

Phil Bannon gets the PC nomination in Oak Ridges - Markham

By Bill Rea

They say “the early bird catches the worm,” and that would probably apply to politics too.

But Phil Bannon could probably come up with a counter argument to that.

The deputy mayor of Whitchurch — Stouffville declared his candidacy for the Progressive Conservative nomination in the provincial riding of Oak Ridges — Markham about three weeks ago. By mid-



D'Arcy Pigott

afternoon Saturday, he had the nomination in his pocket.

The 55-year-old retired Toronto police officer and father of two needed two ballots to secure the nomination in a crowded and sweltering school gym in Markham. He bested former Whitchurch — Stouffville mayor Sue Sherban, organizational behaviour specialist Gayani Weerasinghe and Markham community activist D'Arcy Pigott.

Pigott trailed the pack after the first ballot and was eliminated. He refused to publicly endorse any other candidate or say who he would be supporting.

Bannon had a clear majority and the nomination after the second vote.

Although exact numbers were not provided at the meeting, informed sources

told the Sentinel a little more than 600 votes were cast on the first ballot.

“I can't thank you enough,” Bannon told the crowd as he accepted the nomination. “It's not me, it's you.”

He also endeavored to set aside any bitterness from the nomination campaign as he urged everyone to work to win the riding for the Tories.

“We must work together if we want to take this riding,” he remarked.

Bannon agreed he had a late start in the race, but despite that, he still sold more party memberships than any of his competitors; more than 500. He also pointed out that owing to the cut-off, he only had about a week and a half to sell those memberships.

He concluded that shows people know him, believe in him and know he delivers.

He added Saturday's

meeting held few surprises for him.

“I felt very confident,” he said. “I wouldn't have entered the race unless I was confident we could win.”

Bannon also said right after the meeting he had spoken to one of his opponents about working on his coming campaign, and he plans to speak to the others, in the hopes of presenting “a united front for this riding.”

“I can't do it alone,” he added. “It's a team effort.”

Bannon had a number of his council colleagues from Whitchurch — Stouffville on hand to back him up, including Mayor Wayne Emmerson, who focused on how knowledgeable he is and the input he offers. “He's a strong voice on council and he cares about our community,” Emmerson commented.

In his address to the meeting, Bannon said there were three things he was trying to impress on them, based on what he's heard people want; dynamic communities, smart communities and healthy communities.

He added the three things most important to provincial Tories are similar; selecting a strong candidate; electing a Conservative government that is economically prudent, transparent and

accountable; and electing a Conservative government that works well and co-operates with the federal and municipal levels.

Bannon said that's what he wants to accomplish as an MPP, by being able to tackle challenges, seize opportunities and bring a “fresh, can-do attitude.”

He also stressed his experience both in politics and in business as the vice-president of a successful transportation company, as well as a solid track record as one who acts in the best interests of those he serves.

“I am a man of principles,” he said. “I am a tireless advocate of those I serve.”

As well, there were words of praise for party leader John Tory.

“I'm proud to stand as a John Tory supporter,” he declared.

“We have the right platform, and now is the right time,” he added.

Sherban opened her address to the meeting in an angry tone, as she sought to refute misinformation she said was being spread about her, including thoughts that she might seek the Liberal nomination, or that she was supporting another candidate.

She also addressed her desire to serve a greater good. On issues of health care, she said the premium imposed by the Dalton McGuinty government has not been going to local hospitals, and that has to change. She added the Grits have not followed through on their promises regarding child care, and she pointed to the need for infrastructure dollars from the province. “We get programs,” she quipped.

Sherban later agreed she sounded angry at the start of her remarks, but pointed to the need to correct inaccurate stories as fast as possible.

When asked if she would work on Bannon's campaign, Sherban said, “I'll definitely work for the party.”

Weerasinghe commented on a number of issues in her address. “Our health care system is crying for help,” she remarked, pointing out the McGuinty government imposed the health care premium, yet took away funding for various preventive services that would have eased the financial burden on the system in the long-run. On education issues, she suggested having high school students use some of their community service hours to tutor their elementary fellows. She also expressed concern about Ontario talent leaving the province and she commented on the need to have opportunity for those people here.

After the results were announced, Weerasinghe commented that all the candidates had strong attributes. She also said if Bannon asks for her help in the coming campaign, he'll get it. “I have no reservations about helping out a candidate,” she commented.

Pigott was more conversational in his address, commenting on his work as an activist and his efforts to set up a federation of ratepayers. He also lashed out at the broken promises of the McGuinty government, stating that people in the riding are looking for accountability and accessibility. They are also looking for an MPP who will get back to them if they have issues. “That is my promise and pledge to you,” he declared.

He too raised the issue of the health care premium, calling it a tax. “If it walks like a duck, talks like a duck and looks like a duck, it's a bloody duck,” he declared.

Pigott said he wasn't too upset with the results. “Every candidate goes into a contest always expecting to win,” he remarked, adding the grass roots made their choice. “I have to be a big enough person to accept it, and I do.”



Sue Sherban



Gayani Weerasinghe



Phil Bannon received congratulations from party members after winning the nomination Saturday.



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**Durham/York Residual Waste
Environmental Assessment Study
Public Information Sessions**

PUBLIC NOTICE

- Health Risk Assessment Feasibility Study -

The Regions of Durham and York are participating in a joint waste study to find a better way to manage the residual waste (i.e. garbage) remaining after diversion efforts, such as recycling and composting. Through the Joint Waste Management Group, the two municipalities are addressing the social, environmental and financial impacts of this waste issue by way of an “Individual” Environmental Assessment (EA) under the Provincial EA Act. The preferred technology for managing Durham and York Regions residual waste has been identified as thermal treatment coupled with energy generation. A short-list of sites has been identified and evaluations are underway to select the preferred site using criteria and priorities developed during earlier stages of the EA. One of the short-listed sites is located on Garfield Wright Boulevard in the Town of East Gwillimbury.

Through the EA public consultation process, concerns were raised about the potential for emissions from an Energy-from-Waste (EFW) facility and their impact to human and ecological health. As part of the EA process, the Regions directed that a preliminary Health Risk Assessment Feasibility Study be conducted to examine the potential health and ecological impacts from an EFW facility sited in either Durham or York Region. The preliminary study is now nearing completion.

On June 19th and 21st, 2007, York Region will be hosting information sessions to present and discuss the progress of the EA to date and the findings of the preliminary health and ecological risk study. Additional information sessions are also planned in Durham Region.


For more information on the Durham/York Residual Waste EA Study, please visit the Study website at www.durhamyorkwaste.ca.

The following two Information Sessions will be held from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.
A formal presentation will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2007 and Thursday, June 21, 2007
Roman Palace Banquet Hall
1096 Ringwell Road, Newmarket, Ontario

Please note that the format and information discussed will be the same for each session.
Please register in advance of these sessions by calling 1-866-398-4423.

For more information on the
Durham/York Residual Waste EA Study,
please visit www.durhamyorkwaste.ca
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