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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Independent Community Newspaper

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Week of June 1, 2010

Council approves plan amendment

Councillors defeated a motion by Councillor Evelina MacEachern last Tuesday to defer any decision on the controversial planned mixed residential and commercial development at Yonge and Centre Streets until the Town's new Official Plan and Promenade Study are fleshed out.

The motion, which was defeated 5-4, with only Councillors MacEachern, Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo, and Mayor Phyllis Morris in

favour, would have seen the Kaitlin Group's official plan amendment application held off for several months while the proposed plan was discussed and tweaked at the council table.

Concerns over the development were expressed by councillors at a recent general committee meeting when the architect of the project, Stephen Mac, presented changes to the

Please see page 13

Groups join to discuss options on Aurora land

Designers and planners joined forces with Town Staff, local school boards, landowners, stakeholders, and the public at large last week to review options relating to the 2C lands in north-east Aurora.

The land area, which is bordered by Highway 404 in the east, Bayview Avenue in the west, Wellington Street to the south, and the border with Newmarket to the north were subject to discussion, where four preliminary options emerged by Thursday night.

The first option presented to the public, which will again be up for discussion on Monday, is an "attempt to capture all the aspirations of the developers on the land", said Ron Palmer, Planner, from The Planning Partnership. Mr. Palmer has been leading the discussion groups.

"All the various landowners have given us plans so we tried to put them together and display them in the common language of land use and road pattern," he said.

The second and third options try

to achieve similar goals, but display experimentation with road pattern, park land and density distribution, and retail location, he said.

A fourth option was proposed by local environmentalist David Tomlinson with "a disjointed collector road system fundamentally at its base," said Mr. Palmer.

Parkland is a significant - and varying - feature in all four plans. Option One is primarily focused on five-acre neighbourhood parks "intended to serve a larger neighbourhood, (and to provide) sports fields, and active recreation," he said.

While Option Two also provides for neighbourhood parks, a larger recreation space is a marked characteristic.

"(It features) a very large community park and that is for major facilities such as 12 soccer fields, 10 baseball diamonds, it's a 20 hectare piece of public open space intended for very active open space use."

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Members of Aurora's outside workers picketed the Town Hall Tuesday night, handing out literature to anyone who had business in the building.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

Outside employees stage info pickets

Aurora's outside employees, their families, supporters, and other members of CUPE 905 marched in front of

Aurora Town Hall Tuesday night in an information picket regarding their contract negotiations with the Town.

Dawe considering running for mayor

Geoffrey Dawe, president of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, said Sunday he has been asked if he would seek the mayor's chair.

"I am considering it," he told The Auroran, "but I won't make a final decision until I finish with the Chamber".

If he decides to run it would make four who are interested in the job.

Two - Nigel Kean and Roger Clowater - have already registered.

Sitting mayor Phyllis Morris, although she has not registered, told The Auroran recently she would seek re-election.

She won the race in the last election, defeating sitting mayor Tim Jones and councillor at the time, Nigel Kean. Ms Morris also sat on council at the time of the election.

Mr. Dawe, who is also a member of the Aurora Library Board, has never run politically.

About 50 people - including municipal workers from Vaughan and Richmond Hill - were on hand with placards, sandwich boards, and t-shirts, attracting passing vehicles, and handing informational flyers to those coming into the Town Hall area.

"(We're) just letting people know what our objections are, what we want to get, and we're just asking for a fair and average wage comparable to other outside workers in the Region," said Steve Scott, Chairperson of CUPE's One Bargaining Unit for the Town of Aurora.

"We (and the outside workers in Whitchurch-Stouffville) are the lowest paid municipal workers in York Region," outlined the flyers being handed out by picketers. "We're not asking for the

Please see page 12



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COMING EVENTS

CONTINUING

The Aurora Probus Club meets every second Wednesday of the month (except July and August) at the Aurora Legion. Memberships consist of retired and semi-retired PROfessional and BUSiness people, hence the name Probus. It is a fun fellowship with well-chosen speakers. New members are welcome. For more information call Marilyn Munslow, 905-727-9344 or Bob Saunders, 905-841-3558.

Alateen meets every Sunday at 8 p.m. at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, corner of Victoria and Mosley Streets. Al-Anon meets every Tuesday at 8 p.m. at the Aurora United Church on Yonge Street. For more information go to al-anon.alateen.on.ca.

The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society meets on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 8 p.m. at the Royal Canadian Legion, 105 Industrial Parkway North in Aurora. Visitors are welcome for only \$2. For more information call Ray at 905-727-6168.

York Highlands Chorus is an award-winning a cappella Sweet Adelines chorus, a group of women who gather Tuesday evenings at the Old Firehall, Newmarket, to sing, share in the harmony of friendship and learn the barbershop art form. York Highlands is always looking for new women who share the love of a cappella music. Call Karen at 905-726-2113 or Vikki at information@yorkhighlands.com.

The Upper Canada Chordsmen, Aurora-Newmarket's award winning chorus, is looking for male singers. The group meets every Wednesday from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Old Firehall, 140 Main Street South, in Newmarket.

The Optimist Club of Aurora meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Aurora Legion. New members are welcome. Call 905-727-5012 for more information.

The Aurora Lions Club meets the second and fourth Thursdays at the Aurora Lions Hall, corner of Mosley and Victoria Streets, Co-ed club welcomes new members. For further information, call 905-727-6079.

Every Thursday, Martha's Table serves home-made soup, sandwiches, and dessert in St. Andrew's Hall at the Presbyterian Church, corner of Mosley and Victoria Street. Cost is minimal, and the volunteer-run program enabled the church to give more than \$5,000 to local charities in 2008 alone. You can enjoy lunch, conversation, and a sense of community between 11.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. weekly.

The York Regional Police Male Chorus is looking for new members. You do not have to be a police officer nor are you required to read music to volunteer. The group rehearses Monday evenings between 7.30 and 9.30 p.m. For further information, contact the chorus supervisor at 905-727-9676 or the coordinator of volunteer services for YRP at 905-830-0303, extension 6717.

Aurora's Air Cadets meet every Tuesday night at Cardinal Carter School from 6.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m., and offer a program for 12 years and older boys and girls.

Aurora Opera Children's Chorus welcomes treble voices. It is a choir dedicated to nurturing and providing opportunities for children to express their musical abilities. The chorus is open to boys and girls ages 5-17. Contact the general director at keepsinging@rogers.com

Community Home Assistance to Seniors (CHATS) is looking for volunteers to assist with the activities in its Adult Day Program. The positions call for a commitment of a few hours a week at its Aurora location. Various times are available. Call Christine at 905-713-3494.

Every Wednesday from 6.30 to 8 p.m. the Pioneer Club for boys and girls, age three to Grade 4 and the Junior High Club for boys and girls, Grades 5 to 8, will be held at the Aurora Cornerstone Church, 390 Industrial Parkway South. For more information call 905-841-8884.

A drop-in centre will operate every Wednesday at the Community Bible Church on Bathurst Street just south of Henderson from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. For more information e-mail Judy Hoffmann jhoffmann@sympatico.ca.

Scottish Country Dancing on Tuesday evenings at 8.15 p.m. at the Aurora Heights Public School and on Friday mornings at St. Andrews' Presbyterian Church beginning at 10.30 a.m. No partners are needed and beginners are welcome.

Aurora Rotary Club meets every Monday at 6.30 p.m. at Gabriel's on Yonge Street. New members are welcome. For further information call 905-713-9356.

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge 148 meets the first and third Tuesday of each month at 8 p.m. at 15216 Yonge Street, south of Wellington. For more information call 905-830-9205.

Masonic Rising Sun Lodge meets the first Thursday of each month at the Rising Sun Temple, 57 Mosley Street, Aurora at 7.30 p.m.

Robertson Masonic Lodge meets the third Saturday each month at 57 Mosley Street at 10.30 a.m. Coffee Club at 9 a.m. and lunch at noon. Call 905-727-3032 or 905-727-1080 for more information.

Gamblers Anonymous meets every Tuesday night at Trinity Anglican Church, Victoria Street, at 7.30 p.m.

