

North Bay Nugget
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Fedeli promises change at city hall

Third declared candidate in mayoral race

by Gord Young

Vic Fedeli, a former North Bay businessman who helped build the city's aerospace industry, tossed his hat into the political ring Thursday, announcing his bid to become mayor.

Greeted by the standing applause of about 200 people, Fedeli entered the Vittorio Fedeli Business Centre at Nipissing University promising change that will bring economic and social growth to the community.

"Over the past year, I met with people every day and heard over and over that you want change," he told the crowd of prominent business owners and community leaders. "I want you to know that I am not just saying, 'We need more jobs or we need better services'...There is hope, there is a plan that can move us forward."

Helped to generate millions

After 15 years of operating a marketing agency in the city, Fedeli sold the business and retired at age 35. Through fundraising campaigns, he's helped to generate millions of dollars for Nipissing and Canadore College.

Fedeli, 47, who lives in East Ferris but owns property in North Bay, was chairman of Air Base Property Corporation and helped to convert CFB North Bay's hangars into an aerospace park employing several hundred people.

"There's not one person who would doubt my commitment to North Bay," he said, suggesting the location of his home outside the city will have no impact on his duties, if elected.

Fedeli is the third declared candidate in the mayoral race. Council veteran Lynne Bennett was the first to make her intentions known June 13, two days after Mayor Jack Burrows announced his retirement from municipal politics.

Jeff Marceau, a gymnastics coach and partner in North Bay Gymtrix Gymnastics and Athletics Centre, declared his candidacy in the Nov. 10 election about two months ago.

Fedeli presented details of 2020 Vision - a 20-year "back-to-basics" plan for the city. He said he favours eliminating payment and perks for councillors appointed by the city to boards and would initiate a sell-off of surplus municipal land.

"The city is sitting on acres and acres of property it took for back taxes, property from developers in lieu of parks, laneways, closed access ways and it goes on and on," he said, noting the sales would mean hundreds of thousands of dollars for the city.

Instead of raising taxes and complaining about provincial and federal downloading, Fedeli said he would create a grant accessing program to better tap into government sources such as the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund and FedNor.

"The city gives away hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to various groups." he said.

'I'll be the best salesman you've ever seen'

"Instead of using local taxpayers' money, this office would meet with groups early on in their projects," he said, explaining the program's staff would be dedicated to accessing government funding.

Fedeli said he would also work to create a community development corporation that would take over industrial land from the city and market it.

Changes to the Municipal Act about five years ago, he said, provide the city with the opportunity to form such a corporation. It would have the power to sell land for as little as \$1 an acre and slash taxes, attracting industry the same way as do many cities in the United States, he said.

"My role as mayor would be to get to these companies and beat the drums about North Bay. I'll be the best salesman you've ever seen...That's what I'm good at," he said.