

# More 'significant change' on tap for business group

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
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Bruno Grise is the new executive director of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce.

His appointment was announced at the chamber's annual general meeting April 14.

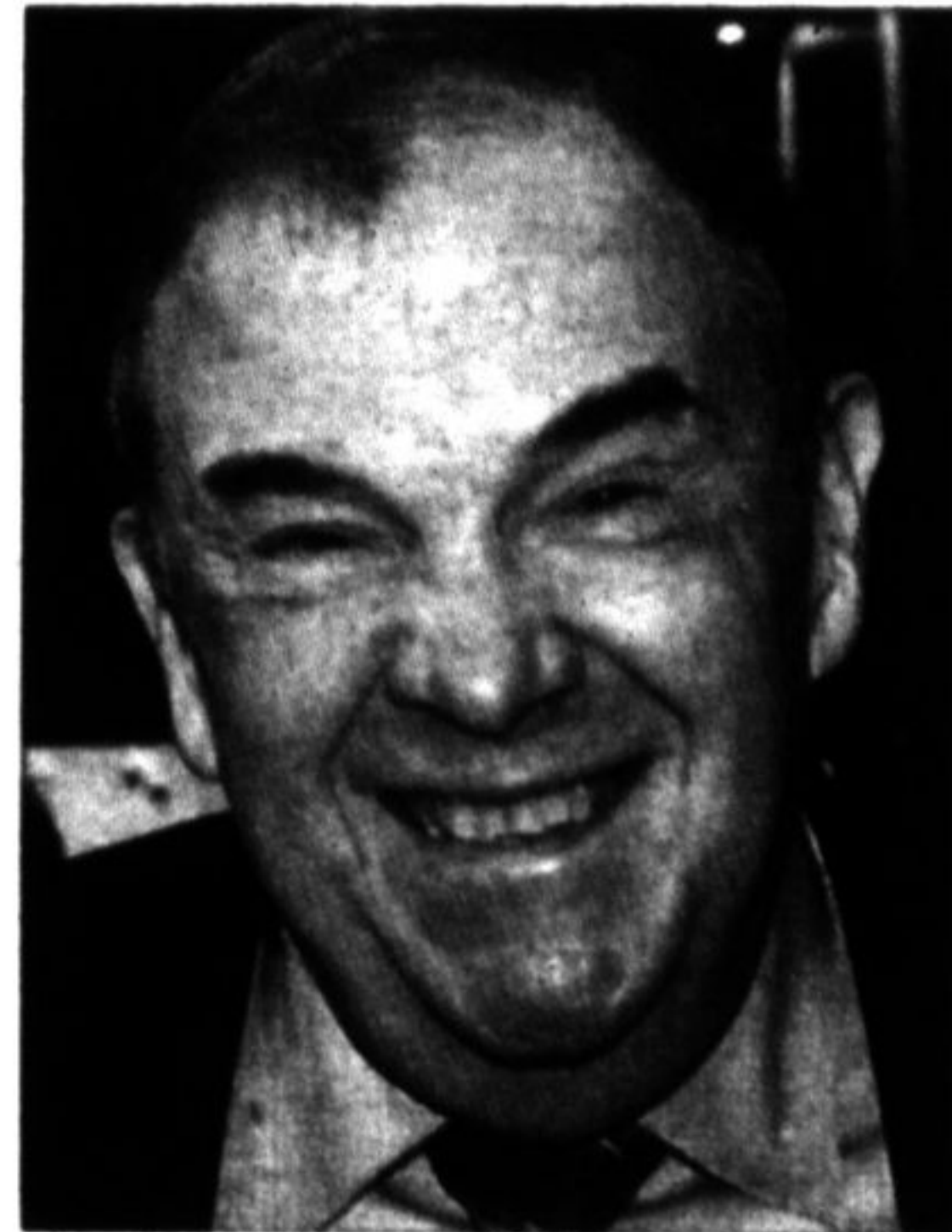
Edward Nelles, who held the position for two years, announced earlier this month he was stepping down in order to pursue other opportunities.

The chamber's hiring committee recruited candidates for Mr. Nelles' replacement, according to Marie-Josée Riverin, the newly-elected chairperson of its board of directors.

