

Newmarket Councillor eyes PC nomination



By Brock Weir

Newmarket Councillor Maddie Di Muccio is set to vie for the Progressive Conservative candidacy for Newmarket-Aurora.

Before a room of supporters on Tuesday, incumbent Newmarket-Aurora MPP Frank Klees announced he would not seek re-election in the next Provincial election after nearly 20 years at Queen's Park. Klees announced he would serve out the end of his term, but that could come as early as this spring pending a snap election.

‘They are very big shoes to fill,’ Di Muccio, a long-time and active member in local Conservative and Progressive Conservative politics, told *The Auroran* on Friday. ‘I think Frank has done an incredible job representing this riding. I haven't made any formal decision, but at this point, it looks like I will be. Having said that, until the end of my own term at this Council, my priority continues to remain as a Councillor representing Ward 6.’

Di Muccio said she would spend the weekend speaking with family, friends and supporters, but all signs are pointing in the direction of jumping into the Provincial ring.

Looking ahead to Provincial matters, education and taxes remain at the top of her list, including her opposition to further taxes on gas.

Now in her first term as a Newmarket Councillor, her tenure thus far has not been without controversy and contention around the Council table. Nevertheless, she said she believes she has done a ‘very good job in a short amount of time’ standing up for taxpayers.

‘Politics is a very nasty world and we need people who won't back down and I think I have shown that with my track record I won't back down,’ she said. ‘I would like to continue Frank's tradition of strong government. I also realise politics, especially with organized parties, it is [about] teamwork, loyalty and making sure the message is strong and consistent. That is something I definitely propose that I will do and qualities I would like to carry on.’

Although a Councillor in Newmarket, Di Muccio said her Aurora connections run deep both as a former resident as a mother whose son goes to school within the municipality. She said she is a York Region person to her core and wouldn't consider herself an ‘outsider of Aurora by any stretch.’

Di Muccio joins Aurora Councillor Chris Ballard in the Provincial race. Seeking the Liberal nomination, Councillor Ballard announced his candidacy last fall. Both still need their candidacies approved by their respective party's riding associations and further candidates can also challenge them for the posts.

Councillor Ballard was among those reacting to Mr. Klees' announcement this week.

"Frank Klees has served the residents of Aurora for many years with dedication," he said. "He has demonstrated an admirable commitment to public service and I wish him well as he moves on in the next phase of his life. I found him to be personally engaging and caring about the future."

Similar words were expressed by Mayor Geoffrey Dawe who said Klees' announcement took him by surprise.

"I think Frank did a great job for our community," he said. "I have a lot of respect for Frank and the work he did. He did a great job as a constituency MPP and that is what I think truly differentiates him from a lot of the others."

This story will be updated.