

Dal student throws hat in ring in Dartmouth Ward Three

By LAURELLE LEVERT

DARRELL DEXTER, A 28 year old Dalhousie law student, is running for a seat on Dartmouth city council as a councillor for Ward Three.

Dexter doesn't think his youth will in any way affect his chances of succeeding; in fact, four of the six running candidates in this year's by-elections are under the age of thirty. However, the other candidates aren't full-time law students.

"I don't think it's any harder on me than on other people who are running," Dexter says, as most of the other candidates have full-time jobs as well as their other duties.

With such a full academic background, Dexter says he's more than ready to take on the responsibility of doing the best he can for the citizens of Dartmouth. With an arts and journalism degree from King's College, an education degree, and a law degree in the works, Dexter says he has shown that he understands responsibility. That, he says, is what is crucial.

The lack of accountability of the present "Neanderthal Council," Dexter says, won't diminish unless someone steps in. In the three years preceding this election, there has never been a general ward meeting of all aldermen to discuss issues from each ward. "The issues change from street to street," Dexter says, "and with out communication, they can't be resolved."

Dexter says the issues being discussed this year are crucial to Dartmouth's future, and feels that he is the only candidate who is really dealing directly with them. The other running members, he says, are showing "token recognition" towards the issues at hand.

In view of the present housing crisis in Dartmouth, Dexter proposes that landlords be required to obtain a Residential Occupancy Permit. Such a permit would ensure the upkeep of the Minimum Standards by-law, and through periodical inspections every 3-5 years, housing standards

An extended property tax rebate system would also ensure the futures of many citizens who would otherwise be evicted from their homes in the case of a sudden loss of income, Dexter says.

Dexter strongly supports the planned cultural centre which would provide a larger library, community theatre, and art gallery. Dexter also supports private business and a redefinition of the commons boundaries. He says that Dartmouth has an abundance of green space, but the commons is slowly "whittling away." He says the commons should be preserved for future generations when open space in a metropolitan centre will probably be a rarity.

Concerning the issues of women and social services for women, Dexter has been particularly vocal.

He says that Dartmouth should establish its own transition house to deal with the steady

ily increasing number of battered women and children.

The most unusual issue on Dexter's platform is one which is rarely seen being dealt with by municipal beings: peace. He proposes that Dartmouth and Halifax Harbour be made a "nuclear-free zone," and is providing an opportunity for the citizens themselves to voice their views about the issue and decide themselves whether or not they want their community to be "nuke-free."

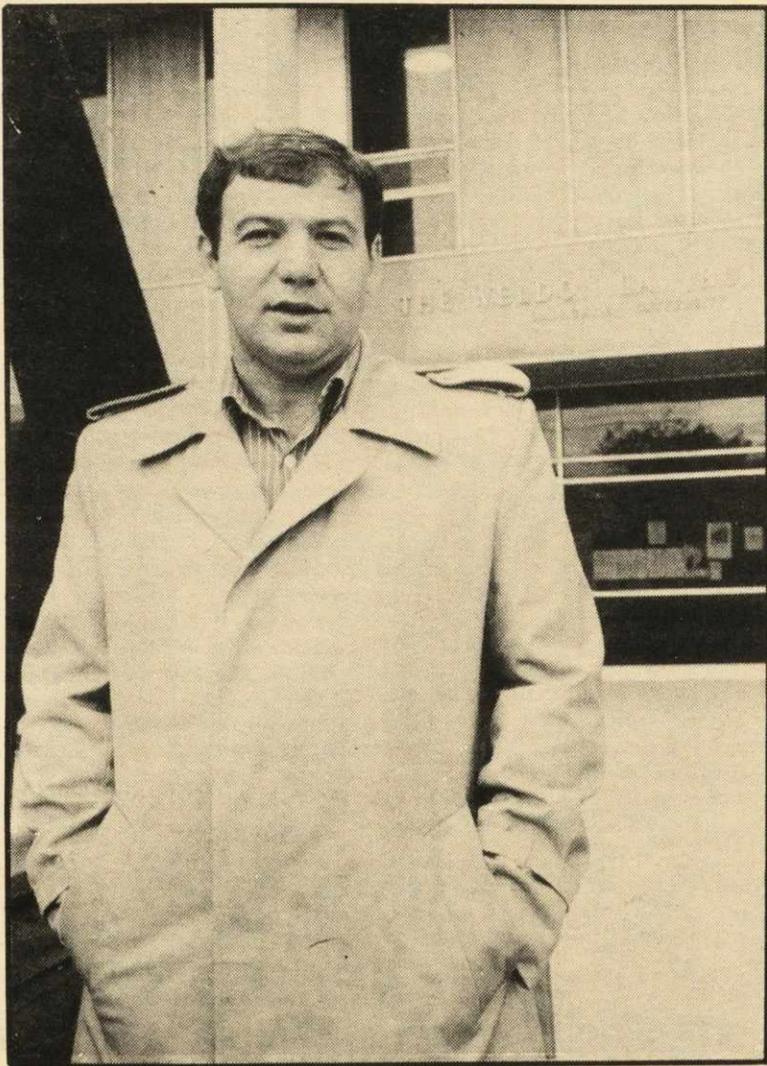
Dexter was not at all pleased that Halifax wouldn't even let the issue come to council this August, and feels that by using the issue in his platform, he is letting the "democratic process carry through."