Ms Riverin is Mr. Grise's wife. She told The Sun-Tribune she recused herself from the hiring process.

Mr. Grise had a reputation in the corporate world for being the "turnaround guy". He is now a paralegal at Riverin Law Firm.

Mr. Grise spent the past year-and-a-half on the chamber's



**EDWARD NELLES:** Former executive director left chamber of commerce after two years.

learning initiatives committee. He was not a board member, he said.

Part of his mandate will be "to look at aspects of chamber operations. It needs rejuvenation," Ms Riverin said.

She also wants to breathe excitement into the organiza-

tion and make it more fun and dynamic.

"Edward did a great job with the mandate he was given," Ms Riverin said.

*'How does a board, whose term expired, hire someone new?'*

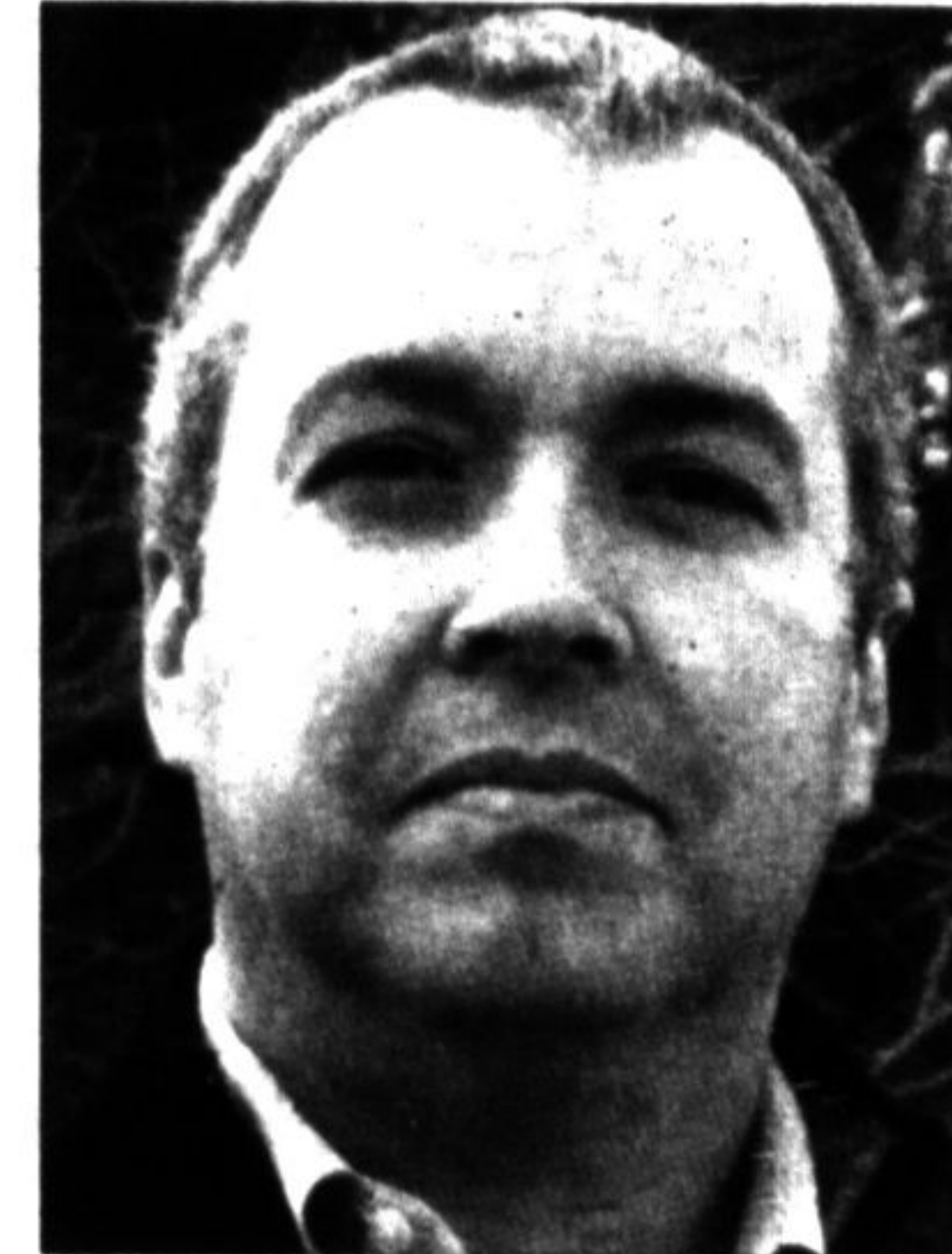
"I think it was a challenging year."