Progressive Euchre every Thursday night at the Aurora Legion at 7.30 p.m. Call 905-727-9932.

Canadian Federation of University Women holds monthly meetings at the Aurora Legion with a variety of speakers. Contact Beverley at 905-727-2151.

THURSDAY, JUNE 3

The next Aurora Chamber of Commerce Business After Five meeting will be hosted by JackRyn France Inc. from 5.30 to 7.30 p.m.. They are located at 89 Wellington Street East. The event is complimentary to Chamber members.

FRIDAY, JUNE 4

Launch of Artcures Art Exhibition Show and Sale at the Aurora Cultural Centre, 22 Church Street, at 7 p.m. A display and sale of York Region visual artists; works in a variety of media including oil, water-colour, acrylic, pottery and more. Artcures is a local not-for-profit organization dedicated to inspiring wellness through creativity. Ongoing through to June 13th; for sale hours call the Centre at 905-713-1818 or send an e-mail to info@auroraculturalcentre.ca. There is no

admission fee for this event.

SUNDAY, JUNE 6

Annual Aurora Street Festival on Yonge Street, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. More than 550 vendor spaces have been sold.

MONDAY, JUNE 7

The Aurora Film Circuit presents "Young at Heart", an award-winning documentary about a group of seniors living in Massachusetts who refuse to let age and ill health get them down. Instead, they join a singing group that performs rock, punk, and disco. The average age is 81; the oldest is 92. One member needs an oxygen tank; another has undergone chemotherapy; a third is recovering from a serious illness. The film is 50 per cent music and 50 per cent documentary footage. Songs include David Bowie's "Golden Years", the Bee Gees' "Stayin' Alive," And the Clash's "Should I Stay or Should I Go". Tickets, at \$10, are on sale at the library and R& R Used Books, Edward Street.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

Merlin's Hollow, the English flower garden, is open, free of charge, to the public today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 181 Centre Crescent.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16

Beginning at 6 p.m., members of the Aurora Historical Society are invited to Hillary House National Historic Site for an evening with good food, entertainment and a chance to win lucky draw prizes. Not a member? Stop by to enjoy the evening and learn more about the organization. It's sure to be a fun evening in the company of good friends on the Hillary House, Yonge Street, north of Wellington, grounds. Admission is \$5 per person or \$2 for children under 10. You must RSVP by calling the Aurora

Historical Society at 905-727-8991 or e-mailing ahs@aurorahs.com.

THURSDAY, JUNE 17

Hospice King-Aurora and Doane House Hospice holds their annual fundraising golf tournament at nearby Station Creek Golf Club at 8.30 a.m. To reserve your spot and for more information contact Lynn McLarnon at 905-773-0155 or Stephen Forsey at 905-726-9343.

JUNE 25 AND 26

Slippermen appears at Theatre Aurora both nights at 7.30 p.m. There is also a 1.30 p.m. matinee at the Theatre on Saturday, June 26. For tickets, call Theatre Aurora at 905-727-3669.

SATURDAY, JULY 3

Merlin's Hollow, the English flower garden, is open, free of charge, to the public today from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 181 Centre Crescent.

SUNDAY, JULY 4

The Aurora Garden & Horticultural Society invites you to attend its annual Aurora Garden Tour. Spend an afternoon on a self-guided tour of seven gardens where the owners and creators of these lovely landscape designs will be present to chat with you. The tour is from noon to 5 p.m., rain or shine! Tickets are \$10 and are available in Aurora at Art of the Matter, 2 Orchard Heights Boulevard; Caruso & Co., 15210 Yonge Street; Flowers by Terry, 14799 Yonge Street; and R&R Used Books, 95 Edward Street; and at the booth at the Aurora Farmers' Market June 19th, 26th, and July 3rd. For more information call 905-727-5926 or visit http://www.gardenontario.org/site.php/aurora/news/details/5469.



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Kennedy Street intersection

ORGAN GRINDER KLAUS

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THE BEN SHOW

12:00 pm, 2:00 pm, 4:00 pm
Just south of Brookland Avenue

THE DOMINO BAND

2:30 pm – 5:00 pm
Golf Links Drive intersection

THE GEORGE ST. KITTS BAND

All day at Church Street intersection

THE MAGIC OF BRANDON DAVID

11:00 am, 1:00 pm, 3:00 pm
Just north of Reuben Street

THE PATTY MCLAUGHLIN BAND

11:00 am - 2:00 pm
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Aurora's schools were the places to be over the weekend. In the top photo, Curtis Fordyce rides a tricycle at the Aurora Grove Public School's 10th Anniversary Spring Fling and Reunion, while Meaghan Kunkeo, left, and Kaitlynn Staniuk, both students at Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, admire a goat, part of the petting farm animals that were at the Aurora Senior and George Street Public Schools Saturday. *Auroran photos by David Falconer*

Changes limit donations

As most Aurorans are aware, polls in the municipal election open on October 25, in the first of many changes in the upcoming election process since amendments to the Municipal Elections Act came into effect in January.

These changes will limit campaign donations and increase financial transparency to the electorate.

Amendments include a limitation on donations to individual candidates for the same office at \$5,000.

"Contributors are still limited to a maximum donation of \$750 per candidate but this amendment limits the aggregate amount that a contributor can make to one municipal council or school board election," said John Leach, Aurora's Town Clerk in a report to Council.

"Contributors who exceed this limit may be liable to a penalty."

The changes to the act also eliminate the "grace period" of 91 days for candidates following the March deadline for filing financial statements without penalty.

Statements are now due on the last Friday in March following the election, although individual candidates may apply for an extension through the Ontario Court of Justice.

Once filed, these statements

will now be published online for all to see.

Under previous rules, statements were only available for public review through the Town Clerk's office.

Accessibility for the electorate, which has been of particular concern to councillors such as Wendy Gaertner, is also tackled in the changes.

The Town Clerk must now ensure that each polling station is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Considerations are also being made for candidates with disabilities.

The act now provides for expenses related to "a candidate's disability to be excluded from the candidate's spending limit."

With Election Day looming in October, key dates leading up to it have been clarified further.

Nomination day for candidates is scheduled for September 10.

This is, therefore, the last day to submit a nomination as well as the last day to withdraw from the race.

A voters' list will be available September 1 for viewing at Town Hall and the Aurora Public Library.

Advanced voting at the Aurora Seniors' Centre begins October 9.

Aurora Optimists plan picnic for anniversary

The Optimist Club of Aurora will mark 25 years of service to the Town of Aurora with a community celebration at the park which bears its name.

The celebratory picnic, which will be held June 19 at Optimist Park, will be open to all Aurora residents, said Optimist Brian Marshall at a recent general committee meeting.

"The people who come will be able to enjoy pony rides, petting zoos, an inflatable bouncy house, a climbing wall, games and races, as well as other activities," he said. "There will also be live music provided by local musicians and all this will be provided free of charge as our gift to the people of Aurora. "Those who attend will be encouraged to pack their own picnic lunch or purchase one from our mobile kitchen."

The 25-year celebration marks the silver anniversary of the group lending a hand to Aurora youth.

"For a quarter of a century, we have been actively sponsoring children in Aurora in hockey, baseball and soccer," said Mr. Marshall. "We also run an annual chess tournament for children and have provided scholarships and other funding for both Aurora High School and Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School for years."

The club, he added, sends

Grade 10 students from each Aurora school to leadership seminars every spring, as well as helping to organize and marshal events such as the Santa Claus Parade. Local youth is currently enjoying the Flipside Skate Park at the Aurora Leisure Complex courtesy of the Optimists.

Mr. Marshall appeared at the meeting on behalf of the 54-member strong Optimist Club requesting the Town waive the \$300 fee incurred when hiring a Town park for an event.

The request met with no opposition at the council table, with councillors noting the inclusiveness of the plans.

"That is a lot of work done by a very small group of people," said Councillor Evelyn Buck. "We're not setting a precedent because the Optimist Club is seeking to organize a festival that is encouraging everyone in Aurora to join them for a celebration. They're not asking for a park for an exclusive purpose. They're asking for the use of this park and inviting everyone in the community to join them in celebration."

