

Aurora re-elects Geoffrey Dawe for a second term as Mayor



By Brock Weir

It has been a long road since Mayor Geoffrey Dawe declared his intentions to seek re-election last winter, but it was a fruitful one as Aurorans returned him to the post Monday night with a solid mandate.

Mayor Dawe clinched the mayoral race against challenger Councillor John Gallo with 8,903 votes to Councillor Gallo's 4,106.

As the vote for Aurora's eight Council seats shook down, Mayor Dawe will be joined at the table in the 2014 ? 2018 Council term with some familiar and fresh faces. Councillor John Abel was returned as Deputy Mayor, garnering the highest number of votes in a 28-member Council race at 6,098.

Coming in second is incumbent Councillor Sandra Humfries with 5,052 votes, followed by incumbent Councillor Michael Thompson with 4,974, newcomer Jeff Thom with 4,921, incumbent Councillor Wendy Gaertner with 4,605, newcomer Harold Kim at 4,098, newcomer Tom Mrakas with 3,826 and incumbent Paul Pirri with 3,760.

Falling just short of securing a place at the table once again was incumbent Councillor Evelyn Buck, who came in ninth with 3,719 votes.

Voters also re-elected Elizabeth Crowe to another term as York Catholic District School Board Trustee for Aurora, King and Whitchurch-Stouffville with 3,564 votes to challenger Mark Sullivan's 2,023. Peter Adams-Luchowski was also elected as Aurora and King's trustee on the York Region District School Board with 4,432 votes, followed by Alex Noudelman at 2,976 and Liliana Usvat at 2,288.

Many candidates came out to Town Hall to watch the election results roll in live, joined by several supporters who cheered them on. Before the results from the first three polls came in, Mayor Dawe admitted to feeling a bit of nerves.

?You're almost in a state of suspended animation,? he said of time between the polls opening and the results coming in. ?You're not really sure what you can do. It is the waiting.?

The wait proved to be worthwhile.

After sealing his victory, he said the support from the community really meant a lot.

?It is a totally different experience running for re-election as opposed to running for election,? he said. ?The first time through

everything was new. I didn't know enough to be nervous last time. You don't know what is going to happen, you don't know how it is going to turn out. One of the things I re-learned was with all our fancy technology that we have today, nothing beats knocking on doors and just talking to people.?

In Mayor Dawe's view, his victory on Monday was also a sound rejection from voters towards negative campaigns, particularly campaign literature which turned up at the doors of some Aurora homes at the eleventh hour last week. Aurora, he said, is ?not interested in U.S.-style politics.?

Speaking to his supporters at his victory party at Graystones, Mayor Dawe reiterated his pride in his campaign.

?We ran a positive campaign, we focused on our record, we focused on our vision and we focused on our goal,? he said. ?We focused on Aurora as the best place to live in York Region. I am completely committed to making sure that not only do we say it is the best place to live in York Region, but we're moving up that scale in Canada. The message we portrayed throughout our campaign resonated with the residents of Aurora. They want positive, they want growth, they want to know what you are going to do, and when you are going to do it. We delivered that message.

?I want to thank everyone for their incredible support. There were a couple of times where people had to talk me off the ledge from reacting to things. [Campaigning] is an incredibly stressful and effective way to lose weight. As a team we worked well together, it is so humbling, and it makes me proud to be able to work with a group of people like this who do that work.?

Looking at the group of Councillors he will be working with over the next four years, Mayor Dawe said focusing on revitalizing Aurora's Downtown Core will be a top priority at the start. Development, he added, is ?extremely important? in determining how to go forward, but in accordance with Official Plans and Secondary Plans.

He also looks forward to working with the eight new and re-minted Councillors in getting up to speed on the tasks at hand.

?I think people will have a greater participation [in Council orientation this time around],? he said. ?I learned this pretty dramatically during the appointment process [to replace Chris Ballard] that a lot of people don't realise what the role of a Councillor is. You are a board of directors [and] I think it is important to set that expectation very early.?