

Two council veterans, one fresh face announce candidacy



You'll have heard of Wollaston Reeve Graham Blair and Hastings Highlands Mayor Vivian Bloom before, but do you know Dorothy Gerrow (above) who's running for the first time this year? Gerrow said she's running as an accessible ordinary person. / SUBMITTED

By Sarah Sobanski

Wollaston Reeve Graham Blair will be pushing two decades on council should he win the next election.

Blair put his papers forth as a candidate for the October 2018 election. This year was his 15th on council. He served three terms as a councillor before being elected to reeve in 2014.

"I feel I can bring a lot to the council table in terms of experience and accumulated knowledge of the concerns of a small rural municipality," he said.

Originally a contractor, Blair took up real estate 30 years ago. He said he's lived in Coe Hill for 40 years.

Blair said he sees added provincial regulations as a main issue the township is facing. He said the provincial government doesn't recognize how restrictive these regulations can be for municipalities on their resources and development prospects.

"I would like to do what I can to maintain a personal level of municipal governance where people continue to be individuals rather than roll numbers," he said. "I feel we need to be very concerned that we maintain transparency and that our ratepayers are kept well informed of the workings and the rationale of decisions made by members of their municipal council."

Hastings Highlands' first mayoral and councillor candidates have come forward.

Mayor Vivian Bloom has announced she'll be looking to head council through the 2018-'22 term. She's putting her name in for "one more term," she said, running with more than 10 years of council experience.

"I know the municipality inside and out from one end to the other," she said. "The people here deserve the best we can offer them. I hope they feel I can provide that."

Bloom moved to the municipality in the '60s with her family from Niagara. She started the first area Brownies pack in the 1970s and in the '80s was the first woman to run for the Bangor, Wicklow and McClure ward. She was also a founding member Maynooth's business association and the Maynooth Madness committee. The former postmaster of Maynooth has no shortage of volunteer history in the municipality.

"I enjoy giving back to the community that allowed us to live and work here," she said. "I feel my time on council is just another extension of that giving back in a different way."

Bloom said major issues for the municipality include provincial downloading in roads, OPP costs and other cutbacks. She said the municipality "needs to lobby harder." She also wants to see North Hastings work together to promote development in tourism, specifically resort development, and small industry so the next generation doesn't have to migrate to find work.

"Growth at this time is our hope for the future," she said.

Lake St. Peter's Dorothy Gerrow will also vie for a seat at the council table. She's decided to run, she said, because she feels there's "a need for ordinary people to represent ordinary people in government." Self-identifying as an ordinary person, Gerrow said she would offer ratepayers someone who would listen to them.

?Too often people are afraid to call their councillor because they don't feel their voice will be heard. I want the ratepayers to know, while I may not always tell them what they want to hear, I will direct them accordingly to make sure their voice is, in fact, heard,? she said.

Gerrow was first introduced to the area as a ?seasonal camper,? but after falling in love with it she became a permanent resident. This will be her first time campaigning for election.

Gerrow said she's been attending meetings since 2015 when council got rid of curbside pickup. She said she advocated for better landfill conditions such as better hours and hazardous waste days. She also started paying close attention to the municipality's financial dealings.

?I am very passionate about fairness to the ratepayers since it costs me money too. It costs a great deal of money to run a municipality, so it's important that it's spent wisely. From that involvement with attending as many meetings as possible, I decided to run,? she said.

Gerrow said major issues for Hastings Highlands include that it has ?nine landfills and many miles of roads.?

?These areas come at a high cost,? she said noting she's been advocating with the province about funding for Hwy 62 north of Maynooth, something the municipality has been denied funding for three years running.

Gerrow also promised she wouldn't submit mileage claims to travel to council from home nor would she ?exercise [her] companion expense? to travel to out of town conferences.

Bancroft This Week will update voters with the area's candidates as they are announced.