The Club's good works in the community also justified waiving the fees, said Councillor Evelina MacEachern.

"Typically our reaction is to

refer to staff for a report," said Councillor MacEachern. "I'm sure everyone at the table feels there's no need for that because we get so much."

When the councillor asked Al Downey, Aurora's director of Parks and Recreation Services

whether his department was comfortable waiving the fees without the preparation of a report, he replied in the affirmative.

"I'm more than pleased to waive the fee," he said. "The Optimists are a great partner."



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Letters to the Editor

MPP Klees responds to letter with his facts

To the editor,

After 15 years serving as a Member of Provincial Parliament, I thought I had experienced most of the ugliness that the dark side of human nature can hurl my way.

But I was wrong, and what caught me off guard was the fact that it came at me from the pages of this community newspaper in the form of a letter to the editor published in the Week of May 25, edition.

While I have resisted responding to letters to the editor, I feel compelled to respond to the letter written by James McConnell for two reasons.

First, because the letter contains a litany of inaccurate information that not only misrepresents my position on important policy issues, but is also misleading about my role as a provincial representative and calls into question my personal and professional integrity through innuendo.

In short, Mr. McConnell has maligned my character and reputation and in due course, will be required to account for his actions through the justice system.

My second reason for responding is that by crowning Mr. McConnell's letter with a headline as large as the newspaper's front page banner, and publishing the letter without so much as the most basic fact-checking, the editor has been as irresponsible as the letter-writer in perpetuating the defamation that has resulted from the dissemination of this information.

Let me set the record

straight:

McConnell begins by calling into question my "integrity" and then proceeds to misrepresent even the most basic of information.

1) McConnell accuses me of posing beside a gravestone with the Premier's name on it. He apparently missed the factual information; namely, that the monument did not contain the Premier's name, it was engraved with the words "Dalton's Death Tax" by the owner of a monument business after learning that the HST would add an additional \$1,200 - \$1,600 to the cost of funeral and burial services in Ontario. He chose to ignore the fact that I had been invited to the unveiling of this "monument to the HST" by a constituent who felt compelled to express his opposition to this new tax in the best way he knew.

2) McConnell calls into question my criticism of the Green Energy Act which he says was modelled after Germany's Renewable Energy Sources Act which he claims may be the most successful green incentive policies in the world. Mr. McConnell could not be more misinformed and should apprise himself of a recent study released by the German government that concludes "wind farms are an expensive and inefficient way of generating sustainable energy". In fact, the government study confirms that its pre-occupation with unreliable and expensive windpower has forced Germany to import most of its baseload power at what are proving to be unsustainable

prices. As Bloomberg News reported, "the unsustainable flow of wind power in their networks has forced German utilities to buy more expensive energy, requiring them to raise prices for the consumer".

As for the "over 200,000 people" Mr. McConnell claims are employed in Germany's renewable energy sector, the promise of green jobs is yet one more illusion. Eric Rosenbloom, science editor of the Country Guardian reports that "a typical large wind facility requires just one maintenance worker. According to his study, of the initial workforce of people who were employed during the construction stage, more than 60 per cent are typically imported foreign labor from the turbine company; leaving no more than one or two local jobs per turbine per 20 MW installed capacity.

If Mr. McConnell wants to inform others about green energy, he should inform himself first.

3) McConnell asserts that Ontarians will be able to "conserve more electricity" with smart meters. Not one person knowledgeable about smart meters will allow that they "conserve energy" and reduce consumption. They are simply a tool to allow utilities to charge different rates at different times of the day. Again, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing.

4) McConnell tells his readers that "Klees is on the board of the Universal Energy Corporation", and ties my role as a board member to disciplinary measures against the company by the Ontario

Energy Board and insinuates that there may be a "financial gain from the pro oil and gas opinions" I express. First, Universal Energy hasn't existed for over a year. The fact that McConnell's information on this is inaccurate, may also explain why he chose to ignore the fact that as an Independent Board Member and Member of the Audit and Governance Committees I was responsible for the implementation of a zero tolerance policy for non-compliance with prescribed business practices by frontline employees. It is also apparent from his innuendo of conflict, that McConnell does not understand the difference between generation and the marketing functions of electricity and natural gas industries. To suggest that there could be even a spark of conflict between the two functions demonstrates a total lack of understanding of the energy industry.

5) McConnell seems to think that he revealed a deep secret when he states that a blog reported that the former CEO of Universal Energy (and a long time personal friend) donated to my leadership campaign. In fact, all donations to all leadership campaigns are reported in real time and are available for all to see through Elections Ontario. That's the only factual information Mr. McConnell offered up in his letter and he didn't have to rely on a blog to find it.

6) As for McConnell's suggestion that his "younger generation" will suffer because of what he calls my "ignorance is bliss attitude" on environmental issues, I would ask him to brush up on who it was who spearheaded the Oak Ridges Moraine Protection Act that has permanently protected from development 100 per cent of the environmentally sensitive areas of the moraine that stretches 160 kilometres from the Trent River in the east to the Niagara Escarpment in the west. Informed constituents will know that this was one of my initiatives as a member of the former PC Government. He is also apparently not aware that I am a Member of the Board of Directors of Tribute Resources, a public company that is in the business of developing renewable energy generation including wind and hydroelectric generation along the Trent-Severn Waterway.

Finally, Mr. McConnell states that "Aurorans expect dignity, respectable dialogue and innovative ideas from their elected representatives". On this, I agree with Mr. McConnell. I will let my constituents decide who has conducted themselves with dignity, and what could possibly be the motivation behind Mr. McConnell's attempted assault on my reputation.

Frank Klees, MPP
Aurora

Perhaps letter writer is a Liberal member

To the editor,

Re: "Klees' column "disgusting, appalling", reader claims" (The Auroran letters, May 25, 2010)

Mr. McConnell is clearly upset with Mr. Klees...or is he?

Sounds to me that he may be guilty of exactly that which he accuses Mr. Klees! Opportunistic politicking? A Liberal perhaps?

For the record, I'm not a card carrying member of any political party.

I'm an ordinary, tax-paying Aurora resident, just trying to make ends meet.

I attempt to keep myself somewhat informed politically, (at least as much as I can stand) and I, like the majority of Canadians, look at my bottom line every month. Right or wrong, that sways my opinion.

I've been watching with

concern about what the HST will do to my bottom line and have heard both sides clearly disagree on what its impact on me will be.

That impact has become clearer in the last few weeks.

I've seen ads from companies selling windows, vacations, theatre tickets, real estate, and yes, funeral services that say "Buy now...Beat the HST!"

I don't notice any of them say, "Don't worry. We're saving money on our end and we're gonna pass it on to you!"

Of course, they won't! As a business owner, would you?

What I found "disgusting", Mr. McConnell, is the hypocrisy that instructs the LCBO, a government-run business, to keep prices constant when the HST comes into effect (Toronto Star May 13/10), all in the name of social

responsibility!

Give me a break.

I have to say I appreciate that Mr. Klees takes the time to write a column in the local paper and kudos to this local paper for printing it. It helps.

The way I read it, Mr. Klees responded to the outcry by one of his constituents, Dave Tomkinson at Luesby Memorial.

Although I have never contacted his office personally for any assistance, I've heard many stories about people who have reached out to him for help and have been impressed by the time and result he and his staff give.

As for July 1st...Canada Day celebrates our national pride.

National pride keeps the debate active; critical to a country strong and free.

