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THE AURORAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

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FREE

Week of March 10, 2022



Newmarket-Aurora MPP Christine Elliott, centre, got an early start to International Women's Day on Saturday when she attended a York Region Community Open House hosted by local first responders at CYFS Station 4 – 1. Ms. Elliott, pictured above with some super-powered guests, visited the open house days after announcing she would not seek re-election this spring. For more on the Open House, see Page 17.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Christine Elliott leaves Newmarket-Aurora race open after deciding not to seek re-election

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The race to be Newmarket-Aurora's next MPP is on after Christine Elliott, who has served as the riding's Provincial representative – along with the roles of Deputy Premier of Ontario and Minister of Health – since 2018, announced she would not seek re-election.

Ms. Elliott formally confirmed her

decision on Friday morning, a move she said was taken “after considerable reflection” and discussion with her family.

“I sought elected office in 2006 because of my strong desire to improve the quality of life of individuals with special needs, as well as mental health challenges,” said Elliott, who previously represented the former riding of Whitby-Ajax between 2006 and 2007. “I saw gaps in care that motivated me to action. I am so proud

to have worked on these issues as the critic for the Official Opposition, Ontario's first Patient Ombudsman and most recently as Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. My passion for these issues, of course, evolved over time to include the breadth of challenges facing our health care system.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has tested us all, but none more so than our incredible frontline healthcare

Continued on page 16



STANDING WITH UKRAINE – Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons was a sea of blue and yellow on Sunday for a multi-faith prayer vigil for Ukraine – including a show of solidarity from Brianna, Michael and Kylie. For more on the observance, see Page 9.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION

The Town of Aurora is in receipt of the following Complete Applications under the Planning Act.

Applications: The Town of Aurora has received complete applications for an Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment. The purpose of the subject applications are to permit and facilitate the development of four (4) residential lots.

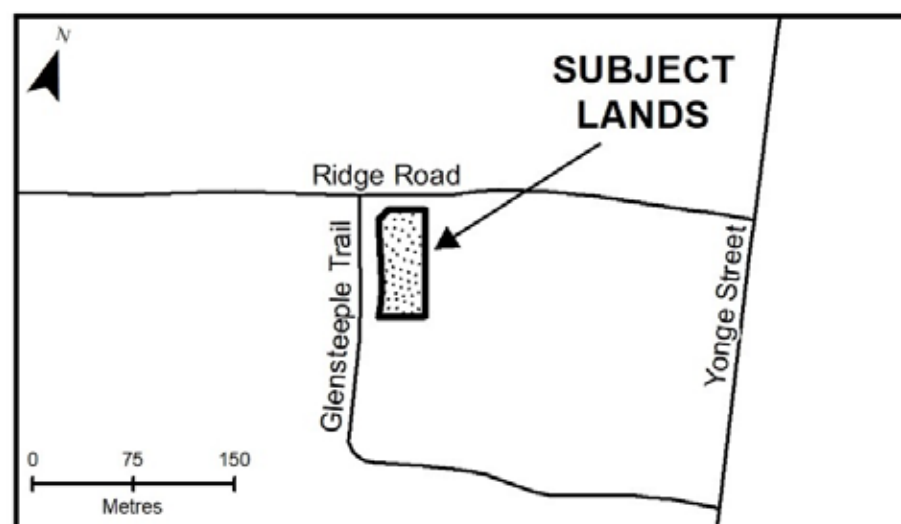
Property: 15 Glensteeple Trail

Legal description: PLAN 65M4614 LOT 29

Applicant: 2457920 Ontario Inc.

File numbers: OPA-2022-01 and ZBA-2022-01

Related Applications: At this time, there are no other applications under the Planning Act, R.S.O 1990, c. P.13, as amended, pertaining to the subject lands.



Additional Information:

Town Hall is currently closed to the public and additional information and material regarding the proposed applications may be requested by contacting the Planner for this file, **Brashanthe Manoharan** of the Planning and Development Services Department, at **+1 365-500-3104** or at **BManoharan@aurora.ca**.

Should you wish to provide comments, they may be provided by mail to the Planning and Development Services Department at the same address above, by fax to 905-726-4736 or by email to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

A Statutory Public Meeting to obtain input on the proposal will be scheduled in the future. Notice of the Public Meeting will be provided in accordance with the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.

