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MOVE UP TO THESE HOMES AND "SYLVIA HOUGHTON" WILL BUY YOUR HOME FOR CASH

Moraine at centre of political storm

of all rivers in York Region and provides drinking water for Newmarket and Aurora, is unique. There's just not anything like it," McGuinty said.

But he declined to say if he would call for an outright ban on development on the moraine. "First we want a freeze, then we will look at the ideas presented in the bill which would provide the same protection as provided for the Niagara Escarpment. But it's open to debate how much development," McGuinty said.

Colle conceded such a commission probably could not affect moraine developments already proposed in towns such as Richmond Hill, and said there must be a compensation process to give developers fair value for their investments. "You just can't arbitrarily take away property rights," he explained. "Compensation, expropriation, land swaps, would all be part of it."

The MPP said the moraine's future is a key to a more general debate on how development should be shaped around Ontario's urban areas. "It's a good signal about which way we're going to go."

Tony Clement, provincial minister of environment and municipal affairs, has promised a provincial policy statement on the moraine in the near future.

Colle's bill got a good reception from environmental groups battling for the moraine.

"We're thrilled at the initiative they've taken," Debbie Grandall, co-chair of Save The Oak Ridges Moraine, said from Caledon. The preservation of the escarpment and its "connected wildness" is the proof that a body like the Niagara Escarpment Commission works, she said. "Seeing them in action, we have a wonderful model."

Private members bills rarely make it to third reading, something McGuinty acknowledged Thursday.

— with files from Jennifer Brown

Lastman calls story 'crazy'

According to the Star's report, prominent Tories have been pushing to hire Fantino and the only stumbling block is opposition from police union leader Craig Bromell.

Olivia Chow, a Toronto police board member, said she doesn't even know who has applied for the job yet.

"We haven't even closed the applications yet. Today's the deadline for applying," Chow said Friday.

The Toronto Star story quotes unnamed insiders saying Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman will back Fantino if he wants the job and will convince Gardner and Chow to vote with him.

But Lastman denied the story. "To my knowledge, he hasn't made any application for the job," Lastman said. "I think it's crazy. Nothing's been decided, nothing. I haven't interviewed anybody. I haven't spoken to anybody. I haven't seen anybody."

Gardner, a Thornhill resident, said the applications will go to the search firm hired by the board. The company will put together a short list of candidates who will be interviewed by the board members. "I want them all to participate, if at all possible," he said.

A decision will most likely be made at the end of this month, or early next month. Current Toronto Chief David Boothby is retiring in February.

Boothby got the job in 1994 when the board members at the time were deadlocked between Fantino, who was then chief in London, and another candidate. As a compromise, the board settled on Boothby.

York Region hired Fantino in August 1998 after seven years at the helm of London's police department.

He was handed a force that was suffering from severe underfunding and morale problems stemming from the resignation, in disgrace, of former chief Bryan Cousineau as a result of a breach of trust scandal.

Fantino is on holiday until Nov. 15. Calls to his Woodbridge home were not returned Friday.

— with files from Metroland staff

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CORRECTION

The story in our Nov. 2 edition about a Richmond Hill couple killed in Sunday's EgyptAir plane crash contained inaccurate information about Anna Kogan.

She did not teach Hebrew at a Thornhill synagogue. She taught science to new Canadians at Greenwood Secondary School in Toronto. She and her husband Mark were not Richmond Hill residents.

We regret the errors.

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