

On the Road

MAY 2025 NO. 88

A STOUFFVILLE MAGAZINE



Grounded For Good

Land Over Landings' Alexis Whalen and Stephen Marshall reflect on the end of the Pickering Airport

 Stouffville

Grief, Healing, Hope

Author Joe Lyons-Rising shares his grief journey

Sustainable Stouffville

Local nonprofit group helps keep the town green

Doors Open Guide

This year's event showcases 15+ sites and activities



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From the Editor

Welcome to the May edition of *On The Road*. Hopefully by now you've had a chance to cut the grass a couple of times—and hopefully the Leafs haven't fallen.

A few months ago, Stouffville (and all of southern Ontario) got the news that the federal government has officially scrapped the Pickering airport plans. Starting on page 12, I chat with members of advocacy group Land Over Landings about what it's like to win a 50-year fight.

You'll also notice the magazine's had a little makeover! Big thanks to Kira and Katrina from our graphics team—they've done an awesome job, as always.

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A Conversation with Joe Lyons-Rising About Grief, Healing and Hope

by Cassandra Papas

As May marks Mental Health Month, it's a timely moment to spotlight stories of resilience and recovery that remind us we're never truly alone in our struggles. I was lucky enough to sit with Stouffville's Joe Lyons-Rising at a local coffee shop one morning as he shared a glimpse of his book *Pain Remixed*, a memoir blending personal storytelling with music and mental health insights. All royalties are donated to Seasons Centre for Grieving Children—a nonprofit that Joe wishes had been around during his youth.

of her suicide attempts. But it wasn't until decades later a more profound shift began. Amid climbing the corporate ladder and his passion for data, Joe uncovered a love for English literature, opening a door he didn't know was waiting.

This remixing is more than a metaphor. Joe, also a longtime DJ, uses music to process his emotions and build community. From spinning tracks at local events to co-leading mental health workshops across the country, he's found a way to turn pain into purpose.

Joe shared that blending his business background with his passion for mental health has been deeply meaningful, especially in a time when anxiety and loneliness are so widespread.

"To me, grief isn't a disorder—it's the cost of loving someone," he said. "It doesn't expire; it evolves. I can laugh, dance, write, and still feel the ache, and that's okay."

It took decades for Joe to meet his own emotional needs before he could tell his story—with the support of his wife and daughters, he's doing just that.

This Mental Health Month, I'm reminded that healing doesn't always arrive with clarity or closure. Sometimes, it arrives in the form of a conversation, a page, a beat or a person brave enough to tell the truth.

Joe's journey is a powerful example of what it means to grieve openly and live purposefully—and of how we can all, in our own way, remix what's broken into something beautiful.

Joe continues to speak nationwide, DJ at community events and advocate for mental health support—especially for youth.

Because sometimes, the bravest thing
you can do is stay. 🌾



Connect with Joe & Support His Cause

***Pain Remixed* is available at Blue Heron Books and online. Join him for a book signing at Indigo Markville on May 24th from 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. or at Stouffville's own Back Alley Moto Café on May 26th from 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.**



A Podcast Episode on Healing, Resilience, and Reclaiming Joy After Trauma

Scan the QR code or visit YouTube to listen to Joe, joining Nina Purewal on the **My Legacy Podcast**, hosted by Martin Luther King III, Arndrea Waters King, and Marc & Craig Kielburger.

RIGHT HERE AT HOME:

Shopping Local in Stouffville Matters More Than Ever

It's an early morning in the Village of Stouffville, and the lights flick on in Redefined Finds. You can hear laughter from the group of cyclists at Red Bulb and the familiar voice of Lynda of Lindy's Flowers greeting a regular by name. This isn't just commerce—it's connection. And these days, more and more Canadians are realizing just how powerful that can be.

Across Canada, more people are realizing the value of shopping locally. A recent Interac survey found nearly 80% of Canadians feel it's more important now than a year ago. In Stouffville, this shift feels personal. Small business owners here are our neighbours, our kids' hockey coaches, the ones who donate to school fundraisers without blinking. Every time we walk into a locally owned shop or grab a sandwich from a nearby café, we're doing more than just spending money—we're choosing to build something right here at home.

And when you choose to shop locally, your money goes further. Sixty-six cents of every dollar spent at a local business stays in the community. It supports staff wages, local suppliers and the vitality of our downtown. Small- and medium-sized businesses make up 99% of all Canadian companies and provide 64% of private-sector jobs. That local purchase? It has a national impact. As Alison, owner of Redefined Finds, puts it, "when you support local, you keep your community vibrant and engaged, and a place that people can proudly call home."

That's the spirit behind *Shop Local Stouffville*, a campaign launched by the Town to highlight the value of our more than 900 local businesses. These aren't just storefronts—they're stories, families and futures.

Canadians are showing their support. Over half say they're willing to spend a little extra to buy local, and a third would spend \$10 more. It's not just about the product—it's about choosing community.

Where you spend matters. Choosing a local shop helps strengthen the fabric of our town, one purchase at a time.

Visit discoverstouffville.ca for more information



Community Updates

Legion Events

Branch 459 150 Mostar St.
stouffvillelegion.ca



- MAY 30**
- Dinner in the Clubroom**
5:00–7:00 p.m. Homemade lasagna, \$18.
Register by May 25th to reserve a time slot.
- JUNE 14**
- Fun Bingo**
In the clubroom every month at 2 p.m.
18+ years. \$10 for 3 plays, \$20 for 9 plays.
- JUNE 21**
- Live Music – Dave Valencourt**
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- JUN 7**
- Sultans of String**
7:00–11:00 p.m.
- JUN 13**
- Ginger St. James w/Trash Pandas**
7:00–11:00 p.m. \$20 advance tickets

BRIERBUSH BABIES BOOK UPDATE

Wendy Forfar, author of *Boomers Time Capsules: Short Stories from a Small Town*, wishes to send an update regarding her book featured in October 2024's issue of *On The Road*. Due to personal health circumstances, the release of the book has been delayed. To contact Wendy, please email wendyforfar@gmail.com

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Creativity, Innovation and the Pace of Change

Stouffville’s Kelly Parke teaches York U students to get comfortable with AI

by Glenn Jackson

Not many conversations about innovation and creativity in the 21st century begin with a chat about Led Zeppelin, but that’s exactly where things started when I sat down with Stouffville’s Kelly Parke.

Noticing the sweater Kelly was wearing featuring Robert Plant—the legendary lead singer of Led Zeppelin—and Alison Krauss, I mentioned how I regretted missing their show at Budweiser Stage a couple of years ago.

“This sweater is a gift from Robert. He’s a nice guy—the guy makes \$300 million and will still sit and have a beer with the crew. He’s a very cool guy.” In his spare time, Kelly is a cameraman at the venue.

The conversation continues with his memories of seeing Loverboy at Stouffville High in the 1970s, but I’m quick to point out that my SDSS recollections go back only to the Much Music dance parties of 1986.

“Fair enough,” he says. “On to that innovation and creativity stuff...”

Kelly is a course director at York University’s Schulich School of Business, where he has taught since 2009. He designs an innovative MBA curriculum focused on creativity and innovation in modern business.

“I incorporate design thinking and emerging technologies into the course,” he says. “I lead hands-on ‘innovation lab’ sessions to mentor students and strengthen their problem-solving skills.”

“My focus is on embracing the power of creativity and innovation for adaptability.”

That “creativity and innovation” Kelly refers to is mainly driven by artificial intelligence (AI). I recently had a chance to sit down with him to define what that means and how it can play a pivotal role in his students’ future.

“I tell my students—you have to get comfortable with AI. It should augment human intelligence.”

Kelly uses the example of someone who wants to market a sellable product.

“What typically happens is teachers bring in successful entrepreneurs to tell students how to start a business,” he says.



“They tell their story of how they went broke and all that; it’s supposed to be an inspirational story, I get it, but it’s actually a fallacy, to be honest with you. It’s not disciplined enough to make a difference.”

Kelly argues you can flush out those ideas faster with the proper use of AI.