A. McLean
Aurora

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THE AURORAN

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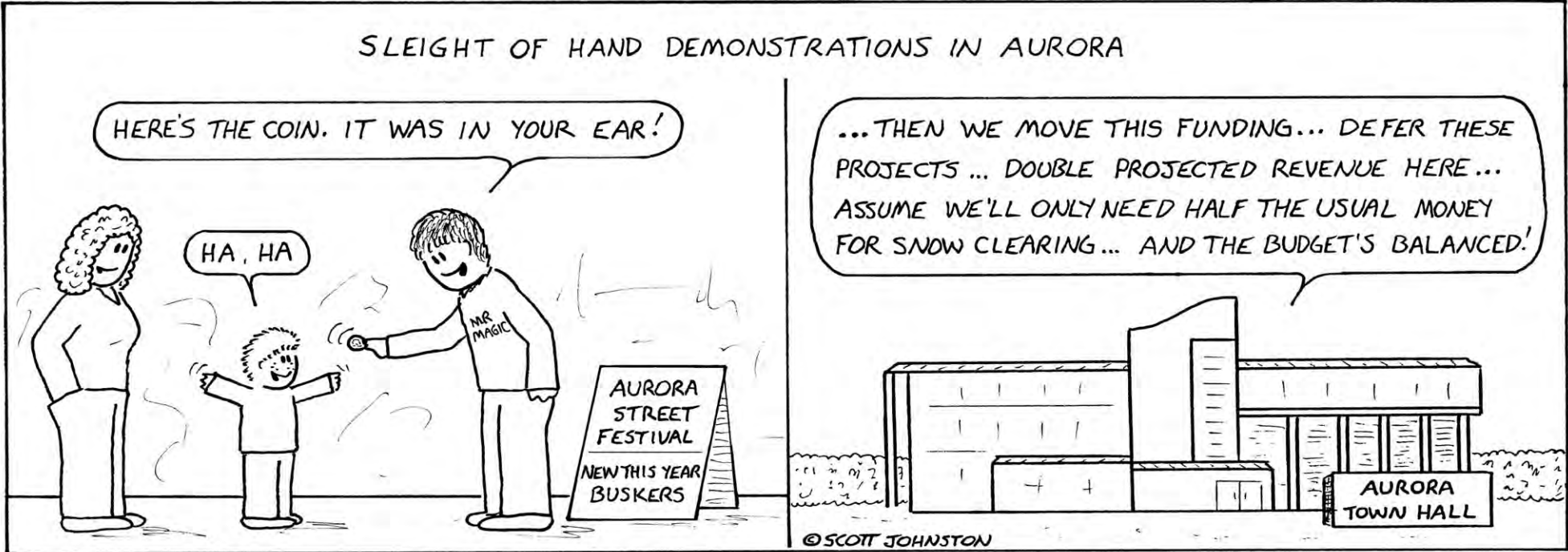
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Front Porch Perspective

By Stephen Somerville

In last week's Auroran, reader George Hervey wrote a letter to the editor:

"In recent columns Stephen Somerville seems to be tearing himself apart."

"Is he John Ibbotson or Jane Taber?"

"You need to find a number of Aurora residents who can produce a weekly column."

"Surely there must be some who could add luster to this most important page."

Mr. Hervey, don't be so indirect and vague, please tell me how you really feel next time!

I spent the last few days checking to see if my mother-in-law was writing under a pseudo name! (She is not.)

Over the past four years, I have received numerous e-mails regarding this column; I have responded to all of them. As Mr. Gervy has written an open letter to me, I will respond through this column instead of through e-mail.

While I am always interested in feedback (both good or bad) and constructive criticism, your letter doesn't provide me with anything to work on.

I don't know what is meant by "seems to be tearing himself apart."

Is it that the subjects that I write about don't interest you? Are they boring? Or you simply don't like my approach or style of writing?

I do hope that my columns are not boring. I will admit though, that from time to time, I have had some difficulty in coming up with something suitable to write about.

It is very much a pleasure and a privilege writing on a weekly basis

- this being column number 193 - and I usually do have enough ideas for the next three or four columns, but there have been periods when I have been stumped. This has not happened lately though.

There have also been times where I had already written a large part of the column, but after further reviewing it, I scrapped the document and started again.

The editor has been good enough to allow me to write about anything that has a local flavour to it. I have not confined my written offerings to just politics and public affairs; I have also written about people and various events in our community.

The reason for this is that I am very interested in the different things that occur locally and I also don't want to bore the reader with too many columns about any one topic. (i.e. taxes and also my fervent desire to see everyone eligible to vote in Aurora do so).

I have also tried, in some cases, to take a dispassionate, third person perspective of things, while at other times, injected myself or certain family members into the column for a change of pace.

I also try to lighten things up a little. Quickly scanning the three major dailies every morning shows me that there are enough misdeeds going on out there, so it is nice to highlight some of the good things.

I also don't get what you mean by "Is he John Ibbotson or Jane Taber?"

They are both political and national affairs columnists/commentators of some stature.

I don't try to emulate them and I certainly don't see myself in their class of writers.

Response

Is it my political ideology or philosophy?

I refer back to the words in my initial column from May, 2006: "I start from the basic premise that I both admire and respect all those - irrespective of political stripe - who seek and hold public office. I think public life is fundamentally about the nobility and selflessness of public service. It is too bad that sometimes the noblest profession seems to have taken on the characteristics of the oldest profession."

Having volunteered in 30 political campaigns over 28 years, I have a lot of respect for any of our public officials. I also know that the politicians do enough bone headed and shortsighted things to justify some of the public cynicism, but we are still very fortunate that we have good people from our community willing to step forward and serve.

While I take my responsibility as a volunteer columnist seriously, I also try and keep it in perspective.

I remember a number of years ago preparing remarks for a speech I was to give and my wife telling me, "don't try to be informative, engaging or humorous, and for God's sake, don't try to be intelligent - just be yourself". Keeping this sage advice in mind, my columns are simply intended to stimulate debate and discussion on some of the issues and also to promote the good work that goes on in our wonderful community.

I most welcome any readers comments/criticisms/suggestions at any time.

Cheers!

Stephen can be contacted at:
stephengsomerville@yahoo.com



Heard About Town

By David Heard

I would walk 100 miles for fresh.

For the last four summers I have become accustomed to getting up at five a.m. just like a real farmer, but a little later.

The first year I just began getting used to being part of a community as I made a terrific choice to get involved.

By doing this I overcame my communication challenge and I learned to read lips to assist with my hearing and practiced it at the Aurora Farmers' Market.

It has been wonderful watching the farmers interact with customers and sell their wares.

The gathering of citizens catching up on the latest gossip and local news and the smells of fresh and healthy are a highlight.

It has become a destination I look forward to each Saturday and miss it through the winter months.

The original marketplace in the mid-1800s was at Yonge and Wellington streets where farmers from miles around would sell their harvest to the mills that were abundant in Aurora.

The underground network of the many aquifers and streams was like we had a hidden Niagara Falls for power that supported our economy.

Then in the latter part of that century it was the Town Hall at Mosley and Yonge Street that became the first organized market.

The fire department's wagons were wheeled out to make space for trade and the market grew along Mosley.

There in the same location was a library and a one-room school.

So big in fact that it made its way to almost Wells Street.

The current location, the Aurora Town Park, just kind of took off where the old one finished.

At the new meeting place the Snowden Farms meat pies are a bevy of flavours that scream fresh ingredients.

Worth the trip is the fair trade coffee that if the brew does not wake you up in the morning then John's smile will.

Nicole can make a cookie look like anything, and anything look like a cookie.

At the north end of the market Mike (I call him Barney Rubble) is the cordial neighbor who says "morning" across the hedge.

Kevin's awesome smokehouse kitchen is a marvel just like what he and his wife serve up.

If that is not enough try one of the new vendors who offer breakfast pizza with a crust that is one of the best I have devoured.

What an addition.

There are organic soaps and passionately crafted jewelry and a seamstress who completed a custom job for our display that compliments the merchandising.

There is much to enjoy and produce season hasn't even hit yet from the 100 miles we draw our vendors from.

It is also so quiet this year you can hear the birds call out in the trees above the street.

It's a canopy that you cannot find just anywhere in Aurora.

Did I mention the authorities we have on honey and heirloom tomatoes?

They will inform and educate you, so come learn and be entertained by the experts who really know their stuff.

You can't find that in the aisles.

It is like stepping back in time to a softer gentler era when you were entertained by the environment.

It was about the people.

They make the market and the market is thankful.

I will probably get heck from one of the many vendors or farmers whose name I didn't mention.

