Canada. One of the main things I found out about the Rhinoceros Party is there is no set platform. There is no party line. That leaves me able to do what I feel is best for this riding, Newmarket-Aurora. I want to be able to speak to the people of the community and be their voice in Ottawa. I want to be able to find out what matters here and also to be able to have some sort of accountability at the top levels to make sure they are not just following their party line and ignoring the people around them.

It may be a satirical ?joke? party to a lot of people, but I am a serious candidate. I worked hard to get the signatures on the ballot. I appreciate all the people who supported me in that and I hope more people will support somebody other than one of the big parties that nobody much seems to be entirely happy with. I want to be able to be more positive and get rid of attacking the other parties by saying, ?They did this, they did this, they didn't do that,? I want to be able to say, ?This is how we all work together as a group of parties to make this country a better place, to make lives better for everybody, but me, specifically, for the people in this area.? I hope you will give me an opportunity to represent you.