Information About Preserving Your Appeal Rights:

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, to the Ontario Land Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora or Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, before the proposed Official Plan Amendment, or Zoning By-law is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to The Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan Amendment or Zoning By-law is adopted, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Ontario Land Tribunal unless in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora, or the Regional Municipality of York, as the case may be, on the proposed Official Plan Amendment, or Zoning By-law Amendment, you must make a written request to the Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

Personal Information Collection Notice

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

Dated at the town of Aurora, this 10th day of March, 2022.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 • aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375

Vaccines integral in fighting COVID once mask mandates lift: Public Health

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Getting boosted will remain the best line of defence against contracting severe cases of COVID-19 once mask mandates lift, according to York Region Public Health.

In his weekly update on the local fight against the virus, Dr. Barry Pakes, York Region’s Medical Office of Health, said that when mask mandates, the “last population-level measure”, are lifted, it is integral that residents get boosted.

“Though capacity limits have lifted, pandemic control measures such as wearing a mask and screening remain in place,” said Dr. Pakes. “The Province will be making decisions soon on the mask mandate. The masks are our last population-level measure and once they are gone vaccination will be our only remaining protection. Vaccines are the best line of defence against COVID-19 and avoiding severe outcomes.

“Spring is in the air and so many of us are excited to get as close to normal as we possibly can. The vaccine is our ticket to doing so. By increasing our booster dose coverage, we’ll decrease hospital admissions due to COVID-19 and continue to slow transmission, allowing us to move into the spring months more safely.

“As we continue to make the transition back to almost normal, be considerate of other people’s comfort levels. The last two years have been hard on us all; everyone is recovering at their own pace and we must be respectful and kind above all else. We’re not out of the woods yet and the COVID-19 pandemic is far from over. We are optimistic for a positive spring or summer, but we need to remain vigilant as we approach the unknown, particularly looking to the fall.”

Earlier this month, the Province lifted proof-of-vaccination requirements and eliminated capacity limits in both indoor and outdoor settings. This, said Dr. Pakes, has resulted in an “interesting and challenging point in the pandemic.”

“Our hospitalization numbers continue to decrease slowly, but unfortunately deaths remain stubbornly high,” he said. “Our wastewater signals are fluctuating

but looking stable, but again at a very high level compared to previous waves. We know some people are eager to take advantage of these receding measures [of proof-of-vaccination and lifted capacity limits] while others are uncomfortable and anxious about this change. Either way, please continue to be responsible and kind with one another. Everyone is experiencing a different journey when it comes to easing of pandemic control measures, so it is important to be empathetic and understanding

“As a result of these changes, we are likely to see a slight increase in COVID-19 transmission but with so many York Region residents having three doses of vaccine, we are hopeful that this will not translate into more hospitalizations and deaths. I myself was in the hospital with an injury over the weekend and while I was able to be treated with excellent care, I certainly saw healthcare staff who are burned out and patients in hallways. This is understandable and expected during a pandemic but it is preventable and we can each do our part.

“Getting a booster dose if you haven’t had one is critically important – even if you are young and even if you are healthy, and even if you have had COVID already. Please remember how COVID-19 is transmitted and how contagious Omicron can be.”

LOCAL STATS

As of Monday, March 7, Aurora was experiencing 19 confirmed active cases of COVID-19, according to York Region Public Health.

But, as the Region notes, this number is an under-estimate of the real number.

“With rapid transmission of Omicron and recent provincial changes in testing eligibility and case management, case counts and outbreaks reported through the COVID-19 in York Region interactive dashboard are an under-estimate of the true number of individuals with COVID-19 and outbreaks in York Region,” the Region stated at the start of January, adding case counts should be treated with caution. “Public Health units across Ontario are prioritizing case management of high-

risk individuals and settings. Workplace outbreaks are no longer reported.”

The Region is no longer reporting source of exposure for active cases.

Since the start of the global pandemic, York Region Public Health had been able to confirm 4,257 PCR-confirmed cumulative cases of COVID-19 in

Aurora as of March 7. 4,177 cases are now marked as resolved. There have been 61 fatalities attributed to the virus.

89.8 per cent of Aurora residents aged 5 and up have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, while 87.2 per cent had received two doses by the start of the week.

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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE TO AMEND THE ZONING BY-LAW LIFTING OF THE HOLDING (H) SYMBOL

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will consider the passing of Amending By-law under Section 36(4) of the Planning Act to remove the Holding (H) Symbol on:

March 29, 2022 at 7pm

at Aurora Town Hall, Council Chambers, 100 John West Way, Aurora Ontario

TAKE NOTICE that the Council of the Corporation of The Town of Aurora will consider an Amending By-law under Section 36(4) of the Planning Act to remove the Holding “H” Symbol for the lands described below.

1. An Application by Gillam Ltd Partnership, File Number: ZBA(H)-2021-01, has been submitted to amend the Zoning By-law to Remove the Holding “H” Symbol. The lands are located on PLAN 246 PT Lot 4, municipally known as 15520 Yonge Street.

The conditions for Removal of Holding “H” Symbol as set out in By-law 6000-17, as amended, have been fulfilled. The Holding ‘H’ Symbol was established to ensure:

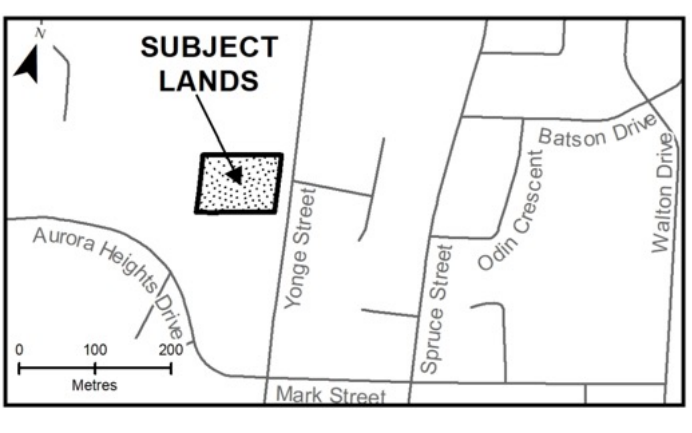
1. The owner enter into a site plan agreement with the Town
2. That the existing building be sprinklered prior to occupancy as a retirement home.

The Removal of the Holding “H” Symbol will allow the development of a 105 unit retirement home within the existing 4 storey building on site.

Contact:

Any inquiries should be directed to **Rosanna Punit** of the Planning and Development Services department at 905-727-3123 Ext. 4347. Please quote the File Name and Number.

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Please direct any questions about this collection to the Town Clerk at 905-727-3123
Dated at the Town of Aurora, this 3rd day of March, 2022.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1 • aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375

Proof-of-Vaccinations to remain in hospitals: Joint Statement

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Proof of vaccines will remain in place at York Region hospitals.

In a joint statement issued Friday by the Region, Southlake Regional Health Centre, Mackenzie Health, and Oak Valley Health, health officials said that while it is “encouraging” to see public health indicators stabilizing “and showing signs of improvement,” hospitals need to “take a measured, evidence-based approach to pandemic control measures” including maintaining visitor and employee vaccination

mandates.

“By maintaining proof of vaccination policies, combined with the continued mandatory mask requirements, we continue to offer additional protection to some of our most ill, injured, and vulnerable residents in settings where they need to be safest. These measures also work to keep our health care workers safe.

“The last two years have been challenging for all of us. Hospital staff, public health staff, our health and community partners and volunteers are all doing everything they can to continue providing exceptional care to patients and their families.”



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Affordable housing needed but not at the cost of safety

In E. Evans' letter of February 3, she indicates the Town has a list of almost 300 apartments that the landlords have applied to the Town to create legal secondary units.

I was shocked that the listing was so outdated.

Why is there no follow up from the Town to ensure landlords are following through to make the units “legal”? I understand the need for affordable housing in our Town; however, it should not be at the cost of safety.

In perusing social media, such as Facebook Buy/Sell groups, I encounter so many landlords advertising rental units in Aurora and in looking at the pictures, they do not have secondary egress, large windows, so just in looking at the pictures, you can tell the apartment does not meet the required bylaw standards.