Farmers' market

Oh well, it is about the bigger picture anyway and not a popularity contest.

It is a community.

There are rumours also circulating, that some classic things will happen this year that will remind you of days gone by.

Where old meets new and parents and children relish in originality and accomplish something together.

Where flight and fancy may take the champion to new heights.

I remember that type of feeling when at eight years old I won a pie eating contest at the Town Park.

I won seven silver dollars competing against adults and don't have the coins but I do have the valuable memories.

There were the old horse shows at the park and more than just those animals showcased.

Those days may return. There may be awards given out to four legs again in that very park called Town. Keep in touch and we will let you know how to get involved.

Also I will be guiding a few Friday or Saturday night walking tours in the moonlight during the summer months.

If you know a service club, church, or group who wish to hear stories of our great little Town I am willing to guide a private tour.

Dates will be set soon.

Thanks again to all the people who brave the weather and especially the farmers who invest their summers with us.

The only thing missing is the sound of hooves and the mooing of a few cows.

There is always next year

See you at the market.

David Heard can be reached at
astepintimeaurora@yahoo.com

Letters to the Editor

Giving up this information will not require me to vote

To the editor,

The municipal elections in October of this year will be an interesting event on many fronts.

Not only is it all about electing an effective municipal government but also about overcoming low voter turnout and the general apathy of the electorate.

The turnout at the last municipal elections although

I don't have the figures, was nothing short of deplorable.

The first comes hopefully with being presented with those who will be committed to the job and the second will just follow suit because people will be interested and more likely to exercise their civic duty.

Taking care of the first part although seemingly an easy fix by offering choice is really so closely tied to the

second, apathy, that I don't see an effective change on the horizon.

Therefore it is a recognizable symptom that low voter turnout will always follow.

I don't know how to fix any of the problems.

If I did, I might be a politician.

I do know that to fix voter turnout you need to get people registered and turning out.

I for one will turn out but I might not be registered if I fail to mail in some information sheet to M.P.A.C. (Municipal Property Assessment Corporation).

Now call me old fashioned, but I remember when election time meant enumerators coming door to door to make sure you were able to cast your vote.

I choose not to send any information about members of my household to a Corporation whose sole task is to systematically generate an increase of my annual taxation to that very body that I am voting for.

Serviceman offered reader his own car

To the editor,

Just as I was losing all my faith and respect for our Service Industry, a young mechanic restored it. My vehicle is not new anymore and I have always looked after it when service was indicated.

At the dealership I purchased it (no longer in business) whenever I took it in to have a check up and oil change – they always found at least \$500 worth of work to be done and sometimes more.

It got to the point I just handed over my Visa card and said that they should just "have their way" with it and I would come in

and sign.

I trusted, naively, that they knew more than me.

Mind you, if the work was going to take a long time they provided me with a courtesy car. Big Whoop!

However, being a widow and must watch my pennies, I started to ask questions and did some consulting with my grown sons who just shook their heads in dismay, offered to take my car in for its service, after giving me a lecture on dealership protocols.

Okay, so after the dealership closed, I investigated (not really I just asked my son where he takes his truck) other options and decided on Lloyd's Auto

Shop on Industrial Parkway.

When that service light came on I made an appointment and \$40 later was told that I required some additional "bushing thing" done, not immediately.

Being a grown up I decided without consultation to make another appointment before the bi-weekly trek to the North Country started.

To my dismay, not only did the work cost a reasonable sum – approximately half of the usual dealership amount - but because there was no working courtesy car available – the mechanic loaned me his own personal car.

How cool was that??

I came home, watered, did ad copy and within a couple of hours was called and picked up my van. Matt did not have to provide his own vehicle.

There are still those who hold customer service in high esteem and I found one right here in Aurora.

Chief has advice for use of cottage

To the editor,

Cottage season is here!

Remember, it is law in Ontario to have working alarms on each storey and outside all sleeping areas in your cottage, as it is in your home.

Please also check your local laws regarding carbon monoxide alarms.

Fire chiefs across cottage country want you to have "piece of mind at your piece of heaven".

Watch for our TV reminders featuring FishTV host Leo Stakos, and heed these five tips:

1. Change all smoke alarms batteries at least once per year,
2. Replace all smoke alarms over 10 years old,
3. If your cottage has a fireplace, or gas or propane appliances, install at least one CO,
4. Clean heating appliances and barbecues before use, and ensure all combustibles as well as children and pets, are kept well away while grilling,
5. Check with local authorities for restrictions on campfires or burning brush.

Enjoy the summer of 2010 while being fire safe.

Ian Laing
Fire chief
Central York
Fire Services

Bonnie Tiffin
Oak Ridges

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Peter Virtanen
CLU Agent, Aurora

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Money stands in way of treatment

**By BROCK WEIR
Auroran staff**
When eight-year-old Thalia Avgousti tries to speak, her jaws, lips, vocal cords, and diaphragm don't always cooperate.

Her mother Flory likens the cooperation between Thalia's brain with her lips, jaws, vocal cords and diaphragm to an orchestra. "Just imagine an orchestra where everybody is playing a different note at a different time," said Ms. Avgousti. "They can't all synchronize themselves. These articulators are basically an orchestra."

Thalia lives with cerebral palsy. While the disorder affects each person differently, Thalia experiences her most severe symptoms in areas related to speech.

There is no cure for it and the only treatments available tackle the symptoms, not the source.

Doctors have told her the primary course of action is extended physiotherapy with a focus on repetition.

Repeating a prescribed exercise over and over, upwards of a few thousand times, has a profound effect on muscle memory, said Ms. Avgousti. The more an action is repeated, the greater likelihood of success.

"It takes a lot of time and effort in order for her to achieve something that is very minimal," she said. "With all her challenges and all her therapies - physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy - she is going to grow very slowly being physically successful.

"I've always said to doctors and therapists, 'can't we take care of the source of the problem which is at the brain, and not the symptoms?' They've said no, there is nothing available to do that."

But a better method of tackling these symptoms

may be on the horizon for Thalia: stem cell therapy.

Ms. Avgousti said she has been researching stem cells for several years. In her research, she came across a clinic in Germany that uses a patient's own stem cells - extracted from bone marrow - to treat countless diseases and disorders.

And this particular clinic treats cerebral palsy.

"It is like giving yourself a blood transfusion with your own blood; it is zero risk," said Ms. Avgousti. "We got interested in it and we followed the research and spoke to some moms in the US who have actually gone ahead with this treatment and they have found great success with their children.

"Great success for their kids may appear to be small because it won't be a cure, but it will be an improvement. An improvement to a child with cerebral palsy is huge in parents' eyes because obviously what it would create is a huge stepping stone for kids like Thalia."

Ms. Avgousti said this treatment could almost be like setting a new "baseline" from which Thalia would be able to develop and grow.

"Therapy would then work better, so rather than getting a return on 10 per cent of the treatment she has done in the past, maybe we'll get 30 or 40 per cent from the therapy we do in the future. Everything will work better. She will have a new baseline and we'd be getting better return on the money and time we invest in therapy, and that is huge to us."

A ton of money - \$40,000 to be exact - is what currently stands between Thalia receiving the treatment in Germany.

The family is planning community fundraisers to help towards the cost of

treatment as well as looking for community and corporate partners.

The first fundraising event will be "Mom's Martini Night Out" to "celebrate the lengths and efforts moms go to for their children."

It will take place Thursday, June 10 at 8:30 p.m. at the new SW Club at Bayview Avenue and Wellington Street.

Following this, a second fundraiser will be held June 19 called "Family Movie Night under the Stars."

This event, which is slated to kick off at 7 p.m. at James Lloyd Park on Stone Road, consists of a barbeque featuring souvlaki, hamburgers, and hot dogs, a silent auction, a musical chairs tournament and the main event - a screening of the hit movie Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs.

"We're renting a big jumbo movie screen - 28 feet by 22 feet - and we'll also have pre-show entertainment. We're still working on seeing what we can get probably over the next week or two," said Ms. Avgousti.

"We'll also have interactive sports games and a jumping castle."

Admission for a family of four is \$35, while adults can get in for \$10 and individual children for \$8.

