

Mayoralty candidates address sewers in King City

By Bill Rea

Two of the candidates seeking to be mayor of King Township faced each other Oct. 26 in the second of two all-candidates' meetings hosted by the King Township Chamber of Commerce.

Incumbent Margaret Black and Councillor Steve Pellegrini were both of hand for the session, and challenger Mark Healy again did not attend.

Black, who spoke first, said she wanted to build upon her comments from the previous three meetings, which she said included continuing a program of controlled growth and stressing that the Township's finances have been well managed, "despite the demands placed on them in the past few years by my opponent."

She also stressed the success in preserving King as a rural oasis among high-density municipalities, citing the difference one sees when entering the township from Vaughan, Richmond Hill or Newmarket. "Our township is magical," she said. "It's a magical place."

She added that's because of the work over the 12 years she's been mayor to develop community and official plans to protect the landscape, and she pointed out those plans have been strengthened by provincial legislation.

"You need a mayor who will defend the community plans she helped build," Black declared.

She stated she has listened to the concerns of King City residents regarding the personal financial impacts they are facing with the new sewers in the village, adding borrowing rates have been put in place that are better than banks. "We are prepared to ensure that

no one faces financial hardship," she said.

Black also promised to keep on seeking grant money to help with the sewers, and set up a residents' hook-up advisory committee to offer guidance for people with their connections.

She took a swipe at Pellegrini, charging his desire to cancel the connection bylaw will only increase costs, while disregarding health and safety concerns.

"Everyone would have saved money if they had been installed in 2000," Black maintained, pointing to increases in inflation, as well as energy and labour costs. "Does anyone really believe that sewers or connections will cost less in five years?"

Pellegrini opened his remarks by restating his belief that it's time for new leadership in King, also remarking that a good leader listens and works with all levels of government, while supporting fiscal responsibility and reflecting a shared vision.

He charged King has been suffering under poor leadership, which has driven costs up, including on the new sewers. He said they are over-budget due to poor management.

Pellegrini also stressed his commitment to the job, pointing out he has never missed a meeting in six years on council. As well, he mentioned accomplishments while he's been in office, including expanded parks and recreation facilities like bike trails.

He went on the offensive too, citing Black's previous comments that buying the plaza in King City for municipal offices was a wise investment. He said it cost \$2.85 million and about another \$1 million has been

spent on repairs, meaning almost \$4 million has been put into it.

As well, Pellegrini commented on the municipal finances, pointing out \$2.5 million has been committed to the sewers in King City that has not been fully secured, and there will be about another \$1 million in connection charges.

"Our credit will be stretched to unprecedented levels," he warned.

Pellegrini lashed out again at the imbalance in the local tax base, with residents carrying too much of the load, to the tune of 95 per cent. He also repeated his contention that for every dollar of new residential taxes collected, it costs about \$1.40 to maintain the same level of service. He stated it's time for an economic strategy that addresses and corrects the imbalance.

There were some at the meeting who resented being forced to hook up to the sewers.

Pellegrini stated he would offer options as opposed to forcing people with working septic systems to hook up if they don't want to.

Black countered that the bylaw is in place, passed after several landowners put up some \$9 million to cut the individual household costs by several thousand dollars. To pick and choose those who are to hook up would create "utter chaos," she said, adding environmental assessments and independent studies have determined there is a health problem. She also said the cost will appear to be minor if a resident has to replace a septic system down the road.

Pellegrini told another questioner that some people in the village want more time to come up with the money.

The topic of sewer litigation

came up, with Black stating she had not supported spending money on it.

Pellegrini countered a group of residents launched an action against York Region, and Township joined in, at its own expense.

Black stated the Township was obliged to get involved in order to keep the project progressing. She added the Region didn't have the option of stopping it because of the health concerns and possible liability involved.

Pellegrini said he had nothing to do with it, adding the Region has a budget of more than \$1 billion. "What could little King add to the region in terms of fighting this litigation?" he asked.

