

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: 2018 Municipal Election notebook

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By Stephen Somerville

We are now in the closing stages of the municipal election campaign. For the volunteers of the respective candidates, it has been anything but calm; activity has been on-going for the past couple of months.

It will be a sprint to the October 22 finish for all the campaign teams.

Some musings and observations from the campaign trail:

You don't need to read the papers, listen to the radio or watch your television to know when any election has begun; simply watch for the lawn signs.

Aurora is awash in political lawn signs.

The amount of signs that one sees doesn't correlate exactly to a winning campaign, of course, but they do provide clues as to the organizational strength of the candidate, provide visibility and name recognition and, as the campaign moves along, the more signs shown popping up on people's lawns, shows momentum.

Neighbours become intrigued as they watch a sign crew do their work. I love it as the neighbour cranes his neck to see what it is being put up. A sigh of relief comes what they realize it is not a 'For Sale' sign.

The homeowner then sees the name of the candidate on the sign and they either smile or may even say something nice to you or they will immediately look away.

In some rare instances, I have seen these individuals looked stunned, thinking to themselves, 'I thought my neighbour was a good guy' 'I shared a beer with him yesterday. It turns out that he is an idiot.'

I wish I had a digital camera to record some of the looks! Priceless!

I had the honour of moderating the All-Candidates debate on behalf of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce at the Royal Venetian Banquet Hall. A good crowd was on hand considering that the Leafs home opener was occurring at the same time.

Each of the four mayoralty candidates acquitted themselves very well in light of the tough questions that the Chamber had prepared. We opened with ten rapid fire questions, in which the candidates were only allowed to answer using their ping pong paddle 'green side for 'yes' or red side for 'no'.

My favourite three rapid fire questions:

Did you/Do you support the reduction of the size of council to 6?

Do you support a ward system moving forward?

Do you support the retail operation of cannabis in Aurora?

Each candidate was given two minutes to answer a question specifically directed at them and then each candidate had one minute to rebut/respond. There were no fireworks. However, the questions were quite detailed and of sufficient variety that I think those in attendance had a good understanding of where the candidates stood on the issues.

Interspersed throughout breaks in the debate were two minute videos of all the council candidates. I am amazed by the quality of the candidates. Besides the passion shown through the screen was the amount of volunteerism that they have done in our community.

It is also interesting to see what each of the respective candidates chose to highlight during their two minutes. Some spoke about their business background, while others discussed their long history in Town.

A good idea was suggested to me that evening 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 so that and be able to compare and contrast the candidates in an easy way. Trying to select six council candidates is not easy.

I was talking to a first-time council candidate at the debate and asking them how it was going. The lady said pretty well, but that it is 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 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 have come forward to represent us. Please

make sure you go out and cast a ballot either in the advanced polls or on Election Day.

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