

Town's former fire chief represents change in upcoming election



By Mike Pickford

Andy MacIntosh is adamant that he represents the sort of change he'd like to see in our community.

Sitting down with the Citizen this week, Orangeville's former fire chief for more than 30 years explained exactly why he is so eager to trade in the comfort of retirement for the stress and pressure that goes hand-in-hand with a role on municipal council.

Having signed and submitted his paperwork last week, Mr. MacIntosh is making a run for deputy mayor – a sizeable jump for someone with no previous experience sitting on Council, but one that Andy believes he's more than capable of handling.

“That's the big question I've had right off the bat – why go for the deputy mayor role? Why not start at Council? I've been attending our Council meetings and dealing with Orangeville Council for over 30 years. I have insight into how our Town is run,” Mr. MacIntosh told the Citizen. “This is a decision I've thought about long and hard and I believe this is the way I can have the best impact on our community.”

A resident of Orangeville for more than 52 years, Mr. MacIntosh would like to see the community thrive the way it once did, and he has some ideas of how to get the municipality back on track. First up is improving cooperation amongst members of Council.

“The thing that really got me into this in the first place is hearing people talk about this Council, and then taking the time to really watch this Council myself. To say it's dysfunctional is probably an understatement,” Mr. MacIntosh said. “I'd like to see more cooperation, I think I can bring that. I've worked with many different organizations in Orangeville and across Ontario. I just feel I can do a better job than we're seeing right now.”

Another important facet that drew Andy to the deputy mayor position was the fact the role comes with a guaranteed seat on Dufferin County Council. He noted there was change he wanted to see at that level too, pointing to the current 911 operating system, which is based out of Sudbury, and a lack of local affordable housing for seniors as items he would look to first tackle.

Mr. MacIntosh does face some competition for the position. Current councillor Nick Garisto has also filed his paperwork to run for the role having previously served as deputy mayor from 2000 to 2003. It is unclear at this point whether Warren Maycock, the Town's current deputy mayor, is interested in running for re-election.

As far as hot-button topics go heading into the election, Andy pulled no punches when discussing taxes, the potential resurrection of an OPP costing in Orangeville, the future of the Orangeville fire hall and on what it's going to take to attract more business the community.

“Obviously the number one problem in Orangeville right now is taxes. I'm not running on a platform of cutting taxes, that would be irresponsible. I'm running on a platform of reasonable tax increases,” Mr. MacIntosh said. “I don't believe an increase should be anything above the cost of living.”

He added, “As for the number one issue heading into the election, it sort of goes hand in hand with taxes, but that's the police. The future of policing in Orangeville is going to be a big issue.”

“To truly save \$4.5 million a year, you'd be a fool not to go with the OPP. However, I don't believe for a minute that this costing was done correctly. It was done in house, it became very political and it should not have been done that way,” Mr. MacIntosh continued.

“We should hire a consultant to do a proper job, tell us what we're going to gain, what we're going to lose and complete a true costing.”

Andy pointed at Midland which recently went through an OPP costing proposal of its own. Midland Council voted in favour of

accepting an OPP contract, although that municipality realized savings of approximately \$750,000 a year ? a fair way short of the \$4.5 million over four years that some were estimating in Orangeville.

?Something just doesn't sit right there,? Mr. MacIntosh said. ?This is an issue that became very political when it should have been anything but. This is an issue that needs to be considered for the citizens of this town only.?

Giving his thoughts on the future of Orangeville's aging fire hall, Mr. MacIntosh admitted a new facility would definitely be required sometime in the future, while stating he will do what he can to address what he perceives as the real reason more businesses aren't coming to Orangeville.

?I think taxes play a bit part in attracting businesses. We have this reputation, whether it's true or now, as having some of the highest taxes in Ontario. That puts people off moving here. Changing that will be a big part of bringing industry here,? he stated. ?A lot of people in their election promises will say ?I'm bringing industry to town', I won't do that. That's like saying ?I'm going to hold the price on has', you just can't do it. What I will do is try and fix some of the problems to hopefully make Orangeville a more attractive community for everyone.?

In closing, Mr. MacIntosh rehashed his campaign slogan ? Vote Andy for Change ? before taking aim at Orangeville's current Council.

?I don't take personal shots, that's not my style, but what I will say is we've had a Council this term that hasn't been successful.

We've got a lot of older Council members, I really think we need a new way of thinking,? Mr. MacIntosh said.

?The old style of politicking isn't the best way to go any more. We need to make change and serious change at that. Otherwise, we're not going to be able to afford to live here.?