

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Campaign Notebook

By Stephen Somerville

With the municipal campaign in the final home stretch, a couple of observations from my campaign notebook.

First, it is great to see that democracy is alive and kicking in Aurora.

We are very fortunate to have two gentlemen vying to be Mayor and 28 candidates for the eight councillor positions. By way of comparison, in 2010, we had four people seeking the Mayor's chain of office and 21 council candidates.

Based on the literature that I have seen and some of the folks I have spoken to, we will continue to be well served in our community with whomever we elect.

Second, I was at church the other day and a former council candidate and I were speaking about the large number of candidates and how many votes it will most likely take to win.

I had guessed that it would take a minimum of 6,500 votes while my friend suggested just over 5,000.

I went back and checked out the results of the 2010 municipal election.

We were both right!

In 2010, John Abel was elected as a local Councillor (and Deputy Mayor) as he had the most votes with 5,831. He was closely followed by Michael Thompson with 5,810. Paul Pirri was the eighth and last person selected; he garnered 4,140 votes. Stephen Granger just missed out on being re-elected with 4,122 votes.

Third, another curious aspect to this campaign is that with so many candidates on the ballot, will voter 'fatigue' set in? By this I mean that a person might have in mind three or four candidates they want to vote for, but don't have anyone else in mind.

If a voter wants to complete their ballot by choosing the maximum amount of council candidates, they just tick off the names of those at the top of the alphabetically organized ballot in order to reach eight.

I have never seen any empirical studies to back this 'fatigue' claim. I guess we will have to wait until voting night to find out.

Fourth, a lot of people seem to love reading or hearing about opinion polls, and yours truly is no different.

Last week this paper published the results of its traditional pre-election poll done through www.theauroran.com.

I will be very interested to see how close these poll results are to the actual results on election night. If this poll is in anyway indicative, then there will be some new Council faces after October 27.

Fifth, I have received a few pamphlets and brochures from candidates in my mail box over the past couple of weeks. For the most part, the documents are well done; providing some high level background on a person's experience, education, volunteerism and reasons for running.

One mistake that I have found is that the type face is so small that I even have trouble reading the text on some of the brochures and my eyes aren't too bad. Please consider your audience might be over 30 years old and not have 20/20 eyesight!

Lastly, shame on those individuals who have defaced or ripped or kicked or have torn down campaign signs. This vandalism is a criminal offence. Hopefully, your luck will run out and you will be caught.

Just under two weeks to go until voting day.

Good luck to the candidates on the hustings!

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