Why does the Town have bylaws, if they are not using the tools, like the registered listing, to enforce them?

Again, Aurora does need affordable housing, but not at the cost of safety.

N. Deviller
Aurora

Science is “about questioning not censoring” scientists

Richard Doust took issue with the term “Johns Hopkins” study that I used, however the title page of that very study states “Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise.”

This study was under the direction of Steve H. Hanke, Professor of Applied Economics and Founder & Co-Director of The Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, etc.

I never said it was from the Medical Centre. Two other well respected economists from Denmark and Sweden were co-authors. Their conclusion was that lockdowns in Europe and U.S. only reduced COVID-19 mortality by 0.2% on average and “While this meta-analysis concludes that lockdowns have had little to no public health effects, they have imposed enormous economic and social costs where they have been adopted. In consequence, lockdown policies are ill-founded and should be rejected as a pandemic policy instrument.”

We need both epidemiologists and economists to conduct meta-analyses on data related to covid and government responses to it.

Critics of the anti-lockdown conclusion, like Dr. Seth Flaxman, have previously published papers supporting lockdown and other interventions estimating that these measures have averted millions of deaths. Such critics have a vested interest in attacking studies that conflict with their own earlier predictions.

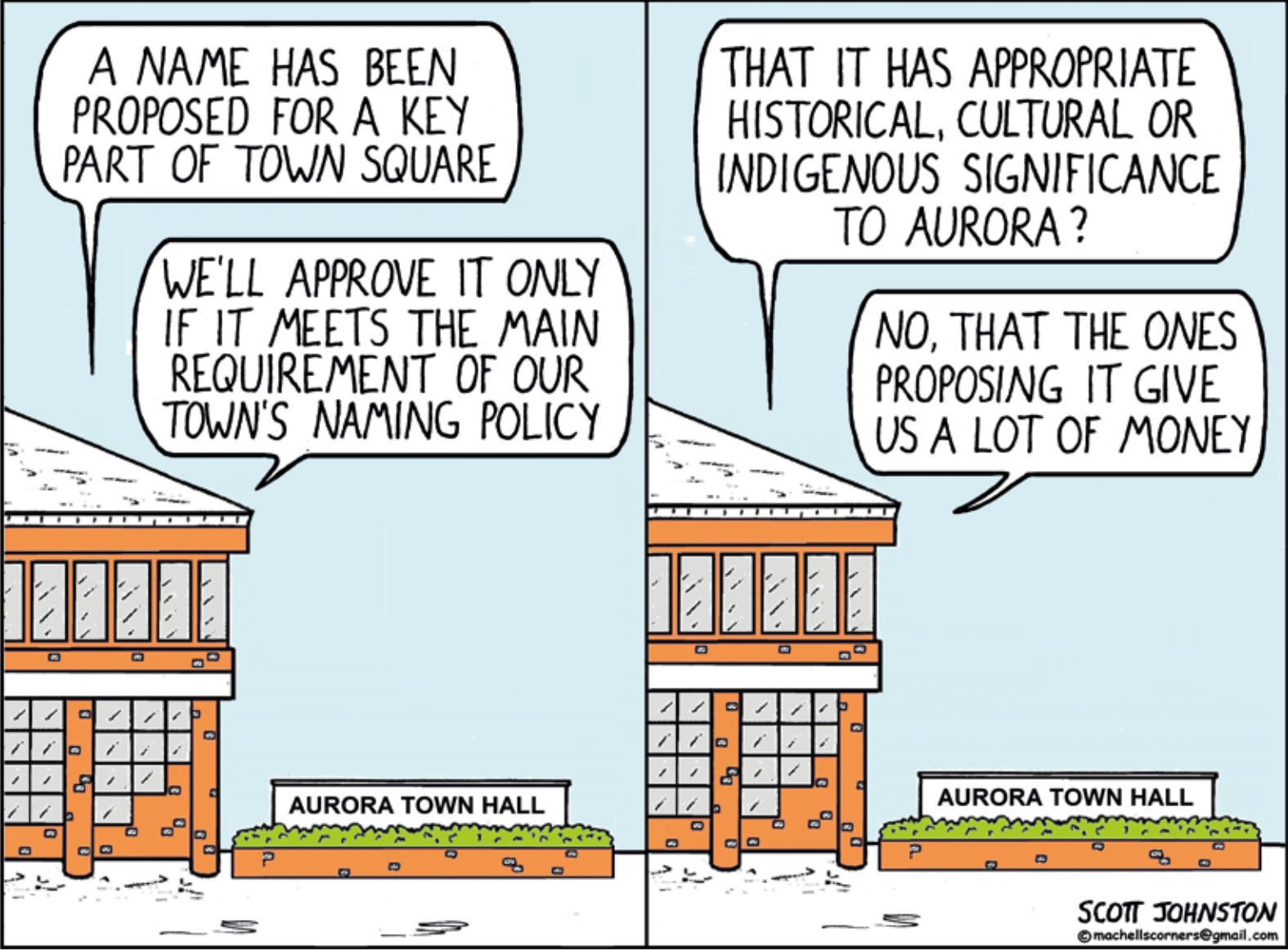
Aside from not protecting the elderly in nursing homes early on, Sweden got it right. Sweden's economy is thriving. It enjoys a much better health record than many countries that imposed stringent lockdowns on themselves, including the U.S. and Britain.

