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Aurora Chamber agrees it's time to broaden discussion on hotel

As Chair of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, I would like the opportunity to respond to The Auroran's April 7 article entitled ?Renewed talks get to the bottom of the hotel debate: Councillor.?

First, let me thank The Auroran, Mayor Geoffrey Dawe and Councillor Michael Thompson for keeping the topic of hotel development in the news and a key issue in the economic development of the community.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce welcomes Councillor Thompson's desire to broaden this discussion to include initiatives that can ensure steady occupancy rates. I would like to express the Chamber's desire to represent local business in working with the Town and interested groups to develop a strategy.

Sports tourists are a key factor in ensuring that hotels reach occupancy on weekends, however the benefits of having a hotel in Aurora extend well beyond housing visiting sports teams and the dollars they infuse in the local economy during their visit.

With a hotel, the Town can explore further opportunities to develop events and tourist attractions in Aurora.

These include seasons when sporting events may not ensure high occupancy rates. The Chamber of Commerce would naturally like to see more visitors at both the Aurora Chamber Home Show and the Aurora Chamber Street Festival.

A hotel also offers accommodation for exhibitors who travel from greater distances.

We believe that working with other key event organizers, we can create events that attract exhibitors and visitors from farther afield.

In addition to excellent sporting events, we have cultural and community events that could grow and develop into premier tourist events, attracting even more tourism dollars to our community.

Our local businesses need more options for hosting conferences, workshops and large meetings. There are a limited number of venues in Aurora. While occupancy rates are important, the revenue a hotel could generate from meetings and conferences cannot be overlooked. The Chamber would like to see the demand for these facilities and this potential source of revenue as part of the discussion.

Finally, a hotel makes Aurora more attractive to local businesses who need accommodation for out-of town staff. This is true for business currently in Aurora and those we are hoping will establish offices here. As we aim to attract new corporate offices and headquarters to the community, a local hotel makes Aurora more appealing. This also helps boost weekday occupancy rates.

The Aurora Chamber of Commerce aims to begin conversations with local business, the Town and community stakeholders. To that end we have planned meetings to grow the conversation and invite any and all local businesses with a vested interest in a hotel to join us in this discussion.

Please call the Chamber at 905-727-7262 for further information or to learn more about meeting dates. With your input, we hope to accept Councillor Michael Thompson's invitation to inventory a wider number of initiatives.

Join us in representing local business interests in discussions with The Town of Aurora. We aim to work with you and the rest of our community to be part of a positive and comprehensive strategy towards hotel development in Aurora.

Javed S. Khan
Chair, Aurora Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors