

Inauguration Speech November 21, 2022

Debbie Schaefer, King Township Ward 5

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Without question the #1 issue I heard, when campaigning for re-election, was traffic: the amount, the speed, the noise. Some of that is within my scope to mitigate with traffic calming on our local roads; and I have already started the process for one area. To address the complaints about traffic on the arterial roads of York Region a different tactic will be required. Addressing these concerns is a priority and in partnership with Township Staff I know that better is possible.

Very much connected to traffic complaints is the complaint about growth and the deep concern about future growth. For an elected representative this is particularly tough. 1st the voters have clearly not asked for the growth. 2nd the current voters may see a real impact on their quality of life, and even if the outcome is desirable, their daily life will be disrupted during construction. During the last term your Council got our house in order by updating the Official Plan and zoning bylaws; no one was happy with every detail but there was public consultation and council made decisions to deliver the community vision.

It is going to be far more difficult for me going forward because of the recently tabled Bill 23 and the Amendments to the Greenbelt Plan which include dramatic and very important policy changes for all municipalities. For example: how is a municipality like King, which has prided itself as being a good steward of our natural heritage be able to evaluate development applications without the expertise of our Conservation Authorities? Will we need to hire more consultants? How will we pay for this? This is clearly not the forum for discussing this

legislation, but I bring it up as a “head’s up” that Council may be confronted with issues never foreseen.

I commit to you that I will be as transparent as possible as I work with the rest of council and staff to respond to the consequences of the new legislation.

In addition, I will work diligently to see that our fledgling community climate action plan takes off.

To finish my comments, I will refer again to my first term at council. I got there because I was inspired by Jane Underhill... her vision, her tenacity, and her integrity. Twelve years later I'm still inspired by Jane and with that I will tackle the challenges of this new term.