Swedish schools stayed open with no masks. Test scores are up, and there is

Continued on page 19

To submit a letter to the editor,
please send youremail to
brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions
is Sunday at 1 p.m.

Machell's Corners



Finding our places at the starting line

Do you ever get that strange feeling that the laws of time and space have been left permanently off-kilter over the course of the global pandemic?

Don't get me wrong, we're always in a state of adjustment as far as COVID-19 is concerned – and, let's be real, we're always in a state of adjustment as far as time is concerned as well, and I'm not talking about this weekend's leap forward on the clock front!

When we were youngsters, I am sure we can all agree that time felt like it passed arduously slow. Chalk it up to short attention spans, or simply to not knowing any better, but I remember a time when sitting through a 90-minute movie seemed like a relatively tall order. A year seemed like an eternity, especially considering the distance between one Christmas and the next. Then, of course, there was a special cachet for a nine-year-old when they acquired that much-talked-about double digit.

Somewhere in the early years of that double-digithood, however, time seems to catch-up to your attention span and what feels like an equilibrium sets in.

All of a sudden, a year doesn't seem like very much time at all, a movie can practically go by in the blink of an eye, and the next Christmas rolls around before you know it, and certainly before you're prepared for its return.

You don't especially relish adding another strike into your tally of double digits (that relish, understandably, takes a rebound the closer you get to adding a triple digit to your CV, but that's a column for a different day) and, at the same time, you lose your sense of being able to ballpark the ages of others with reasonable accuracy.

Some of us may resign ourselves to these being simple facts of life, and that's fine – but COVID has upset the delicate balance. Two years of essentially being on pause can do a number on any one of us!

Activities you did, people you met, places you went in the first couple of months of 2020 both seem like yesterday and a lifetime ago. If someone asks me for a specific date on something that might have happened two or three months ago, what used to be pretty easily accessible information in my grey matter now takes a few more lobe flexes before coming clearly into view.

Maybe this is a new normal. The information isn't gone, it hasn't been forgotten, but time, something they always tell us is relative, has become somewhat



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

estranged!

As has the simple act of being “people.” We often talked about how difficult it was to – and has been – adjusting to public health measures as they were handed down or lifted again, with varying levels of justification in either direction. But far less has been said in comparison on how difficult it also is to adjust to varying returns of normalcy and finding our places amongst throngs of people when isolating and re-isolating for so long.

On Friday night, for instance, I was out at the movie theatre to see The Batman, perhaps the first post-ish-COVID blockbuster.

I had been to the movies a handful of times during the pandemic, including the brief window of normal we had last summer, but without capacity limits last week, it was, as far as experiences go, something else again.

Going by the interactions I saw as people came into the increasingly crowded theatre, I got the distinct impression that a lot of other patrons felt like they were thrown into the deep end. Sure, academically, we knew we would be in a crowd, but maybe we forgot what being in a crowd was like.

