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THE AURORED

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 20 No. 40 905-727-3300 *TheAuroran.com* **FREE** Week of July 23, 2020

Tristan Coolman, President of Pflag York Region, is pictured Monday at Yonge and Wellington walking over the zebra crossing which will soon be replaced by a Rainbow Crosswalk following a decision made by Council last week. Mr. Coolman says this visible display of support for the LGBTQ2S community could be a life-saver.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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Rainbow Crosswalk could be “life-saving” for LGBTQ2S Community: Pflag

Yonge and Wellington crosswalk will be York Region first

By Brock Weir

A rainbow is a symbol of hope for many around the world, but it can also be an important and life-saving signpost for the LGBTQ2S community.

These were the words shared with Council last week by Tristan Coolman, President of Pflag York Region, as local

lawmakers signed off on the installation of York Region's first Rainbow Crosswalk at Yonge and Wellington Streets following a motion from Mayor Tom Mrakas.

As a leader within York Region's LGBTQ2S community, Mr. Coolman sees the struggle and fear some members of the community face every day. A very visible sign of support, such as the one approved by Council last Tuesday, will go a long way towards fostering a feeling of openness and respect, he said.

“For LGBTQ2 people, their lived experiences often involve repressing their

true authentic self out of fear of being disowned, fear of being attacked, amongst other concerns,” Mr. Coolman told Council. “Aurora isn't unique to these challenges as every hamlet, town and city worldwide faces similar obstacles. We, unfortunately, still live in a world and a community that is not always affirming and respectful of these lived experiences.

“A rainbow crosswalk serves as a visible sign of support from our elected officials for the LGBTQ people. It is a sign to anyone who feels different to, quite frankly, educate

Continued on page 14

FUTURE SPORTS STARS – Aurora's Students Athletes of the Year are normally honoured for their prowess on the sports field at Town Hall each year, but this year the honours were done by Sport Aurora (including Aurora Sports Hall of Fame honouree Alan Dean above) door-to-door. Pictured here are recipients Jidechukwu and Tobechukwu Otoh with their certificates of recognition. For more, see Page 11.

Contributed photo

York Region enters Stage 3 Friday

By Brock Weir

Nearly all businesses and public spaces in York Region will get the green light to re-open as of 12.01 a.m. this Friday.

On Monday, Premier Doug Ford, accompanied by Deputy Premier – and Newmarket-Aurora MPP – Christine Elliott and Finance Minister Rod Phillips announced York Region was set to join most of Ontario in the next phase of re-opening on July 24.

As part of the next phase, indoor gathering limits will increase to a

Continued on page 8

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Aurora establishes Anti-Racism, Anti-Black Racism task force to foster “systemic change”

By Brock Weir

This past spring, more than 1,000 residents from across York Region filled Town Park as part of a Solidarity Walk against anti-Black racism around the world. Now, the Town is set to establish a new task force to address the problem at a local level.

Last week, Council unanimously approved a motion brought forward by Mayor Tom Mrakas and Councillor Harold Kim to establish an Anti-Black Racism and Anti-Racism Task Force to take “meaningful action” and help effect “long-term systemic change.”

In their motion, they said the move builds upon Aurora’s endorsement of York Region’s Diversity and Inclusion Charter and the Town’s commitment to “building a more inclusive society by ‘working to identify, address and prevent systemic racism in municipal policy, programs and services.’”

The purpose of the task force, they expanded, is to “develop strategies” to eliminate racism in the community and within “the Municipal Corporation” while working with “Black community groups within Aurora and York Region to identify and develop priorities” and “opportunities to increase Black community engagement and foster an

increased public awareness of anti-Black racism.”

“Last summer, there was another motion I put forward in terms of having staff investigate diversity in Aurora and the Town of Aurora with respect to employment and I believe that this is coming to us sometime in the fall,” said Councillor Kim, who moved the motion alongside Councillor Sandra Humfries. “A lot of things have happened [since then]. It seems like every year there is some really, really bad incident that happens, whether it be in the States or in Canada – and lately the George Floyd incident. With that, the Mayor and I were talking about what we could do as a community and as a Town to not just merely have a discussion, but take action.

“I know we have had other actions before, but we want to take action – something solid and something measurable, hence the motion.”

Councillor Humfries said she was “really proud” of the motion and, moving forward, it was a mark of leadership.

“We’re actually taking action,” she said. “We’re not just stamping our approval on it...we’re actually doing something.”

Support was also expressed by Councillors Wendy Gaertner and



More than a thousand people marched up Yonge Street from Henderson Drive bound for Town Park this past spring in a Solidarity Walk in the spirit of the Black Lives Matter movement. Just over a month later, Council has laid the groundwork for a new task force to combat racism in the community.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Michael Thompson, with the latter stating he wanted to make sure people with lived experience have a place on the committee, which is set to be comprised of two Council members and seven members of the community.

“In the past, sometimes when we have had...more of a focused or specialized committee, we have gone out to the public and we have put some wording into the advertisements when we are seeking citizen members looking for specific experiences, skills or background that could complement or perhaps bring some knowledge and experience to the issues,” said Councillor Thompson. “The way it reads, it is saying we’re going to follow our standard process [but] will there be an attempt to put some language into those advertisements and try to encourage and seek out people who could add to this community with their knowledge, experience or background?”

Councillor Kim replied that

you want people with that “lived experience” well-represented on the committee to “give us first-hand knowledge of their experience and their testimony.”

“Only then can we have these types of solutions we need to alleviate some of the pain in our society,” said Councillor Kim. “Certainly, we do need people with diverse views.”

Mayor Mrakas added he would also like to look at these issues with a wider scope.

“I know we’re striving to take action on a lot of these issues that are coming to the forefront,” he said. “I commend you and this Council for what we’re doing. I will be talking to Mayor Taylor because I know that Newmarket is looking to do something similar from a task force perspective...and I want to have a conversation with him possibly seeking if there is a way we can collaborate [as] I know this issue doesn’t end at our borders.”

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Aurora High grads recognized as “Leaders of Tomorrow”



This year’s recipients of the John West Memorial “Leaders of Tomorrow” Scholarship are Amanda Bishop (left) and Kiana Mirshahi, both recent graduates of Aurora High School.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

Graduation celebrations might be muted this year, but there was a celebratory air last week as two recent graduates of Aurora High School were recognized by the Town with the John West Memorial “Leaders of Tomorrow” Scholarship.

This year’s recipients, Amanda Bishop and Kiana Mirshahi, both of Aurora High School, were recognized for their volunteerism and leadership not only within the walls of AHS but in the wider Aurora community as well.

The John West “Leaders of Tomorrow” Scholarship was established through a financial bequest to the Town from the late mayor John West to recognize students going on to post-secondary education who have demonstrated clear leadership abilities while in high school.

“Kiana recently graduated from Aurora High School, finishing her secondary requirements early,” said Julie Stephenson, Youth Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, who formally presented the recipients with their scholarships. “Throughout high school, she consistently took part or led opportunities that focused on youth mental and emotional wellbeing.

“Her work and passion have led to numerous volunteer opportunities for others and have provided a clear path for improving life for those in the Aurora community – [and her work is] culminating in over 1,000 community service hours. Among her impressive contributions include partnering with her school’s administration and York Region Public Health on the Be Well to Do Well campaign, helping to lead her school’s Equity Club, and taking on a junior student leader role in her place of worship in the Ismaili Muslim community.”

In addition to these roles, Kiana has also been an integral member of the Town’s Youth Engagement

Committee for the past three years, noted Ms. Stephenson, and has recently partnered with other youth to launch [a] free peer support tool for teens to address wellbeing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Kiana is someone who has used her own personal obstacles and experiences to act as a proud mental health advocate and have helped her pay it forward. Her dedication to giving back and positively impacting others in the community and her extensive contributions have made Aurora a better place for residents to enjoy.”

This fall, Kiana will be attending McMaster University to start her studies in their integrated Business & Humanities program. She tells The Auroran she has “always wanted to make a difference in the world.”

“From a young age, it has been my passion to actually help people in developing countries,” she says. “Although it is hard to do that right now, I think it is best to make a difference where you can. There are still so many injustices and inequalities happening here in our community I think we really need to focus and hone in on and look at.”

Amanda Bishop, the second honouree, is looking forward to beginning a degree in Software Engineering at the University of Waterloo this September. Over the past few years, Amanda has demonstrated her passion for technology in numerous ways, including spearheading local initiatives to help women and girls break into careers in coding.

“Amanda has become a positive presence in our community through her continued activism in making STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) accessible for all and advocating for strong representation for girls and women in this field,” said Ms. Stephenson. “After working with her sister to create Why Code Aurora, a one-night panel of women in technology... developed a series of free coding camps and programs for

girls. More recently, Amanda founded the First Robotics Canada FTC team known as the Aurabots at Aurora High School. The group advocates for all students to gain real life experience in engineering and programming design and business. Amanda had a personal goal of accessibility for the team, which she accomplished by securing external sponsorship, raising almost \$50,000 over two years. This generous endeavour allowed other students to join the robotics team without any membership or equipment fees.”


Amanda was also recognized for her work on various organizations within Aurora High and the greater community, including toiletry drives and a Tulips for Autism initiative, which raised funds and awareness for Kerry’s Place Autism Services, as well as serving as a youth judge for the past two years at the Town’s annual Youth

Innovation Fair.

“Her contributions to the community have created a positive legacy for students to carry on,” said Ms. Stephenson. “Her hard work and dedication to accessibility in STEM has created an environment where students are encouraged to engage and assist others.”

Says Amanda: “The reason I wanted to give back with the initiatives I run is some of them are things I guess I wish I had when I was younger and it made me a little bit sad they didn’t exist, so I thought I might as well do them so young girls can have that opportunity to get involved in STEM.

“For some of the other initiatives, like Tulips for Autism or my toiletries drive, that is where I have seen a need in our community and I really wanted to make an event so, that way, we could fill the need.”