In addressing questions of the tax imbalance, Pellegrini pointed out there's a difference in service levels required to accommodate business as opposed to homes, in terms of things like snow plowing, garbage collection, recreation, etc. He pointed to The Kingbridge Centre, and stated there should be efforts to attract a corporate head office, that will pay local taxes and employ people.

Black said she supports attracting more business to the area, although she said the figures Pellegrini had been citing were wrong.

Pellegrini also stressed the need to be vigilant when it comes to adhering to the community plans. That means working with developers, and he said if they have to put together a good product, it's easier for them to sell it and better for the

community.

Black also pointed out the community plans call for mixes in housing types.

One man attacked Black for having to declare conflicts of interests at the Region because of work her husband does. She responded her husband is an environmental engineer who specializes in water resources. He has done work in York, but on behalf of government. She also said he spends a lot of time researching global warming. "He's a true environmentalist," she declared.

"For the record, I've never had a conflict of interests," Pellegrini commented, later stating he has no ties with developers. He added if he did, he wouldn't be accused of fighting sewers.

But he was called to explain his academic qualifications. One man said Pellegrini's Web site could lead one to believe he has an MBA, but he stated he does not. He has taken a masters program at York University, but said he does not have a masters degree.

Black also asserted the

community plans, combined with the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt legislation, are "absolutely" effective in curbing urban sprawl. She pointed to the example of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, which is still going strong. "Do you know hard it would be to change that?" she declared, stating the province would have to change the legislation, and both the Region and Township would have to approve.

Pellegrini pointed out King City is a settlement area in the moraine plan, adding there's nothing to preclude intensification within the boundaries. He said that would require a process too, but said there will be a lot of development pressure applied as the village is filled.

Black countered the population in King City is going to be limited by orders of the Ministry of the Environment and the size of the sewer pipe. "You can't just amend the community plans," she said. "Our population in King City cannot be intensi-

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Asks You To Consider The Following Before Casting Your Vote

Do you want a full time Mayor - **(Black)**, or A Mayor with a full time Job? (Pellegrini)

Do you want a councillor who has lived in Ward 3 for 29 years, understanding the needs of our local farmers and rural issues **(Pabst)**, or A councillor who does not live in Ward 3? (Alilovic)

Do you want a councillor in Nobleton who has worked hard on your behalf to improve Nobleton -**(Grandilli)**, or One who has tried to stop any form of progress in King Township by constantly fighting us in the courts (Laidlaw)?

Do you want a councillor who thinks independently - **(Grandilli)**, or One who represents special interest groups - (Laidlaw)?

Do you want a councillor in King City who wants to move forward with a realistic vision - **(Peacock)**, or One who wants to take you backwards -(Mortelliti)?

The Facts Are:

The Nobleton Community Hall has **never** been discussed for demolition.

The Slokker Development **is** within the community plan, Nobleton **will not** exceed a population of 6500.

Nobleton and King City have an abundance of water – York Region **will not** allow any houses to be built without sufficient water capacity.

The King City hook-up by-law **cannot** be rescinded. There must be sufficient flows to allow the system to carry sewage. Do you want trucks hauling sewage through your village? To rescind the by-law at this point would be foolish fiscally. Capital costs have already been incurred. Do you want to increase your cost more due to further delay?

As councillor with 12 years experience, I want a Council that will work to preserve our rural heritage and move forward in making King Township a well-balanced community in which to live. We must have a Council that will work for the best interest of King Township by considering all the facts and information provided. It is imperative that we start moving this Township forward in a positive manner and stop the negativity that has enveloped us all in the past.



ACCLAIMED COUNCILLOR HAS MESSAGE TOO

Councillor Bill Cober has been returned to his Ward 4 council seat by acclamation, but he's still been taking part in the all-candidates' meetings, urging residents to get out and vote. "Your vote counts and your vote matters," he declared.