There was the hesitation of just how to clamor over fellow audience members in the way of you and your pre-booked seat. There was a visual half-step back when people rounded the corner and saw far more people seated in the place than they had anticipated leaving the house. There were groups and couples trying to figure out, again, what the appropriate volume was to share the experience without disturbing those who were focused on the film.

Over the course of COVID, people forgot the simple action of opening up their most crinkly of plastics before the trailers were over, the art of turning off their ringers before the proverbial curtain went up and, in the case of this particular screening, it was forgotten they weren't actually watching the film on a streaming

service in the comfort of their living rooms – at least judging by the handful of screen-rattling belches that came up and wafted across Gotham City over nearly three hours.

Additionally, if the detritus left behind in just about every aisle of the theatre was any indication, I would hate to see the state of their respective living rooms.

The point is, we have all been down this road before.

We've hunkered down for months on end, only to have places to go and people to see once again, and each time there has been an extended pause in our regular human interactions, once that holding pattern is lifted, it feels like we're all renegotiating the rules of a vaguely familiar game.

Our conversation muscles may have atrophied a bit in face-to-face interactions as we've gotten so comfortable with navigating a remote world. Those oh-so-convenient “mute” and “camera off” buttons can make engagement beyond this controlled (rather, self-controlled) environment feel somewhat daunting and in need of further practice.

In our temporarily-shrunken worlds, until the emergence of many recent tragic global events, our subjects of small talk were decidedly tiny if COVID-related topics were taken out of the equation. Without normal day-to-day interactions with others, our abilities to pick up common social cues might have been weakened as well.

But all is not lost. Some of us are at different places in this familiar game and need more time to catch up than others.

Some of us are just counting down until that as-yet-unspecified date that we can all hang up our masks again and get on with our day to day lives.

Some others have already decided that they're less comfortable unpacking their N95s as soon as they get the green light to do so and, instead, will opt to wear them until questions, anxiety, and, yes, fear subsides.

Some of us, for better or worse, have been living life as though there have been no restrictions and that, too, is another factor of uncertainty for others.

Regardless, none of us are on completely unfamiliar ground, but we might need more time to fully find our footing.

Until we're all there, let's all be conscious of our respective levels, those of others, and respect one another on this common journey.

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Aurora's Community Newspaper

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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



Welcome to Library Land

By Reccia Mandelcorn

For writers and readers who seek the unexpected, poetry is where they can find a kaleidoscope of the vast spectrum of human emotions.

I first fell in love with the genre when I was introduced to the Beat poets in high school. I painstakingly carved the opening lines of Allen Ginsberg's epic poem "Howl" into a clay bowl I was entering in an art exhibit. I hung out at poetry readings. I wore black, exclusively. I was hooked. My love affair with poetry flourished as I read Montreal poets Irving Layton and Leonard Cohen, and later the beautiful love poems of Chilean poet Pablo Neruda.

Poetry allows the writer to share their message with the reader in what is an often non-traditional narrative. There is no need for an intellectual thesis; only an invitation to experience, to be surprised, to be playful, intimate, romantic or spiritual. It is an invitation to feel.

April is National Poetry month. This year, thanks to funding generously provided by the League of Canadian Poets and led by Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke, APL will be hosting an extraordinary evening of poetry and song.

5 Poets Breaking Into Song features poets from across Canada. Each will read from their body of work, with one of their poems adapted into song and performed by award-winning international composer James Rolfe, accompanied by composer and interdisciplinary artist Juliet Palmer.

Participating poets bring lived experiences from multicultural perspectives. I will be co-hosting with poet Giovanna Riccio, whose work largely deals with the struggles immigrants face and the ongoing pull of trying to retain something from the "old country" in their new adopted home.

I am particularly excited to hear reading by Canada's Parliamentary Poet Laureate, Louise Bernice Halfe (Sky Dancer), whose signature style weaves together English and Cree.

Although not listed as one of the five poets, guests can be assured that we will not let Poet Laureate George Elliott Clarke get away without reading from his vast oeuvre known for its lush physicality and raw political statements.

Rounding out the evening will be Poets Anna Yin (China/Toronto), Boyd Warren Chubbs, (St. John's), Astrid Brunner (Halifax) and Andrea Thompson (Toronto).