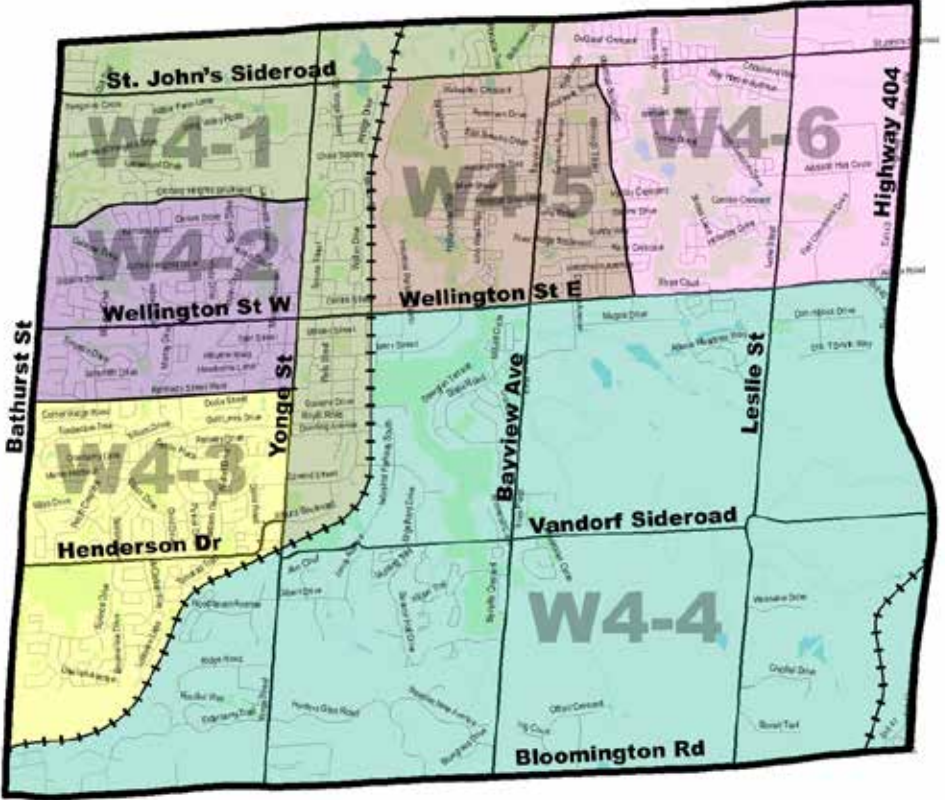
TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF PASSING

Notice of the Passing of a By-Law to establish ward boundaries for the Town of Aurora

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Aurora passed By-law 6271-20 on the 14th day of July, 2020 pursuant to Section 222 (1) of the Municipal Act, S.O. 2001, c.25

AND TAKE NOTICE that By-law 6271-20 provides for the division of Aurora into six (6) wards to be in place for the 2022 Municipal Election, as follows:




AND TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to Subsection 222(4) of the Municipal Act, 2001, any person or agency may within 45 days of the passing of the by-law submit an appeal to the Local Planning Appeals Tribunal with respect to the establishment of wards pursuant to Section 222 (1) Municipal Act, 2001.

An appeal must be filed with the Municipal Clerk of the Corporation of the Town of Aurora at the address below, not later than the **28th day of August, 2020**, setting out the objections to the by-law and the reasons in support of the objections.

This notice of appeal must be accompanied by a certified cheque or money order in the amount of \$300.00 made payable to the Minister of Finance.

Additional information regarding By-law 6271-20 may be obtained from Michael de Rond, Municipal Clerk, mderond@aurora.ca, (905) 726-4771, or from the Town of Aurora website www.aurora.ca.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 23rd day of July, 2020.



Michael de Rond, Town Clerk
Town of Aurora

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MP’s column was “campaign-style rant”

(Re: MP’s Perspective, July 16)

I enjoy reading The Auroran and commend the entire Auroran team for great work and sharing local Aurora news and information.

That said, I was very disappointed in the MP’s Report by Leona Alleslev (Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill) printed in the July 16, 2020 edition.

I plan to share this “MP’s Report” with my teenage daughter who is completing an online “Civics” course over the summer to demonstrate the party-driven and nasty side of our democratic system in Canada.

This “Report” is just cheap campaign style political ranting.

Instead of an informed update on the actions of our Federal Government, especially about actions to mitigate COVID impacts, or a report on how this MP is representing the interests of her constituents and taxpayers, we get a highly critical politically motivated and one-sided PC stamped campaign diatribe infused with a personal rant from a disenchanted ex-Liberal.

The MP does ask a few valid questions that many are asking about the current Liberal Government and the Prime Minister’s recent actions, but it would have been nice for the “MP’s Report” to include some actual useful information as well as an update on what is happening at the Federal level from this local MP.

Dave McLaughlin
Aurora

Taxpayers need to know impact of Library Square: Reader

It is imperative before Aurora makes a commitment to any construction on the Library Square project that Council fulfills its fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers of this town.

As I understand it there are two funding possibilities. The first involves receiving a \$31M grant. In the second, we do not receive the grant at all or receive only partial funds. This will require using money gained from selling Aurora Hydro. It is crucial that we know how each of these will affect our taxes. Has Council done an updated Business Plan that takes into account the financial uncertainty caused by COVID-19?

It is my understanding that the answer to that is no. Would it not be prudent to conduct a financial analysis of the best- and worst- case outcomes to determine the possible tax implications?

I wonder what will happen if Aurora does not receive the full grant and the decision is made to proceed with this controversial project anyway?

The last Financial Report on the Square says that in fact we will need to spend the Hydro money. This seems at odds with the fact that the report also says we are using the same money to lower our taxes. Parallel universes?

Just what is this project, which has a very real chance of becoming a financial boondoggle, going to really cost us?

It’s time for an honest accounting. We need transparency and we need it now.

J. Pollard-Wilson
Aurora

COVID should force Library Square plans back to “drawing board”

The Town of Aurora Special Meeting of Council Agenda and Special Council Report, Tuesday, December 17, 2019

Continued on page 17

Machell’s Corners



So much for the summer exodus



BROCK’S BANTER

Brock Weir

A few days ago, I was asked by a colleague when I planned to take my summer vacation.

I was slightly taken aback by the question. After all, there were still a few months to think about that. Or, so I thought.

With the present reality disrupting so many parts of our collective routines, it didn’t really dawn on me until that moment that my traditional holiday time was just a few weeks away.

Time has marched on, but without those regular place markers, sometimes it seems like it has not only marched on, but right on by.

Traditionally, this year’s holiday time is spent in upstate New York for a comedy festival that has been part of my family’s vacation routine for the better part of two decades. With borders closed through much of August – not to mention the pesky detail that the festival itself has been cancelled for obvious reasons – that is not an option.

Other options, however, seem pretty limited. Unnecessary travel, at present, doesn’t have the appeal it once did and staycations are now looking like the order of the day – and I suspect this is the case for many of you as well.

It goes without saying that this is an unusual year, but perhaps the present reality will put to bed, once and for all, the outdated myth that there is a virtual mass exodus out of this community once the warmer weather arrives.

Granted, we’re in unusual circumstances right now, but the community is changing and having the luxury of clocking off from Aurora for a month or two at a lakeside cottage is, in my observation, becoming more of an exception rather than the rule.

But, in some quarters, the idea still persists that as soon as Canada Day rolls around, the roads out of Aurora are instantly flooded, and, after a few days, the only thing you can see making its way through the Yonge and Wellington intersection is a sagebrush.

Yet, these patterns have become entrenched in the decision-making process, the idea that any big decisions with any weight on the future of our community should be put on the backburner.

The reasons for doing so were myriad, but the typical train of thought was people were simply not around to provide any kind of meaningful input on the issues that matter to them and, if they were, they were not as engaged as they would otherwise be in, say, the fall or the winter.

I’ve never personally subscribed to this line of thinking and I am glad to see, at least in my observation, it is somewhat falling by the wayside.

It could be argued the pandemic has imbued the decision-making process with a new sense of urgency, or maybe others have reconfigured their old notions of time, but things seem to be moving full speed ahead.

Last week, for instance, Council formally approved a bylaw that will overhaul the Town’s electoral system into a six-ward model with little more fanfare than a recorded vote to allow elected officials to preserve their positions for posterity.

While opponents of the plan agreed amongst themselves in the weeks leading up to that moment that more public consultation was warranted before a final decision was made, I don’t believe any opposition was expressed on the final decision – or, at least the ratification – being made in the height of summer.

Nor was there any move by members of Council to shove the matter of the proposed Rainbow Crosswalk at Yonge and Wellington onto the backburner until September on the premise that stakeholders weren’t available to weigh in on the matter.

Rather, virtual delegations representing the pros and cons of the proposal, were linked into the meeting via video link and the final – and welcome – decision was made.

The pandemic, due to sheer necessity,

has made accommodations that were once dismissed out of hand – including virtual meetings and virtual engagement – part of our new and accepted routine and, as such, business is continuing in a way that now reflects reality.

Perhaps it is time for Council to re-think its routine of only having one Council cycle in July and August on the premise of a summer slowdown, because that slowdown simply isn’t happening – and probably hasn’t happened for quite some time.

Take, for instance, the present debate that is swirling around the future of the planned Library Square development. If a quick flip through this paper in recent weeks is any indication, residents are highly engaged on this issue – and on all sides.

They are concerned about the economic implications of the development, and rightly so, and what this will mean to the average taxpayer.

Although there are contingency plans in place to fund the project to completion, much of the pitch involved more than \$30 million in grant funding from the upper levels of government.

Given economic uncertainties on the Federal, Provincial and Municipal levels, and the fact that any announcement regarding the success, or lack thereof, of the Town’s applications for money to get the job done is still pending, maybe it is time for another Council meeting for local lawmakers to consider these well-expressed opinions out in the open and see if any components of the extensive project are worth re-considering.

If anything, a reaffirmation of Council members’ support for the project amid this global period of economic uncertainty, will re-engage the community on what I still personally believe is a bold vision for the community and one which I think will bring to Aurora longer-term economic rewards.

It’s summertime and, as luck would have it, engagement is high. It is an opportunity and it shouldn’t be wasted.