“It speeds up that process so fast that you get the ideas instantly, it gives you enough information to proceed. Rather than waste six months on an idea that is going nowhere. You get to the answer faster.”

“And most of the time, the answer is no,” he says. “The entrepreneur says, ‘don’t give up on your dream’—well, if it is a bad idea, yeah, give up on your dream!”

However, Kelly goes on to emphasize the rate of change is directly related to adaptability.

“Change is on very short order these days, and some people will not be able to adapt quickly,” he says. “So, what do they do? It’s back to the survival of the fittest.”

“Adaptability is built on character, environment and ability. I’m more passionate about how to build those three things right now because... people are getting so wound up by the pace of change. They’re looking for old traditional models.”

His answer was fairly abrupt when asked if humans will eventually come to their senses and accept the pace of change.

“I think we will have to crash and burn first. People love technology—technology is driven by technicians that don’t have a defined purpose,” he says. “People who are concerned about humanity get technology to serve a better purpose for humanity. We’re not in that position right now.”

“So, I think there’s going to be a bigger revolution in human design according to AI, how will it assist humanity. It’s going to be such a big push for that.”

While we are waiting for that push, I mention how I admire Led Zeppelin for never getting back together. I said The Beatles broke up in 1970 and never reunited as a foursome after that; they did not change their legacy. And Robert Plant is not changing the legacy of Led Zeppelin.

Kelly is quick to interject. “I was backstage in a lineup in catering beside Robert. I said, ‘So, ever thought about getting back together with the boys?’ Then he told me the real reason why he won’t reunite with Led Zeppelin.”

But that’s for another article... 📄

PHOTOGRAPH BY CASEY CUNNINGHAM



New Partnership with York U

In a bold step toward building a stronger and more vibrant future, the Town of Stouffville and York University have officially signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU), deepening a relationship rooted in years of collaboration and shared values.

The five-year agreement lays the foundation for exciting new initiatives in areas such as transportation and traffic management, sustainability, urban planning and more. It also opens doors for York University’s students and faculty to engage directly with the Town on research projects, experiential learning and innovation programs aligning with both partners’ visions for thriving, inclusive communities.

“We are pleased to deepen our partnership with the Town of Stouffville to further our shared objective of building more sustainable, equitable and prosperous communities,” says Rhonda Lenton, York University President and Vice-Chancellor. “Collaboration is the cornerstone of driving positive impact, and together, we will continue to foster knowledge mobilization and innovation while creating new opportunities for talented individuals to succeed.”

Mayor Iain Lovatt echoed this excitement, highlighting the importance of this collaboration for the Town’s future. “Partnering with York University marks a significant milestone for Stouffville,” says Mayor Lovatt. “This agreement will open up new avenues for our residents to participate in groundbreaking projects. As the first post-secondary institution to have a partnership with Stouffville, York University will bring transformative educational opportunities to our town. Through this collaboration, we aim to create lasting benefits and opportunities for all our community members.”

Key areas of focus under the MOU include transportation systems, environmental sustainability, urban development, municipal law, and promoting equity, diversity and inclusion. The partnership also aims to enhance professional development opportunities, support local entrepreneurs through initiatives like YSpace—York’s entrepreneurship hub—and contribute to economic growth in the broader York Region.

Together, Stouffville and York University are paving the way for a future where education, innovation and community spirit work hand in hand.

INSIDE YAWG: Stouffville’s Youth Advisory Working Group Empowers Young Leaders

by Bobbi Martellacci

In Stouffville, youth are not just the future—they’re actively shaping the present. The Youth Advisory Working Group (YAWG) is a passionate team of ten students from grades 7 to 12 who are helping to ensure the voices of young people are heard in local government. These dedicated members meet monthly to share ideas, set priorities and work closely with Town staff to advocate for youth needs across the community.

With a focus on collaboration, leadership and service, YAWG members contribute to key Town projects and help plan engaging events such as Youth Week, Study Sessions and various youth programs. Their insights influence everything from recreation programming to youth engagement strategies, creating a more inclusive and youth-friendly community.

“My experience in YAWG has deepened my understanding of civic engagement and the importance of youth representation in local government,” said Alina Dharamshi, a grade 12 student at Stouffville District Secondary School. “It’s challenged me to think critically, collaborate across perspectives and embrace the power of advocacy. Being able to raise my voice and represent Stouffville’s youth in such a supportive environment has been incredibly meaningful.”

YAWG provides hands-on experience building confidence, cultivating civic responsibility and empowering young people to make a tangible difference. Members also gain a deeper look at how the Town operates by learning about different departments and their work.

Open to Stouffville residents in Grades 7 through 12, YAWG requires a one-school-year commitment from October to June. Members can reapply each year, making it ideal for students who want to deepen their involvement over time.

Stay Tuned!

YAWG is teaming up with SUSO Skate Co. to host **free Youth Roller Skate Nights** every Thursday from June 5th to August 21st at Memorial Park, complete with complimentary skate rentals and youth-only time slots.



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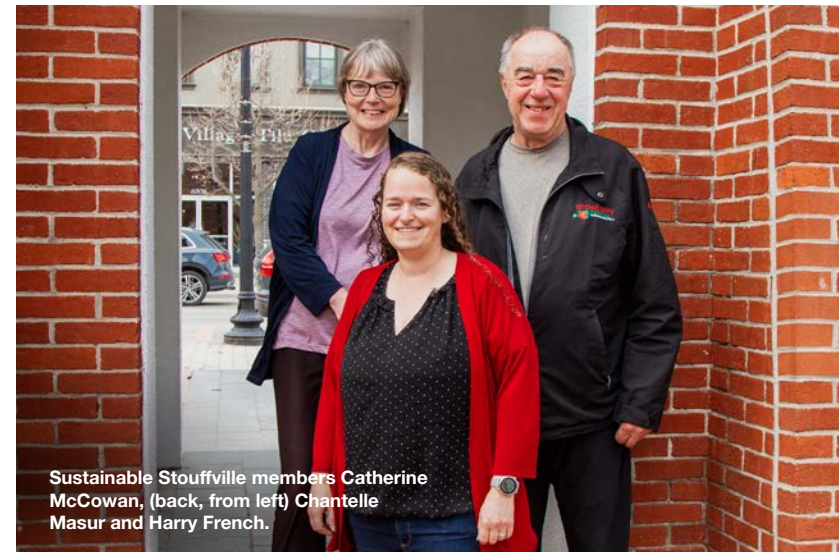
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SPOTLIGHT

The Story of Sustainable Stouffville

From Festival Booth to Community Movement

by Bobbi Martellacci



Sustainable Stouffville members Catherine McCowan, (back, from left) Chantelle Masur and Harry French.

Through their public-facing programs, they also encourage climate-friendly habits like active transportation and reduced single-use plastics.

Looking ahead, the team hopes by this time next year, Sustainable Stouffville will be a recognized and well-supported organization throughout the community, and its membership will continue to grow.

Check out their Earth Day Bike Rally, running through June 14th. All participants will receive a bike bell and a chance to win some awesome prizes—so get pedalling! 🚲



Want to Get Involved?

Become a Member

Associate Members (\$30) help shape the group's direction, while Supporting Members (free) contribute to sustainability projects. Benefits include staying informed, saving money and connecting with like-minded neighbours.

Join the Movement

✉ sustainable.stouffville@gmail.com

📸 @sustainable_stouffville

📍 Sustainable Stouffville

If you've been to the Stouffville Strawberry Festival in the past few years, chances are you've seen the Sustainable Stouffville booth—or maybe attended one of their hands-on workshops, but if you haven't heard of Sustainable Stouffville yet—now's the time.

Sustainable Stouffville is a grassroots, volunteer-powered nonprofit that's been quietly making a significant impact in town since 2013. It was founded by two passionate locals, Harry French and Catherine McCowan after they met volunteering at the Strawberry Festival. United by their passion for sustainability and community-building, they launched the organization with one simple goal—to connect residents and support local, action-focused environmental initiatives.

