

OPINION

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Editorial

Voters losers if Sorbara can't help with issues

What good is an MPP if that elected representative can't go to battle for constituents in the halls of Queen's Park?

It appears some voters in the provincial riding of Vaughan-King-Aurora are finding out. Their MPP, who also happens to be Ontario's finance minister, says he can't take sides in a local issue involving Hydro One.

Greg Sorbara, a political veteran who has waged war for his constituents in the past, now claims his hands are tied when it comes to the issue of mega power towers proposed for his riding by Hydro One, a provincially owned corporation.

"As a cabinet minister, my responsibility is to make sure there is a fair process and a fair hearing on the project," Mr. Sorbara said last Friday.

"If I were to take sides, I would be in a conflict of interest that could not be rectified. That sounds like a cop out."

Surely Mr. Sorbara doesn't mean he can never come to the aid of his constituents when it comes to government agencies because he is in a position of power.

What is an MPP, if he isn't the guy in your corner, fighting to get what the majority of voters in his riding want?

If Mr. Sorbara can't take sides simply because he is in cabinet, then his constituents should hope he loses his powerful position in the next cabinet shuffle.

They would be better off with a backbencher.

Perhaps Mr. Sorbara is being overly cautious after the opposition called for his resignation over conflict-of-interest allegations earlier this year involving a company he once helped direct.

But that was much different. Surely MPPs in cabinet are still allowed to take off the minister's hat and act as an effective MPP when it comes to local issues. If not, having your member in the government's inner circle is clearly a downfall, not an advantage.

Mr. Sorbara should clarify his position and tell constituents exactly what he means by saying he can't take sides when it comes to issues involving government agencies.

If this remains his stance, voters in Vaughan-King-Aurora may as well ignore him and go straight to the opposition for help.

There must be a politician out there somewhere willing to stick up for the little guy.



Off The Top

with Jim Mason

Ex-Olympian unimpressed with Athens 'disgrace'

John Pearce should be in Athens this week.

Instead, the world-ranked show jumper is at his Ballantrae equestrian centre making travel arrangements for his next competition and preparing young horses and riders.

And he's not mincing words. "The Olympic team's showing this year is disgraceful," he said.

An Olympian himself four years ago in Sydney, the 40-year-old owner of Forestview Farms isn't slamming the Canadian athletes or even the administrators.

It's the system. More money is needed at all levels.

"We need to encourage more sport in this country," he said. "We can teach young people competitiveness, integrity and team spirit through it. And at the upper level, we need money, too. For (athletes) and management, too."

(Show jumping in Canada) has needed better organization for the last eight years and it needs to be corrected before we have international success again. We have no chiefs and too many indians. We need a chief."

The legendary Ian Millar is the only Canadian jumping in Athens, thanks to a poor showing by a young team at the 2002 Pan American Games. That was a crucial error, said Mr. Pearce, who has been first or second in earnings among Canadians this year, including three grand prix championships.

He competes twice as much in the United States as in Canada now.

"You can jump every weekend in the States," he said. "And the money isn't as good here."

Riding stateside also serves his horse-selling business well.

"Don't get me wrong, I'm very patriotic and I like riding for the (national) team," he said. "I'm a veteran rider with a great horse. Yes, I would have gone to Athens."

But there's a new star horse, Champagne, to prepare after a two-month break and two newer mounts to work.

And someone's on the other line with information on a meet in the States.

Jim Mason is editor of the *Stouffville Sun-Tribune*.

Letters to the Editor

Newcomers will determine future of quaint community

Re: *Too much farmland growing houses*, Aug. 5

As long as farmers continue to sell their land as the population in and around major urban centres continues to grow and as long as politicians continue to approve new housing developments, neither complaining nor wishful thinking will stop urban sprawl and its impact on surrounding communities.

The new housing projects surrounding Stouffville will likely be beneficial to local merchants and businesses, providing a new source of consumers and income base.

It will also provide a larger source of revenue to the township in the form of taxation, not just from the newcomers, but from all of us.

More people translates into the need for more resources and services and we will all have to pay.

In the years to come, it seems inevitable Stouffville will change. Population growth means there will be more traffic, congestion, air pollution, noise, demand on existing natural resources and the list goes on.

Only time will tell if Stouffville can maintain its quaint and country-like charm in spite of its growth.

Much will depend on the type of people who will eventually move into those new

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Write: Letters to the Editor, 34 Civic Ave., P.O. Box 154, Stouffville, L4A 7Z5, e-mail jmason@yrng.com

houses and the values and vision they bring with them to this lovely community

TONI WAYNE
STOUFFVILLE

Stouffville theatre great idea

We are both young girls who want to be actresses. We love to watch movies and plays but don't like to drive far and our parents don't like driving far either.

A theatre would liven up the downtown and convince more kids to dance and act. Schools could walk to the theatre for movies and plays. Seats could be reserved for birthday parties. People need a theatre to entertain them during a rainy day.

We hope you all will vote to look at this great idea

MACKENZIE MOYER
AND MARIJKE REESOR
STOUFFVILLE

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