THE AURORAN

Aurora’s Community Newspaper

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Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

International Tiger Day
(July 29, 2020)

International Tiger Day was established in 2010 to raise awareness about tiger conservation due to declining wild tiger populations. Some of the reasons behind declining populations include poaching, illegal trade, habitat loss and climate change. While Aurora isn't home to wild tigers, it is the proud hometown to the Aurora Tigers Junior A Hockey Club! The program pictured here is from the 1962-63 season when the Aurora Tigers played in the old Aurora Memorial Arena on Yonge Street – this was before the Aurora Community Centre was built in the late 1960s. To learn more about how you can support International Tiger Day, visit bit.ly/2CcE1TR.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

I was reading an opinion piece in the Globe and Mail about why Canada needs to accelerate its digital maturity. It was written from the perspective of how COVID-19 has exposed an economic divide from a worker and a business perspective. How will workers who do not have jobs to return to get the training they need to acquire new skills? How will businesses be able to adapt to a culture of remote work?

The digital divide has shown its cracks as workers who have lost their jobs scrambled for online access to government supports, as students and teachers who are trying to complete the school year online lack the personal technology and the bandwidth to connect and as residents in nursing homes are disconnected from family and friends.

I have seen through personal experience how technology can broaden the lives of the disabled and elderly by connecting isolated people to a world beyond their physical reach, making their view global in scope. And now, COVID-19 has taught so many of us the importance of technology in navigating our world.

Libraries are connectors, and in a post-pandemic world, the need for us to support our communities will never be more real. Once we enter the “new normal” phase, libraries will play an even greater role in supporting people looking for jobs and re-skilling. We will need to enhance

programs and partnerships that will not only get people back to work, but will help build new skills that will be required as we shape a new economy.

We will be looking at new programs to develop technological skills for people of all ages and abilities. Since we've been closed, many seniors have not been able to enjoy reading because they don't know how to download eBooks. Libraries need to do more to ensure no one is left behind.

Partnerships are how you get the big ticket items done. Broadband is expensive and even in Aurora, many people do not have access to high speed internet. The gap between the haves and have nots has only been highlighted during this crisis. I'd love to see libraries, educational institutions and government working together to make high speed broadband accessible and affordable to all our residents.

Technology gives you the power to transform your world in so many ways – to bridge gaps and create a more equitable society. Library Land has a long history of reinventing ourselves to respond to the needs of our communities. I'm looking forward to the next step in our evolution.

Reccia Mandelcorn is the Manager, Community Collaboration at Aurora Public Library. The opinions expressed in this column reflect her personal thoughts about the engagement of community with their public library.

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Is York Region ready to move
into Stage 3 of Ontario's
re-opening plan?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE July 21, 2020	YES 50%	NO 38%	UNSURE 12%
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Summer is finally here, along with the beautiful weather we've been craving for so many months. As the temperatures soar, we are likely spending more time outdoors, more time socializing, and less time isolating in our homes.

Indeed, summer brings with it an easier, more carefree lifestyle that is synonymous with the season. Which means we need to stay smart. We are in a much better place today than we were a few short months ago, so we must continue to practice what our health experts advise and keep up with the precautions that have so far served us well.

Recently, our government presented Canadians with a fiscal snapshot. For many, the debt we have incurred fighting this pandemic might seem staggering. I ran on a campaign of fiscal responsibility, yet still believe the measures we took to ensure our well being were, and continue to be, the right decisions.

COVID-19 has been the greatest challenge many of us have ever faced. I have seen firsthand its dramatic impact on lives, communities and businesses, and am proud of how quickly and effectively we have responded. Measures to flatten the curve in Canada are working, and efforts are underway across the country to safely and gradually reopen the economy.



MP'S REPORT

Tony Van Bynen, MP
Newmarket - Aurora

I am heartened by how we have invested in Canadians to ensure that our country remains strong, healthy, and poised for recovery. And I will be with you, doing my part, to build an even better, more inclusive Canada as we overcome these challenges.

As we continue to safely restart the economy, many Canadian businesses are continuing to face significant challenges and uncertainty. That's why our government is proposing changes to the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) that would provide broader and better targeted support so that workers can return to their jobs quickly as the economy recovers.

To date, the CEWS has supported roughly 3 million Canadian workers to stay on payroll, and with these changes even more Canadians will benefit. These changes would extend the subsidy until December 19, 2020,

with details for a redesigned program until November 21, 2020. The changes would ensure that all eligible employers facing a revenue loss can qualify and introduce a top-up subsidy to those who have been the hardest hit by the pandemic.

These important changes, if passed, would help employers re-hire workers quickly while ensuring that those currently using the program can continue to receive support, even as they recover.

Speaking of supporting their community during this crisis, I would like to give a big shout out to the Aurora Chamber of Commerce (ACOC). Their efforts began with a survey to the business community, and personal calls to more than 300 businesses to determine their needs.

The ACOC was the first York Region Chamber to launch a Shop Local website – ShopFromHomeAurora.ca – and they developed the Shop Local marketing plan, which included the launch of the ExploreAurora.ca website.

In addition, they have hosted virtual networking breakfasts, “After 5” socials, and other regularly scheduled events online.

The Aurora Chamber team are definitely community champions.

Until next time, enjoy the summer – and stay safe!

Aurora Quiz - Part 8

It's once again time to find out how well you know the Town in which you live with Inside Aurora's eighth Aurora Quiz.

As usual, the questions are a bit challenging, but to make it easier, all of them provide a 50% chance of being correct.

- How many printed titles (books) reside in the Aurora Public Library – more or less than 100,000?
- True or false; a Citizen of the Year has been recognized in Town for the past 50 years?
- In 2019 which tree species was the most commonly planted on the boulevards and in parks in Town: Autumn Blaze Maple or Accolade Elm?
- Trumpeter swans are often seen in Town, thanks to the work of resident Harry Lumsden, who helped re-establish this species in Ontario after it was hunted into extinction in the 1800s. Can trumpeter swans also be seen as one of animals that fill in the spaces on the achievements mural at Yonge and Wellington?
- There are dozens of municipalities called Aurora worldwide. At around 65,000 residents, is ours the largest by population?
- On the east side of Yonge near Industrial Parkway South is a protected historical structure made of limestone, several blocks tall. What is it: the remains



INSIDE AURORA

Scott Johnston

of a bridge abutment for the railway that used to run along Yonge Street, or a cairn commemorating the original settlers in Aurora?

7. True or false; Under normal (ie: non-COVID) circumstances, Canine Commons, the leash-free dog park, is accessible 24 hours a day?

8. Aurora's first Council, which convened in 1863, consisted entirely of men. How long did it take the Town to elect a female Council member; more or less than 75 years?

9. True or false: when head of track reached Aurora in 1853, the first train to arrive here was given the name “Aurora”?

10. Aurora once had both its own hydro utility and TV station. Which one survived the longest before being taken over; Aurora Hydro or Aurora Cable?

11. True or false; in 1932, mammoth bones were discovered by a farmer on

his property northeast of what is now Wellington and Bayview.

12. Aurora Storm is associated with which sport: badminton or volleyball?

13. True or false, Charles Doan, the Town's first postmaster and the person credited with naming Aurora, was once imprisoned?

14. According to The Aurora Chamber of Commerce's business directory, does Aurora have more dental offices or legal firms?

15. Frederick Tilston was: a Victoria Cross recipient who later lived in Aurora, or the founder of St Andrew's College?

16. Including just the ones that the Town maintains, are there more baseball diamonds or outdoor tennis courts in Aurora?

17. “Choice Cut-up” was the name of a former Aurora: stand-up comedy venue, or a chicken processing facility?

18. True or false: the oldest items from this area in the collection of the Aurora Museum are farm implements thought to date from the late 1700s?

19. Of Aurora's almost 500 roads, which letter do the most street names start with, “C” or “M”?

20. Which is older: Aurora's Masonic Lodge, or the country of Canada?

Feel free to e-mail Scott at:
machellscorners@gmail.com

Continued on page 15

One Stage virtual gala is a chance for community to support local theatre

By Brock Weir

There’s nothing quite like taking in a live performance seated in front of a stage where everything is unfolding before your very eyes.

This has been a driving philosophy of Theatre Aurora for more than 60 years, but it is one that has been forced onto the backburner due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

But this Friday, July 25, at 7 p.m., Theatre Aurora (TA) and Marquee Theatrical Productions are joining forces to bring the next best thing to audiences here in Aurora and around the world with the One Stage Live virtual arts fundraiser.

A joint initiative of the two local theatre companies, it is akin to an online telethon where TA and Marquee performers will showcase their skills in live and pre-recorded segments while viewers have a chance to contribute to the cause.



Contributed photo

One Stage streams live this Friday.

“A lot of times, I think people think community theatres are in competition with each other and this is one of those opportunities to show that, no, you can come together in a time of crisis – and even out of a time of crisis – to work together and create something really special and try something new,” says Theatre Aurora president Jason Silzer.

TA is bringing a lot of technical expertise to the table for One Stage Live.

The gala will be streaming live from their Henderson Drive lobby with their tech folks making sure things run as seamlessly as possible.

Everything, however, is being done in sponsorship as both theatrical companies have experienced similar challenges as a result of the pandemic.

“The biggest impact is we have had to close our doors to the public,” says Mr. Silzer. “We are following the health guidelines in terms of the numbers of people who can be within the building at a given time with mask-wearing and social distancing, but what the pandemic and the closure of performance space has done [has left us] with the question of how do you provide a theatrical experience when you don’t have a physical theatre, or when you’re not allowed to gather as a physical theatre?”

There were some short-term answers, including delivering youth theatre and camp programs online, he says, but the through-a-screen experience can only take theatre-lovers so far.

“There is an opportunity to really think outside the box and figure out how to continue our mandates in a very different set of circumstances,” says

Mr. Silzer. “We just soft-launched our own project, a production that has been designed for streaming called our One Voice project. You can go online and get a ‘ticket’ and that unlocks your ability to see the performance – and there are a limited number of tickets available.

“But, I think what we have discovered is you can’t do a straight translation [of a production online]. Online is a different medium from in-person. Just putting a camera in front of a performance and putting it online saying ‘you’re getting live theatre’ is a lie. They are different mediums and what we have done is find out what works and what doesn’t. I think we’re still in a learning process. We don’t have all the answers, but I am excited by the fact we’re still open to trying new things and very excited we’re learning from them, and I am very hopeful our patron base will come along with us for the ride.”

The ride will continue this week with the virtual gala, which will stream at onestagelive.com and marqueetp.com.