Now retired, Harry and Catherine have poured their time and energy into building the organization from the ground up. One of their first significant steps came in 2023 when they secured nearly \$20,000 through the Legacy Fund to support their mission. With that support, they launched a town-wide sustainability survey, drawing over 400 responses from residents and local businesses eager to talk about their sustainable habits and the barriers

holding them back.

What stood out most? People in Stouffville care deeply about sustainability and have big ideas—they need the right support and connections to bring those ideas to life. As Harry says, "We have many skilled people living in our town, we just need to find a way to bring everyone together, allowing them to execute those skills."

The founding duo was joined in 2022 by Chantelle Masur, whose community development and strategic planning background has helped strengthen the organization's direction and reach. The trio is committed to creating a greener, more connected town.

Harry, the group's President, has long worked in environmental advocacy, including with the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association and Windfall Ecology Centre. Vice President Catherine leads the charge on community engagement, believing that "nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something." Chantelle's leadership in outreach and communications helps the team continue to build momentum.

Their efforts are visible all over town, from educational workshops at the library to local resource guides and online tips.

PHOTO BY CASEY CUNNINGHAM

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Fast Times at Stouffville Track Club

Award-winning Fred Robbins has coached young runners for 30 years



Fred Robbins, Head Coach and Director of Stouffville's York Region Runners Club, puts club runners through their paces at the Connell-Franklin Track next to the Stouffville Arena.

 **by Jim Mason**
jimmason905@gmail.com

Stouffville residents might know Fred Robbins as a local heritage expert who is super passionate about preserving the history of the Stouffville area.

He's equally keen on mentoring young people in the fine art of running.

Robbins, 70, is the Head Coach and Director of the Stouffville-based York Region Runners Club.

Track people outside of Stouffville know our Fred.

He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Minor Track Association of Ontario in March.

The former Stouffville Sports Person of the Year was honoured this spring for both his coaching and heritage work with a King Charles III Coronation Medal.

The York Region Runners Club, born 30 years ago as the Stouffville Track and Field Club, also includes race walkers and jumpers aged 8 to 18 from across the region of 1.28 million people.

The club was so popular that it had to close online registration just 24 hours after it opened in March, with 91 athletes signing up.

The club trains twice a week at the Connell-Franklin Track in Stouffville during the spring and summer, Bruce's Mill Conservation Area in fall and at the Toronto Track and Field Centre at York University during winter.

Robbins plays ringmaster during workouts, directing athletes to stations around the track before leading his own small group.

His coaching career started while he was in his final year at King City Secondary School. After graduating in 1975 as athlete of the year he competed for Seneca College. A masters athlete, he continues to train and compete in the mile. He's a certified middle distance, sprints and hurdles coach.

An official at the 1976 Montréal Olympics, Robbins is one of ten coaches with the club, which maintains a ratio of one coach for every ten athletes.

Members won five medals during the team's annual trek to the nationals recently. Robbins predicts more greatness for his athletes, including a former youth football star who is turning in impressive times in sprints.

"I like the energy of the kids," said Robbins, borrowing a line from *Dazed and Confused*.

"The kids are the same age, so I don't feel any older!"

"And the parents have really stepped up to help. They don't want me to retire. It's a nice environment to have, that helpfulness, encouragement and support."

For more information on the club, go to: yrrc.ca

Uncommon Track

The Connell-Franklin Track is unique to this area of Ontario, and not just for the circumstances in which it was built

in 1991.

Located next to the Stouffville Arena, the track is the only track in York Region that's open to the public 24/7, according to Fred Robbins, Head Coach of Stouffville's York Region Runners Club.

"There are other quality tracks around but they're school board-based and they're locked up and permitted to the schools," he said.


Andre De Grasse approves. The seven-time Olympic medallist from Markham surprised some of the kids from the club when he showed up at the Stouffville track to work on his sprinting last summer.

The 400-metre, eight-lane track was built after officials from then neighbouring Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) and the community raised \$400,000 for its construction. The York Region District School Board, which had denied requests to build a track for the school, chipped in \$150,000.

Track coach Fred Robbins donated two weeks of his time to build the track's field house.

The facility is named for then SDSS phys-ed department head David Connell and student council president Julian Franklin.

The school has since moved to Hoover Park Dr. and the track is property of the Town.

A plaque at the north end of the track commemorates its construction and pays tribute to its donors and the project organizers. 

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The end of the runway

Advocacy group *Land Over Landings* reflects on the half-century fight to save Pickering's farmland

By Glenn Jackson



It was Thursday, January 9th of this year. Rumours started to swirl that something was up in Ottawa regarding the “Pickering Airport” file.

Despite the announcement two days prior that Justin Trudeau was resigning as Liberal leader and Parliament would be suspended until a new leader was chosen, rumblings suggested something big was coming in the next few weeks.

The idea of a new airport in Pickering has been making headlines since the federal and provincial governments proposed it in 1971. Protests were held, land was expropriated, and buildings were torn down, but no airport has been built to this day.

Advocacy groups such as the Friends of the Pickering Airport and various municipal governments, including

the Region of Durham and the City of Pickering, have supported the airport at one time or another.

Others, including residents, farmers, business owners, conservationists, and environmentalists, as well as advocacy groups such as People or Planes and Voters Organized to Cancel the Airport Lands, have fought for over half a century to stop the building of the runways.

PHOTOSHOOT BY CASEY CUNNINGHAM

Important announcement

One of the groups fighting the airport is Land Over Landings (LOL). They define themselves as “part protesters but mostly advocates,” with their overriding aim to “ensure the preservation of this rich farmland for the benefit of future generations.”

When Land Over Landings heard about the possibility of an announcement in January, they were reserved. They had “too many disappointments over the years to allow our hopes to soar, but we (started) to quietly hope nonetheless.”

A couple of weeks passed. Then, on Thursday, January 23rd, Land Over Landings Chair Alexis Whalen and other board members were told to expect invitations to an announcement “any day now.”

Anticipation was soaring, no pun intended.

Two days later, LOL's executive members receive formal invitations

to an “important announcement” on Monday, January 27th, at Pickering Glen Golf Club. Coincidentally, this was the exact location where, in 2013, Transport Canada held two public open houses explaining the airport was back on the table.

Whalen and the rest of the group's members knew that two announcements would be made — one about the Pickering Lands and one about the neighbouring Rouge National Urban Park.

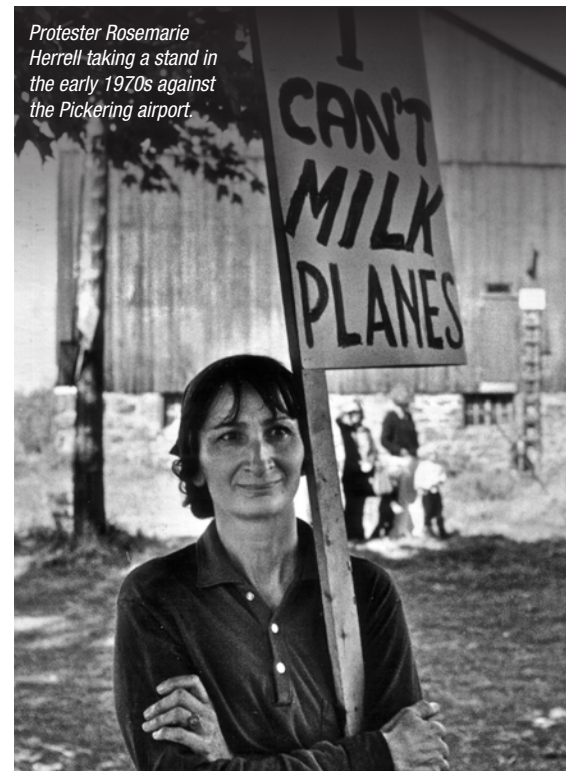
“We waited with bated breath,” Whalen said.

The weekend goes by without any word of what the announcements are.

Then, an early Monday morning story by the *Toronto Star* spills the beans: “Pickering Lands to be used to expand national park space as federal government grounds plans for future airport,” read the headline.