When all is said and done, Ms. Avgousti said this event might raise \$2,000 towards Thalia's treatment. While community support has been "overwhelming" with individuals trying to help out and contribute to the cause, the family is still looking towards securing community and corporate support and sponsors.

"If I look at all the costs we're investing in this event, what we get in return is really not that much," she said. "We're really hoping we could get some corporate sponsorship involved in this to raise the funds that way. I'm still continuing



THALIA AVGOUSTI

to look for sponsorship and anyone wanting to make a donation would be appreciated."

To date, they have raised \$1,000 from a local company and \$250 from

firefighters, but securing further sponsorship "has been a struggle".

"I have focused on local businesses in the community," said Ms. Avgousti. "We're in a subdivision that

is 15 years old and I thought starting out it would be great if a roofing or window company could sponsor this event. It would be great visibility for them, it would show their generosity, and it is visibility that works."

These companies, however, were not receptive, she said.

In addition to this, information has been given to the Optimists Club and Neighbourhood Network.

If the Avgoustis meet their goal, they hope to get treatment for Thalia this summer; but time, she said, is of the essence.

"The potential for using stem cells for a young person is even greater," she said.

To learn more about Thalia's journey and to find out how you can help, please visit www.thaliasjourney.com.



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Event: Mom's Martini Night Out
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Yellow Brick House needs a new shelter

A second Yellow Brick House shelter in southern York Region would provide more options and an added benefit for abused women and children in the Aurora and Newmarket area, according to Yellow Brick House's Executive Director Lorris Herenda.

"We did a needs assessment back in 2006 as part of our strategic planning process," said Ms Herenda. "Then in 2007, we did a capital needs assessment and we decided the best location for a shelter would be in the southern part of the Region.

"(It is) likely what would happen is women and children from Aurora and Newmarket would be going to the Southern part of the Region to seek shelter for security reasons and vice versa," she said.

Yellow Brick House is currently in the midst of a capital campaign to raise funds to build the second 25-bed shelter in York Region.

A house in Richmond Hill has been donated to the organization for use as a shelter, but not the land that it stands on.

For the group, it is a matter of moving the house to a suitable plot of land and they are currently considering a site in Markham.

"We do have a house that has been donated to us if we can move it," she said. "We're now trying to get the land secured and we are coming along."

Yellow Brick House has so far raised \$1.2 million of its \$4 million goal, but people are fanning out throughout the Region to help boost those numbers.

"We have our Capital

Campaign Chair, Vivian Risi from Royal LePage, and she has recruited women and individuals in the community who are fundraising on our behalf. We refer to them as 'angels of influence' and each angel has a goal to raise \$50,000 towards our final goal."

In this two-year capital campaign, \$1,900,000 will go towards the construction of the new shelter, including a budgeted \$500,000 for a half-acre of land, \$1,300,000 for the cost of operating the new shelter for two years, and \$800,000 to "sustain existing agency operations for two years."

A second shelter will help alleviate some of the demand currently facing Aurora's Yellow Brick House.

"On an annual basis, we're not able to accommodate more women and children than we're actually able to accommodate in our current shelter, so we have 25 beds and seven cribs, we see about 450 women and children through that facility alone," said Ms. Herenda. "Yet over 550 women and children were not accommodated due to lack of shelter beds. This is an annual number and it just increases by 10 to 12 per cent. The need (for a second shelter) is definitely very, very clear to us."

With third party fund raising events frequently springing up across the Region -- including a June 28 golf tournament at Eagle's Nest Golf Club hosted by Royal LePage - Ms Herenda is also focusing a possible fundraiser in November which would cement the support of the York Region mayors.

"Verbally, (the mayors) are

supporting the capital campaign and we may be working on an event for November 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children and to have an event that would be supported by all nine mayors," she said. "That's one purpose; the second purpose is to raise funds for the capital campaign."

With the anticipated addition of a homeless shelter for women in Newmarket in the near future, Ms Herenda said she anticipates the two

organizations will often come together.

"Our specialty is domestic violence, so women who are fleeing to a shelter from such a horrid situation they are seeking security," she said. "The homeless shelter's focus is not security, but shelter. Having said that, a lot of women who eventually become homeless have, at some point in their lives, experienced some domestic violence, so there is a connection and I think we will be collaborating quite a bit."

At this point, Ms Herenda

said she is hopeful that the second shelter will soon be underway.

"I'm trying to be optimistic

in saying that we'll be up and running by the end of this year, hopefully; if we are able to secure the land."



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Barb Hartwell, wife of the late Bob Hartwell, and Steve Hinder, Chair of the A+B Courier Run For Southlake, right, present John Cappalletti with the first “Bob Hartwell Spirit Award” which will be given every year to the volunteer who best demonstrates outstanding commitment and dedication exemplifying the true “Spirit” of what Bob Hartwell gave to his community. John was the first Chair and an original member of the committee who put together the Hartwell Challenge in honour of Bob. John has been associated with the event ever since and is committed to helping grow the event to benefit many more people who call Southlake their hospital.

Photo by Catherine Hunter

Peewee Jays open season with loss, then add victories

The Aurora Peewee Jays looked a little rusty as they dropped their season opener against rival Newmarket 9-2 recently.

However, Aurora got solid pitching performances from Alexander MacKinnon and Kyle Hauck.

In their second game of the season, the Jays bounced back nicely with a 5 - 2 victory against visiting East York.

Timely hitting by

Grayson Lloyd and Mathew Ho combined with solid fielding from Michael Dilosa, Mathew Leroy, Michael Imseis and Alessandro Bitondo helped contribute to the win.

Mathew Niece and Jack Pecora threw strikes for the Jays.

The Jays continued their winning ways with a 4 - 1 victory over home team Orillia.

Aaron Hauck played

well at 3rd base and as did catcher Ryan Donovan who twice threw out runners attempting to steal second base.

The Jays extended their unbeaten streak to three games with a 5 -5 tie against visiting Bolton. Behind 5-2, the Jays made a dramatic comeback in the bottom half of the last inning with a three-run outburst but stranded the winning runner at third base.

Tennis Club holds its official opening

Aurora Community Tennis Club courts have been open for some time, but the official opening happened Saturday at the club's home courts located at McMahon Park.

Hosted by the club's board of directors, the event offered a complimentary barbecue lunch and social tennis activi-

ties for all existing members and individuals interested in becoming a member.

A variety of demo tennis racquets was also available to try out for those looking for a new piece of equipment.

"Aurora Community Tennis Club is an outdoor summer facility that's

been providing a range of outstanding tennis programs that promotes tennis for all levels of skill in our community since 1937," said Brent McKinnon, ACTC President. "We utilize three cushioned courts under a partnership agreement with the Town of Aurora."



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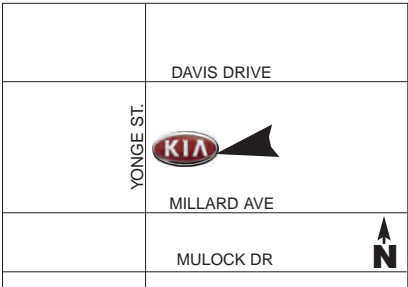
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Groups discuss Aurora land options

From page 1
Option Three takes what Mr. Palmer refers to as a "finer grain approach" to parkland distribution.

"There are a couple of neighbourhood parks, but most of the parkland is in much smaller pockets scattered throughout the neighbourhoods.

"Option four, most of the public open space is used on the edge of the environmental features to enhance those features or create new connections among the features, so it is kind of focused not on a traditional park format but more of an enhancing the environment approach."

Proposed road patterns in the various options vary as well. Option One, for instance, focuses on a collector system of roads featuring roundabouts.

"That kind of implies

equal priority to the roads in all directions," added Mr. Palmer. "It connects 2B to Leslie and the employment lands on the east side of Leslie. We've tested other forms of that, giving priorities to east-west. One of them goes and connects to the east side and ends at Leslie."

Land use also varies between the options from mixed use developments east of Leslie Street for residential, retail commercial, and employment developments that could include warehouses.