In view of the issues being presented in his platform, Dexter says that he is ready to take new steps towards a brighter future for Dartmouth.

"These are ugly problems," he says, "and no one wants to deal with ugly problems."

Dexter says the major problem with today's council is the "lack of accountability to people." A city council should not just be responsible, but responsive as well, he says.

Dexter realizes that, if he is elected, he will be only one of fourteen voices representing Dartmouth, but says that even if he cannot change what he would like to, he hopes to at least "heighten the contradictions" so that the citizens of Dartmouth "will know there's someone on their side."



Dal law student and Dartmouth council candidate Darrell Dexter poses before the Weldon Building. Photo by Todd Miller; Dal Photo.

Ward 3 hopefuls speak

By TOBY SANGER

ECONOMIC REVIVAL AND improving the housing situation are the two major concerns voiced by all three candidates vying for election in Ward Three.

Former deputy-mayor and the city's first black councillor, Graham Downey, faces strong challenges from Margaret Fekeshazy, a community service co-ordinator with the YWCA, and from David Hill, a local businessman.

While the three candidates may agree on what the main problems are in the city's poorest — and richest — ward, they have very different ideas on how these problems can be solved.

Downey says a renewed federal government commitment for a delayed office building project on Gottingen Street will provide the key for economic revitalization in the ward.

Demolition of the existing buildings on the property resulted in a loss of about 500 jobs in the area, Downey says. "And then the federal government puts out a sign that says 'Creating Canadian Jobs' ... Gottingen Street can't survive without this commitment no matter what building it is."

Downey challenges the claims of his opponents that Ward Three has the highest unemployment rate and notes that the ward brought in the most taxes in the city.

He says if he is re-elected, he will push MLA's for changes in the Residential Tenancies Act, such as amendments to provide for security of tenure. These amendments are proposed in the

Housing for People Coalition's blueprint.

"I don't think anyone can fault my record on housing. Other candidates offer everything but can't do it. I run on my record over a period of time and that's all I can do. I'm not making any promises I can't fulfill," says Downey.