The fight to save the northern Pickering landscape from the airport bulldozers was over.

Protester Rosemarie Herrell taking a stand in the early 1970s against the Pickering airport.



“It was overwhelming, and at the same time, it was difficult for me to fully believe it.” - Land Over Landings member Heather Rigby, on the announcement that the Pickering Airport has been cancelled.



A farmhouse on the expropriated lands is demolished in 1975 with camera crews on hand.

Three runways proposed

While driving to Claremont one sunny April afternoon to meet with Alexis and other members of LOL, I realized that Concession 9, the primary road from Stouffville to the tiny quaint village at the intersection of Brock Rd., would no doubt have been gone if the airport was built.

Three runways were initially proposed. All three had flight paths over Stouffville: two just south of the Community of Stouffville, mostly in northern Markham, and one directly over Musselman's Lake and Ballantrae.

I arrive at the legendary Old Brock Café and Pizzeria and meet Alexis, LOL's founding members Gabrielle Untermann and Heather Rigby, and members Jim Miller and Pat Valentine.

There couldn't have been a happier group in Claremont that day.



Land Over Landings members (from left) Stephen Marshall (Vice-Chair), Gabrielle Untermann, Alexis Whalen (Chair) and Pat Valentine.

New round of evictions

The fight to stop a Pickering airport dates back to the early 1970s, but it came in waves. The airport was shelved in September 1975 when the Ontario government, under Premier Bill Davis, refused to provide the infrastructure needed for Ottawa to build it.

The idea of an airport on the land never died, however. Various levels of government have made multiple proposals, including one as recent as 2019, when the Toronto Board of Trade recommended the building of an “aerotropolis” complete with offices, hotels and entertainment complexes.

Local municipalities, including Stouffville, opposed this idea. The City of Pickering rescinded their support of an airport in a Council decision in April 2023 after having endorsed it as recently as 2017. In August 2019, Stouffville Council passed a motion to ask Transport Canada to “reconsider the airport ... if there is no clear business case to support it,” stating that “... one of the most important duties of

Council is to protect the quality of life in our community.”

Land Over Landings, successor to People or Planes, was born in 2005 to oppose a new round of evictions and demolitions after a study by the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) detailed the plans for a 3-runway “regional/reliever” airport.

The Globe and Mail broke that news, saying the GTAA will “build a \$2-billion, three-runway airport in Pickering that could eventually accommodate 10 million passengers a year... equivalent to 20% of the 50 million that will then go through Pearson airport.”

Land Over Landings resulted from the confluence of two separate meetings: one held in Claremont and the other convened by Gord McGregor in Brougham. When the two groups heard about each other, they combined, and all subsequent meetings were held in Brougham, headed up by Michael Robertson, a previous member of People or Planes who suggested the name.

Dynamic feeling of joy

At the café, we grab a table and settle in. Violet, our server, takes our order and notices an old newspaper clipping on the table.

“Pickering federal lands?” she asks. “What is this?”

Subtle laughter breaks out, and with a smirk, Gabrielle says, “Who wants to answer that?”

Over lunch, every member takes a stab at that answer. I listen and learn. I hear stories of perseverance, disillusion, passion, and, eventually, relief.

I then ask each member at the table what January 27th meant to them.

“There was a dynamic feeling of joy and connectivity in that room,” Heather said. “It was overwhelming, and at the same time, it was difficult for me to fully believe it.”

The other members at the table all nodded in agreement.

“There is a reverence that is moving through me, that we strangers came together and blossomed with one nugget of an intention that has served a huge community.”

Heather, a professional artist who captures the scenery of the Pickering fields in her paintings and drawings, was a founding member of LOL 20 years ago. She has leased her home from the federal government for 45 years.

“I think there is a ripple effect. I hear ... even across Canada ... ‘Good for you guys! What an example you have set.’ And that makes you feel very reverent.”

“It was very personal,” said Gabrielle. “I have lived for 35 years where a runway was supposed to go; that is my home.”

“But I’m 76 now, and I wonder what will happen if I can’t look after the farm anymore. I have six acres of land I have been trying to keep pretty and grow food on,” she said. “It’s going to be in the Park very soon, and maybe it will house a family that will farm there.”

Gabrielle met her husband in 1978 and has lived on that farm since 1986. She decided to join the new Land Over Landings group after 2005 evictions caused “a lot of anxiety in the community.”

No sense of jubilation

Jim Miller’s story goes back to March 1972 when, as an undergrad at the University of Toronto, he read a front-page story in *The Globe and Mail* leaking the idea that the federal and provincial governments were about to announce plans for an airport on the Pickering lands.

The plans called for the expropriation of 18,600 acres for a major international airport and 25,000 acres further south for a new city, at the time named Cedarwood.

“The following year, my parents’ farm was two-thirds expropriated — we were on the eastern edge,” Jim said. “My parents decided to fight, and for six years, there was uncertainty. We didn’t know if we were going to be forced off or not.”

“My parents were heavily involved in the protest, but our lawyer never allowed me to join People or Planes,” Jim mentions. “In case my parents were imprisoned, someone had to stay and run the farm. He recommended that one person — me — stay uninvolved.”

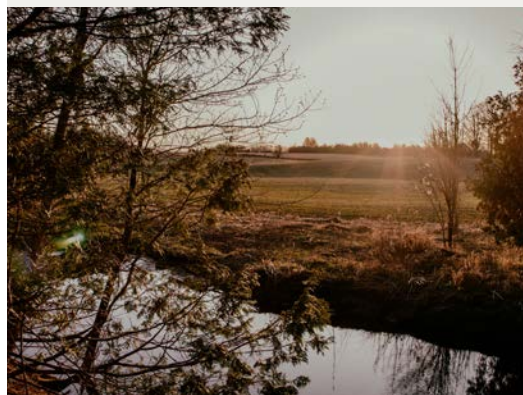
Jim’s great-grandfather settled on the farm in 1839. Jim moved away in 1981 but stayed in touch through the media.

Today, Jim is a member-at-large and “head of research” for Land Over Landings.

“Asking someone what January 27th was like,” Jim says, “would equate to asking someone in October 1945 what you think of the Second World War. You’re numb; you can’t believe it’s over.”

“There is no sense of jubilation — at least on my part yet. Because it isn’t over. They announced that the vast majority of the high-value conservation lands will be transferred to Parks Canada. What does that mean? And no one has told us what exactly that means. So, the public consultation coming up is critical.”

TOP: TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVE



A lot of gaps

Pat Valentine came to Land Over Landings a bit later than everyone else.

“I lived in Toronto and had no idea where Pickering was,” she said. “Then, around 2007, we fell in love with Claremont, but I asked our real estate agent what all these airport signs were doing around. She said it’s nothing to worry about — it’s all history.”

“I started driving around the area and couldn’t believe what I saw,” she said. “Everything was decrepit; the houses had holes in their roofs, and most were abandoned. It looked like a warzone. I then joined Land Over Landings.”

But nothing was being done, she said.

Then, in 2013, Ottawa announced an airport twice the size of Pearson International would be built on a portion of the land, with 5,000 acres given to the Rouge National Urban Park.

“We were galvanized. That’s when Land Over Landings *really* became Land Over Landings.”

“On January 27th, we were leery,” Pat said. “We understood this was a rushed announcement, but there were a lot of gaps in what was said. And we were thinking of those gaps.”

“Yes, we screamed and yelled and whistled and jumped up and down when they said, ‘Get this right — there is no more airport. It is dead!’ The place exploded. But we all thought, what is next?”

“We are all leery until it is fixed, and it’s not fixed yet.”

Cautious optimism

Alexis points out the commonality between everyone’s recognition of January 27th — one of cautious optimism.

“It was like a wedding, prom, birth of first child... all of these spectacular things, but with the asterisk beside it that comes from an organization of this nature. That we spent so much time and mental energy watching and listening for the gaps that the harm can creep in.”

She stresses the Land Over Landings fight is not over.

