

# Candidates comment on party discipline on MPPs

**By Bill Rea**

The candidates running in Oak Ridges — Markham in the Oct. 10 provincial election were contacted over the last week for their spontaneous responses to some predetermined questions.

Their replies are presented here in alphabetical order.

## What is the proper rate for provincial sales tax?

“I think the current rate is acceptable,” remarked Progressive Conservative Phil Bannon.

“I haven’t thought about that,” commented New Democrat Janice Hagan. “I don’t like sales tax. It’s a retro tax that hits working people harder.”

While she said it would be “irresponsible” for her to just pick a figure, Hagan thought the rate should be reduced. “The weight of the tax should be more on the income,” she remarked.

“The way it is now,” replied Liberal Dr. Helena Jaczek.

“The proper rate would be zero per cent,”

commented Green Party candidate Attila Nagy. “I would prefer that there wasn’t a provincial sales tax.”

He added the Green Party believes taxes should be resource based, rather than by sales or services.

Independent candidate Doug Ransom observed that people are inclined to accept whatever rates are presented to them by the government, assuming the money is needed. He added a one per cent change, more or less, would not make a substantial difference. He pointed out the federal government cut the GST by one per cent. “Did that sharply affect the individual?” he asked. “I would say not.”

He did add, however, that such a reduction would be a symbolic sign that the government was trying to reduce the tax load.

Family Coalition Party candidate Patrick Redmond said he’s heard of no plans to reduce the current tax, adding he didn’t think his party has a policy on it.

“I favour lower taxes, but in terms of higher exemptions for families,” he said, adding he might support a reduction to PST, but would want to hear more about the implications first.

## Does party discipline put too many restrictions of the power of individual MPPs?

Bannon said there are two ways to look at the issue.

Many people who get into provincial politics without having been involved at the grass roots tend to place their allegiance and responsibility with the party. Bannon said he entered politics at the grass-roots municipal level.

“You understand and appreciate the need to be in touch with your constituents and to understand their concerns are relative to your community.”

I feel I do have the responsibility to my constituents to represent their concerns at the provincial level,” he added, “and I don’t feel pressured in any way to abandon

them.”

“Absolutely,” Hagan declared. “I’m totally against it.”

“I believe you’re in government to represent the people in your community,” she added, stating elected officials aren’t supposed to just represent the party to the people.

She stated that’s how she will react to something she thinks her constituents don’t like or is bad for the community. “I will speak against it, regardless of what my party wants me to do,” she said. “That’s what you’re being paid for. You’re paid to represent the people.”

“I feel passionately about

this issue,” she added.

“There are occasions when there are free votes,” Jaczek commented, adding the provincial Liberals do a good job of having discussions within the party on things like platform development. “I don’t see a difficulty with the current situation.”

“In my opinion, it does,” Nagy said. “There is definitely a party dogma, a set of beliefs that all candidates have to adhere to.”

He added there should be some accommodation for personal beliefs, as long as they aren’t too contrary to the party. The current system places loyalty to the party

ahead of loyalty to the electorate.

“Absolutely,” Ransom declared, adding that as an independent, he wouldn’t be subject to it.

He agreed MPPs are told by their parties how to vote.

“You are told this is good legislation,” he said. “You pass it without reviewing it in depth.”

“Yes, it does,” Redmond declared, adding this is one of the big reasons to vote for his party. “I would not be under the control of the leader of the party.”

He added this would make him different from

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## Nagy running for Green Party

**By Bill Rea**

A self-employed writer from Toronto has ambitions of painting Oak Ridges — Markham Green, at least at Queen’s Park.

Attila Nagy, 35, is running for the Green party in the Oct. 10 provincial election in his first venture

into politics.

“I don’t like the direction the province has been going,” he remarked, referring to the administration of Premier Dalton McGuinty and former premiers Bob Rae and Mike Harris. All three, he said, had spoken about nuclear energy, “but they are just spending a lot of money on nuclear power

themselves.”

Nagy said he was also concerned about urban sprawl taking out farmland.

Nagy said the party’s chances in the election are encouraging, as voters seem to be considering Green as a possible option.

“I think the chances are definitely better than they were four years ago,” he said.

## Doug Ransom running as an independent

**By Bill Rea**

Pottageville resident Doug Ransom believes people’s rights have been gradually taken away of the year, so he wants to try and spread the word about that.

A good place to do that is from an election platform, so the retired Toronto police officer is running as an independent in Oak Ridges

— Markham in the Oct. 10 provincial election.

Ransom said he has “no illusions” about his chances of election, but added his candidacy might turn out to be a “media event.”

He is concerned that successive provincial governments over the last several years have brought in legislation that

“takes away rights that we believe we have.”

Access to information is one of the areas where he believes rights have been eroded. He said the freedom of information legislation actually offers all kinds of grounds to withhold information, thus forcing people into litigation.

He also said none of the

parties seem to be addressing this, “because they all reap a benefit.”

“We are substantially over-legislated in the area of the flow of information,” he remarked.

“This is the largest riding in Canada,” he added. “Getting the word out there is a key issue.”

Ransom also said he has positions on other issues. “You certainly can’t win an election by being a one-issue candidate,” he observed.

## Redmond running for Family Coalition

**By Bill Rea**

Markham resident Patrick Redmond has been a candidate before in Ontario for the Family Coalition Party, and he’s doing it again, in Oak Ridges — Markham, in the Oct. 10 election.

“I believe that a lot of family values in Ontario are coming under attack,” commented Redmond, who recently retired after 31 years working for IBM.

He added the family is fundamental in society. Same-sex marriages are such an attack, he said, adding the party opposes them and will seek to have their approval repealed. He added there are other core Canadian values that have long been respected that are being attacked too, such as that everyone has the right to life. That’s why the party opposes abortion, euthanasia and fetal experimentation. As well, he said certain other rights, such as freedom of speech or religion have been attacked too, because they conflict

with powerful minority groups.

On matters of education, Redmond said the government has been taking more control that should go to the family, and he added he favours the idea of school vouchers.

Redmond seemed to have

a clear idea of his chances for election; “slim to non-existent,” he remarked.

He added the party is not very well known.

“We’re trying to overcome that,” he said. “We’re the one party that holds these values in the Ontario election.”

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*All-candidates’ meeting  
at Seneca Oct. 3*

Local voters will have the chance to see the candidates running in Oak Ridges — Markham in the Oct. 10 provincial election next Wednesday (Oct. 3).

The all-candidates’ meeting will be held at the King campus of Seneca College, and is being sponsored jointly by Concerned Citizens of King Township, Markham Board of Trade, the York Region News Group and the Richmond Hill Chamber of Commerce.

It will run from 7 until 9 p.m.

Call Seneca College Media Relations at (416) 491-5050, ext. 7017 for more information.

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