

GETTING THINGS DONE

By Mayor Tom Mrakas

Council discussed a motion that I had brought forward concerning the need for consistent, region wide regulation of cannabis use in public spaces. Specifically, my motion asked that Aurora request the Region to develop a Regional Bylaw that would speak to public usage of cannabis ? where public cannabis use would and would not be allowed.

As I said at the table, residents have raised concerns about attending town events such as the Christmas parade or Arctic Adventure and someone smoking cannabis beside their kids, so we need a clear and consistent Bylaw that respects peoples rights both ways: respects the fact that this is a legal product that residents are legally allowed to use and respects our residents right to enjoy public spaces without their children being directly exposed to cannabis smoke.

Regulating use in a public space though is not a straightforward process. While the Town could create a standalone Bylaw that limits cannabis use to private residences only and does not permit public use, this type of Bylaw is unenforceable.

The municipality has no right to create Bylaws that speak to roadways ? and that includes sidewalks. Thus, that means a municipal Bylaw cannot restrict use of cannabis on a public sidewalk.

So, what can a municipality do that can be enforced? We can create a Bylaw that prohibits use of cannabis in all public parks, special event areas as well as during special events and sets a minimum distance from the entrance to public buildings.

The Region does have a working group that has been working on creating a cannabis public usage Bylaw. As was said at the table, this motion would act as a catalyst for a discussion of the issue at Regional Council which would then afford Council the ability to give clear direction to the working group, and, ultimately, bring forward a Bylaw that provides clear and consistent regulatory control of public use of cannabis across the Region.

A regional Bylaw is the best way forward, in my opinion.

In my discussions with YRP and the Region's solicitor, it was stated that rather than nine separate municipal Bylaws, a consistent Bylaw, that is adopted Region-wide would allow for easier enforcement. It would also enable a clear and consistent understanding by both residents and officials of what is allowed and what is not allowed.

The second part of the motion that was discussed by Council speaks to need for education and outreach. I believe that once any Bylaw

is put into place there needs to be an education/awareness campaign to inform the public about the new Bylaw; to ensure residents are aware of what is and isn't allowed when using cannabis in public.

I was very pleased that the motion passed unanimously. I am looking forward to continuing this discussion at the Region and to have a Bylaw in place soon.

That's all for this week. As always if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to contact me anytime by phone 905-727-3123 ext. 4746 or by email tmrakas@aurora.ca, and if you would like to sign up for more newsletters and council updates then please visit Mrakas.ca/contact to join the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed.