

Newmarket Councillors vie for PC nomination



By Brock Weir

Newmarket Councillors Maddie Di Muccio and Jane Twinney are among those seeking the Progressive Conservative nomination for Newmarket-Aurora.

The two are the first to jump into the race, following MPP Frank Klees' surprise announcement last Tuesday he would not be seeking re-election after nearly 20 years at Queen's Park. He will, however, continue to serve out the remainder of his term.

‘They are very big shoes to fill,’ Councillor Di Muccio, a long-time and active member in local Conservative and Progressive Conservative politics, told *The Auroran* last week. ‘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.’

Councillor Di Muccio said she would spend the weekend speaking with family, friends and supporters, and ultimately filed her nomination papers on Tuesday.

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, Councillor Di Muccio said her Aurora connections run deep both as a former resident, and 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.’

While the two often don't see eye to eye, Councillor Di Muccio and fellow first-timer Councillor Twinney share a conservative

philosophy. Having served on the board of the local riding association, Councillor Twinney said she worked on Mr. Klees' first election campaign in the newly created riding of Newmarket-Aurora and also participated in his leadership campaign.

She said she was "very sad" to hear his decision as she hoped he would go for at least one more election.

Having recently filed her papers to seek re-election as Councillor for Newmarket's Ward 3, the opportunity created by Mr. Klees had to be given serious consideration.

"One of the factors in putting my name forward is the nomination is going to be very quick," she said. "Had it not been, I would have had thought about it in different ways. [The nomination] is going to be in a matter of weeks.

Although a long-time Newmarket resident, she has worked with and served community organizations that straddle both sides of the Newmarket-Aurora border, including Community Living and Bereaved Families of York Region. Having been brought up with conservative values by an entrepreneurial father, she says she is committed to serving the community.

"It has brought me more joy and the most satisfaction than anything I have done in my professional life," she says. "I am sure there are going to be people who look at [taking this opportunity] in a negative way, but when you serve your constituents in a political way, opportunities, just like in professional life, you are always looking at ways to improve on what you are doing in a much higher level.

"The problem is, sometimes things don't line up and you don't finish one job and move onto the next. It is not that simple."

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

Two further Aurora residents also expressed interest over the weekend in seeking the Progressive Conservative nod although neither were prepared to go on the record at this time due to their current work commitments.