“Obviously (we feel) the delight of seeing and hearing for what we have been advocating for so long coming to fruition, but not yet in a solid shape that feels reliable or certain,” she says. “I use the analogy that we have written the mid-term exam, and now we are preparing for the final exam, but it’s an open book, and



Longtime Stouffville auctioneer Norm Faulkner sells items from the expropriated Lloyd Britton family farm in Altona (1974).

we can bring our contact list.”

The figurative final exam she refers to is the public consultation coming up to determine what the land will be used for.

“Over the years, it has always been going in the right direction — a little bit of land moved off, some zoning changes here, and you slowly see it moving in the direction we want it to be,” Pat adds. “I assume it will keep happening. We are here to make sure it does.”

“The most remarkable thing about Land Over Landings is our motto – family first,” Alexis said. “It is awe-inspiring what we have achieved as a team while taking care of our family and ourselves.”

“It has been monumental for me in my life,” Heather adds. “It has marked me. I am so proud to be part of this movement. It has fed me to be more open and honest with where we are headed.”

“In my previous life (in the city), it was all work — my friends were working, the hours worked, everything was work, I hardly knew my neighbours,” Pat said. “But when I came out here, I started meeting people, and then when I joined Land Over Landings, I suddenly developed a family. People I love, people I rely on. This place is special.”

As the sun sets, Land Over Landings Vice-Chair Stephen Marshall and I walk through Common Ground Gardens, which supplies volunteer-grown produce to local food banks in the shadow of Highway 7.

Stephen and his wife, Judy Mann, are lead community garden coordinators.

“My original motive was both selfish and heartfelt: to protect these lands for the children, so that the landscape of their childhood — meadows, creeks, forests and fields — would not be utterly

destroyed and replaced by strip malls and urban sprawl.”

Protecting the ‘landscape of their childhood’ is Stephen’s calling.

“Helping to protect these lands and communities for all our children is ... not a job or a career; it is a calling. It is the song of my heart.”

Asked how he felt on January 27th, Stephen replied: “elated, utterly thrilled.”

“I was humbled to be in the presence of old warriors, two or more generations of perseverance. I was awed by the

breadth and depth of the community engaged in the struggle.”

“I saw the outcome of so much effort over so many years. It feels like victory.”

As we continued our walk, Stephen pointed out High Perspective, a hand-gliding school sharing the land with Common Ground. It is operated by his friend Michael Robertson, the same Michael Robertson who helped launch Land Over Landings 20 years ago.

Ironically, only Michael’s gliders land in northern Pickering today. 🌿



BOTTOM: WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE MUSEUM #2023.000.435 / TOP: TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY ARCHIVE

“Helping to protect these lands and communities for all our children is ... not a job or a career; it is a calling. It is the song of my heart.”

- Stephen Marshall, Vice-Chair, Land Over Landings

Stouffville in the Airport Crosswinds

The Pickering airport from a resident’s perspective



by Jim Thomas
thomas-jim@rogers.com

The year was 1970. Charles Nolan was publisher of *The Stouffville Tribune*. I was his editor.

When Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his federal Minister of Transport broke the news that 18,600 acres of mostly rural Pickering farmland, bordering Stouffville and Markham, would be transformed into an International Airport, turbulence erupted. Opponents dreaded the thought of jet engine noise, increased traffic, loss of land, atmosphere disruption and absence of neighbours. But not all objected.

Some area farmers welcomed the proposal. Some, now aged, would receive ample payments for their properties, immediate retirement or preferred new locations. Others, less fortunate, wished to remain in homes they’d purchased and wished to stay. A sharp division occurred, both publicly and politically.

So where did the newspaper stand? The publisher favoured the decision, claiming an airport of this size would benefit Stouffville, both in population and business. I, too, supported the plan but stated, editorially, it would be a long-time coming, if ever. It would be never!

Prime reasons why the proposed airport project didn’t extend beyond a ‘threat’, can correctly be related to



Protesters at a 1974 Stouffville meeting attended by 2,000 residents opposing the proposed Pickering airport.

dogged determination from initially a ‘People or Planes’ organization headed by Charles Godfrey, later, an elected NDP member of Provincial Parliament, plus a follow-up committee of equal intensity known as ‘Land Over Landings’. So, determined were these groups, they would later barricade themselves inside a Pickering farmhouse and from there dare demolition teams to tear the building down, (with them in it). Machine operators backed off.

At a group meeting in Stouffville’s Latcham Hall, one member unleashed the recorded vibrations of a plane’s jet engine that proved so loud it threatened to raise the roof. Later, an anti-airport

rally was held in a proposed mid-site field that attracted thousands. Signs opposing the project were everywhere. While opponents of the airport remained cool to me as reporter, I was never banned from meetings.

Second, and possibly foremost, was a decision by Ontario Premier Bill Davis, (1971-

1985), not to provide infrastructure, including sewers, watermain and roads to the proposed airport site. This announcement automatically blocked further progress by federal authorities.

While the envisioned airport plan was initiated by Pierre Trudeau, it failed to gain the approval of Pickering Township council. Their vote against the project was unanimous. Stands by Stouffville, Markham and York Region were mostly ‘wait and see.’

However, in 2013, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stepped in and assigned 5,000 acres of airport land to the Rouge National Urban Park project and two years later transferred an additional 5,200 acres also to this plan. Since then, the once anticipated proposal has remained dormant with only a few nearby farmers leasing sections of property at \$120 an acre. The remainder remains relatively bare with only a few houses and barns standing.

It was recently that former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau broke faith with his father and announced the airport’s cancellation.

So, what of the future?

I say one possible use could be affordable housing. But let the people have their say. The upcoming public meetings will play a pivotal role. But it won’t be an airport.

I hear sighs of relief. 🌿



Residents march on Stouffville Town Hall, warning that noise from the proposed Pickering airport could turn the community into a ghost town.

Get involved with MSH



There are plenty of ways for you to support our hospital as part of our community. Take a look at the listings below for upcoming events that make a difference.



Run for Women Markham
May 25



WITH MSH
Wellness, Wealth & Wisdom
June 3



Stouffville Main Street 5K
June 15



40th Annual MSH Golf Tournament
August 11

For more information about these events and Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation, please visit mshf.on.ca or follow @supportMSH on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn!



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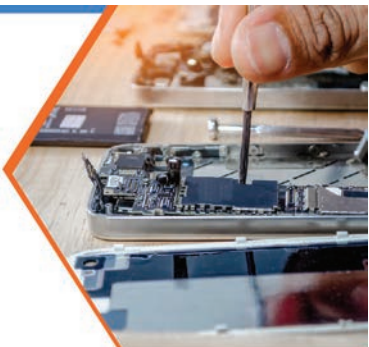
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"For many years, both my parents and I have made monetary donations to the hospital," says Theresa. "After my Dad passed away, I chose to include a bequest to the MSH Foundation in my Will."

Government funding alone can't meet all of MSH's priority needs. That's where legacy donors like Theresa step in — helping to shape the future of health care in our community.

"It is my hope that the hospital continues to provide quality care and is able to partake in advances made in health care in the future," says Theresa.

May is Leave a Legacy month in Canada, a time to highlight the impact of providing a planned gift to help bring a lifetime of care close to home. Naming MSH Foundation in your Will is a powerful act of giving.

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For Kids Ages 5-7

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For Kids Ages 5-14

Code Ninjas CAMPS turn your child's tech interests into a fun learning adventure. Choose from a variety of exciting camps, such as Minecraft, Roblox, game building, modding, robotics, physical computing, 3D design and print, and video production. Join the Code Ninjas community during school breaks and gain valuable tech skills. Make learning fun and unforgettable!

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Code Ninjas Clubs combine the best of camps and CREATE, with collaborative coding on fun platforms like Roblox and LEGO, plus several weeks of focused instruction to build great things. Kids will love learning to code and creating projects all school year long.

WORKSHOPS

We offer custom-tailored 1-hour Coding & STEM workshops for groups like Girl Guides, Boy Scouts, and community organizations. Scheduled and customized on request!

