

## Local Climate Change Action group host environmental debate

By Constance Scrafield

Waste, poor water management, careless development, flooding were some of the concerns that came across as eight candidates seeking seats on Orangeville council answered questions and gave assurances at the all candidates meeting Tuesday evening. Sponsored by Climate Change Action Dufferin-Caledon, the meeting at Westside Secondary School drew a large number of interested voters.

With Bernadette Hardaker as moderator, the evening progressed efficiently and none of the candidates was permitted to waffle on at length.

The questions were interesting and the answers telling. Mayoral candidates Sandy Brown and Darrin Davidson were on hand and presented a sharp contrast both to each other and to the incumbent, Jeremy Williams, who did not respond to the invitation. Of the other council candidates who did not attend, all but the Mayor sent statements expressing regrets not to be able to attend and assuring the assemblage of their support for environment protection and plans for future action.

Deputy mayor hopeful Andy Macintosh was there and told the crowd, as an introduction, that he has lived in Orangeville for 52 years and was the fire chief for a number of years.

He spoke initially about waste management, citing 2041 as a goal year to have reduced our waste by 80%. He later insisted that leadership in matters of action to protect the environment was important, to support Dufferin County, "promote ourselves by working to improve municipal building [to be more green]. To take better advantage of public transportation by sharing with other municipalities."

Council candidate Grant Peters' work is in the business of assessing and offering solutions for improving buildings and constructing well in the first place. He insisted that a great deal is known about how to build more efficient and better buildings and commented that the Ontario Building Code must be improved to improve the current standard of construction than exists at the moment. Most of the candidates were concerned about the proposed high-density development on Hansen Blvd., behind the Orangeville Mall on many fronts, most importantly the location of the planned development of some 650 residents, with more to come, so it seems, on a wetland, where two creeks cross; increased risk of flooding on First Street, the mall and more; traffic congestion and lack of infrastructure; quality of the buildings planned.

Council candidate James Jackson said the consensus was that the project "doesn't seem like a good fit for Orangeville." But it was not conclusive that the planning permission had been irrevocably given.

"We need smart development," said Kelly Zammit, "650 units is not smart."

There are also plans for five or six acres of paving included in the Hansen development.

There were discussions about the need to promote public transportation by enlarging the routes the new buses are occupying. This again is a matter that can be raised with other municipalities. Approaching GO to bring more busses into Orangeville to save driving to the cities was another suggestion of more than one speaker.

"Maps show Orangeville's water to be very poor quality, largely due to the salt on the roads in winter," Mr. Zammit told the company.

Also running for council, Robert Duthie said, "Government is slow. There's talk about action but nothing happens."

Attending a funeral elsewhere, Todd Taylor said of himself that he is, "openly an environmentalist. There is no doubt about the science."

In attendance as well were Vic Thapar, coming from India, where he was a doctor and very aware of the health problems environmental decline is causing; Joe Andrews who said he is committed to water sustainability.

Mayoral candidate Sandy Brown talked about working closer with developers and was concerned that most waste is not recycled, while Darrin Davidson declared, "We must work together, come to the table and figure it out."

The last word might be given to council candidate Simran Bhamu, who read all her answers but at the end of the session, when one person talked about more going into recycling and rather than as waste, said, "No! Less recycling? use more and have less to recycle and no garbage!?"