This year's theme for National Poetry Month is Intimacy. Though the pandemic has kept us apart, I invite you to get close and intimate at an extraordinary artistic experience on Wednesday, April 6, 7pm, when five fine poets and two wondrous musicians break into song. Free virtual tickets at bit.ly/370RA7X

What I've been reading:

Off the Record

by Peter Mansbridge

A Conspiracy of Bones

by Kathy Reichs

Vi

by Kim Thuy

Being Mortal

by Atul Gawande

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

Will you continue to wear a mask/face covering once mandates are lifted?

Yes No Unsure

www.theaurora.com

RESULTS TO DATE March 8, 2022	YES 100%	NO 0%	UNSURE 0%
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A Little Laundry

The glass washboard was a novel advancement in the years when manual washing was the norm. Glass moulding technology allowed for more control over the ridge pattern of the washboard, and was patented in 1877. This washboard (988.38.16) was made by the Canadian Woodenware Co., which began operations in 1906. The company was purchased in 2013 and moved to Havelock, ON, where it continues to produce this model and several others with much of the same machinery used a century ago. Get scrubbin'!



Celebrating Inspiring Women



CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

Christine Elliott, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

As many of you may have heard by now, after considerable reflection and discussion with my family, it is with deep gratitude for my 16 years in public life that I recently shared with Premier Ford I will not be seeking re-election in the upcoming provincial election in June.

To the people of Newmarket—Aurora and all the volunteers who have supported me, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve and fight for your interests at Queen's Park. I know that my successor will continue to advocate strongly for what matters most to you.

I am truly thankful for the journey I have taken in public life and am looking forward to what the next chapter will bring.

It's hard to believe that March has already arrived with a promise of warmer, brighter days. With key public health and health system indicators continuing to remain stable or improve, our government has been able to continue with its plan to cautiously and gradually lift public health measures. As of March 1, capacity limits have been lifted in all indoor public settings, and proof of vaccination is no longer required. On behalf of the government, I want to extend my sincere thanks to each of you for your hard work during the pandemic. It is thanks to the sacrifices and efforts of all Ontarians, including

those in Newmarket—Aurora, that our province has seen such success.

To date, over 12 million Ontarians are fully vaccinated and over seven million have received their booster. If you still need your first, second, or booster dose, I strongly encourage you to book an appointment as soon as possible. Getting vaccinated continues to be the best way to protect yourself, your loved ones, and our community from the severe outcomes of this virus.

It has been a challenging two years for our community and our province, but we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. As a community, we are starting to enjoy many of the things we missed during the pandemic, including in-person events and opportunities to celebrate with the people around us.

This past Saturday, I had the pleasure of joining Newmarket's York Region first responders open

house event. The open house was focused on attracting more female first responders to the field. As a community, we want to ensure that young women are aware of the many career options in front of them and are supported in whatever they choose. Thank you to our first responders and volunteers for hosting this wonderful event.

As many of you know, March 8 was International Women's Day, a day to celebrate women and girls and the significant contributions they make in our province.

Over the last four years, I have had the honour of meeting many of the inspiring women in Newmarket—Aurora. From some of our youngest philanthropists who are fundraising for wonderful causes, to community leaders who work hard to build a diverse and inclusive community, to award-winning entrepreneurs who play a key role in strengthening the local economy, women help make Newmarket—Aurora one of the best places to live, work, and raise a family. Thank you to all of the incredible women and girls who make a difference in our community every day and continue to inspire the next generation.

Should you have any questions about this update or other provincial matters, my constituency office is available and can be reached at 905-853-9889.

Party politics in municipal races?

Political junkies have to be happy; there was a federal election last year; the federal Conservative Party will be voting on a new leader sometime this year; voting for a provincial election is scheduled for June 2; and, last but certainly not least, there will be a municipal election in late October.

The municipal election will look and feel different. Aurora voters will go to the polls utilizing a ward system. The community will vote for both a mayor and one of the local ward councilors.

Should political parties enter the Aurora municipal realm by supporting philosophically like-minded mayoralty and council candidates?

We are all aware that election-voting patterns at the federal, provincial and municipal level have been on the decline and that the lowest voter turnout occurs for municipal elections.

Any measure that can be utilized to both further educate and interest our fellow citizens in voting and for a better and more effective local government should be thoroughly examined.