“This is a fantastic way to support your local community,” says Mr. Silzer. “I think it is a chance to see the talent that is here within the Town of Aurora. It is a great opportunity to have a fun evening with your family. It’s a chance to sort of discover and see what these groups have to offer and, in the comfort of your own home, put us on, be entertained, but also find out about the history of the groups, how the current circumstances are impacting us and how you can build relationships with us if you haven’t already.”

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York University continues Scholar's Hub program "@Home"



York University Associate Professor Dr. Ruth Koleszar-Green helped kick off the Scholar's Hub, a partnership between the University and the Aurora Public Library last fall. Now, the Scholar's Hub is resuming online, rebranded as Scholar's Hub @Home.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

By Brock Weir

The definition of "democracy" – along with rights and freedoms in a rapidly changing world – have recently been hot-button issues in this uncertain time.

In fact, they were issues due to be tackled at the Aurora Public Library (APL) this past April as the Library and York University planned to host the second lecture in their Scholar's Hub partnership launched last fall.

Plans to host a York University professor on the topic of democracy had to be pushed to the backburner as APL was forced to close its doors in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the partnership is moving forward in a new way – virtually – in Scholars' Hub @ Home.

Now a series of webinars, York's partnership with APL was renewed this Wednesday, July 22, with Exploring the Summer Skies, a talk on astronomy and developments in space research carried out by the university, with future talks – free for everyone, regardless of educational background – resuming on a bi-weekly basis.

"The entire world changed," says Kairi Williams, Associate Director of Alumni Events for York University. "The challenge then became...how do we still fulfil the organization's mandate under these new circumstances with the pandemic? That was the question many of us were trying to answer and we're also trying to answer at York. It really came down to moving, transitioning this in-person experience to a virtual experience. The difference is we actually found a way to do this where it almost didn't matter where you were in the world, you could be a part of this experience."

York subsequently pre-recorded two lectures for Scholars' Hub @ Home, each of which were well-received, as was a third lecture that was livestreamed,

and going live is the order of the day moving forward.

"We have the same premise, which is to deliver lectures from academics from York related to topics that are current, relevant and now," says Ms. Williams.

From APL's perspective, they were looking for ways to continue their partnership with York in this "new normal" and they were eager to jump on board with this new virtual format.

"This is an opportunity to be curious and engaged," says Reccia Mandelcorn, APL's Manager of Community Collaboration. "It is so important to keep alert with the things that are going on in the world, especially when many of us are not being a part of that world. I love the opportunity that every two weeks, two o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon, people will be able to tune in and listen to a short lecture on something they may have always been interested in or didn't even know they were interested in. I look at this as not a substitution but a whole different experience."

As they began looking at transitioning to a virtual world, York was trying to make sense not only of the pandemic itself but how that reality would inform the future. They wanted to look at how the "new normal" was going to impact how people interact, as well as economic and societal impacts. They explored how COVID-19 was impacting mothers, the homeless, and even the "politics of vaccines" and how that will shape the future.

Incidents at home and abroad, including the killing of George Floyd, sparked a discussion on anti-Black racism as well as the Black Lives Matter movement.

"We said, 'we've got to do this too' because our commitment is to do things that are timely, relevant and just relatable," says Ms. Williams. "Those two topics basically took us through the Spring...and our highest attended

sessions were those two sessions on anti-Black racism because it really seemed to resonate with people who wanted to know what is going on.

"People aren't done hearing about COVID, they're also not done hearing about anti-Black racism."

While these sessions have proved to be well-attended, this is not the only measure of success being eyed by York and the APL. Although numbers are important, Ms. Mandelcorn says her own personal yardstick is how people may have been challenged and changed at the end of a lecture.

"How have people's lives been changed? How have they opened up? If one person walked away and was changed and impacted, that's my measurement," she says.

Adds Ms. Williams: "This series is part of supporting York's reputation as being a leading educational institution

featuring York's scholars, whether they be professors or researchers. Just also advancing knowledge and thought leadership within our communities – with people who are sort of surrounding the university either physically or even virtually. Thought leadership, getting people to question and think differently about things, is part of what an educational institution stands for. Tactically, we're always looking to have more people coming and coming back, but holistically it is about furthering York's mission to be an inclusive and progressive educational organization."

For more on Scholars' Hub @Home, visit aurorapl.ca or register for upcoming discussions at yorku.zoom.us/webinar/register. The next lecture will take place Wednesday, August 5, from 12 noon to 12.45 p.m., and will feature Silvia Vasquez Olguin on gardening and food sustainability.

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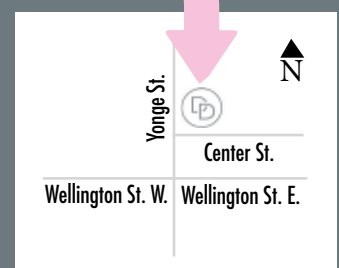
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More businesses, facilities allowed to re-open Friday

From page 1

maximum of 50 people and outdoor gathering limits will increase to a maximum of 100 people, while all gathering limits are subject to physical distancing requirements. Here in York, face masks or coverings remain required in all indoor public spaces through November.

“Over the weekend, hundreds of restaurants and bars, gyms, theatres, and personal care services, hundreds of businesses in 24 regions across the Province opened the doors again,” said Premier Ford on Monday afternoon. “This is good news. It is a clear sign that we’re on the right track. It is a clear sign that we’re making steady progress. Tens of thousands of people are getting back to work, but we can’t stop – and we won’t

rest until all of Ontario gets to Stage 3. We won’t stop until every worker in Ontario gets back to work and back on their feet. Today, we have more good news for Ontario families, businesses, and communities.

“We know as a Province we can’t ease up. We can’t give this virus an absolute inch and part of the process is learning from other jurisdictions about what works and what doesn’t work. We’re always prepared to take additional steps to strengthen public health measures based on the advice of our experts. We have to stay vigilant and we have to stick together.

“It starts with simple actions: visiting your local restaurant or small business, shopping local, buying Ontario-made when you’re out at the grocery store or hardware store because if we all take those



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MPP Michael Parsa visited a number of local businesses and organizations who have stepped up to help the fight against COVID-19, including Food In Motion, which has provided meals to frontline workers. The MPPs are pictured above with Food in Motion’s John and Danielle Cosentino. For more in the MPPs’ tour, see Page 18.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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simple actions, we can make a big, big difference. Billions of dollars in economic activity, more jobs, more opportunity, the chance to build a better life for you and your family. We all have a part to play in rebuilding this Province together.”

Ms. Elliott, who also serves as the Province’s Health Minister, said that in order to get to Stage 3, thanks need to go out for the “considerable and ongoing efforts of all Ontarians.”

“Thanks to the considerable and ongoing efforts of all Ontarians to stop the spread of COVID-19, seven more Regions will enter Stage 3 this Friday,” she said. “This is in recognition of positive local trends and public health indicators and a decision that was made in consultation with our Chief Medical Officer of Health. Physical distancing, wearing face coverings, practicing good hand hygiene and keeping our social circle safe – they will all remain critical as we continue to safely re-open Ontario, as will case and contact management.”

Wayne Emmerson, Chair of the Region of York, reiterated these sentiments on Monday afternoon.

“On behalf of York Regional Council and The Regional Municipality of York I want to personally thank our 1.2 million residents who have each done their part to help slow the spread of COVID-19 in our communities,” he said. “Thanks to your efforts even more businesses can begin to re-open, more residents can get back to work and we can get back to some of the activities we have previously enjoyed.

“While this is great news for our residents and our local economy, it has never been more important for us to

continue to take steps to keep ourselves, each other, our families and our communities safe. This includes staying at home when feeling ill, maintaining physical distancing, washing your hands frequently with soap and water and wearing a two-layer face mask or covering when physical distancing is not possible. Throughout the COVID-19 global pandemic York Region has remained committed to protecting the health and safety of all residents while taking prudent measures to stop the spread of this virus.

“Entering Stage 3 re-opening takes us one step closer to returning to the next normal and I extend my sincere appreciation to all who have helped us get here while continuing to build a strong, caring, safe York Region.”

Part of this approach to the “next normal” will be facilitated through new medical systems designed to track the virus, Ms. Elliott noted.

The Province has been working to implement a new case and contact management system tailor-made for COVID-19 symptoms, she said. The new system, which runs on Cloud-based software, has been rolled out in a handful of public health units and the rollout will continue week to week.

“By implementing this new system, we can enable local public health units to accelerate case and contact management to quickly identify new cases and more effectively contain the spread of COVID-19,” said Ms. Elliott. “Doing so builds on our government’s ongoing efforts to protect the health and wellbeing of all Ontarians.”

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Travel-related COVID-19 cases on the rise in York Region

By Brock Weir

Travel-related cases of COVID-19 are on the rise in York Region, while the numbers of new individuals seeking out COVID-19 testing is waning, according to Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Chief Medical Officer of Health.

As the Province announced Monday that York Region would be entering Stage 3 of Ontario’s plan to re-open the economy, Dr. Kurji urged residents to remain “vigilant” against the virus as more businesses and public facilities open up to the public.

“As the Province moves to opening up places for Stage 3, please remember that this is a time when the higher risk places are going to be opening up, so it requires particularly diligent attention to all those hygiene measures, in particular physical distancing as well as washing our hands frequently,” he said. “When wearing a mask indoors in public places, please remember that physical distancing is still paramount. The masks only give us an added layer of security for the community.

“As we have seen when the southern states in the U.S. opened up, unfortunately there was a great resurgence in the cases. Our situation in York Region is different from that in the U.S. Nevertheless, we can’t take things for granted, so we need to be particularly vigilant that the same thing doesn’t happen here.”

While new case numbers in York Region continue to show signs of improvement, there are some trends Dr. Kurji said are worthy of some concern – particularly travel-related

cases, which he said are on an upswing.

“Most of these cases seem to be divided into 50 per cent coming from the States and 50 per cent internationally,” he said. “As long as all these folks remain in quarantine and they get tested when they have mild symptoms, we can keep the lid over these cases and the transmission to the community, unlike the situation in early March.

“Remind any travellers coming to your places, whether they be relatives or friends, to make sure that they quarantine themselves to keep our community safe. We are also seeing a reduction in the number of new individuals going for testing for COVID-19 as opposed to individuals going for repeat testing. Again, I would like to remind anyone with COVID-19-like symptoms, mild though they might be, to access the testing centres, which are the three assessment centres of the three local hospitals (including Southlake Regional Health Centre), and they are open six days a week.”