Options Three and Four focus on using those lands for employment land development, while Option Two "identifies a certain amount (of land) on Leslie Street for a potential major institutional university/college development."

The school boards also

call for two elementary schools in the lands west of Leslie Street. If lands are developed residentially east of Leslie a school could be built on that side as well.

"I always say the same thing at the beginning of my presentations: It's not going to be one of these plans; it is going to be a bit of Option One, a bit of Option Two, a bit of Option Three, and a bit of Option Four," said Mr. Palmer. "We try to pick the best pieces of each of those four plans and try to create the best plan for area 2C."

Public consultation for the 2C Secondary Plan Study and Environmental Assessment began Wednesday, with the day ending in a public workshop to determine development criteria in creating and evaluating these plans.

Attended by Mayor Phyllis Morris, and

Councillors Wendy Gaertner, John Gallo, and Evelina MacEachern, who are on the steering committee, participants were each asked to whittle a list of 16 design criteria down to five both individually and in small working groups.

These included land and infrastructure efficiency; creating job opportunities; the conservation of cultural and natural heritage features; mixed use developments that are "transit supportive"; health promotion, and the development of "a vibrant, walkable, complete community."

Criteria that could fall under into the environmental category rose to the top by the end of the night, with "minimize fragmentation of natural heritage features", "conserve natural heritage features", and "establish a visible and linked

Greenlands System" leading the way.

Curiously, at this meeting Aurorans in attendance were far outnumbered by people from Newmarket.

Individual Newmarket landowners who participated came out as their property lines end at the Aurora-Newmarket boundary, and they wanted their voices heard in the process.

"We got this official looking letter in December and quite frankly to read it was a very strange feeling," said Newmarket resident Paul Quigley. "They didn't speak to us as if they cared about the way the Town was going to integrate with the Town of Newmarket."

"I called our councillor and he said 'I can't really help you because it's Aurora' so the next thing you know I'm calling the neighbours and talking to one of the planners saying 'can you still not help us through this process?'"

Mr. Quigley and his wife, Lynn Holden, said they came

to the meeting with three primary concerns, including finding out whether there is to be a buffer between their properties and new developments, adequate drainage on new properties so their own lands are not flooded, and a "like-to-like" property concept.

"It's very common sense stuff (such as) like-to-like property and not saying it's low density and find out it's a 33-foot wide lot," he said. "We're talking like-to-like meaning if we're on 60-foot lots then you put 60 foot lots behind us."

"For me, to not hear anyone talk about that between December and today makes you anxious because you're worried about an apartment building or something like three small townhouses being put into your backyard."

Public consultations were ongoing at press time with working sessions taking place and concluding with a further public meeting Monday night.

Jazz Fest is set for July 30-31

The 2010 Aurora Jazz Festival slated for July 30 and 31 is moving full steam ahead, according to organizer Sher St. Kitts.

"We're pretty excited about it," Ms. St. Kitts said at last Tuesday's general committee meeting. "There has been a lot of promotion...so I think the festival will be a big success this year."

Ms. St. Kitts was on

hand as a delegate to speak to the request to have a permit for a beer and wine garden which would be operated at the Festival by the Rotary Club of Aurora.

Councillors moved to receive Ms. St. Kitts request and comments and the matter was referred back to staff for additional comments on items relating to this application councillors

should be considering before endorsing the request.

"The Rotary Club is hosting and managing the beer garden and the request is not for approval by this council because that happens by another body, but rather that council endorses the event and has no objection to the LCBO issuing the licence," said Aurora CAO Neil Garbe at

Tuesday's meeting.

"Council may choose to refer the matter to staff and bring something forward so you have a something that outlines that ensuring that the Rotary Club is the person liable for the event and carries the responsibility for providing insurance and so you could refer that to staff and we could turn that around in short order."

Employees picket Municipal Office

From page 1
moon, we're just asking to be brought up to the average salaries."

The flyer goes on to state that eight senior managers for the Town of Aurora are on the so-called "Sunshine List" for people in Ontario making more than \$100,000 a year.

These managers include Aurora CAO Neil Garbe; Al Downey, Director of Parks and Recreation Services; and Christopher Cooper, the Town Solicitor.

The information picket was very important to getting this message known not just to the public at large, but to local politicians, said Derek Bakshi, President of CUPE 905.

"We felt it was important to let the politicians of Aurora know that we're not happy with that position and we would like to see some movement in terms of raising wages at parity with the rest in York Region," he said. "We're not asking to be the highest paid, but we definitely have an issue with being the lowest paid. Really that is what the problem is. We would like the public to know it is not just about money, it is also about what is fair and that is what our catchphrase is: Fairness is not a lot to ask."

Politicians are often removed from the bargaining table, yet they are the decision makers, said Mr. Bakshi.

Town staff are mandated to negotiate with the union and politicians "don't know exactly

what goes on.

"Town staff (know, and) I'm sure they do their reporting, so we're not saying the politicians are fully unaware, it's just that we want to make sure they are aware of the issues and we don't want to leave it with the chance of does council know or not?"

At this point there are no further plans for future protests or any other measures to raise awareness before they head back to the table for another round of negotiations with the Town June 24, said Mr. Bakshi.

"I know (Mr. Garbe) had made the comment that we were all surprised when we heard about the information picket because the union had agreed to conciliation, so they're not in a legal strike position and we have to wait for the June 24 meeting at which time we will have further discussions," said Jason Ballantyne, Manager of Corporate Communications as the picket continued outside.

"Things have been going well to this point," he added. "We have a good relationship with our unionized workers and we value them and we're just going to continue to have talks, the June 24 talks being the next one."

Mr. Ballantyne wanted to assure residents that water safety will not be jeopardized in the event of a strike. Nor, he said, would residential, commercial or industrial garbage pickup.

"Our goal, of course, should there be a strike - and we're hop-

ing there won't be - is to minimize any disruptions as much as possible, but until we reach that point we don't want to speculate on the what-ifs," he said.

"The core services of water safety and garbage pickup will remain and we'll put some plans into effect should we get to that. The fact that things have gone so

well to this point leads me to believe we will continue having good talks come June 24.

"There are 47 workers in total but we're hopeful that it won't come to a strike and we will be able to come to a resolution that works for both the ratepayers of Aurora as well as our employees."

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Council approves amendment

From page 1
proposed building.

Earlier, councillors and town staffers had asked the developers to reduce the height of the building by one storey to comply with the existing Official Plan.

The developers complied with the decision not by knocking an actual storey off the building plans, but by reducing the height of the plan by what they argued was the equivalent of the full storey.

As Aurora's Official Plan currently stands, the document speaks only to storeys but does not specify what constitutes a storey in metres or feet.

This could be an issue addressed in the new Official Plan, but to approve this amendment would pre-empt the study, argued Councillor MacEachern.

"(The developers have) taken off 11 feet from the building but it is still a seven-storey building," she said. "That might be appropriate once we get the results of the study and it might be that the recommendations from the consultation are (for) seven storeys for that stretch of road.

"There is a lot of discussion going on that hasn't come to this table and it is in the eleventh hour. I believe in a short time we will be getting the recommendations, and it seems premature to make a decision that doesn't comply with the existing town policies.

"If it complied with the existing town policies it wouldn't be an issue. However, it doesn't comply with existing town policies so for us to make a decision we're almost pre-empting the conclusion of the study."

Aurora now has a committee in place working on behalf of the Town and Community. A decision would "circumvent the process", she added.

Councillor Gallo said he had been struggling with the same issue. For him, the lack of clarity surrounding the height of the proposed building was the "crux" of the issue. Making a decision on the building when the study results are

imminent would be "irresponsible", he added.

"We've been at this since 1996 and I'm not sure what three, four, five, six more months is going to do," he said. "I'm willing to wait. I'm willing to let a future council make that decision if that is the case and I think at that point they would have all the information in front of them and it may very well be exactly what we have before us right now.

"What is the rush to push this along before we get a very significant study completed?"

Councillor Buck, however, said she was "at a loss" at the suggestion that councillors would be doing anything "in haste".

