

Chaulk says he wants to work for a better future

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Trevor Chaulk moved to the County 17 years ago and opened Chaulk Woodworking 15 years ago. As a businessperson, he said, “we have to understand people, how to motivate them, and financials. My strengths are in problem-solving ... but most important, good leadership and humility.” He added, “The business is at a point now where it’s working, pretty steady and consistent. I don’t work as many hours as I used to. I do want to see other people grow within the community and, in the aftermath of COVID, people are looking for leadership, accountability, and hope.”

Amalgamation

“In some ways, I’m for it. In some ways, I’m not for it right now. In Haliburton County, there’s still very distinct us versus them mindsets between townships, cottagers versus locals. We have to get on the same page. The amount of work that needs to be done now in individual townships, we’re not ready for it. Do I believe amalgamation will save costs? Yes.” However, “It’s no different than when a larger company swallows up a smaller company. The staff that have been there 30 years are saying, ‘this isn’t the way it works’. And the upper management is saying ‘this is the way it’s going to work’ so there is going to be a lot of conflict in the early stages. Eventually we will be in a position where it will be supported, but we are not there yet.”

Health

“Staffing is a critical thing, housing is a critical thing, because we can attract all the doctors, nurses and administration staff but if they have nowhere to live, no entertainment or night life aside from recreation, we might not attract and retain these skilled professionals.” He said they have to find creative ways to get and keep staff since they are competing with the rest of the province. Asked for his ideas, he said, “it’s business growth and development.”

Labour

“We have to fix a labour shortage before we can fix a business shortage. You’re not going to attract more business here if there are no workers. If we want to have light to medium industry, which is year-round, steady, good-paying, how do we attract that when there’s no workers or industrial area in Minden?” Asked for a solution, he said it is something he wants to investigate. “In the Official Plan they do not talk about any industrial areas. I want to find out what municipal lands are owned and what the municipality can do to develop and promote it. If we can get more light to medium industry, then we also provide better-paying jobs.” He emphasized that tradespeople are needed.



Trevor Chaulk is running for councillor-at-large of Minden Hills. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

Poverty

“The living wage in Haliburton County is \$19.42 an hour.” He said other factors come into play but, “we all know that is still not enough. Ten years ago, you could do that but we cannot do that anymore. We cannot have a majority of the workforce in the minimum wage sectors.” He said he knows people willing and able to work but one problem is a lack of affordable daycare, with long waitlists.

Housing

“We have to talk about people’s perception on what is affordable...because you are going to have different tiers of affordability. We do need low-income rental housing. We also need market rate affordable housing for the workforce, and for seniors downsizing. We can look at our bylaws and allow multi-residential on a smaller scale. We can allow homeowners to create apartments in their homes. We can allow duplex and triplex construction. Smaller-scale units, which can go up faster. We can’t wait three years for decisions and then investors walk away because they’re tired. We need to find faster solutions. We only have a three-to-five-year window to get this balanced or you’re going to have more and more people leave the area.”

Transportation

“How do we solve transportation issues when you work on a lower-tier pay scale? You cannot afford the high rent, heat,

grocery prices and have a vehicle and insurance. It’s not doable. How can we encourage people to come out of poverty if we can’t get them trained. If we can’t provide schooling?

Shoreline preservation bylaw

He said the intent of the bylaw is “just”, but he thinks there are gaps. For example, he said there is a lot of wording giving discretion to the director. “It seems one-sided where it’s protecting the County.” He added if the County or township has to do work on land within 20 metres of the high-water mark, they do not have to go through any permit approvals and there is nothing to ensure inspections after the work is done.

Short-term rentals

“I’m for and I’m against.” He said they have to be identified as casual or a business. If businesses, he said they have to follow certain guidelines according to environmental and local laws. He said they should be registered and licensed if operating solely as businesses. He said it will protect neighbours and the environment.

Vision for the future

He would like more industry to bolster the taxation base. “We want to redirect wasted money to priority projects.” He added, “I have no intention of disrupting heritage.

But as society is changing, mindsets are changing, new people are coming into the area that have different wishes. We have to balance everything as much as possible because we’re going to be serving many different cultures now, many mindsets. So, we have to integrate and monitor the growth.” He added the County has done a good job of attracting retirees and tourists. It has led to booming summers but bust winters. He added, “we have to find creative ways to create a year-round stable economy and need to attract and retain younger families.” He said their spending drives the economy.

Minden Hills

“There are a lot of issues from big to small.” For example, he said people want public washrooms unlocked. He said roads and waste management are a concern. Chaulk added the downtown core needs improvement, and to be more vibrant. He cited other issues such as safety and well-being, a lack of policing, drug issues, and homelessness.

Trevor Chaulk the candidate

“I’m a forward thinker. We cannot just look right in front of us and deal day-to-day ... we have to have a vision... What can I do for the community? I thought I could run for council ... My biggest fear, in the next five to 10 years, if we don’t get on top of some of these topics right now, and aggressively get on top of them, this area can be in severe trouble.”

