

Markham councillor challenges Emmerson for chair of York

BY BREA BARTHOLET
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You may not see re-elected Markham Regional Councillor Jim Jones in his position for very long.

Jones is telling colleagues he wants to become the next chair of York Region – replacing Bill Fisch, who is retiring after his fifth term.

"Our present chair is retiring from the position after many successful years," Jones wrote in an email Tuesday afternoon.

"As a person who prefers to be upfront about major policy and political issues, I

am letting you know that I would like to become the next chair of York Region."

Whitchurch-Stouffville Mayor Wayne Emmerson, whose term ends this month, announced he would be seeking the post in 2013.

Jones' email went on to outline some of the issues he believes would be part of the upcoming term, including increased debt in York Region and the expansion of essential services.

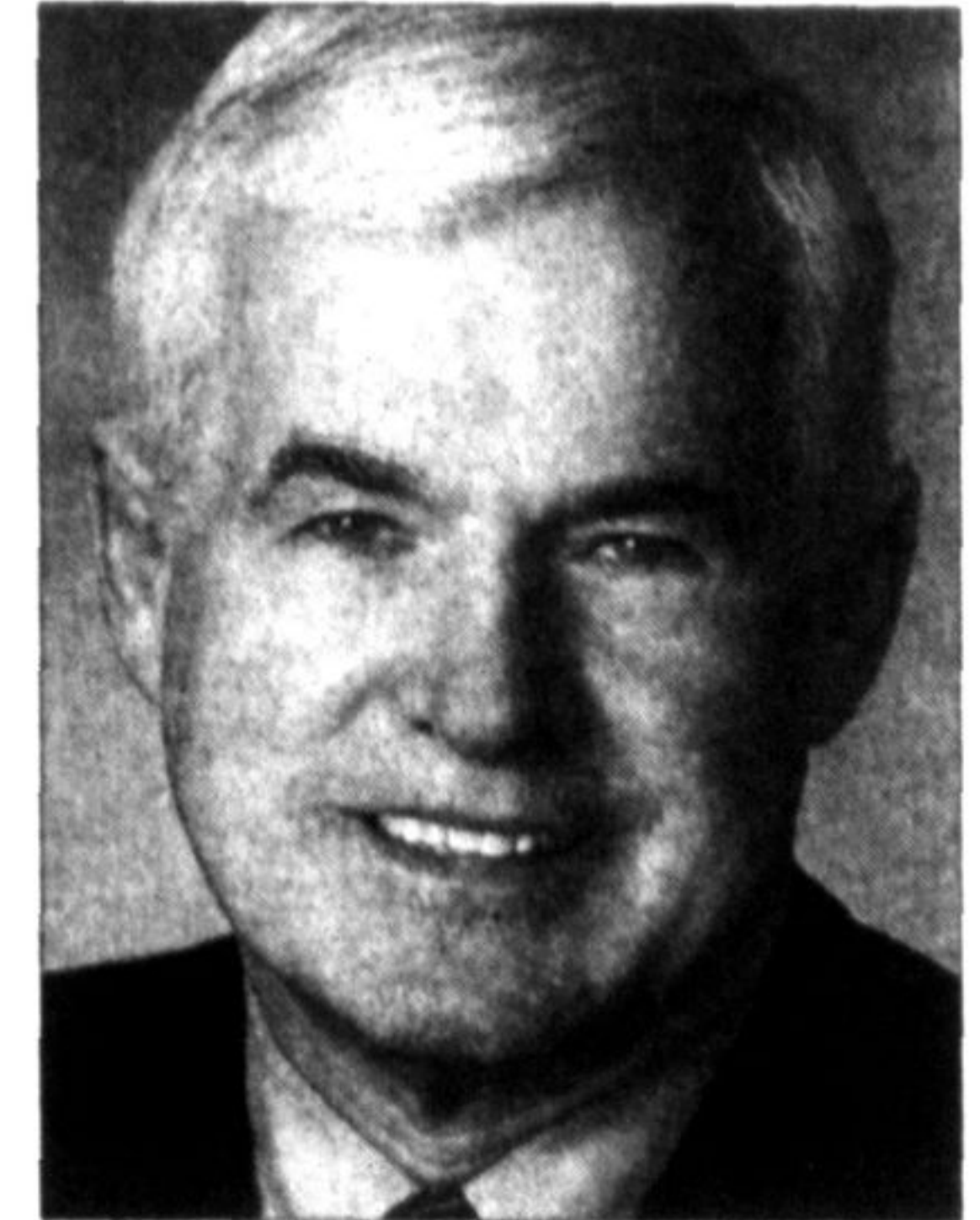
For a number of years, Jones has highlighted one of his primary interests of work being an integrated rail transit network to

improve commuter access and travel time. Jones hopes his journey to becoming chair will bring some of his transit ideas to life.

"I would like the opportunity to see some of that work come to fruition. This will require a successful partnership with other municipalities in the GTA, the province and Ottawa."

Other goals on Jones' list include:

- Make York Region a more desirable place to locate business and industry
- Review the rapid transit plan presently under construction to determine if it is still the right one for our region
- Review the long-term operating and maintenance of the bus rapid transit system



JIM JONES: Former Markham MP announced plans Tuesday to seek chair of York Region.

Rumours have been swirling for some time that re-elected Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti may seek Fisch's position. Another name touted is Regional Councillor John Taylor in Newmarket.

- Electrify and transform GO Transit lines from a commuter to a subway type service at 15-minute frequencies

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Scarpitti may seek Fisch's position. Another name touted is Regional Councillor John Taylor in Newmarket.

The new chair will be chosen by the mayors and regional councillors at their first meeting in Newmarket, Dec. 11 at York Region headquarters. If the person chosen is a sitting politician, a byelection would be required in that municipality to find a replacement.

Jones has 23 years' experience in government, having served locally, regionally and as a federal MP.

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