

FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE: Vic Fedeli

By Stephen Somerville

After the recent provincial electoral debacle, it is time for the Party to get off the mat and move forward.

The executive of the Party is proposing to choose a new leader next May.

Although I would have liked to see serious policy development begin before the leadership process has started, this is now not possible.

Last week, one of the declared Leadership candidates, North Bay PC MPP and former finance and energy critic Vic Fedeli was in town.

Although it snowed quite a bit last Wednesday and the roads were not in great condition, there was a good turnout of folks from our community to hear what Mr. Fedeli had to say.

Mr. Fedeli's campaign is built on his five proposed constitutional amendments that would address the following.

1. Clarify the Leader's Role in the Constitution
2. Election Platform Ratification
3. Leadership Review
4. Private, Democratic Balloting
5. Membership Represented in Caucus

Let's take a brief look at number three on his list ? Leadership Review.

I agree 100% with what Mr. Fedeli said:

?It is no longer enough just to have a leadership review once after losing an election. Members need a way to demonstrate our confidence in the Leader on a regular basis.

?We have seen bad press and unnecessary distraction whenever our Party goes down in the polls ? because there is no way to put the issue of confidence in the Leader to rest.

?That's why I have proposed that a leadership affirmation vote should be held at every Annual General Meeting of the Party.?

I also agree with Mr. Fedeli regarding #2 ? Election Platform Ratification.

?Over several losing election campaigns, one thing has become perfectly clear:

?We have had a disconnect between the policies that members and MPPs want, and the policies that find their way into our platform.

?A broad, inclusive, big tent Party ensures that we have the best ideas, and those ideas ? approved by our membership at Party policy meetings ? must be respected.

?That's why I'm proposing that our election platforms must be ratified by our Progressive Conservative MPPs and also by the Policy Committee of the Party before it is released to the general public.

?The Policy Committee includes representatives from our grassroots membership, the Party Executive, and the Leader. As Leader, I would ultimately be responsible for the election platform, its contents, style, and strategy.

?But, a good leader with a good platform should not have trouble gaining support for the platform by MPPs and by the Policy Committee.?

Adopting these two Constitutional Amendments would be a good start to regaining the trust of the rank and file and also to rebuilding enthusiasm within the provincial PC Party.

Although I believe this Leadership process is much too long, with a Leader being selected next May, I do look forward to the upcoming debates between the candidates.

Once a new leader is chosen, then the party can get on with the very hard work of strengthening itself; recruiting new party members, raising funds and developing policy alternatives for the next election.

So, why is all this important to me here in Aurora in the fall/winter of 2014 as Ms. Wynne's Liberals will be holding power with a

good sized majority until June 2018?

As I have written on these pages before, it is important for the simple reason that a democracy best functions when you have Opposition parties that are ready and able to potentially govern.

Knowing that the other guy/gal can do the job is a great way to keep the incumbents on their toes.

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