By press time Tuesday, the number of active cases of COVID-19 within Aurora remained in the double digits, with 12 total active cases. By July 21, Aurora has seen a total of 130 cases of the virus, 103 of which have now recovered. 15 cases have proved fatal.

10 of Aurora’s 12 active cases are related to local transmission, with the balance attributed to institutional outbreaks outside the community.

Region-wide, York has seen a total of 3,229 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 2,713 cases marked resolved. 266 cases remain active, and 250 people have died.

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However, many people are hesitant to have surgery given its invasive nature. It is important to know that although surgery is sometimes necessary, it is considered a last resort in most cases.

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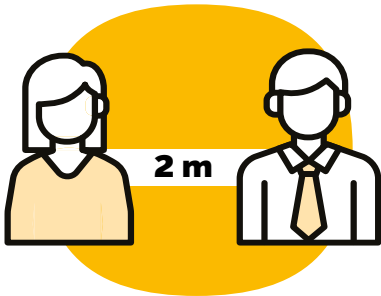
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As more businesses and services reopen, and with social gatherings increased to 10 people, we all must continue our efforts to protect each other.



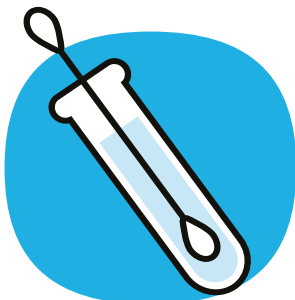
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Continue to **wash hands frequently.**



Get tested if you are worried you may have COVID-19, or have been exposed to the virus.

Inside or out, stay safe. Save lives.



Cultural Centre goes beyond its walls with Uxbridge Artist Collective

By Brock Weir

Clare Bolton was just starting to get a visual of how her upcoming exhibition was going to look.

The long-time visual arts curator for the Aurora Cultural Centre had just finished taking a look at new gallery space allocated them at Town Hall due to the temporary closure of the historic Church Street School for the redevelopment of Library Square when the global pandemic made it clear that these doors would have to close as well.

It was up to Ms. Bolton and co-curator Carmel Brennan of the Uxbridge Artist Collective to rethink their collaborative show from the ground-up, and the result is a brand-new online art show and sale running now through September 28.

Beyond the Walls, a partnership between the Centre and the Collective, transcends geographical boundaries and brings together 18 working artists from wide-ranging disciplines and media.

“We thought there was such a variety with the Uxbridge Collective that this would be the perfect exhibition, so when we couldn’t go into the building, I was so disappointed,” says Ms. Bolton. “Art

is an emotional experience and I was thinking [an online exhibition] would be flat. How are you going to connect with the community? I was a bit of a cynic, and this whole experience has changed me quite a bit.”

From Ms. Brennan’s perspective, collaborating with the Centre on an online exhibition was an easy sell for Collective members.

“It is so important to keep us alive and get it out there,” says Ms. Brennan of delivering art in new ways due to present restrictions.

Moving online also opened up new options for participating artists. Thanks to the online gallery, space was no longer a restriction on the art they would be able to show, which was welcome news to creatives who communicate through larger and, perhaps, less traditional media – including a participating blacksmith.

Artist Bert Liverance, however, is a more traditional artist.

Bringing down his brush to paint beautifully vivid flowers, he welcomed the chance to expand his audience, and reach art lovers in a new way through video “art bites” – which has snowballed to encompass many of the other exhibiting artists.

“As a kid, my mom took me to museums and I have always enjoyed going physically and seeing things



Beyond the Walls showcases a variety of artists from wide-ranging media – including glass and sculpture.

Contributed photo

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in person,” says Mr. Liverance, who has been a practicing painter for nearly 40 years. “[Going online] is an important way to communicate. Art takes many forms. Video is an art form as well and I think, if done well, communicates well and can capture the spirit and soul of the artist – and that is what we’re really trying to do.

“At the end of the day, an artist is a storyteller. We’re telling stories through our medium and if this piece doesn’t speak to me, I can’t have it speak to you. If the art doesn’t speak to your spirit or to your soul in some way, it is not the right piece of art for you. At the end of the day you should have a connection with it just as I have a connection with it. I want my

art to give the viewer joy and peace. If they think, particularly in these times, when it has been tumultuous, a person exposing themselves or viewing our artwork can get a little more joy in life and a little more peace in life, that is good. I am just happy to make someone smile – look at the flower and smile.”

If you would like to see if Mr. Liverance’s flowers bring a smile to your face, or if something speaks to you from any of the myriad media used by members of the Uxbridge Art Collective, the Beyond the Walls exhibition can be viewed through September 26 at auroraculturalcentre.ca/beyond-the-walls.

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Week of July 23, 2020



Sport Aurora honours high school athletes on their doorsteps



(Top Row) Jack Sutherland (Aurora High School) receives his certificate from Sport Aurora's Kristen Dajia. Jidechukwu Otoh and Tobechukwu Otoh (Cardinal Carter) with Alan Dean, Member of the Aurora Sport Hall of Fame. Julia Cuccia (St. Max) with Sport Aurora's Ron Weese. (Second Row) Sidney Gardiner (AHS) with Weese, Dajia and Dean. Julia Micic (Cardinal Carter) with Dean. (Third Row) Dajia with a certificate for Hailey Appleby (AHS). Ibrahim Rahal (Williams) with Dean. Nicole Rubinstein (Williams) with Dean.

Contributed photos

By Robert Belardi

As the old slogan goes, it's time to "have a break." And why not? There's a lot to celebrate.

Frontline healthcare workers are continuing their efforts in tackling COVID-19, helping the province net positive results on the number of new cases – and there are other moments to celebrate across Aurora.

Here, the Town and Sport Aurora spent last week in a celebratory mood as members of staff presented Certificates of Excellence to the top high school athletes of this past year.

President of Sport Aurora Ron Weese, Chair of the Sport Celebration and Recognition Committee, Aurora Sports Hall of Fame Member Alan Dean, and member of the Sport Celebration and Recognition Committee Kristen Dajia personally delivered the awards to the athletes on their doorstep.

Traditionally, this celebration is normally held at Town Hall.

"Even during this challenging year, Sport Aurora wanted to acknowledge the spirit of excellence driven by our community, school athletes. They deserve some good news and Sport Aurora wanted to continue this tradition of celebration," said Sport Aurora Executive Director Laurier Mueller.

As a requirement to be selected, students are chosen by their schools in the public and catholic boards in the town. Athletes are presented a Certificate of Excellence in response to the athletes' contributions in multiple sports and within the school community.

Twelve athletes were selected across four schools in Aurora.

From Cardinal Carter Catholic High School, Jidechukwu Otoh, Tobechukwu Otoh, Julia Micic and Katie Kimmens took home their awards.

From Aurora High School, Jack Sutherland, Hailey Appleby and Sidney Gardiner were honoured for their accomplishments in the school.

Sutherland, took part in volleyball, basketball, co-ed tennis, alpine skiing and was supposed to play lacrosse.

"It definitely means a lot to be recognized as the senior athlete of the year, especially knowing we have other great athletes at our school. It was definitely a goal of mine to try and receive the award this year," said Sutherland.

He received an email from his Physical Education teacher Mr. Forster and was also mentioned in a video on the school's Instagram account amongst other athletes.

"I feel like my parents played a big role in me getting this award, they allowed me to compete on all the teams and help manage getting me to tournaments and then to other practices after that. I'd also like to thank all the coaches such as Mr. Forster, Mr. Bladon and Mr. Kirkimtzis. Without them it wouldn't have been possible to participate in all the sports I love to play."

Out of St. Maximillian Kolbe Catholic High School, Sean Marseille, Matthew Turco and Julia Cuccia brought home the grand prizes.

And finally, out of Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School, Ibrahim Rahal and Nicole Rubinstein celebrated their accomplishments.

Rubinstein, took part in Field Hockey and Volleyball. She was supposed to begin Badminton and Flag Football around the

time when all schools closed.

Unaware of this award and the magnitude of winning this award in the community, Rubenstein says her field hockey coach Mrs. Palm presented her the award.

"I have so much appreciation for the coaches for running these teams taking the time out of their day. They really made my high school experience. So, the fact that I'm winning this award, it brings out that appreciation that I have for them so much more and it allowed me to be social and be active and I was able to go to other schools and be social. All of that put together makes me really happy to win this award."

SportAurora.com congratulates all 12 athletes

selected and honoured for this award for their dedication and commitment in the high school game.

Sport Aurora will announce the athletes selected from the elementary school level in the fall.

Fittingly, following days of handing out Certificates of Excellence, Sport Aurora's All Kids Can Play Program was presented with a certificate from MPP Christine Elliot.

This award is for the All Kids Can Play program's dedication to helping the community and most notably for providing meals to families across the Town sponsored by realtors Angie Vallelunga and Mauro Bucci.

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York9 FC hires director of on-field analytics

By Robert Belardi

York9 FC continues to bolster their office staff with the hiring 27-year-old Kingston native Sam Gregory as the club's new Director of On-Field Analytics.

Gregory will be reporting to Angus McNab directly as well as the coaching staff.

“Sam is a great addition to the team,” said McNab in a statement. This will be the third time I’ve worked with him, having worked with him very briefly at Opta and much more extensively during my time at Sport Logiq. His primary remit will be to support me and supply opposition analysis and then turn his attention to recruitment later in the year.”

In an area where there is seemingly a lot of work to be done, Gregory is most excited to be a part of the groundwork of data analysts within the club and with the Canadian Premier League.

“To be at a club in this league and set the groundwork for how the analytics department should look like or how analytics should affect on-field performance is really exciting to me.

We're at such a ground stage at York9 and around the league in general. I'm really excited to build things and take analytics within York9 and within the Canadian Premier League overall."

Gregory took to Twitter to announce his arrival with the Nine Stripes. He tweeted he was most thrilled to join one of the most forward-thinking clubs in the league.

Gregory praised York9 FC's personable approach, commending the club for changing home matches to Friday nights avoiding Toronto FC and York9 FC's effective use of social media, connecting with patrons and fans.

A lifetime football fan, Gregory has avidly loved the sport since a young age. He has played the sport, coached and refereed, all while closely following Canadian soccer and his boyhood club, Manchester United.