Chamber members "... should expect to see significant changes in the coming months to both the structure and services offered ...," Mr. Grise stated in a media release.

The chamber has 416 members, according to its online directory.

Between 20 and 50 members attended the AGM and voted in a brand new board of directors as all of their terms were up.

"Usually people come out to vote when they're unhappy," Mr. Grise said.



**BRUNO GRISE:** New executive director says chamber is coming off of 'challenging year'.

He also noted AGMs are "not real exciting as far as meetings go".

Local businessman Tom Whitaker was interested in joining the chamber and thought attending the AGM would be a good idea.

When he contacted the chamber, he told The Sun-Tribune, he

was not allowed to attend because he was not a member.

Eventually he was allowed to attend as a guest of another member.

"If the goal is to grow the membership, then why make it so hard for someone to come out to the AGM?" he asked.

What he saw, he did not like.

Mr. Whitaker, the chief customer officer of Tiny Toolbox and former national sales manager for WIND Mobile, claimed there was little discussion about the 2013 financial statements or initiative results.

Once the new board was voted in, Mr. Grise was introduced.

"How does a board, whose term expired, hire someone new?" he said, adding the new board should vet the candidate before accepting him or her.

"I've decided the organization at this time is not for me. It would be a waste of my money," Mr. Whitaker said.

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\$300,000	\$1,139.11	\$525.74
\$320,000	\$1,215.05	\$560.79
\$340,000	\$1,290.99	\$595.84
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## Kroon taking 3rd run at council seat

BY SANDRA BOLAN  
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Twenty-four votes.

That's how close Hugo T. Kroon was to a Ward 3 victory in 2010.

Mr. Kroon, 56, is making his third bid for the Whitchurch-Stouffville council seat this October.

"I'm going to win it this time," the self-employed landscaper said.

Current Ward 3 Councillor Clyde Smith has not made his intentions for this year's municipal election publicly known.

"Most people vote against a candidate, not for one," Mr. Kroon said.

During the past four years, Mr. Kroon has been a fixture at council meetings, not chiming in with his two cents on issues, but "just sitting there, learning".

What has he learned?

Council meetings have to be more accessible to the average resident, not only when it comes to the time of day the meeting is held, but also the reports have to be understandable by the layperson.

Like many other candidates, Mr. Kroon, if elected, promises more accountability and transparency.

But he also promises to take ownership of his mistakes and even those of previous councillors.

"You take responsibility of everything that ever happened," he said.

"No one expects government to be perfect and that includes the people who work for

them," he said.

Mr. Kroon also wants more co-operation between all three levels of government and for the blame game to stop.

"It doesn't do anybody any good," he said. When it comes to specific Ward 3 issues, getting Gormley developed is top of mind.

"The town seems to be less than interested in making things easy for (developers)," he said.

While social media is expected to take on a larger role this election, don't expect Mr. Kroon, a married father of three daughters, to be using Twitter to engage residents.

Mr. Kroon still believes face-to-face conversations are best.

"Phone me up. I'll come on out and we'll talk," he said.

He did, however, say that when using social media, it should come from a single, reputable source, such as the town itself to ensure accurate information is disseminated.

For the past eight years, Mr. Kroon has been on the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum board. He also runs its annual antique and classic car show.

He has been a municipal livestock evaluator and on the Lemonville Community Centre board for the past four years.

Mr. Kroon has been a member of the Stouffville Legion for more than 10 years.

The municipal election takes place Oct. 27. For more information, go to www.townofws.ca/elections

The Sun-Tribune is profiling candidates in the 2014 municipal election.