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2025

Doors Open

Whitchurch-Stouffville

Saturday, June 7 • 10 AM – 4 PM

townofws.ca/doorsopen

DOORS OPEN ONTARIO

Doors Open is a provincial initiative designed to highlight cultural, architectural, and environmental heritage throughout communities and cities across Ontario to provide the public with unique experiences and engage them with the community.

Historic Walking Tour – 1.5 hrs

Rails, Roads & Restoration

Tour departs promptly from Stouffville GO Station (6176 Main St.) at 11 AM

Established as a Heritage Conservation District in 2024, explore the area of Stouffville Junction North, where business boomed with the opening of the Toronto & Nipissing Railway in 1871.

Community Garden and Plant Identification Learning Experience with Odeiwin

Parking at 99 Reeves Way Boulevard

12 PM – 2 PM

Join Jay Shea from the Odeiwin Foundation for the soft opening of the Community Garden at the Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site. The opening will include giving thanks to the land through words and songs, along with a plant identification tour and a seed pack giveaway.

⚠ Notice of Construction: Edward Street and Main Street

Site Locations

: Washrooms Available

: Accessible

1

Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre

14732 Woodbine Avenue

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre has preserved and interpreted the Town's heritage since 1971. Explore our heritage buildings, exhibition galleries, and learn about the lifecycle of artifacts through a behind-the-scenes experience.

2

Ontario SPCA York Region Animal Centre

16586 Woodbine Avenue

The Ontario SPCA and Humane Society provides care, comfort, and compassion to animals in need. Tour the Animal Centre, interact with animals, play games, and learn to be Animal Smart.

3

Blue & Silver Farm

17019 Woodbine Avenue

Experience the outdoor learning opportunities that the Blue & Silver Farm has to offer. Learn about Pickering College's outdoor learning centre while taking a self-guided tour of the property, greenhouses, forests, and the outdoor kitchen.

4

Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship and Education Centre

16389 Highway 48

Celebrate the York Regional Forest at this innovative LEED platinum-certified building. Enjoy the displays and a guided tour of the facility.

5

Holy Theotokos Convent/ Joyous Light Candles

4369 Faulkner Avenue

Holy Theotokos is a Greek Orthodox convent that manufactures pure beeswax candles. Tour the chapel and the candle shop to see how this property has changed and adapted over time.

⚠ Notice of Construction: Woodbine Avenue (between Aurora Road and Mulock Drive/Vivian Road)

ON THE ROAD MAGAZINE 21

6 Richmond Hill Live Steamers 
15922 McCowan Road

Experience miniature railway demonstrations at this outdoor model railway run by hobbyists and engineers. Rides are limited to one ride per person. Entry will not be permitted after 2:00 p.m.

7 Lemonville Community Centre 
13453 McCowan Road

Constructed in 1923, Lemonville School closed in 1969. Today the building serves as a rental and community space. Explore a pop-up exhibit and chat with volunteers about the building's history.

8 Bruce's Mill Conservation Area – Nature Centre 
3291 Stouffville Road

Experience nature's gifts at Bruce's Mill Conservation Park. Walk along the forest trails, admire the tree canopy, and participate in a guided nature hike. Learn about the park and conservation!

9 Whitchurch Stouffville Food Bank 
86 Ringwood Drive, Unit 24

The Whitchurch Stouffville Food Bank supports the community through food assistance. Visit this site and experience a self-guided tour, get behind-the-scenes, and learn food sorting skills you can bring home with you.

10 Muddy York Brewing Co. 
50 Innovator Avenue, Unit 1

As the only brewery in Stouffville, Muddy York Brewing Co. provides a welcoming atmosphere for both visitors and locals. Visit the site for a staff-led tour and learn about our locally crafted beverages.



11 Morra Caruso Law 
6060 Main Street

This heritage home, built in 1885 for the village veterinarian, currently houses the offices of Morra Caruso Law. It features the original dining room pocket doors, and crafted baseboards. Take a tour and enjoy refreshments, with a presentation of photos.



12 Richardson Masonic Lodge No. 136 
279 Second Street

Richardson Masonic Lodge prides itself as an institution dedicated to the cultural, social and moral development of men 21 years of age and older. Visit the site for tours, the history of Richardson Lodge Masonic Hall, fundraisers, and refreshments.



13 Stained Glass Centre for the Performing Arts 
34 Church Street N.

Explore the wonders of this heritage building, offering performances and special amenities! Enjoy live entertainment, refreshments, and a demonstration of the venue's sound and lighting.

14 Memorial Park Multi-Purpose Trail 
2 Park Drive

Measuring 275-metres, the Memorial Park Multi-Purpose Trail provides an accessible space for both winter sport and year-round recreation. Walk the trail loops and visit the nearby building to see where the ice resurfacer is stored.

15 Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site
Parking at 99 Reeves Way Boulevard

The Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site was home to a remarkable late-16th-century ancestral Wendat community. Explore and learn about this amazing archaeological site with self-guided tours and a staffed interpretation table.

2025 Doors Open Whitchurch-Stouffville

INFORMATION HUB:
Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum
Please note: Map not to scale



- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1 W-S Museum and Community Centre | 4 Bill Fisch Forest Stewardship & EC | 7 Lemonville Community Centre | 10 Muddy York Brewing Co. | 13 Stained Glass Centre for the Performing Arts |
| 2 Ontario SPCA York Region Animal Centre | 5 Holy Theotokos Convent/ Joyous Light Candles | 8 Bruce's Mill Conservation Area | 11 Morra Caruso Law | 14 Memorial Park Multi-Purpose Trail |
| 3 Blue & Silver Farm | 6 Richmond Hill Live Steamers | 9 Whitchurch Stouffville Food Bank | 12 Richardson Masonic Lodge No. 136 | 15 Jean Baptiste-Lainé Site |

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Jack Johnson: Stouffville's Latest High-End OHL Draft Pick

by Jim Mason



Meet Jack Johnson. Not the Hawaiian surf-rock singer of the same name. And not the Columbus Blue Jackets' Jack Johnson. Stouffville's Jack Johnson also dreams of playing in the NHL.

And he's part way there.

Johnson, who turned 16 on April 21st, was picked by the Ottawa 67's in last month's Ontario Hockey League draft of North American players born predominantly in 2009.

He went in the second round, 32nd overall, joining fellow Stouffvillians Sam Carrick, Ethan Werek, Kaden Pitre, Michael Buchinger, Alex Assadourian and others as high-end OHL picks.

"Jack is a big right-shot defender who moves well," said Ottawa General Manager James Boyd. "He's responsible defensively and a great leader. We're thrilled to get him."

Johnson was a point-per-game player on his Toronto Marlboros team during March's OHL Cup, a showcase of the top Under-16 AAA teams from across Ontario and the United States, scoring a goal and adding three assists in four games.

On draft day, the six-foot-two-and-a-half defenceman stepped away from family and friends, who were gathered

around the TV at the Johnson home in south Stouffville, to take a call from the 67s.

"Ottawa was on the clock," he said. "It was pretty much: 'How are you, and would you like to be an Ottawa 67?'"

Johnson obviously said yes to the proposal and "walked back into the room with a massive grin on my face. My family kind of knew what was up."

Moments later, after a commercial break added some drama to the broadcast, Ottawa made it official.

Johnson started skating on local ponds and outdoor rinks at age three, four years before playing on teams in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association.

The grade ten student at Bill Crothers Secondary School in Unionville was scheduled to attend 67's orientation camp this month. He'll work out this summer at ex-NHLer Gary Roberts' new training facility in Vaughan in order to prepare well for the season.

Schools Face Off For Charity

by Jim Mason

The Stanley Cup playoffs have nothing on St. Brigid and St. Brendan Catholic Elementary Schools.

The staff, students and families from the Stouffville schools had hockey fever way before NHL teams caught it this spring.

Co-ed teams from the kindergarten to Grade 6 schools faced off in a charity game at the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex on April 9th.