With a Masters in Economics from the London School of Economics, Gregory first began an analytics role with Sportsnet while in school, as a consultant, blogger and co-host on the Analytics FC Podcast.

Further strengthening his profound interest, Gregory ventured



Sam Gregory

Contributed photo

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Proposed aquatics facility could cost more than \$50 million

By Brock Weir

A fully-equipped aquatics facility could greatly improve service levels for sports groups and residents alike, but could come with a hefty price tag.

This month, the findings of the Town’s Aquatics Feasibility Study were formally presented to Council.

Commissioned in early 2019 as part of the Town’s overall Parks & Recreation Master Plan to examine how current Town of Aurora facilities will accommodate future growth, the study went forward on the Master Plan’s findings that a new pool of 25 metres, accommodating six lanes, would greatly improve service levels and better accommodate the needs of user groups.

Working with swim clubs such as the Aurora Ducks and other stakeholders, as well as examining similar builds elsewhere in Ontario, the study focused on several options for the Town, including a 25 m pool to be added to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex (SARC), as well as a more elaborate 50 m pool in a separate standalone facility elsewhere in Aurora.

“An additional 25 m pool would allow staff to increase offerings in all areas of aquatic programming [including] learn to swim and leadership development programs, leisure and lane swim, health, wellness and fitness programs, and additional practice time for stakeholders,” said Lisa Warth, Aurora’s Manager of Recreation, in her report to Council. “It would also create some capacity to accommodate pool use requests from new users such as high school swim teams and other clubs.

“A 25 m pool would not allow for optimal elite athletic development, nor hosting provincial or national competitions and the economic spin-offs, such as accommodation, food and beverage and other local purchases that come with hosting big competitions. This style of pool would be the most economical and sustainable to build from both a capital and operating perspective.”

A 25 m option with 10 lanes would allow capacity for 450 spectators and 300 competitors. A 50 m training pool option would allow for up to 600 spectators and competitors combined. A 50 m competition pool would allow for 900 spectators and 600 competitors, as well as a 25 m warm-up/cool down pool if built as part of a stand-alone facility.

“The 50 m event pool expands deck space and adds elevated spectator seating to be able to host significant regional and provincial invitational and championship events, and even small to mid-size national events,” Ms. Warth continued. “The 50 m event pool has additional potential for increased sponsorship and advertising revenue, significantly increasing the cost recovery of the overall aquatic facility. The 50 m event option also generates incremental economic impact for Aurora of over \$6.6 million annually.

“This figure is based on economic impact generator models with inputs including event days, hotel nights, and other spending related to events such as meals, gas and other purchases.”

Depending on the configuration, the costs for the proposed facilities are estimated to range between \$23.75 million and \$54.55 million – and land would need to be purchased for each model.

Consultant Stuart Isaac presented his findings to local lawmakers last week, underscoring the impacts an aquatics facility would have on the local economy as well as on user groups of all ages who, through the course of the consultation process, outlined a number of shortcomings with existing pools and facilities.

Stakeholders requested a wider range of aquatics programs for all levels and abilities, he said, while water temperatures for swimming lessons, fitness and other forms of community programming remain a “concern.”

“We wanted to make sure we really took a look at the whole scope of program,” he said. “[We wanted to] not just understand their wish list, but with different options for expanded pool facilities, what would they commit to both in terms of time, lane space and rental revenues.”

A 25 m pool, he noted would improve lane availability, but a 50 m pool – a new facility or built onto the SARC – would meet all current and future training needs of existing user groups and opens up more space for others. A 50 m training space would also be a tourism draw as there are “limited” facilities outside Toronto, but location is key to maximizing tourism and economic revenue.

Building onto the SARC would be key in harnessing this money with two hotel facilities slated to be nearby, while a new build in the south end of Town runs the risk of Richmond Hill reaping much of the tourism and economic benefits.

“Your numbers provide a very compelling case to build a competitive swimming pool,” said Councillor Harold Kim, who questioned the consultant on how similar builds have impacted other communities.

Mr. Isaac replied the best example is the Windsor Aquatics Centre.

Council agreed, however, there is more work to be done in order to assess the situation.

“I will do some more digging [but] I am not overly confident we need this facility,” said Councillor Gallo. “Perhaps I need some more information in order to make me feel confident.”

Following Council’s receipt of the report last week, further community consultations will continue through August. A further report on aquatics is due this fall.



Getting Things Done

Mayor
Tom Mrakas

Last week, Council approved my motion 5-2 for a permanent installation of a rainbow crosswalk on the south side of the Yonge and Wellington intersection.

The intent of this initiative is to provide a permanent symbol of the Town of Aurora’s commitment to diversity and inclusiveness.

I am proud the majority of Council supported this crosswalk and the Town of Aurora will become the first municipality in York Region to install a rainbow crosswalk.

Work to order the paint and schedule installation will begin immediately.

You may have heard the budget for this crosswalk is \$12,600 versus \$8,400 for a typical white zebra crossing as currently installed — which is true. Crosswalks in high use areas like Yonge & Wellington use preformed thermal plastic for durability and typically last 7 to 10 years with little maintenance.

The current crosswalk was installed in 2012 and a “refresh” was done in 2018 to clean and remove any marks. The incremental cost of \$4,200 versus a white crosswalk is for the additional coverage area — and

of course, the rainbow colours. As I said at the table, sometimes you do things just because they are the right thing to do — and I believe this is the right thing to do.

The support from the community has been overwhelmingly positive based on the feedback I have received. In fact, a donor generously contributed \$10,000 towards this initiative.

Normally I would acknowledge this substantial donation, but they asked to remain anonymous so the focus would be on the importance of this initiative. This crosswalk will be a permanent feature in the heart of our Town that will always confirm that Aurora is a diverse and inclusive community where everyone is welcome and accepted. That’s all for this week. As always if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to do so 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, please let me know and I will add you to the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed. I am here for you.

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Rainbow Crosswalk could be completed by August

From page 1
themselves. As many of us have learned over the last few weeks, social literacy is a skill that many of us are lacking. In a way, it is a new currency for how we measure our engagement with others. Agencies like Pflag York Region can support those journeys and this Rainbow Crosswalk might be the start of that for many residents.”

The statistics, he noted, make it clear that when LGBTQ2S people “see visible signs of support, whether it be in their household, amongst their chosen family, or from institutions and elected officials...their quality of life can improve. Their access to opportunities and to success greatly improves as well.”

“For some, this may be another crosswalk and others may question [if] it is smart to invest tax dollars in this, but take it from someone who leads an LGBT organization, who has heard stories from LGBTQ2 folks, their friends and family from across York Region, take it from someone themselves who identifies within the community, this Rainbow Crosswalk could be life-saving. It has the potential to inject a dose of hope, validation and optimism into anyone who crosses over that. When it does that, even just for one person, it is completely worth it.”

Not everyone was in favour of the initiative, however – albeit for different



Tristan Coolman, President of Pflag York Region, welcomes the incoming Rainbow Crosswalk as a York Region first and says he hopes it is an example to York Region's eight other municipalities.

Auroran photo by Brock Weir

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reasons.
Aurora resident Jim Sinkovic, making a delegation to Council, questioned the wisdom of installing such a sidewalk at Yonge and Wellington from both a safety and cost perspective.
“[The stated intent] is to have a large visual presence – we already have red light cameras at this intersection to promote safety, isn’t it possible drivers will be even more likely to misread a light due to being distracted and looking down at the road instead of at light signals?” he questioned.
Mr. Sinkovic also questioned the use of

thermoplastic required to make the rainbow crosswalk a reality. As a motorcyclist, he said he was concerned the rainbow stripes would make things more slippery for cyclists and pedestrians alike.
“While others say this might be lifesaving for the community, this may also be deadly to a motorcyclist,” he said, before Al Downey, Aurora’s Director of Operations, said that the present intersection already uses the same materials at its crosswalks.
An additional concern, he noted, was the proposed \$12,600 budget to make the Rainbow Crosswalk a reality. Not only did the cost seem excessive, he said, but it didn’t take into account the Region’s plans to install new turn lanes at Yonge and Wellington in the years ahead.
“What benefit is spending \$12,000 on a display that will last for a year or two rather than something more permanent or something reaching a wider audience like an information campaign, for example? Why not install one or more flags like most other communities do? What does it say about our priorities when we spend \$12,000 on this frivolous display rather than doing more to help out our local businesses?”

In response, Councillor Harold Kim said he did not see a Rainbow Crosswalk as a “frivolous” display and said when it is a matter of “human rights...there is no price tag.”
“On principle, I would support the Rainbow Crosswalk,” he said. “Rainbows have many symbolic interpretations for the LGBTQ community and it means acceptance. For other faith-based groups like Christians, it means God’s covenant of grace, and, for the general population, it might mean hope and prosperity. For all of these reasons, having it on our main street sidewalk would be visually and symbolically appealing to a wide-cross-section of Aurorans.”

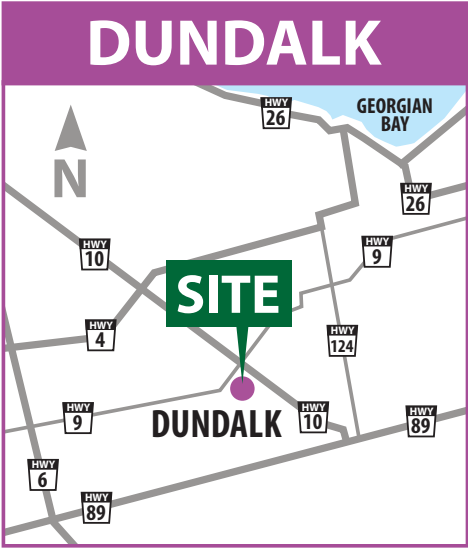
Speaking to his motion, Mayor Mrakas reiterated his position that a Rainbow Crosswalk would, in his view, show Aurora as “an inclusive, diverse community that is welcoming to all.”
This was a view shared by the majority of Council, who passed the motion on a vote of 5 – 2. Voting against the motion were Councillors Wendy Gaertner and John Gallo, who questioned the project’s \$12,600 budget without knowing until the end of the meeting, nearly an hour after the vote was taken, that an anonymous donor had stepped up to kick in \$10,000 towards the plan.
Had this been revealed during the discussion, they contended their votes would have in favour of the Rainbow Crosswalk. (For more on Council’s discussion, see Page 15)
Following Aurora’s decision, Mr. Coolman said Pflag plans to partner with LGBTQ2S organizations across York Region to encourage other Councils to adopt Rainbow Crosswalks across every York Region municipality.

