

Mayor looks forward to new challenges

By Jonathan King

Belleville Mayor Neil Ellis will not run in his third mayoral race this year, and confirms he will be seeking nomination in the upcoming federal election in the new Bay of Quinte riding.

During a recent interview with *The Pioneer*, he leans forward, taking his feet off of the table, planting them firmly on the floor.

"The way I roll, I don't regret my choice. I'm dealt a deck and I do my best. I'm always looking forward," he says.

He leans back on the black leather couch and puts his feet on the coffee table. Awards, certificates and plaques from various groups and charities adorn the shelves behind him.

Ellis was born and raised Belleville. He comes from a line of city residents. His father, Fred, served as a firefighter captain in the city for more than 30 years and his uncle, Richard, served on city council for many years in the 1960s.

Ellis is always trying to be positive while at city hall, always being open to discussion and shying away from debates.

"When a councilman says they want to debate, that means someone wins or loses. We need discussions." He leans back into the sofa again.

"If you have a discussion, you get the opportunity to turn something negative into something positive... That's why I'll say 'I'll second that for discussion' because when you discuss things, everyone wins."

Ellis has plenty of involvement in the Loyalist College community, helping to raise funding for more equipment and helping improve industry recruitment with local companies such as Bioniche and getting the equipment needed to re-tool and adapt to the ever-changing workforce.

"The nice thing about Loyalist is that we can adapt and change," Ellis says. "I remember my first year as mayor. I asked the students where they were from and when they told me Vancouver because Loyalist has the best program for radio broadcasting. That's something I like to hear because it puts us on the map."

Ellis, like numerous others, uses Twitter because it provides a direct line between constituents and himself. It's something that not many other mayors or politicians embrace.

"Twitter is the best; 140 characters is all I need. It can consume your entire day, but at the end of it, I prefer face-to-face or voice communication. There's a lack of emotion when we use it," he says. "I wish I could be on social media as Neil Ellis, not Mayor Neil Ellis. It's hard to detach from the office but I accept that."

Ellis has had an impact with some of the councillors. Inside the council chamber, councillors spoke out about his service to the city and the co-operative spirit he brings to the chamber.

"Mayor Ellis has worked very hard, and diligently to fulfill and exceed the requirements of the Mayor's job. His efforts and decisions in his mind have always been with the betterment of our community in mind," says Coun. Lafferty. "I do remember right after getting elected first time he would stop by my house every morning to have me tie his necktie for him. We have had a lot of fun together over the last



Photo by Jonathan King

Mayor Neil Ellis takes a phone call during a recent interview about his career in municipal office. "The way I roll is I don't regret my choices, I'm dealt a deck and I do my best, I'm always looking forward," Ellis said.

seven years, and as I said earlier, he has served his city well."

"During the first or second year in office at the end of long session there's a proclamation, usually for different weeks or days such as children's week, for example... and while reading the proclamation Neil said 'I request all children to be loved and neutered' instead of nurtured, we all got a lot of chuckles in the chamber" laughed Coun. Egerton Boyce. "He is an amazing mayor, he takes people who come in with different agendas and he gets us all working as a team... The city will miss him around the table and the leadership he has shown over the past eight years."

Ellis is still optimistic about the local economy, especially in the wake of the recent lay offs by Sears and Best Buy Canada.

"It's not great but our economy is strong... our credit rating got bumped up. We could survive a depression."

Belleville's credit rating was increased in April of 2013 by Standard and Poor's rating service from AA- to A+, reflecting Belleville's posting budget surpluses from the past six years before slipping into a 1.8 percent deficit in 2010.

"When you look at job loss or gain, it's how the media says it... Closure news always multiplies the bad... It's not great but our economy is strong," he says.

"Over the last eight years we've concentrated on the food sector. We all gotta eat, right?" he laughs.

"We're taking efforts to build serviced industrial land to attract employers, and we've looked at our competition and seen what we could do to improve... We never got to second base with companies lost to London, Ont. We've learned from London what we need."

Ellis remains positive about the new federal election ridings combining Belleville and Prince Edward County into the new Bay of Quinte riding

in addition to adding 15 more ridings throughout Ontario.

