

Somerville withdraws PC race amid ?threats?

By Brock Weir

Aurora's Stephen Somerville withdrew from the race to replace MPP Frank Klees on Wednesday morning amid what he describes as ?threats? made to him and his family.

In a statement, he said the matter was now in the hands of police.

?Unfortunately, there were threats made against me and my family that has caused me to reconsider my candidacy in this race and upon considerable reflection, I have decided it is best I do not continue at this time,? said Mr. Somerville in a statement. ?My family is my top priority.

?As the matter is now the subject of a police investigation, I cannot offer any details or additional comments at this time. I wish all approved candidates for the PC Party in Newmarket-Aurora good luck and hope that Ontarians elect an Ontario PC government, let by Tim Hudak, in the next provincial election.?

Last week, the York Regional Police declined to elaborate on the nature of an ongoing investigation.

?Any time a citizen reports an incident to police, we will conduct a thorough investigation,? said Constable Laura Nicolle. ?If, in the course of that investigation, the evidence provides us grounds that an offence has been committed, investigators will lay the appropriate charges, based on the circumstances.

?We do not confirm or deny if a report has been made to us or if an investigation is taking place or not.?

With Mr. Somerville out of the race, that leaves Newmarket Councillor Jane Twinney as the one left standing, so far, in the race.

She said she was ?shocked? that something like this would happen, particularly in Newmarket-Aurora.

?I sent an email to Stephen and expressed my hopes that everything was all right for him and his family, and to take care,? said Councillor Twinney. ?He has done a lot for this party and we were just shocked that something like this would happen and it is very sad to hear.?

It is, however, business as usual for her campaign signing up new members and reaching out to the existing membership base.

She reiterated she had not received any threats herself, and it had not crossed her mind about doing anything differently.

?I don't want to start getting worried about things like that, I am just carrying on doing what I am doing,? she said. ?As of now, I am the only candidate but there are still two weeks for another candidate to come into the picture. I am just carrying on doing what I am doing.?

Fellow Newmarket Councillor Maddie di Muccio was the first candidate to throw her hat in the ring to replace Mr. Klees. Her candidacy, however, was vetoed by the Party earlier this month, causing a flurry of debate within the party.

Councillor di Muccio did not return calls from The Auroran for comment on the Somerville matter.

Party faithful will formalize their candidate of choice in a nomination meeting on March 20.

On the Ontario Liberal side, Aurora Councillor Chris Ballard is, at the moment, the only declared candidate. Elsewhere, Dorian Baxter will also stand as a candidate. The perennial Federal candidate for the Progressive Canadian party founded by Sinclair

Stevens in response to the foundation of the new Conservative Party of Canada, has found a spot in the new Canadians' Choice Party.

Finding his efforts to stand as a candidate for the Ontario PCs 'frustrated', Mr. Baxter found his party in the Canadians' Choice, which bills itself as a 'bottom up' party giving independent candidates a banner, and a place for 'true patriots' to work for constituents 'and not a party leader.'