

New Democrats will represent true 'values' of Newmarket-Aurora: Duff



By Brock Weir

The 'values' of the people of Aurora and Newmarket have not been represented at Queen's Park by the Liberals or the Progressive Conservatives, and it is time for these values to have their day, according to Aurora's Angus Duff.

Duff formally filed his papers on Saturday to be Newmarket-Aurora's NDP candidate for the June 12 provincial election. Accompanied by his daughter Gillian and son Charlie, he says these common values of the two communities have continually been underrepresented by the area's Provincial reps.

'I think the essence of the values of the folks of Newmarket-Aurora are people who are caring, people who are generous, people who are concerned about social issues, and I got the sense that these weren't being represented by other parties.

'Personally, I thought this was an opportunity for me to make a positive contribution to Newmarket-Aurora and I figured I had the skills and the voice of the people, so it was an opportune time to run for election.'

A professor in Business Administration with a specialization in Human Resource Management at Trent University's Oshawa Campus, Duff says this background has uniquely positioned him to understand 'the challenges and needs of the public service', particularly in education.

'I believe I can bring that practical understanding of work, combined with the needs of public service, to make a very positive contribution in Queen's Park,' he says. 'Having spent 15 years in Newmarket-Aurora, I believe I understand the needs and desires of constituents here, so I can effectively represent constituents at Queen's Park.'

One of the predominant issues Duff feels needs to be better represented at Queen's Park is transit, particularly a 'public transportation system that works.' He says he sees the current system as a 'patchwork' of systems that have been put together, resulting in inadequate and impractical bus scheduling.

'I believe that transit needs in this area are focused on having all-day transit into Newmarket-Aurora,' he says. 'This is a promise that has been made repeatedly by Conservative candidates in the past, which have not been delivered on, even though Conservatives have had the power. It has been repeatedly promised through the Liberal party but, again, not acted upon even though they lead the province. I believe I can be a voice for that need for public transit in Newmarket-Aurora.'

If elected, the NDP he said would be given the opportunity to 'investigate how we would actually execute that', but it is 'the allocation of energy and resources which, until now, has not been addressed.'

Another priority is what he terms "the need and focus on the preservation of education and health care" in the area.

"When I talk to voters, they are concerned about the erosion of education," he says. "They are concerned about pending cuts to education. They are concerned about the quality of health care. Additionally, the support for workers in Newmarket-Aurora right now is such that we have some workers who are really struggling and the NDP is focused on supporting those workers through an increase in the minimum wage to \$12 and providing some support for the elimination of HST on energy bills."

Transit growth, as well as growth and support for businesses, go hand in hand, he argued. To underscore his point, he recalls a conversation with Stephanie from the Studio 44 Salon on Wellington Street near the GO Station. She lives in Holland Landing, but has to drive to Aurora to her business right next to the GO Station because hers is not a typical 9 to 5 job.

"I believe all-day Go service will open up business opportunities along the Aurora-Barrie corridor by connecting people in those various communities," he said. "The NDP have committed to offering an HST rebate on hydro bills. The harmonization of HST, as it applies to Hydro, has created a situation where our constituents, faced with high energy bills already, are being charged provincial tax on top of those costs, so the NDP have committed to removing the HST from bills, providing a direct savings to our constituents."

At the end of the day, however, voters, he says, will have to consider the "burgeoning debt" created by the Liberals, the money they have spent on government, and whether they are seeing anything on their bottom line to justify it.

"I speak to a lot of people who are disillusioned with the government in terms of thinking the government has not represented their values, so I believe the voters are going to look at the bottom line by saying, "Here is a government that provides the services that are valuable to me. They provide health care, education, public transit, child care, and this is a government that shows more fiscal responsibility than has been demonstrated by the Liberals over the last 10 years."