McKelvey has 40 years of municipal experience

By Lisa Gervais

Qualifications

Tammy McKelvey started in municipal government in 1980 as a receptionist for Anson, Hindon and Minden. She worked her way up to payroll clerk, accounts payable, deputy clerk, treasurer. She was clerk, treasurer, tax collector at one point. She was the first CAO-clerk for Minden Hills. She was the CAO of Dysart et al. She ended her career as treasurer for Algonquin Highlands in 2019.

Amalgamation

“I am a proponent. However, the service delivery review is rolling out. I want to see it rolling faster. My first priority would be building and planning departments. It’s ridiculous that a County the size of Haliburton has five official plans, four zoning bylaws ... it’s just so inefficient.” Asked how it could be sped up, she said, “I think we need to focus the priorities on it...start putting the staff resources where they need to be to make it a better place, make it more efficient and effective.”

Health

“We need to collectively lobby for additional funding. The paramedic service, where they started doing the home check-ins, is wonderful. There’s going to be more need for that sort of thing. We can’t have ambulances going to Lindsay for CAT scans and staying for a whole day because they were sent out on another call there. So, the long-term benefits of providing a CAT scan to our local hospital really will provide us with some financial gains at the other end, but it’s a big expense. It will also help attract doctors. They want that sort of diagnostic equipment. It will be a terrible decision to have to make if one of the hospitals has to close... Having said that, I can see where the cost of running two hospitals is not sustainable.”

Housing

She’d like amendments to the zoning bylaw to allow for secondary houses on larger pieces of property. In town, she’d like to see infilling some of the larger lots that are serviced with sewers and water. “I’d like to see opportunities for people to sever those ... Change the mindset of what we can do to provide affordable lots for people to build on ... Tiny houses is definitely another issue we need to look at.”

Poverty

“I would encourage employers to provide a living wage to their workers, starting with the township. The lack of student hiring for the township is a poor image in our communities with the lack of garbage collection and grass maintenance. These young people can’t afford to work for minimum wage and I feel the township



Tammy McKelvey is vying to be councillor-at-large in Minden Hills. *Photo by Lisa Gervais.*

needs to be a leader. Paying wages over minimum wage usually results in a wage subsidy from the province as well. We need to encourage the development of community gardens and provide space on municipal property. Lack of housing, and affordable daycare, is adding to the poverty levels.

Shoreline preservation bylaw

“The entire economic engine of our area is the lakes. If we don’t protect those, we will have nothing here. I am a strong proponent for lake protection. I think the shoreline preservation bylaw needs to roll out. Let’s try it. Let’s see how this is and commit to reviewing it so it is a living document that can be changed if things need to be tweaked, but let’s try it out first before there’s any decision to change.” She also thinks the septic reinspection program has to continue and properties requiring remediation followed up on.

Short-term rentals

“Short-term rentals have to be regulated. It’s no longer just people renting out their cottages for a couple of weeks to help subsidize the cost of having it. It’s becoming a business. It’s taking away the enjoyment of the lakeside lifestyle. The County’s initiated that process. I think we should probably not re-invent the wheel. Lake of Bays is a good place to start. They have a process in place and we could probably utilize that and put it to work in Haliburton County.”

Transportation

“Public transportation in an area so spread out with a limited population – I don’t see it being in the foreseeable future. You can run a bus from Minden to Haliburton, great, how many people are off all of the other hundreds of roads that can’t utilize it? It’s a critical infrastructure that’s needed. Can it be feasible? I question whether we can. The County has tried pilot projects and tried to come up with a solution.”

Vision for the future

“We really need to work on the government structure and make sure it’s running efficiently and effectively. The decision-making has to set priorities that are going to benefit the majority of the ratepayers. We will never be able to do everything for everyone. We need to make sure people can safely drive down our roads. Long-term, I’d love to see lots of things for kids. I’d love to see a waterpark. I’d like to see a downtown so when people come from the other areas with their kids to the waterpark they’re going to spend some money in town. I don’t like to see how people have to drive to Bobcaygeon to go to a waterpark. Swimming pool...we missed the boat. We are “arena poor” and now we have to make sure it becomes useable and bring events to it.”

Minden Hills

“Minden Hills has a lot to offer. The village has water and sewer, which makes

for tremendous development opportunities and housing. I think priorities need to be set for our limited financial resources. One per cent on the levy is \$97,000 so we need to look at it from that perspective. Roads are going to be my number one priority and housing is so important. It’s affecting everybody here.” As for debenturing for roads, McKelvey said the long-term costs must be offset by the benefits. She does not agree with borrowing money for operational costs. Asked what could be done to expand the tax base, she said they have to help existing businesses, ensure basic garbage collection and grass-cutting downtown so it’s attractive. She said it would be hard to attract industry, so it will have to be residential growth. She wants more diversion at the landfill: hard plastics’ recycling, periodic shredding of confidential documents, and a Beer Store bottle return run by service clubs.”

Tammy McKelvey the candidate

“Municipal government has been my passion for most of my life. I have almost 40 years’ experience and think I can bring a lot to the table. I will hit the ground running.” She said she has the experience to ask the right questions and understands the legislation. “I don’t have that learning curve ... I think my background, experience and financial strength can really help. I think my team player skills and bringing the council together and making sure there is really good dialogue at the council table and encouraging that discussion” will help.