

Highland Gate Ratepayers to form at Monday meeting



By Brock Weir

Concerned residents living around the former Highland Gate Golf Course are expected to come out to Town Hall once again this Monday, December 15, to formally form a ratepayers' association.

This will be the second formal meeting of the neighbours as they seek to form a united voice to speak on their behalf on any potential future development of the over-80-year-old golf course, which closed for its final season last month.

They met last month to formally appoint officers to lead the group, but after a heated debate, opted to take a breather of a few weeks to seek nominations for the positions of president, vice president, treasurer and secretary.

As only two residents put their names forward for the latter two positions, these will be acclaimed at Monday's meeting. Candidates seeking the presidency and vice-presidency will face a challenge.

The first candidate seeking the presidency of the new group is Dave Newton, who spearheaded last month's meeting. While the group decided to put the election off at the time, they voted to have Mr. Newton act in an administrative capacity to take nominations.

In his pitch to registered residents, he says he, like any of the neighbours in question, purchased their homes for the views from their backyards onto the golf course. A graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in marketing, he notes his business experience as President of Premier Entertainment Services as beneficial in taking the group forward.

"The skills I have acquired and developed in this career that lend themselves well to this position include action planning and engagement to make things happen," he wrote. "The ability to lead a varied group of individuals with similar or differing perspectives has proven a valued skill in my day-to-day life, time and again, that has helped both the company and our extensive client base maximize their involvement in our industry."

"More so, working in an environment of high pressure, short timelines and varied personalities, identifying tasks that should be delegated to colleagues with greater skillsets in specified areas, has proven a valued asset in both problem solving and overall management initiatives."

Also seeking the presidency is Martine Eliase, a 15-year resident of Aurora.

In her pitch, she says when she heard Highland Gate's future was uncertain and considered the possibility of an outcome similar to Newmarket's Glenway Golf Club, she knew she had to do something. Cited professional credentials include serving as national director of community relations for a large pharmaceutical company, as well as their director of government relations, past-president of the women's branch of a Federal riding association, and her current position as Director of National Patient Engagement Strategy for the company.

"If elected, I will dedicate myself to ensuring that together, as a neighbourhood, we are in the best possible position to protect our

housing values, our quality of life, and the current character of our neighbourhood, she wrote. I will bring my considerable professional experience to bear in working with all stakeholders involved to ensure that the best interests of existing residents remain front and centre.

As an added bonus, I have an existing relationship with the chair of the Glenway Preservation Society [Christina Bisanz] and recently volunteered on her successful election campaign for Town Council in Newmarket. With my strong grassroots experience in politics and a passion for our great neighbourhood, I ask for your vote.

Andrew Marshall and David LeClaire seek the vice presidency. A two-year resident of Aurora, Mr. Marshall serves on the Board of Directors of the York Pioneer & Historical Society, the Sharon Temple Management Society, and has been a member of the Highland club.

Mr. LeClaire has lived in Aurora for nearly 15 years, with a background in the Royal Canadian Navy, followed by a career in the financial sector.

The meeting will be convened in Council Chambers at 7 p.m.