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By Chad Ingram

Gary Schultz is fed up with Algonquin Highlands council.

That's why the Oxtongue Lake resident has decided that he will be running for the position of Ward 3 councillor in the October municipal election.

“Mainly, it's out of frustration,” Schultz, who owns the Algonquin Lakeside Inn, said of his decision to file nomination papers last week.

Schultz said Oxtongue Lake residents were in danger of a continuance of the “same policies and same indifference” that he said the community has been facing from most of the current council.

President of the Oxtongue Lake Association and the local business association, Schultz said most residents of his community are against the Stanhope Airport expansion project and that there was no proper opportunity for discussion or debate on the issue given by the current council.

“We as a community were appalled . . . that it was going to be acted on without any input from the community,” he said.

The residents of Oxtongue Lake went on to create a petition and lobby council to reconsider the project, “and found they were somewhat indifferent to us.”

Schultz said he's not fighting to crush the expansion project, but to have more discussion about it.

“All we're asking is, 'Hold on, take a deep breath, here,'” he said.

He is definitely not a single-issue candidate and he thought carefully, and with the input of his family, about the decision to run, Schultz said.

“I understand the commitment.”

The former owner of a number of businesses, one that had him managing more than 350 people, Schultz said he is confident in his organizational skills and in budgetary responsibility.

In times of economic instability, he said a responsible council should be able to tighten its belt while still protecting fundamentals like septage and road maintenance.

“These are the fundamental basics that need to be protected,” he said.

Located at the entrance to Algonquin Park, Schultz said the residents of Oxtongue Lake realize they are a long way from the rest of the township's population.

“We don't ask a lot of council,” he said. “But we don't like to be taken for granted.”

Schultz, who added that Oxtongue Lake's many lakeside resorts contribute a healthy amount to the township's tax base, said he wants Ward 3 voters to know they can bring change to their community.

“I want them to know that they now have a choice, which is something they haven't had for four years,” he said.

Current Ward 3 Councillor Diane Griffin has also filed nomination papers and will be running as the incumbent.