

After 10 months as councillor, Steve Anderson feels ready for DM role

Written By **MIKE PICKFORD**

It's shaping up to be an interesting two-horse race for the deputy mayor position in Shelburne.

Having spent the past 10 months serving the community as a councillor, Toronto Transit Commission lawyer Steve Anderson hopes to take a giant step forwards in the upcoming municipal election, vying for outgoing deputy mayor Geoff Dunlop's seat in the Oct. 22 vote.

It has been a year of learning for Mr. Anderson, who stepped up to the plate last October in the wake of long-time councillor Tom Egan's passing. Rather than seek what would be a first-time election to the councillor role, Steve told the Free Press this week that he feels it's the 'right time' to take on a new challenge.

'When the current deputy mayor made the decision not to run again, I realized there is an opportunity there to take on a new challenge in Shelburne. It's obviously big shoes to fill when you're talking about replacing someone like Geoff Dunlop, but I'm confident, if given the opportunity, that I can do a lot of good in this position.'

Prior to being sworn in last year, Mr. Anderson sat down with this reporter to discuss his plans for the community. He talked about celebrating diversity in the community, stating his belief that the Town needed to do more to recognize some of its newer residents. He has had a hand in organizing and celebrating several cultural events and presentations in the community - a sure fire sign that Mr. Anderson follows through on his promises.

Perhaps his crowning achievement during his short stint on council was the creation of both a community service and academic excellence award, handed out to deserving youth earlier this year. That was a real priority of Mr. Anderson's as he took on the mantle of councillor. The awards were created and awarded in the late Mr. Egan's honour.

When asked what he was most proud of, however, Mr. Anderson said it was simply being afforded the ability to serve the community.

'It's true that I've been able to accomplish a number of things I said I wanted to do, and of course that does bring me great pride. But the thing I'm most proud of is just having the ability to serve. It's a real privilege to serve your community and do that's that impact your community in a positive way. That's what keeps you going when you've got a number of different things on your plate. Sometimes it can be daunting, sometimes it can be overwhelming, but in the end it's the knowledge that you're making a difference that really makes you smile.'

With the recent decision not to sell Fiddle Park now behind this council, Mr. Anderson says he's looking forward to 'positive discussions' in the new year on what is easily the most talked about topic in town - the future of the Shelburne Police Service. With an OPP costing underway and set to come to the new council in February of next year, Steve says every candidate should be taking it upon themselves to get informed now so that council can come together to make the right decision when the time comes.

'As an elected official we have to exercise due diligence when making important decisions for the town. What I can say is I have met with the Shelburne Fire Chief (Brad Lemaich), I have met recently with the police chief (Kent Moore) and? I can tell you I am for local police. I am behind local police,' Mr. Anderson said. 'Yes, we have an OPP costing on the table. We have to exercise our due diligence, that's why we're going through this process, but if there is a way we could continue to support our local services, whether it be police, fire or EMS, I will certainly be looking at those avenues.'

Aside from the SPS issue, Steve says Shelburne's next council needs to pay attention to a growing infrastructure deficit, noting the municipality needs to do more to support its growth. He wants to work with town staff to see what opportunities exist to bring more commercial and industrial business the community, while he also wants to engage with municipal neighbours to see what can be done about bringing transit options to Shelburne.

Having enjoyed a good working relationship with Wade Mills at the council level, Mr. Anderson said he would love to be afforded the opportunity to work closely with Shelburne's next mayor following this election.

'I believe Wade and I have a similar vision for what we want Shelburne to be. I have no doubt we would be a very good tandem working alongside the rest of council,' Mr. Anderson said. 'On my flyer and website, I'm going with the motto 'Shelburne Stronger Together'. Over these past ten months I have proven my leadership skills and I have brought proven results. I'm not the type of person to simply talk about doing things, I believe I am a person, since my appointment, that has done things and I want to continue doing things in my community.'

He concluded, 'So I am asking for the public's support on Oct. 22. We have very good candidates for deputy mayor and for council - hopefully, when people look at my track record in the community they will feel I'm worthy of their support.'