"A quick calculation on the number of councils who have dealt with this development proposal or this piece of property is five; from 1996 on there have been five councils. If we don't (make a decision), it will be six," she said.

"The last council dealt with it and gave approval in principle. It came back to this council in 2007 and this council did not give approval in principle. (They told them to come back at a GC) and that is exactly what has happened.

"We spent two hours last week with the architect and the design here to answer every conceivable question that any councillor might have and he took the time and we did not vote until every question had been asked."

She urged councillors to remember "that property owners have rights as long as it does not interfere with their neighbour's property."

"(With a) refusal of an application of an official plan of amendment, a municipality is bound to

respond within a certain period of time with a decision of yes or no," she continued. "Provincial legislation requires us to do that within a time limit. We have avoided doing that by referring it back to a general committee meeting. Now we're talking about deferring again, not making a decision."

The developers did everything that was asked of them; therefore the council should approve the application for the official plan amendment, argued Councillor Alison Collins-Mrakas.

"(On) February 25, the applicants were asked to do essentially two things - bring it back to a future GC and to reduce the height of the building," she said. "The applicants have brought it forward to a future GC which was last week and they reduced the height of the building by 12 feet. Whether that constitutes a storey or not is the side fact.

"If the application going forward was predicated on the completion of the Aurora Promenade Study then frankly it should have said so in the motion."

With the news that the entire process for the plan might not be completed until at least September, Councillor Collins-Mrakas said the Town just could not "hold up the decision" for five months.

The proposed development at Yonge and Centre Streets would be an "enormous" benefit to the Town, said both Councillors Bob McRoberts and Buck, arguing that it would indeed revitalize the downtown core and the Town as a whole.

In particular, Councillor Buck noted a similar development on Yonge Street in Richmond Hill that replaced an "awful, nefarious dump of a

hotel." Units in this building are selling for upwards of \$500,000 apiece, she said.

If the prices for the proposed 76 units at Yonge and Centre commanded the same ballpark price it would bring in \$39 million in tax assessment, she said.

Maintaining Aurora's "small town feel" is important to residents, countered Mayor Morris.

"(People) relish the fact that we are a little different," she said. "In fact, we are distinctly different as you start to leave Toronto and come up to Aurora.

"If you were to go to the theory that it is okay if you're getting tax dollars for every unit that you add, 'Well let's just put seven or eight or nine or ten storeys all along Aurora and we'll have lots of tax dollars coming in', that's not a plan. That (says) 'We're open and we'll take whatever.' I don't believe any one at this table ever meant to say that.

"Not everyone gets what they want but I hope at the end of the day the community gets the right plan. If this was a five storey it would get hands up, let's go. If were a 5/6 then it would start getting difficult, but we'd listen to it. We'd work with it."

At the end of the night, councillors approved the official plan amendment application - with an additional environmental amendment - 6-3 with Mayor Morris and Councillors Gaertner, and MacEachern opposed.

The next meeting related to the review is scheduled for June 4.

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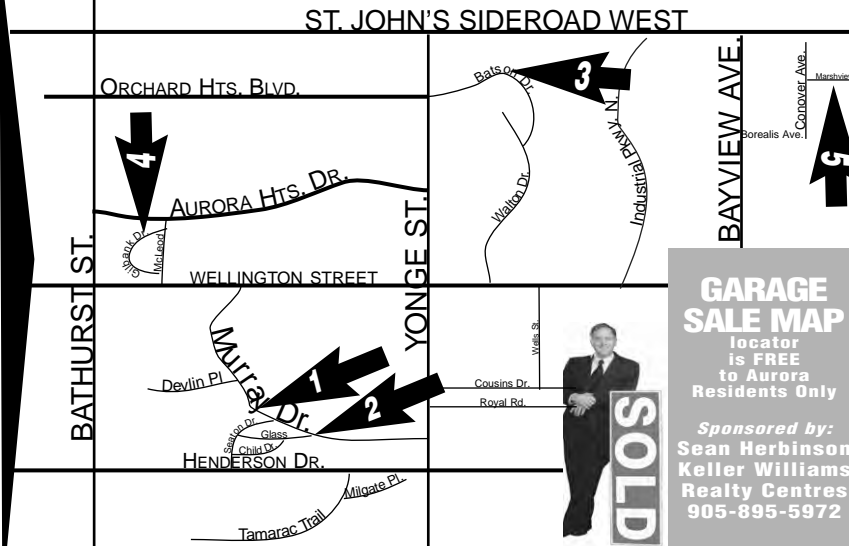
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Senior Scape



By BRIAN WARBURTON

Seniors ready for street event

The Aurora Street Festival is all set to go Sunday, June 6th, between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m., and if you have never visited this street event be advised, it is huge with stalls on either side of Yonge Street and the slowly moving crowd of visitors wending their way slowly through the centre of historic Aurora.

The Street Festival covers a long stretch of Yonge with a reported 600 stalls standing where yesterday lay only sidewalks and roadway.

Probably it is beyond the capacity of any average person to walk from end to end and back, without commenting on the return journey about the number of interesting stalls missed on the first trip.

Remarkable by any standard is a visit to this incredibly varied street festival, which will surely rank among the more stimulating shopping expeditions taken by any of us.

Small business vendors set up their stalls and

canopies and wares to create a large scale weekend street event.

They ply their business diligently and at the end of the business day take down and remove all that is their responsibility, as efficiently as they set up. Some of them travel long distances to become a part of this widely admired street extravaganza.

The enormous crowds who visit this festival annually enjoy a stall gazing expedition, which has a fascination second to none, because no other event can compare with this street festival that we have in Aurora.

The Aurora Seniors Association (ASA) will be represented on the street with two stalls offering crafts from the Wood Shop, the Knotty Knitters, the Sew much Fun Group, and Jewellery and a chess player.

The ASA seniors will be located on the west side of Yonge near Caruso & Company's Flower Shop, just south of Wellington St.

A Karaoke and Pub Night is scheduled for Friday, June 11 between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. at the centre.

This is organized playtime with the seniors, and light-hearted fun and excitement is on the menu for the whole evening. Singing and dancing will be prominent plus trivia contests will be offered with an abundance of prizes that must be won.

Karaoke is a proven crowd entertainer.

Tickets are available at the front desk at \$10 each, which includes refreshments. A wine and beer cash bar will be available.

This is a busy week in the ASA with the AGM on June 2nd.

New directors will be announced and introduced.

After that has been accomplished the directors will retire briefly into caucus and from their group, they will elect the ASA company officers for the coming year. Changes must be in effect because of several new directors on the board.

Meanwhile, the Seniors' Centre has its regular schedule of activities and programs, which keep the heart of the centre beating.

Card games must be among the most popular pastimes among the seniors and it seems that Bridge, Canasta and Euchre and other card games are always in progress.

Bingo is another favourite that has survived good times and bad, and will probably continue to bring pleasure to seniors for generations to come.

The ASA is busy enough now that the parking lot is often full, and often every room is occupied with something going on.

In the next few years, the baby boomers are expected to make their appearance, and when that materializes, major change will become apparent, and a realistic reappraisal of all space and the manner in which it is utilized will require serious attention.

Author returns to community

An author returns to Aurora.

Richard Atkinson, author of the book "Don't Just Retire - Live it, Love it", will be the guest speaker at the June 9 monthly meeting of the Aurora Probus Club.

The meeting will be held at the Royal Canadian Legion hall on Industrial Parkway North beginning at 10 a.m. Mr. Atkinson is expected to address the group from 11 a.m. until noon.

The book and the author have been featured on radio, television and in newspapers across the country. The book is on CARP's (Canadian Association for Retired People) recommended

reading list and is available in most bookstores.

Recently, the author was featured at Toronto's Word on the Street festival. He writes a monthly column and is a contributing writer to various publications.

As a retirement specialist, he conducts pre-retirement planning workshops and one-on-one retirement coaching for those who want to make the most of their life after work.

He and his wife, Christine, live in Toronto.

For further information, contact Bob Staley at 905-727-5017.

Atkinson is no stranger to Aurora. He was a recent guest speaker at a Rotary Club of Aurora meeting.

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