Before the puck dropped, the lobby on Weldon Road was a hive of activity. The St. Brendan mascot mingled and posed for photos. Parents and grandparents streamed in, dropping donations for the Canadian Tire Jumpstart youth sports program into a championship cup. St. Brigid won in Newmarket earlier this season, their first at the Grades 4-6 level. Food was collected for the Whitchurch-Stouffville

Food Bank. Students, quiet in their classrooms an hour earlier, loudly sounded off on behalf of their respective schools with noisemakers.

School spirit was alive and well.

Pregame, Mayor Iain Lovatt and Elizabeth Crowe, the longtime local Trustee and Chair of The York Catholic District School Board, took part in a ceremonial faceoff with St. Brigid Principal Tania Paniculam and Stouffville Canadian Tire owner Jeff Dubois.

Students from St. Brigid led the crowd in O Canada. St. Brendan students read an opening prayer and Indigenous Peoples land acknowledgment.

The players sported school jerseys, topped by their own helmets from a cross-section of boys and girls club teams they play for in the area. The St. Brendan players had their names on the back. The



St. Brigid coaches and players had school hockey hoodies.

"The charity game is just a nice way to end off the short season by giving back to the community," said event spokesperson Linda Scanga of St. Brigid.

St. Brigid, with former NHLer Mike Angelidis serving as one its coaches, won the game 6-3.

The players posed arm-in-arm for a group photo after the final whistle.

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Festival Season Starts in Stouffville!

Summer is heating up in Stouffville with the return of the *Stouffville Celebrates Summer Series*, presented by Hyson Properties! This beloved series of free, family-friendly events fills the season with music, movement and memory-making. Whether you're running through the streets, dancing in the park or enjoying time with friends and neighbours, there's something for everyone. Visit townofws.ca/events for a complete event listing.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8

Main Street 5K & 1K Kids Dash

8:30am 📍 Memorial Park

Lace-up for this fun annual event supporting the Markham Stouffville Hospital Foundation. Get active with your community. Register now at townofws.ca/5k

FRIDAY, JUNE 27 – SUNDAY, JUNE 29

Strawberry Festival

📍 Memorial Park

Join us to celebrate over 40 years of the beloved Strawberry Festival, featuring a marketplace, live entertainment, rides, food trucks and fun for all ages. The tradition continues with the Pancake Breakfast, the Sandy Stronach Red Berry Café in Latcham Hall and Picnic in the Park.

TUESDAY, JULY 1

Canada Day Fireworks

8:30pm 📍 Memorial Park

Show your pride by wearing your favourite Canadian gear and dance the night away to the live music of the Blackboard Blues Band. There will be fun children's activities and various food vendors, and the evening will end with the largest fireworks display of the year!

Become a Sponsor

Sponsorship opportunities are still available for several signature events this season, including the Strawberry Festival. Whether you're looking to showcase your brand, support local traditions or give back to the community, sponsoring a summer event is a powerful way to get involved. To learn about available packages, contact sponsorship@townofws.ca

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

AN UPDATE BY GLENN JACKSON

Work is continuing on the Downtown Revitalization project. Last month, I outlined what our consultants, Accardi Engineering Group, have started, and we are happy to report that steady progress is being made.

On January 30th, we hosted our first public Open House, during which Town staff and Accardi outlined the project and the timelines for completion. A second Open House has now been scheduled for Tuesday, June 17th, at 7:00 p.m. at Nineteen on the Park in downtown Stouffville.

Accardi has completed approximately 30% of the preliminary designs for a new streetscape. This portion of the design, which includes the roadway alignments, sewer placements and parking scenarios, is a first attempt based on the topographic survey and the surrounding utilities. The remaining 60% will be a more tailored design based on public input and comments.

Staff and Accardi will present these preliminary designs at the June 17th Open House, and the public will have an opportunity to voice their opinion.

Stay updated by visiting townofws.ca/downtown and our social media channels for more details about the meeting.

In the meantime, Accardi continues to work on the Condition Assessment Report. As detailed in the last issue of *On The Road*, a condition assessment report outlines the current state of existing infrastructure. Over the past few weeks, Accardi has reviewed CCTV video scans of the sanitary and storm sewers. They will base recommendations on the research they are currently undertaking.

They are also continuing their Low-Impact Development (LID) report. As outlined in the April edition, LID is a land development approach that aims to manage stormwater runoff. Accardi is currently evaluating various LID options based on feasibility and will present a report soon.

Construction is expected to start around the summer or fall of 2026. Throughout the duration, every edition of *On The Road* magazine will contain an update on the project's status.

🔔 Get project updates

Follow this project and sign up to receive the eNewsletter at townofws.ca/downtown

Help Shape the Future of Transit in Stouffville

York Region Transit seeks community input on proposed 2026 service changes

York Region Transit (YRT) is planning improvements to services, facilities, routes and programs for 2026, and they'd like to hear from you. Learn about the changes and submit your feedback on yrt.ca/TransitPlan from Sunday May 4th to Sunday June 1st, 2025.

YRT offers various services in Stouffville to help you stay connected to your community.

You can also chat with YRT staff in person at these upcoming events:

Public Works Open House at the Town of Stouffville Operations Centre (5061 Bethesda Side Rd.) on Saturday, May 24th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Annual Transit Plan Public Outreach Event at the Stouffville Leisure Centre (2 Park Dr.) on Friday, May 30th, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

On-Request Services

On-Request is a flexible, ride-sharing transit option available in select areas. You can book rides through the **YRT On-Request app** or by calling **1-844-667-5327**. Fares are the same as regular YRT services. You can pay with PRESTO, e-tickets, debit/credit or cash. Pre-booking is available up to a day in advance.

On-Request Stouffville

YRT On-Request Stouffville allows travel from a home address to a nearby YRT route or another location not served by regular buses. The current hours for this service are weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 11 p.m., but beginning in September 2025, weekday service will expand to run from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m. This change will provide greater access to GO Transit connections at Stouffville and Old Elm GO stations. Through the Ride to GO program, customers with proof of GO Transit fare can travel to and from GO stations for free using their PRESTO card, credit or debit.

On-Request Gormley

In Gormley, On-Request service is available weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., offering travel from any address to destinations such as Richmond Green Public Library, Honda

Boulevard or the Gormley GO Station. By September 2025, this service will be part of the broader On-Request North-Central service area. Once expanded, it will operate weekdays from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

On-Request Vondorf/Preston Lake

In September 2025, YRT will expand On-Request North-Central to include the Vondorf and Preston Lake communities. Service will be available on weekdays from 5:30 a.m. to 11 p.m., Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Sundays from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

On-Request 65+

Seniors aged 65 and older can take advantage of YRT's On-Request 65+ service, which uses smaller vehicles for door-to-door pickup anywhere in the York Region. Available on weekdays from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., this service allows travel within five kilometres of the pickup point. Fares are \$2.45 with a PRESTO card or \$4.40 using cash, debit or credit.

Mobility On-Request Paratransit

YRT offers a door-to-door, shared ride, accessible public transit service for people with disabilities. To use this service, you must meet specific eligibility criteria. Learn more at yrt.ca/MORParatransit

Route 9 – Ninth Line

YRT continues to operate Route 9 – Ninth Line, serving the Stouffville area on weekdays from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Weekend and holiday service will launch as a pilot on June 29th, 2025. The route will extend to Steeles Avenue in 2026 to improve connections with TTC services and businesses in the southern York Region.