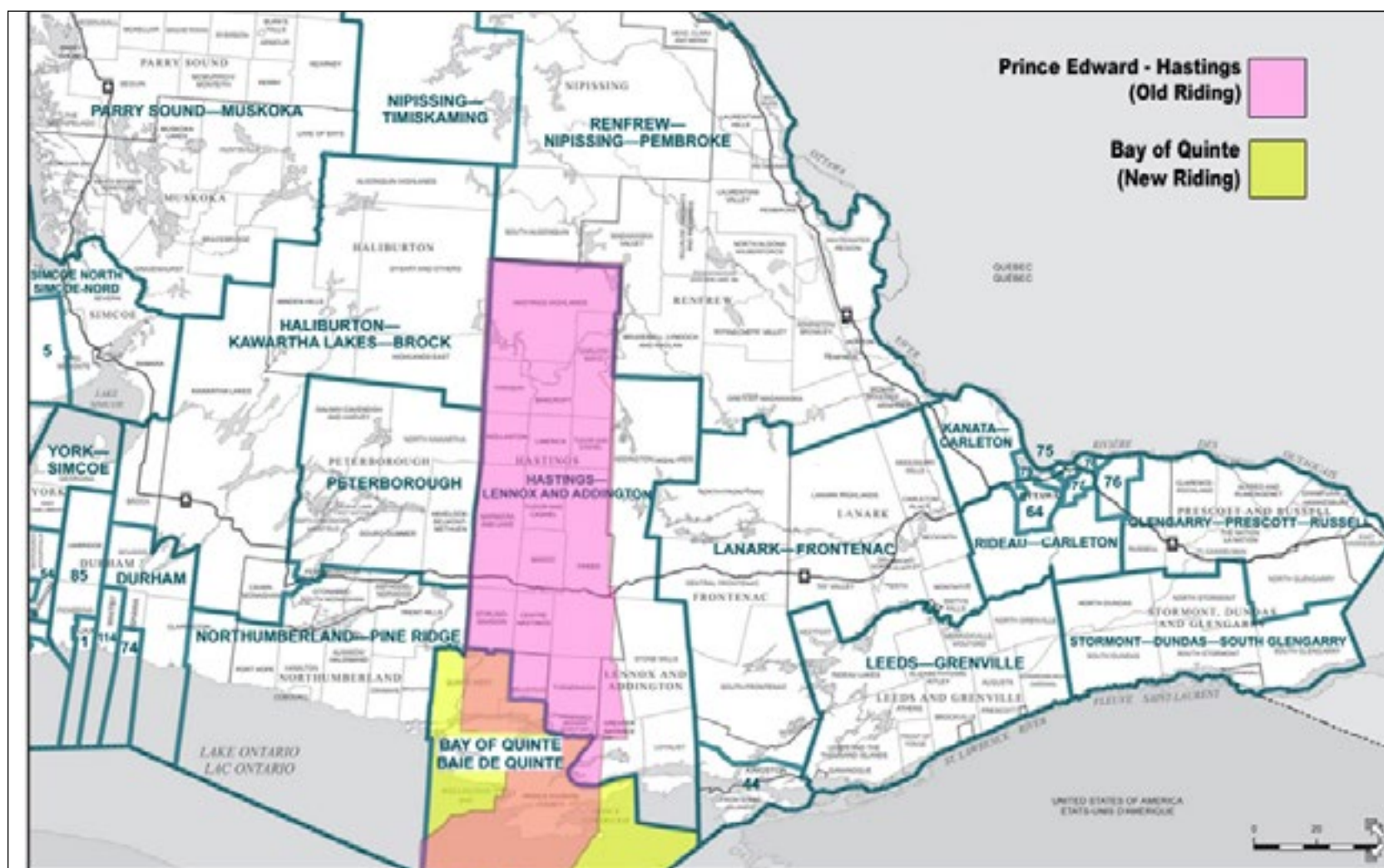
"I wish we had all of Belleville but we do the best. Geographically speaking it's smaller, but also a lot more manageable, past mayors and I have worked on this, between Quinte West and Belleville."

Ellis has big plans for Belleville, especially the downtown core of the city.

"I'm a generator. I'm always thinking about how I can move this organization forward."

One such idea was to build a mobile police station to move around downtown and improve police presence in the city, with a one-time cost and no bricks-and-mortar building it keeps costs low and mobility high, he says.

Ellis has big plans for the small city. He has a plan developed from trial and error, learning from his mistakes and always looking towards the future of Belleville.



Edited map from Elections Canada

This map shows the redrawn boundary lines for the federal ridings in southern Ontario. Belleville has joined the newly formed Bay of Quinte federal riding (illustrated in yellow), along with Prince Edward County, Trenton, and Quinte West. Belleville and Prince Edward County used to be part of the Prince Edward-Hastings riding (illustrated in pink), which has become the Hastings-Lennox and Addington riding.

