

Aurora Votes 2018: Traffic Safety, stable neighbourhoods are a focus for Humfryes



By Brock Weir

Improving traffic safety in Aurora and fighting for the preservation of both Aurora's Stable Neighbourhoods and heritage resource will be a focus if Sandra Humfryes is re-elected to Aurora Council for a third term on October 22.

Ms. Humfryes, who was first elected in 2010, says she 'takes the role of Councillor very, very seriously' and, as she moves towards retirement from her day job in the telecommunications industry over the course of the upcoming Council term, it is a commitment on which she hopes to have the opportunity to double down.

'I am really excited about that and, if I am privileged enough to be re-elected, I would be honoured and that would allow me more time to be available and around during the day. I've had a constant struggle and almost guilt because I want to contribute way more and get into the issues, lead them and really push behind them and leverage.'

Looking back over the course of the last eight years, one of the things Ms. Humfryes says she is particularly proud of is the push to preserve heritage buildings and give property owners the resources to keep the historic properties they own in tip top shape.

This was achieved, she says, through the Community Improvement Plan, which provides incentives for property owners in the downtown core, for instance, to improve and maintain the facades of their buildings. Further solutions, she says, could include offering installment tax breaks to allow owners to invest more into their buildings.

'It takes a lot more care to keep the buildings at a level we would like to see them in,' she says. 'Keeping our historical buildings and properties intact is really important to me and I feel it is in the heart of our Town.'

She also cites the move towards redeveloping Library Square and Aurora's Cultural Precinct as a special hallmark of the last four years.

If re-elected, a broad issue Ms. Humfryes says she would like the opportunity to tackle is the issue of traffic flow and flexibility.

This is an issue she says she hears knocking on doors across Aurora and, while it is an issue that is of concern for people in all corners of Aurora, she says she has heard it most recently in area of Mavrinac Boulevard on Aurora's east side.

'I had a motion to re-establish the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee [in this term] and staff had asked for an interim step of putting in a PlaceSpeak application on our website where people can go on and put in their concerns and it geographically scopes it out and staff takes that information and develops a resolution to some of their concerns,' she says. 'Unfortunately, I don't think it is kicking off enough. We need a Traffic Safety Advisory Board, not just for safety, but for flow and an overall view of how the Town is growing and what we need to do to have our roads move.'

It's not a new issue, nor is the issue of protecting Aurora's Stable Neighbourhoods but they are ongoing. While Councillor Humfryes says this Council has made strides in both of those areas, a resolution has yet to be reached and she would like to be a part of the team that steers both to a successful conclusion.

'[Stable Neighbourhoods] is an issue which is very concerning to me,' she says. 'If you look at our Stable Neighbourhoods, and I will not just call them 'monster homes' because some of the larger houses are okay, but these 'extreme monster homes' in

comparison to some of the homes that are there now, it is just such a disconnect. I feel it is truly jeopardizing the character of these neighbourhoods. The next four years are going to be much focused on that to see what we can do to continue these neighbourhoods so there is a look and feel that, yes, the homes might be a little bit larger, but you can tell they're part of a stable neighbourhood instead of what we're seeing today.

?Traffic will still be a big concern and parking will be a big concern. I also believe employment opportunities within our Town will be a concern. I want to work here and not just play and live here. We need more opportunities. We need to work a little bit harder together, perhaps with the BIA (Business Improvement Area) and the Chamber of Commerce to attract and retain more businesses here to allow that to happen. I see the BIA coming into fruition helping us a lot in those areas and hopefully grow and help support these businesses and get some of those employment opportunities here.?

This election, Sandra Humfries is one of five women running in a field of sixteen Council candidates. If re-elected, she says she would like to lay the groundwork to encourage more women to come forward ?and put their faith in the democratic system? of becoming involved at all three levels of government.

?There are so many amazing, incredible women, highly skilled and intelligent that can offer so much diversity to being a part of Council,? she says. ?I feel that perhaps some women maybe [feel] they don't have the time, or they're not sure what they can contribute?but we just need more of a women's perspective to come in and help move the business forward.?

The Auroran interviewed Ms. Humfries shortly after the first all-candidates meeting hosted by the Aurora Public Library at the end of September. During that session, she says she ?heard a few things? in some of the candidates' speeches that were ?surprising? if not inaccurate. She questions the numbers being bandied about by some candidates over the costs of the Joint Operations Centre, Aurora Family Leisure Complex and, in particular, the renovations at the historic Aurora Armoury.

?The numbers there are not anywhere what I did hear at the All Candidates Meeting and the Armoury is such a perfect example of a national site being renovated. We had to renovate that building anyway, no matter what is going in there, and the partnership we had with Niagara College was not a secretive negotiation. There are some business arrangements that have to be done behind closed doors, but we're all doing this for the good of our community. We all live here, we want the best to happen, and having a reputable college come into our Town and have this I think is so exciting.

?I am proud of the decisions I have made. I will stand by the decisions I have made to the residents and my critics. Some may not feel some things were perhaps not 100 per cent what they would liked to have seen from me, but I can speak to them, I can speak about them and what my perspective was and why. I believe a good conversation will allow those critics to hopefully understand ? maybe not still agree, but understand. Everything I do comes from the heart.?