

NDACT elects new chair, who vows to expand Greenbelt and protect local water sources

Written By **MARNI WALSH**

Shelburne's Karren Wallace has been elected as the new Chair of the North Dufferin Agriculture and Community Taskforce (NDACT.) She assumes the Chair from Alia Jalbert, who Wallace says, "effectively steered the Committee over the past few years including NDACT's submission to the Province on the Greenbelt expansion and throughout the 2018 provincial election." NDACT was established in 2009 by citizens of Melancthon and Mulmur Townships who had developed deep concerns about the Highland Companies' motives for amassing 6000 acres of prime farmland in the area. They suspected a mega quarry application was in the works and they were right.

Karren Wallace grew up in the proposed quarry area, one of four children on a beef and potato farm in Melancthon Township. She raised her own three children on a farm directly across the road from where she was raised. As a child, she garnered an interest in politics from her parents, Murray and Doris Wallace, "who always had the news on at noon and six and discussed political issues around the table," she says.

She carried that early interest into a career in Municipal Administration. Currently, Ms. Wallace is the Director of Legislative Services and Clerk of Wellington Township. She says, "Working on the inside gives me a true understanding of what works and what doesn't and how change can be made."

During the mega quarry battle, Karren became immersed in the issue with the North Dufferin Agricultural and Community Taskforce (NDACT) and began to see the flaws in a weak regulatory system in Ontario that "permitted bullying and buying by proponents." Her knowledge from her years at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing was invaluable to the NDACT team. NDACT would fight for five long years before the 2400 acre open pit proposal on the headwaters was finally rejected by the Province in 2012.

Now, Ms. Wallace says she "will work with the NDACT Committee to solicit campaign platforms from Dufferin candidates running (and acclaimed) in the October 22, 2018 municipal election on their position on protecting and expanding the Greenbelt as well as the protection of source water."

"Another priority will be meeting with key provincial officials," says the new Chair, "to apprise them of NDACT's activities, successes and the importance of the Greenbelt for protection of source water and of the agricultural industry, a major economic driver in Ontario's economy."

To assist with this, NDACT is very proud to announce they received a grant of \$15,000.00 from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. She says, "This grant puts us in a position to be able to effectively deliver NDACT's message of the importance of agricultural, local food and the economic impact of agriculture on Ontario's economy."