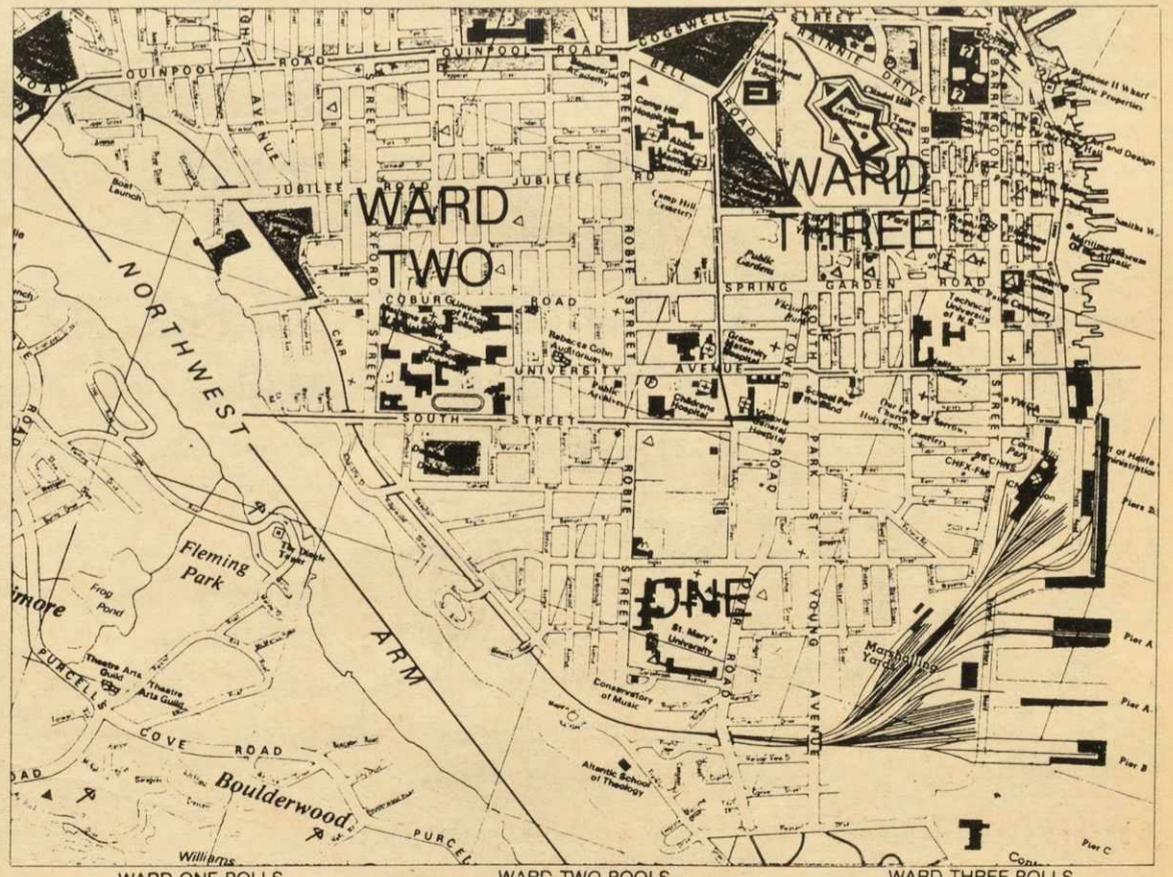
Margaret Fekeshazy, Downey's main opponent, says the lack of adequate housing in the ward "is a crisis situation" and believes the unemployment problem "has to be creatively addressed".

She says developing a "keener sense of community and communication by having meetings on a monthly basis" would be an important step towards solving these problems.

"I really feel that if the residents let the commercial people (in the ward) know what their problems are, then they will work to help solve those problems." In addition, "entrepreneurial programs should be implemented to dig out some of the talents in the community," Fekeshazy says.

David Hill says in order to revitalize economic activity in the ward, "all the city has to do is to get involved in affirmative action programs for small businesses in the area." These would be based on programs which have successfully handled similar problems in American cities such as Detroit, Hill suggests.

Before getting involved in any major housing projects, the "city has to do an in-depth study with community participation, otherwise it cannot work," says Hill. The city has to move "very slowly" and "must be cautious" with housing projects, Hill believes.



WARD ONE POLLS

Tower Road School
945 Tower Rd.
St. Francis School
5985 Inglis St.
Spencer House
5596 Morris St.

WARD TWO POLLS

Sir. Ch. Tupper School
6455 Norwood St.
Lemarchant St. School
6141 Watt St.
Cornwallis Jr. High
1787 Preston St.

WARD THREE POLLS

St. David's Church
1537 Brunswick St.
Joseph Howe School
2557 Maynard St.
St. Patrick's Complex
2277 Maitland St.