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## **SCHEER: Let the race for mayor begin**

Nov 19, 2018

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Mark Scheer



Election season 2019 has already started.

That was the conclusion we reached last week after members of the Niagara Gazette editorial board sat down with Niagara Falls community development and code enforcement director and mayoral hopeful Seth Piccirillo.

The meeting, which included myself, managing editor Matt Winterhalter and Publisher John Celestino, came at the request of Piccirillo who said he wanted to discuss his plans for the mayor's office and his reasons for announcing his candidacy more than a year early.

It was clear from the meeting that Piccirillo is taking an aggressive approach where the 2019 mayoral election is concerned.

It was also clear, based on Piccirillo's comments about distancing himself from his boss, current Mayor Paul Dyster, and the various issues facing the city, that a story based on his interview would make for compelling reading.

It's why I decided to write a story that appeared in Sunday's edition about what Piccirillo said during our meeting.

Stories about candidates generally hit the pages during the fall election cycle.

During our meeting, Piccirillo stated plainly that he doesn't intend to wait until next year to start the conversation about what the next mayor of Niagara Falls needs to do to chart a clear course for the future.

In discussing it after our meeting, the members of the editorial board agreed that other mayoral hopefuls would likely take a similar approach, which meant we needed to be prepared to cover next year's race starting this year.

Who will become the city's next mayor will be one of the most important stories in 2019 and we intend to give it ample coverage moving forward.

The day after our meeting with Piccirillo, our publisher reached out to local attorney Robert Restaino as there have been some indications that he may enter the race for Falls mayor as well.

Restaino said he wasn't ready to announce anything and we extended an open invitation to sit down with us to discuss his plans should he ultimately decide to enter the race.

It's still unclear, as of this writing, if current Mayor Paul Dyster will seek re-election.

If he does, we'll invite him in to talk to us as well.

Piccirillo, Restaino and Dyster are all Democrats.

There's the potential for a Republican candidate or even minor party candidates to join the fray.

Our goal is to offer as much information about any of the candidates and their plans for the office in our pages moving forward.

In the case of this particular race, it appears likely that will involve more coverage earlier in the year as opposed to just the weeks leading up to Election Day.

The mayor's job is an important one, arguably the most important in the city.

As the local newspaper, it's our job to provide voters with as much information as we can about the candidates involved in elections so they can make informed choices.

The 2019 mayor's race is already setting up to be very interesting and perhaps highly spirited.

We plan on covering it from all angles every step of the way.

Contact Regional News Director Mark Scheer at 282-2311, ext. 2250.

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