

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: 2018 Municipal Election final notebook

By Stephen Somerville

The municipal election has come and gone.

No more politics for a while.

Err, no. Strike that last sentence.

The federal election will take place next October, which is just less than one year away.

I can hear the collective groans of readers right now.

Some final musings and observations from the campaign trail.

I was a little bit surprised the way the mayoralty vote turned out.

My analysis was not grounded on any public polling. It was simply a feeling based on a couple of things.

First, I attended one of the three mayoralty campaign events.

Second, I drove around the Town, looking at how many candidate signs were actually on front lawns as opposed to public/municipal property.

Third, I took a look at the individual brochures, website and size and number of ads in the local newspapers.

I thought Tom Mrakas would win a very tightly contested election over either the incumbent Geoff Dawe or John Abel. In the end, Mr. Mrakas finished comfortably in front of Mr. Dawe, Chris Ballard and John Abel.

Both Mr. Dawe and Mr. Abel had been members of Council for a while. They have both served with class. I wish them both well in their future endeavors.

I was also not surprised regarding the Council vote. I thought all the incumbents would win, and I thought that Rachel Gilliland would be joining them. I did not know who would take the last seat at the table. Mr. John Gallo returns to Council with a comfortable margin over the seventh place finisher.

Before I pat myself on the back too hard, just keep in mind that I confidently predicted that Kim Campbell and the federal PC Party would win one hundred seats in 1993! (In case readers may have missed this election or forgot the results, Ms. Campbell's Party only won two seats, not including her own.)

Online voting was great. I voted the traditional way, going over to the Seniors' Centre during the advance poll, while my wife used the electronic voting. She thought it was great ? very fast!

Hopefully, this will improve voter turnout next time (more on this in a future column).

I repeat here something that I mentioned in my last column in order to potentially increase voter turnout and make it easier for votes:

A good idea was suggested to me during one of the mayoralty debates that I believe should be considered by the Town staff. The Town's website lists all the candidates. I think they should take it a step further. They should have the candidate videos there, plus a one page literature piece and a link to the respective candidates' website.

That way, voters like me could do a one stop shop and be able to compare and contrast the candidates in an easy way. Trying to select six Council candidates is not easy.

We should also revisit the issue of a ward system. From what I have read in this and the other local newspaper, there seems to be a good consensus for the adoption of a ward system.

I was talking to a first time Council candidate at the mayor's debate and asking them how it was going. The lady said pretty well, but that it is very hard trying to campaign all around Town. She said that for this very simple reason she is very much in favour of a ward system. I will also have more to say about this topic in a future column.

We are fortunate to live in a community where so many enthusiastic and skilled people came forward to represent us.

We thank all those who put their name on the ballot.

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