

## Chamber's new Executive Director looks forward to meeting business community

By Brock Weir

What you get out of the Chamber is what you put into it, according to Sandra Ferri.

The newly minted Executive Director of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce says it is important for the Chamber to work hard for the business community but, it is also incumbent upon the business community to let the Chamber know what their needs are and how they can help.

With just two weeks on the job, Ms. Ferri is looking forward to a number of meet and greet sessions with Chamber members, and the business community as a whole beginning this Friday, November 3, from 10 ? 11 a.m. at the Chamber Office.

?I want to better understand what our members' needs are and I want to look at what our current offerings are to them and make sure they are in synch,? she says. ?If we find there are any gaps, hopefully I will be able to identify and implement some other options and solutions they will see as supporting their business in Aurora.?



Ms. Ferri comes to Aurora with more than 30 years experience in educational publishing, where she held senior management positions. After leaving the corporate world, Ms. Ferri focused her attention on her role as an Executive Business Coach and an avid volunteer with the Vaughan Chamber of Commerce, where she served on the Board of Directors and on committees ranging from Membership to Marketing, to Finance to Government Relations.

?My experience working with the Vaughan Chamber really brought out my passion for business,? she says. ?It is a very different community than Aurora in terms of the size and number of businesses, but there are similarities for sure. There are a lot of entrepreneurial businesses and I think there is the sense of building a community for business people, along with celebrating business within the community and helping build business to grow and prosper.

?Being with the Vaughan Chamber allowed me to use the skills I developed over 30 years in the corporate world to both support the Chamber and support business endeavours. Here in Aurora, I felt this opportunity was a really good fit for my skill set and what I had to offer. It led into my passion, which is supporting business and helping others. As a certified coach, I love to help people, I love to help business, and that is what the Chamber is all about.?

As she familiarizes herself with the Aurora business community, Ms. Ferri says she sees a network that is strong where people are ?very interested in sharing and helping each other? and those are ties she wants to strengthen even more through her work.

?People have been extremely nice and welcoming to me, and they are very happy to have an Executive Director in place again at the Aurora Chamber,? she says. ?They have embraced me and that certainly makes my job easier. I think my mandate is probably the same as the past Executive Director, which is to grow the Chamber and make sure we're meeting the needs of our members and to collaborate and build relationships not only with our members, but government and other Chambers.

?I believe I will be looking through my lens and through the community lens to try and see where we match, where we have some things we want to change, and I will be prepared to do that once I have a better sense of what the community needs. With every Chamber, you get out of the Chamber what you put into it, so I think if you really want a Chamber that is working hard for you, then it is incumbent upon the members to come and let us know what they need and give us a chance to support them in any way we can ? and we can only do that if we hear from them.?