School Specials

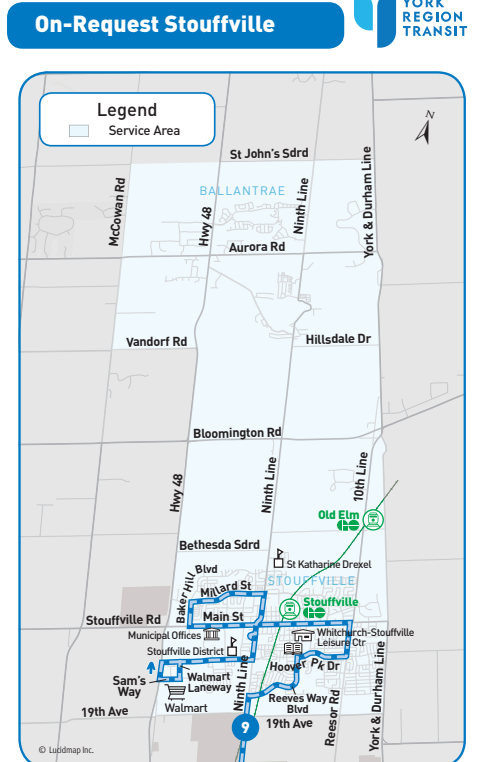
YRT offers three School Special routes to support students serving local high schools. Route 414 – St. Katharine Drexel, Route 415 – Stouffville District, and Route 417 – Bill Hogarth run aligned with school bell times. An afternoon trip will be added to Route 414 in September 2025, followed by a morning trip in 2026.

Residents are encouraged to participate and share their thoughts on all proposed changes. Public input will help guide decisions that improve access, convenience, and service across the region. Make your voice heard at yrt.ca/TransitPlan

Voice your opinion:
yrt.ca/TransitPlan



Get the **YRT On-Request App** to book and manage your trips. Download it for free.



15-Storey Condo Proposed for Palmwood Gt. and Main

Financial and Development reports released; new all-way stop signs coming



by Glenn Jackson
glenn.jackson@townofws.ca

Proposal for Palmwood Gate

The Town of Stouffville is reviewing a development proposal for 5688 Main St., submitted by M. Behar Planning & Design Ltd. on behalf of Hyson Developments Inc. The proposal entails a 15-storey, mixed-use building comprising 254 residential and three commercial units, supported by two levels of underground parking with 281 spaces.

Applications for an Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment have been submitted, seeking site-specific exceptions.

The site is located at the northwest corner of Main St. and Palmwood Gt., where Betz Pools Ltd. currently operates.

The April 2nd public meeting gathered feedback from community members and agencies. The comments received will be incorporated into a future staff report assessing the proposal's merits, which will be presented to Council at a later date for approval. No decisions were made at the public meeting.

New All-way Stop Signs

At the April 16th meeting, Council approved the installation of two new stop signs on Rupert Ave. at Winona Dr. and two on Lloyd St. at the Burkholder St. intersection.

2024 Town Financial Reports

Stouffville's 2024 Year-End Financial Report was presented to Council at the April 16th meeting. The report outlined the municipality's financial performance as of December 31st, 2024. The tax-supported operating budget concluded with a modest surplus of \$29,500, indicating effective fiscal management.

Rate-supported services, including water, wastewater and building services, experienced a combined deficit of approximately \$890,400, primarily due to cyclical economic factors affecting development charge collections.

The Town completed 109 capital



A development proposal outlining a 15-storey condominium complex at the corner of Main St. and Palmwood Gt. was presented to Council at the April 2nd Public meeting.

projects in 2024, investing \$16.3 million towards a total capital program budget of \$65.5 million. The report also notes most key 2022–2026 Strategic Plan activities are on track, demonstrating alignment with the Town's long-term objectives.

2024 Development Activity Report

At the April 16th meeting, Council received the 2024 Stouffville Development Activity report. The report provides an overview of planning and building activities within the municipality. It indicates 106 new complete planning applications were submitted between January 1st and December 31st, 2024, marking a 27% decrease from the 135 applications received in 2023. This decline is attributed to high interest rates, increased material and labour costs, and elevated land values, which have slowed market conditions.

A significant observation is the reduction in site plan applications and draft plan of subdivision applications over the past three years. The decrease in site plan applications is partly due to legislative changes from Bill 23, removing the requirement for Site Plan Control for residential developments with fewer than ten units. Additionally, the limited availability of greenfield lands within the Town's settlement areas has contributed to the decline in new subdivision applications. Consequently, future development is expected to focus more on intensification within strategic

growth and built-up areas.

Committee of Adjustment applications, including minor variances and consent applications, constituted 56% of the total application volume in 2024. This highlights the ongoing demand for property modifications and land severances within the community.

The report also notes while Council granted land use permissions, many projects did not advance to the building permit and construction stages. This trend is likely influenced by economic factors affecting the development industry.

COUNCIL & PUBLIC PLANNING MEETINGS

Upcoming Council Meetings:

Wednesday, June 4th – 1 PM
Wednesday, June 18th – 1 PM

Next Public Meeting (if required):

Wednesday, June 4th – 7 PM

Agendas for Council and Public Meetings will be available on townofws.ca/council at 12 PM the Thursday prior to the meeting.

Anyone wishing to provide comments may attend the meeting in-person at the Municipal Offices. Contact clerks@townofws.ca for more information.

Listen live: townofws.ca/cmlivestream
Live posts on X: @ws_townhall
Subscribe to the monthly newsletter: townofws.ca/councilnews

talk of the town

Stay connected on our social channels: [@TownofStouffville](https://www.facebook.com/TownofStouffville) [@TownofStouffville](https://www.instagram.com/TownofStouffville) [@townofws](https://www.townofws.ca)



Curbside Giveaway

May 31st, Jun. 28th, Jul. 26th
Time to declutter! Place re-usable household items marked "FREE" at the curb starting at 7 AM.

Guidelines:

- Items must be reusable and in good condition.
- Keep sidewalks and hydrants clear.
- Respect private property; only take items marked "FREE."
- Remove all unclaimed items by 5 PM to avoid by-law violation.

Pride and Indigenous Flag Raisings

Tue, June 3rd at 4 PM

Community Flag Pole (Leisure Centre, 2 Park Dr.)

Join us to celebrate inclusivity and acceptance in our community at the Pride and Indigenous flag raisings.



Art in the Park

Sat, June 14th, 11 AM – 5 PM

Memorial Park (2 Park Dr.)
Celebrate arts and culture with live entertainment and talented artists from across Ontario. Featured works include paintings, jewelry, pottery, textiles, photography and more.

townofws.ca/artinthepark

RECREATION

Summer Registration

Tue, June 3rd @ 12 PM for residents
Most summer programs begin the week of June 30th.

townofws.ca/active

June is Parks and Recreation Month

Each week in June we'll highlight recreational activities and outdoor amenities. Check out our socials for more.

19 ON THE PARK



Country on the Patio

Thu, June 26th, 7 PM – 10 PM

Civic Square, 19 on the Park
Kick off the 2025 Patio Series! Enjoy a free outdoor concert in Civic Square — no registration required. Reserved seating is first-come, first-served.

townofws.ca/patioseries

MUSEUM

Doors Open

Sat, June 7th, 10 AM – 4 PM

Showcasing the buildings, natural spaces, and cultural landscapes that shape our community. 16 sites with two bonus options will be open for you to explore!

townofws.ca/doorsopen



Heritage Awards

Celebrate contributions to our community by nominating a property that preserves built heritage. Nominations are open May 9th – July 11th.

townofws.ca/heritageawards

Summer at the Museum

The Museum offers nine weeks of exciting, educational camps including cooking, baking, science and more!

townofws.ca/camps

Unreconciled: Healing, Truth, and Making Meaningful Change

Tue, June 10th, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Join Jesse Wentle – writer, broadcaster, speaker, and arts leader – as he discusses his national bestseller, *Unreconciled: Family, Truth, and Indigenous Resistance*. The talk will be followed by a live Q&A and book signing.

townofws.ca/jessewente

Education Bookings

Now accepting fall program bookings for hands-on education programs—perfect for schools, Guides and Scouts. Discounted rates available for Whitchurch-Stouffville schools.

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum is located at 14372 Woodbine Ave. and is open Wed – Sat, 10 AM – 4 PM

For more details, call 905-727-8954 or email wsmuseum@townofws.ca

townofws.ca/museum



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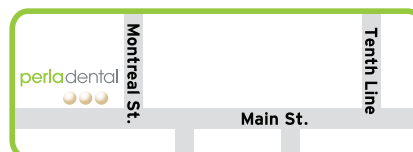
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