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Cost of Rainbow Crosswalk sparks cross words at Council

By Brock Weir

Aurora’s upcoming Rainbow Crosswalk was approved by Council on a vote of 5 – 2 last week, but the vote would have been unanimous had Councillors known an anonymous donor had stepped up to contribute \$10,000 towards the \$12,600 project, according to Councillor John Gallo.

This was the view expressed by Councillor Gallo at the end of last week’s Council meeting – and later online – after Mayor Tom Mrakas revealed the anonymous donation nearly an hour after the final vote was taken to move ahead with the Rainbow Crosswalk.

In the discussions leading up to the vote, the \$12,600 price tag was a bone of contention to both Councillor Gallo and Councillor Wendy Gaertner, who both said they were supportive of the project in principle but questioned approving the costs outside the budget cycle and at a time when post-COVID-19 recovery was uncertain.

“Generally speaking, I am in support of these types of endeavours and there’s great value to the community, there’s no question about that,” said Councillor Gallo near the start of the debate. “To me, I don’t really see the urgency of this. I hope I am consistent in terms of spending money.

“I think the idea is great, but the timing sucks – to no fault of anyone. It is just not something I am willing to spend money on right now. I am more than happy to push it to Budget, have

INSIDE AURORA ANSWERS

From page 5

1. More – 119,820 as of the most recent survey
2. True. The first one was in 1970.
3. Accolade elm – this is a hybrid species resistant to Dutch Elm disease, and was planted to increase diversity and re-establish the elm population
4. No
5. No, not even close. The Auroras in Colorado and Illinois, for example, have populations of 325,000 and 200,000 respectively.
6. Railway abutment
7. False. It is one of the rare parks that is closed at night.
8. More. The first woman Councillor, Thelma Fielding, took office in 1951.
9. False. The train was named for the terminus at the other end of track; “Toronto”
10. Aurora Cable. The Town sold Aurora Hydro in 2005, while Aurora Cable wasn’t taken over by Rogers until 2008.
11. False
12. Volleyball
13. True. During the 1837 Upper Canada Rebellion
14. Dentists, but only by a margin of one
15. Victoria Cross recipient – the local legion branch is named in his honour
16. Baseball diamonds, of which there are 18. There are 13 tennis courts.
17. Chicken processing facility
18. False. The museum has some projectile points, skinning stones and axes that predate European settlement here by hundreds, if not thousands, of years.
19. “C” is the most popular, with 64 streets starting with this letter
20. Aurora’s Masonic Lodge, which was chartered in 1860, three years before the Town of Aurora was incorporated, and 7 years before Confederation.

Scoring:

- 0 - 5 You’re not from around here, are you?
- 6 -10 Not bad - you’re obviously a local
- 11 -18 Well done - you’ve been reading The Auroran
- 19 -20 Congratulations, you must have been a Citizen of the Year

a discussion, deal with it next year, but I won’t be supporting it today. No matter how noble the cause is, spending taxpayer money today just doesn’t sit well with me – particularly mid-budget. I don’t disagree that this is an important thing and I agree with all the positive things this could generate [but] for me it is a financial issue.”

Councillor Gaertner, who has often participated in the York Region Pride Parade, said she thought it was a “great idea” but questioned both the cost and location.

“I am not worried about offending the community,” she said. “Those who know me know that I have been very sincere in my support for Pride [and] I believe I have been a very good, supportive friend to some of those in the community [but] I just can’t vote for this. I appreciate what you’re trying to do with this and I am hoping we can maybe take another idea and maybe do flags. Maybe we can do something in the interim and when we do [the intersection] hopefully our finances will be better and it will make a statement then – and we can make a statement in support in other ways right now.”

Although she ultimately voted in favour of the project “on principle”, similar concerns were also offered by Councillor Rachel Gilliland.

“I do want to move forward with this initiative; I think it is absolutely fantastic – it’s the fact we’re never really presented with a cost analysis on this motion to begin with and we’re just learning about these costs right now,” she said, adding she had particular questions about the financial impacts should the sidewalk need to be replaced or expanded following the intersection’s reconstruction.

“I just want to see some numbers back from staff in order to reflect that concern,” she said.

Following the vote, Mayor Mrakas announced the donation.

“I referenced ‘doing the right thing’ in my motion [and that is because] when this initiative was...when I brought it forward, people recognized how important this initiative is and they immediately stepped up,” he said. “We have secured a donation of \$10,000. I didn’t want to influence the vote because right is right. So, I am glad that this initiative is going forward.”

But this revelation sparked dismay from Councillors Gallo and Gaertner with the former stating that “tidbit of information would have been valuable and I probably would have changed my vote had I known that was the case.”

Added Councillor Gaertner “If we are trying to decide what is right, and the financial implication was the most important, it is interesting you didn’t discuss it.”

Responded Mayor Mrakas: “You voted the way you did because that is the way you felt.”

Following the meeting, Councillor Gallo expanded upon his objections on a video posted to social media.

“The proverbial mic dropped right at the end of the meeting in other business where the Mayor had spoken last and had told us that he had a donor that was willing to donate \$10,000 towards this project,” said Councillor Gallo. “Now, if you take that into full context, knowing full well that Councillor Gaertner and I were not going to be supportive of this because of the finances and he chose to withhold that information during the discussion part of that meeting, knowing full well that had he let us know that there was a donor out there who was willing to

give us \$10,000, he would have known that Councillor Gaertner and I would have supported this and we would have had a unanimous vote on an important issue and a Council that would have been strong in supporting this issue and that community.

“He could have chosen to unite Council and let us know that the funding was there and have a unanimous decision and all of us together – he chose not to and chose to put a wedge between us.”

Mayor Mrakas, however, tells The Auroran that the anonymous donor did not want their donation to “influence the discussion and they specifically requested” it be handled as it was.

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CROSSWORD

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CLUES ACROSS

1. One-time world power
5. Central Florida city
10. Winged nut
12. Elevate spiritually
14. Creative
16. It cools your home
18. Woman (French)
19. “60 Minutes” network
20. Old World lizard
22. Swiss river
23. Ethnic group of Cambodians
25. Abba __, Israeli politician
26. Tire measurement
27. Affirmative
28. Thrust horse power (abbr.)
30. One point north of due east
31. A type of “pet”
33. Tech giant
35. European nation
37. Fencing swords
38. Acquired
40. Origin
41. Cashless payment interface (abbr.)
42. Pouch
44. Peter’s last name
45. Inclined
48. Palestinian territory __ Strip
50. A type of syrup
52. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
53. Weather Underground activist
55. Run batted in
56. Frozen water
57. Sodium
58. Philly specialty
63. Cuts the wool off
65. Rules
66. Icelandic literary works
67. Tattled

CLUES DOWN

1. “Pulp Fiction” actress Thurman
2. Actors’ organization
3. Conscientious investment approach (abbr.)
4. Ranch (Spanish)
5. Beginning
6. Index
7. Portuguese wine
8. A feudal superior
9. Military brach (abbr.)
10. Lithuanian given name
11. A way to become different
13. Able to be domesticated
15. Defensive nuclear weapon
17. Hosts film festival
18. Shows you how to get there
21. Arranged alphabetically
23. S. Thai isthmus
24. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
27. Woods
29. Make yourself attractive
32. Concealed
34. Large primate
35. A favorite saying of a sect or political group
36. Tropical fruits
39. Obstruct
40. Car mechanics group
43. Stroke gently
44. They’re in your toolbox
46. Throngs
47. One and only
49. In a way, bent
51. “Downton Abbey” broadcaster
54. Herring-like fish
59. A major division of geological time
60. Vast body of water
61. Cannister
62. Encourage
64. The man

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Property owners in BIA will get a tax break as a result of COVID-19

By Brock Weir

Downtown Aurora businesses paying into the historic core’s Business Improvement Area will get a bit of tax relief this year due to fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Downtown Aurora Business Improvement Area (BIA) was formed last year as a way to beautify and spruce up the Yonge and Wellington area through various events and initiatives, largely funded by a tax levy on property owners within the BIA’s catchment area.

Last year, the BIA received \$40,400 for operations from this tax levy, which was collected by the Town of Aurora and distributed to the BIA accordingly. \$6,293 was left over from their first year of operations. While this surplus is expected to carry over to next year, should Council sign off on the BIA’s 2020 Business Plan this week, no further money will be collected from property owners for this purpose for the next year.

“The BIA’s Board of Management had originally prepared their 2020 Business Plan and Budget prior to the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Nick Kazakoff, Aurora’s Economic Development Officer, in a report to Council. “However, in May 2020, they revised the budget to reflect the current realities. The original event had focused on large events, but due to restrictions on social gatherings, the BIA has shifted their activities to help support BIA businesses through the recovery period. The BIA has partnered with the Aurora Chamber of Commerce’s Bridge to the Future marketing campaign, which is intended to support local businesses as they reopen and encourage shopping locally.

“Due to the financial burden COVID-19 has caused property owners and businesses, the BIA will not be requesting a special levy to be imposed on rateable properties this year to fund the BIA budget.”

Over the course of the BIA’s first year, the costliest initiative spearheaded by the group was a street party on Yonge Street, which served as a warm-up to the 2019 Magna Hoedown. \$16,763 was spent on an event planner, entertainment, advertising, paid duty police

officers, signage and advertising and portable toilets.

Just over \$10,000 was spent on events surrounding that fall’s Santa Under the Stars Parade for much of the same expenditures.

A further \$4,321 was spent on administration – including insurance, website development, and advertising.

The Downtown Aurora BIA’s Business Plan for the year ahead first hit the Council table this month, where local lawmakers reviewed the numbers at the Committee level. It was approved by lawmakers last week.

There, they suggested a better way to get a full picture of their financials and vision going forward was to have BIA members present their plans at a future meeting of the Town’s Finance Advisory Committee.

“This is one of those things that could go to the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) so they can present to us their financial statements and directly answer questions in the future,” said Councillor John Gallo.

Councillor Rachel Gilliland said she was of a similar opinion, noting she had further questions for them regarding administration fees – as did Councillor Wendy Gaertner.

