

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Election Predictions

By Stephen Somerville

By the time that you are reading this column, the municipal election will have already taken place. This will not stop me today (October 24), however, from a favourite past time ? making electoral predictions.

In December 2006 I also boldly predicted Bob Rae would easily win the federal Liberal Leadership on the fourth ballot ? another one of my classic ?clangers? I must admit.

But this still pales in comparison to my 1993 forecast when I confidently predicted that Kim Campbell would win one hundred seats!

I also predicted that then incumbent mayor Tim Jones would retain the mayor's chain by about 350 votes over Ms. Morris and Nigel Kean in November 2006!

My only consolation is that I did correctly pick six of the eight Aurora Councillors in that same municipal election. Pretty thin gruel, I must admit!

Based on my record in predicting elections, I won't be headed for Las Vegas or Casino Rama any time soon.

A couple of tools were utilized in arriving at my predictions.

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

Second, I reviewed the published results of the traditional pre-election polls done through www.theauroran.com.

The poll has an accuracy rate of ?+ or -? 6% points.

Third, I spoke to some of the workers at the advance polling station to get a feel for possible voter turnout.

Finally, I reviewed about half of the candidates' campaign literature.

Most people will not vote for all eight candidates, they will just vote for the three or four candidates that they like. They will not pick names just to fill out the dance card. If this holds true, then the eighth council spot could be decided by fewer than twenty-five votes. Getting your vote out will be critical.

Let's go back to the on-line poll.

I know that this is an on-line poll, but at least there is the requirement for a separate IP address each time someone votes.

The survey question: ?If the election was held today, who would you vote for??

I reviewed the ongoing poll results published in the October 9 and 16 editions of The Auroran.

There is no real difference in the margin between the two polls for the Mayors' race. Geoff Dawe is shown as the 65/35 winner over John Gallo in the October 9 poll and he had only dropped one percentage point in the October 16 poll.

Now to the Council candidates.

From the October 9 poll:

Here were the top nine ? remember, only the top eight will get in on election night:

1. Tom Mrakas 18% (577)
2. Alice Lalas 16% (505)
3. Mike Thompson 8% (237)
4. John Abel 7% (233)
5. Paul Pirri 7% (228)
6. Jeff Thom 6% (192)
7. Sandra Humfries 6% (175)
8. Harold Kim 5% (155)
9. Arshad Desai 4% (112)

The October 15 poll results:

1. Tom Mrakas 19% (806)
2. Alice Lalas 16% (696)
3. Mike Thompson 10% (432)
4. John Abel 10% (422)
5. Paul Pirri 7% (322)

6. Sandra Humfries 6% (241)
7. Jeff Thom 5% (224)
8. Harold Kim 4% (167)
9. Arshad Desai 4% (164)

There are the same candidates leading in the two polls with Tom Mrakas on top and Arshad Desai in ninth place, just behind Harold Kim.

Based on past elections, it will most likely take over 4,000 votes to win a seat on Council.

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.

Ok, my fearless predictions.

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe wins handily over Mr. Gallo ? probably 60/40. The final electoral results being not much different than the on-line polls results.

There are twenty eight candidates vying for the eight seats. There will undoubtedly be a number of surprises come Monday evening. Now, without further ado, my top eight council candidate picks - in order of votes:

1. Tom Mrakas
2. John Abel
3. Alice Lalas
4. Michael Thompson
5. Sandra Humfries
6. Jeff Thom
7. Arshad Desai
8. Harold Kim

The one wild card for me in this is Councillor Evelyn Buck. I believe that she is going to either finish fourth or 14th.

You heard it here first (ok, last.). And by the way, the Leafs will be sitting in a very comfortable playoff position at Christmas! (Just don't ask me about their playoff status position come the first day of April!)

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