Election results could be impacted by riding change

By Kaitlin Abeele

A new Bay of Quinte federal riding could mean less support for the Conservatives in 2015 election.

Statistics from Elections Canada showed that the Conservatives would have lost over 3,000 votes in the new Bay of Quinte federal riding based on the 2011 general election voter turnout. While not enough to unseat Conservative MP Daryl Kramp for the former Prince Edward-Hastings riding, it is still a loss of support.

"My indication is basically there's less than one per cent difference between what was and what will be. That would be of course assuming everybody were to vote in the same pattern as they did before," said Kramp.

Every 10 years, independent commissions are established in the 10 provinces to examine Canadian census results and adjust the federal riding boundaries based on population changes. The Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut are not included since they each represent

one electoral district.

The former Prince Edward-Hastings riding, which covered everything south of Hastings Highlands down to Prince Edward County, has been divided into smaller geographical ridings. Belleville has now become part of the Bay of Quinte riding, along with Prince Edward County, Trenton and Quinte West.

John Brisbois, president of the local Federal Liberal Riding Association, explained what the new boundaries mean for electoral candidates and voters.

"In terms of the changes, it's a much smaller geographical riding. It makes ease of getting around and ease of campaigning and ease of assembling ideas just a little bit better," said Brisbois.

The new boundaries have added 30 new seats to the House of Commons, with 15 new seats in Ontario, six each in Alberta and British Columbia, and three in Quebec.

With new seats up for grabs, Elections Canada took the 2011 general elections results and redistributed them based on

the new boundaries. The results showed the Conservatives would earn a total of 22 more seats, while the NDP would gain an additional six seats, and the Liberals an additional two.

While the new boundaries are created by independent commissions, some people have been critical of the new boundaries, suggesting the potential Conservative gains were planned.

"Far be it from me to say it was planned. But based on the last numbers it looks like it was planned. But I think it will backfire, because it's a different election and Mr. Harper's appeal has somewhat soured," said Brisbois.

However, Kramp disagrees with claims that the boundaries were influenced by Conservative interests.

"Quite frankly, we have no say in this. This is done by Elections Canada every 10 years... There's no way anybody could have a crystal ball on this. But to suggest nefarious issues are behind this, I think that's an affront quite frankly to the principle and the dedication of an in-

dependent body, Elections Canada," said Kramp.

Kramp will be running for re-election in the coming 2015 general election. He has not announced which riding he will be running in.

As for the coming election, neither Brisbois nor Kramp are able to predict how the public will vote, but Brisbois feels that Justin Trudeau and the Liberals stand a fair chance at election.

"In terms of this coming election, I think it's going to be determined nationally in the sense that, I think there's a great deal of discontent with the Conservatives. The NDP don't seem to have been able to build on the Jack Layton effect. And so that's left Mr. Trudeau with a golden opportunity," said Brisbois.

Kramp said that the decision rests with the electorate.

"I just know we try to work harder every election than the time before. It depends on the people's judgment on whether we have served them to the best of our ability," said Kramp.

Signatures gathered by police foundations students

By Jonathan King

Police foundations students Jason Campaigne, Austin Kiley, Ryan Maguire and Rob Wannamaker, all in their second-year, are looking for signatures for their petition to reopen an investigation into the rape of a South African woman.

Noxolo Nogwaza, an openly gay 24-year-old who was "correctively raped" as punishment for her sexual identity and activism in the LGBTQ community.

"South Africa has the highest rapes per capita in the world, or one woman every 17 seconds," says Campaigne. "She was raped, beaten and targeted by her killers for her activism in the LGBTQ community."

Since 2008, there have been a high number of cases relating to sexual discrimination in South Africa. In 2008, openly lesbian soccer player Eudy Simelane was found in a ditch with over 20 stab wounds after her abduction, rape and murder.

This summer, openly gay and transgender 23-year-old man named Thapelo Makhutle was killed after a confrontation with two men about his sexuality.

Corrective rape is being used as a tool to "cure" lesbians and transgendered people of their "disease."

"The men 'corrective rape them' to urge them to return to a more 'traditional' lifestyle choice," Campaigne added. "It's been four years and no investigation on who or why."

Kaley, McGuire, Campaigne and Wannamaker are gathering signatures for their community policing course in the police foundations program.

"We have close to 500 signatures. Our goal is 1,200," says Campaigne. "Most people are interested or disgusted but they all support and sign."

The petition will be sent to Tsakane police in KwaThema, South Africa.