“A lot of money was spent on the Hoedown and the parade,” said Councillor Gaertner. “Maybe it is just because it is the first year and they are just getting used to the whole process, but budgeting in 2019 was definitely off the mark.”

Councillor Michael Thompson, however, pointed out that while he thought it would be “good” to get clarification on the numbers through the FAC, Council approved their budget of \$40,400.

But, for Councillor Gallo, it was a matter of accountability, particularly as the property tax dollars that are allocated to the BIA are collected by the Town itself.

“We collect on their behalf” because they are tax dollars,” he said. “This feels somewhat different than everything else we do. We collect specifically a different amount for them to administer. The end game is understanding accountability [and making sure] they are accountable to those business owners who are funding them, not necessarily the tax base at large.”

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Library Square is a legacy project for who?

Over the last few weeks I have seen numerous letters to the editor regarding Library Square.

There have been many good points made as to why Council should NOT go forward with this project, especially given the current pandemic and the financial implications that go with it.

I can't believe that this Council is still actually planning to go ahead with this project!

It is fiscally irresponsible to spend this much money on a facility that really isn't required at this time.

Their focus should be on saving financial resources to weather any unforeseen problems in the future. They have lost revenue from recreation programs, from events, and most likely from tax revenues. To use money from a reserve fund and raise taxes during this time is a slap in the face for Aurora residents, many of whom are probably suffering financial hardship at this time.

And why are they pushing forward with yet another facility on the east side of Yonge Street when the southwest quadrant of Aurora does not have one recreation facility? The population in this quadrant is completely underserved and yet pay some of the highest taxes in Aurora.

Another problem I have with this project is the fact that we will potentially be spending many millions of dollars on this when there are critical problems with the infrastructure in Aurora.

Every time we have a severe thunderstorm, Wellington Street West has to be closed due to flooding. What Town or city thinks that this is acceptable?

As well, many resident's homes and properties are subject to flooding during these times because developments are being approved on floodplain areas that are contributing to the problem.

It has been proven that areas that are not developed do not experience the rise in floodwater in streams compared to developed areas. Aurora needs to put money towards alleviating these problems, perhaps

buying flood prone properties so they can't be developed.

We have many streams in town and the flooding will only get worse as climate change progresses.

For many years the City of Toronto has had an entire team dedicated to increasing their city's resilience. They even offer their residents financial help (up to \$3400.00 per household) to install flood protection devices. They have made flood prevention and infrastructure upgrades to prevent flooding a priority. What has Aurora done? Approved a report to retain a consultant to look into the risks associated with climate change (Council meeting, June 23, 2020). Aurora is light-years behind other municipalities in resilience planning.

There are many more problems with the Library Square project.

The soil in this area is very unstable as evidenced when the library was built. Costs soared on that project because of all of the added engineering required to ensure that the structure would be on stable ground.

Does Council think that 50 feet away at the Cultural Centre the soil is going to be any different? Also, this project will be compromising a historical structure and will take away from the beautiful architecture of this old building.

Finally, where is everyone going to park? Parking in this area is already a nightmare without adding this facility.

Council claims Library Square will be a "legacy" project. Is it really a legacy for Aurorans who have the potential to be stuck paying higher taxes in the future for this when costs balloon out of control? Or is it a legacy project for Council, for someone to get his or her name forever engraved on the wall of a new building?

Judging by the letters I have seen thus far, there are far more people against this project than for it. If this is any indication of how Aurorans feel, Council may want to start listening or residents' opinions will definitely be heard in the next municipal election.

Angela Daust
Aurora

services – not Library Square at this time.

The project results in a 2 per cent increase to the property tax levy phased in over two years.

Now, in a pandemic I feel this increase should be reassessed. I do not feel comfortable proceeding with an additional tax increase in the context of potentially high employment with the knowledge many families may be struggling

I still think the development should proceed. I also believe the Mayor and Council should consider an alternate approach to reduce the overall capital costs, perhaps phasing-in or reducing the

project scope to have no impact on the tax levy.

I have read and understand the Town financial statements and reserve balances, I believe this be absolutely possible with an alternate approach.

While I am not in favour of debates going on and on, I do believe that current circumstances warrant a rethink. I look forward to seeing this debate unfold and happy to see new names and members of the community contribute.

Adam Mobbs
Aurora

COVID should force Library Square plans back to "drawing board"

From page 4

are easily accessible in text format along with the YouTube video and provide informative insight and viewing.

The Debt Financing section provides serious and troubling concerns about proceeding with this project, even before the devastating economic effects of COVID-19 were realized, stating the "recommended funding strategy will be heavily influenced" by the potential success in obtaining funding from Federal and Provincial grant applications, and while Council has been provided with multiple financial updates over the course of the Library Square's design, the arrival of COVID-19 necessitates a new review of the issue.

As the country continues to slide deeper into uncontrolled recessionary debt, it is difficult to imagine government grants forthcoming to construct a non-essential theatrical, cultural, library complex when hospitals and medical staff struggle to cope with lack of critically needed resources, countless important causes must make-do with scant provisions, and small businesses are folding every day.

News stories report the closure of spectacular theatres around the globe with no hope of reopening.

Without COVID-19 considerations made, current and new facilities will not be able to be utilized. The Town Hall, Joint Operations Centre, the Seniors' Centre, Theatre Aurora provide examples of this.

Development of special surfaces and new materials that meet virus cleaning

codes, social distancing in elevators, stairways, washrooms, lunch rooms and meeting rooms to name but a few, will require costly dimensional and ventilation modifications along with strict cleaning protocols all of which must be incorporated into this ever-rising over budget production.

There is no logic in designing the Library Square without inclusion of all these modifications while the Town pinches every resource imaginable to push this effort forward.

Warnings by infectious disease experts state "there's a good chance the coronavirus will never go away, a coronavirus-tinged world without a foreseeable end." "This virus is here to stay," said Sarah Cobey, an epidemiologist and evolutionary biologist at the University of Chicago. "The question is, how do we live with it safely?"

The warning this conveys is, "Even after a vaccine is discovered and deployed, the coronavirus will likely remain for decades to come, circulating among the world's population." What this message emphatically indicates, is this project requires back-to-the-drawing-board serious reconsideration in order to provide taxpayers with a true cost inclusive of all COVID-19 requirements.

This excessive, struggling to come up with funds has all the hallmarks of leaving a massive debt-ridden legacy for current and future taxpayers to bear.

J. B. Watson
Aurora

Library Square – An Alternate Perspective

I have read and enjoyed several compelling perspectives regarding the proposed development of Library Square over the past few weeks in the Letters to the Editor section.

I appreciate the authors' point of view and admire Councillor Kim for taking the time to respond and provide clarity regarding the funding formula. It is nice to know we live in a community where one can express an honest and different perspective, yet still be active community members, friends and colleagues.

There appears to be two sides of the argument, one that calls to cease the development of Library Square and another to proceed as planned. My


perspective falls somewhere in the middle.

I believe the area should be developed and also believe the development will contribute to a revitalized downtown core.

Conceptually, I believe the timing is right to proceed with a few considerations. I believe the schematic and architectural plans are attractive and appealing, in fact I find them quite stunning. I truly believe we should invest, build and enhance our cultural assets.

The question is - at what cost?

To offset the capital costs, staff reports call for funding assistance from the Federal and Provincial government. My suspicion is, that at this time neither level of government will provide the requested financial support. And to be frank, I believe both levels should focus on critical infrastructure, debt repayment and social



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A THANKS FROM QUEEN’S PARK & TAIWAN

Area MPPs Christine Elliott and Michael Parsa made the rounds through Newmarket-Aurora and Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill on Thursday to visit local small businesses and to thank businesses and organizations that have stepped up in the fight against COVID-19. (Above) Newmarket-Aurora MPP (and Health Minister) Christine Elliott, accompanied by King-Vaughan MPP (and Education Minister) Stephen Lecce, made an important delivery of PPE to Southlake Regional Health Centre on behalf of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office. Joining them were Director General Catherine Hsu of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office, left, and Southlake’s Barb Steed, right. (Below Left) MPPs Elliott and Michael Parsa, accompanied by Sandra Ferri, President of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, visited Omar’s Shoes and owner Raz Khamissa. (Below Right) They also visited Replenish General Store, one of the newest businesses to plant roots in Aurora’s historic Downtown Core, the theme of the visit was supporting local businesses and boosting consumer confidence.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



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Photo courtesy of the Town of Aurora

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David Petrasovic
B. Eng., P. Eng.

On July 3, 2020 Mr. Petrasovic was granted licensure by the Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO) with the right to conduct his affairs as a Professional Engineer (P. Eng.).

David graduated from Carleton University (Ottawa) in 2015 with Bachelor of Electrical and Computer Engineering (B. Eng.).

He has since completed four years of post graduation work experience as mandated by PEO.

Shortly after graduation in 2015 The Iron Ring was conferred upon him by the PEO.

Since graduation David has worked in Ottawa/Kanata the largest Technology Park in Canada, often referred to as Silicon Valley North.

He first worked for WindRiver/an Intel Company and is currently employed at Nokia Inc. both located in Kanata.



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- Will produce stories and bylines for the events they cover
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QUALIFICATIONS:

- Diploma in journalism preferred
- Candidates should have experience working on the editorial side of the newspaper industry
- Excellent writing, editing and photography skills
 - Valid driver's license and a reliable vehicle
 - Reporting experience an asset
- An interest in local issues is a necessity, as the majority of the writing for this role will be local



Let's Talk.

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Margaret Bahen Residential Hospice staff are committed to making the time spent at the hospice as comfortable and as *'home-like'* as possible.

Some of the things that remind us of being at home are freshly baked goods, a warm cup of tea, the comfort of being with loved ones, and snuggles from a family pet. The pandemic forced a lot of changes at our hospice, however the staff have worked hard to keep that sense of 'home' by providing as much as possible during this time; we didn't want to exclude the important companionship that a family pet can provide. Our staff did some research and found a safe way to reunite some very excited furry family members with their beloved humans during the pandemic.

This

is what true hospice moments are all about. Pets are a significant and constant part of daily life and are a source of comfort while offering unconditional love that can enrich a family's life.

Margaret Bahen Hospice for York Region is here for you, for your family (*including your fur baby!*) and for all of the York Region community.

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