

Jeanne Major running for mayor

BY JOAN RANSBERRY
Staff Writer

Stouffville's Jeanne Major wants to be mayor of Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The 47-year-old O'Brien Avenue resident filed her papers Wednesday, kicking off a mayoralty campaign. "It's a grassroots campaign," said Major. "It involves residents who, for one reason or another, have grown disenchanted with the previous administration."

Two-time incumbent Mayor Wayne Emmerson is spending the weekend contemplating his political future.

While Emmerson has announced that he is seeking a third mayoralty term during the Nov. 13 municipal election and filed the appropriate papers signaling the intent to run, he and all other

candidates have until Oct. 13 to make a final decision.

Major comes to the political arena with some community involvement. She's on the executive of Residents Information Group (RIG), a citizens' group formed to oppose the pool-library complex site. As well, Major is a member of the Latham Gallery, she participated in developing the Stouffville Secondary Plan and is a founding member of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Residents Association.

Major and her husband Robert Freeman moved to Stouffville 12 years ago, one year before their daughter Mylene was born. A graduate of the University of Montreal, Major was a marketing advertising professional with a national corporation before choosing to stay home and focus on family and enjoy community involvement.

Amalgamation is a very real possibility, Major stressed. "We should come to the table in a position of strength. The people of Whitchurch-Stouffville should be part of determining the town's future. We can't ignore it any longer," said Major. "We have to ensure that our interests are looked after."

Whitchurch-Stouffville is blessed with quality community atmosphere, distinctive heritage areas and a natural environment that are worth preserving and enhancing, said Major.

Recognizing that development will take place in Whitchurch-Stouffville, the mayoralty candidate is prepared to tell voters that strong, effective planning regulations must be in place to protect the community's assets. "These protections will need to be established before the Big Pipe is in place," Major said.



JEANNE MAJOR: Mayoral candidate fought against pool-library complex location.



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Residents fear for well-water contamination

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The town has received four separate applications, each requesting an exemption to the town's new fill control bylaw, allowing more dump trucks to travel past residences to reach the gravel pits and a Kennedy Road polo field.

Earlier this year, a tough bylaw governing the 16 gravel pits in Whitchurch-Stouffville was passed, making it necessary for pit owners to apply for permits to dump fill.

Pit owners helped draft the bylaw, Pitway Holdings owner Dalton Hicks pointed out. As well, Hicks told the audience he only handles clean fill.

"Pitway has maintained the access to the roadway to regional standards of safety," Hicks said.

As well, Hicks stressed he responded to the road dust problem by buying a machine to wash the road.

The residents' biggest worry is linked to the drinking water.

"We are very concerned about contaminated material getting into these pits. What impact would it have on our well water?" said Alan Clark.

As well, residents complained speeding trucks, excessive noise and dust and mud are all linked to the gravel pits.

James Christie of Durham Road 30 told council the fill has the "potential to be a nightmare in the future". Christie suggested local council show leadership by putting the residents first.

Fill will eventually hurt the

ground water as well as affect adjacent kettle lakes, residents suggested. Karen Chubbuck of Kennedy Road said she's especially worried about changes in the flow of the water.

"We must stop filling in without knowing the consequences," Chubbuck said.

Pitway has recently completed a portion of the Warden Avenue clean fill operation, returning an abandoned pit to original grade for rural use.

"It is Pitway's belief that the placing of clean fill will not harm the natural environment or water well," said Hicks.

While the new bylaw is designed to ensure that the fill does not contaminate the environment and that it conforms with existing environmental laws, residents are not convinced.

Still Hicks continues to outline his position.

"These new controls are to be applied to all town-wide clean fill projects of greater than 100 trucks," Hicks said. "Owners are now required to enter into a comprehensive fill agreement and post a substantial no-contamination security bond with the town and undertake ground water monitoring and hydrogeological impact assessment prior to approval in the defunct pits."

Residents took an interest in the state of local gravel pits last summer after provincial government authorities charged a local pit owner with dumping construction debris in a defunct gravel pit. The gravel pit owner was found guilty.

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