Closer scrutiny of the issue does beg more questions: Would a candidate even want a party endorsement, if proffered? If a particular riding association did vote to support municipal candidates, then what type of support would be envisioned?

Would it simply be a press release stating that they are backing a specific candidate? Would it be organizational assistance to the candidates? Would it, or could it, involve the utilization of some of the ridings' financial resources in support of candidates?

Are there limits under the Canadian Elections Act as to what can be done? As well, by what internal party process is the decision made to support a specific candidate(s)?



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

As an initial thought, if party politics is not introduced to the municipal election process, then why not have the mayoralty candidates run "slates" of councillors on a co-coordinated platform?

This is especially important in our Town, as there is not a "strong" mayor system in place. Under the current set up, our Mayor merely has one vote on Council, meaning that any legislative agenda that they may have is at the mercy of their Council colleagues.

Of course, it is important for a mayor to gain consensus and buy-in for their program, and there are obviously informal ad-hoc coalitions on certain issues, but by formalizing an alliance, the voters would know what to expect on the large issues, and, just as important, who to hold accountable if the expected program is not implemented.

Although the work and contribution of every individual councillor is important, we look or should look to the mayor for leadership and to their team for the development of a legislative agenda.

This is not to say that a mayor and his/her slate of councillors, once elected to office, would not disagree on certain issues, and appropriately enough, vote

differently. No one expects unanimity on every issue. But we should reasonably expect to see the major platform issues that the team campaigned on get implemented within a reasonable time frame.

Having individuals run as a team may increase voter turnout, as people may be more likely to come out and vote for a person who is associated with a particular side. It may even help in the recruitment of volunteers.

It is well-known that incumbents enjoy a significant advantage in name recognition. Running as part of a slate could help generate new blood on Council and may significantly reduce the individual expenses associated with seeking office as brochures and signs would only need to be done for the team.

The other nice thing about the campaign slate concept is the symbiotic relationship between the mayoralty candidate and his team; they really do need each other. There is a shared interest in making things work during the campaign and later on while in office.

Electoral platforms and campaigning do matter. The citizens of Aurora deserve a vigorous and respectful debate this fall on the issues of growth, the level, quality and costs of services, and the appropriate level of taxation.

Clearly drawn policy battle lines could engage and galvanize voters and volunteers alike.

Let's hope the mayoralty candidates, in between attending all those barbecues this upcoming summer, assemble a strong campaign slate, which will be ready this fall to offer a vision that resonates with Aurorans.

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

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“Substantial transit hub” in Promenade raises alarm bells at Council

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A potential “substantial transit hub” within the Aurora Promenade area to accommodate future growth raised alarm bells around the Council table last week.

Going into the March 1 General Committee meeting, lawmakers faced a recommendation to “work with York Region staff to explore a substantial transit stop/hub” within the Yonge Street Promenade area given its “proximity to Town Park and the significant investments made at Aurora Town Square within the heart of the Town.”

The recommendation was spurred by York’s review of its Regional Official Plan (ROP) which has put a priority on “complete communities”

and encourages “employment close to existing and future transit service and opportunities for people to live and work in their communities.”

“Town staff reviewed the draft ROP and essentially have no concerns,” said Edward Terry, Senior Policy Planner for the Town. “Our only suggestion would be the consideration of a substantial traffic stop/hub within the Promenade on Yonge Street, taking into account the proximity to Town Park and the significant investments made [at Town Square] within the heart of Town.”

But this suggestion raised questions around the Council table, with Councillor John Gallo pressing staff on just what a “substantial” transit stop or hub might look like.

“I just have a feeling it is going to be pretty significant,” he said.

Acting Planning Director Lisa Hausz told Council that the Town has until the end of March to provide feedback on the ROP and the recommendation to Council is to “raise awareness to the Region that in the future we would be looking for something within the Promenade area.”

“Not necessarily right in the historic area, although that is kind of implied in the wording, but it would be somewhere in the Promenade based on the growth of the Town and where growth is identified,” she continued. “The process right now is to make sure that the Region is aware and that it is part of their plans going forward.”

While Councillor Gallo said he had no issues with having discussions, the phrase “substantial transit stop/hub” made him want to “take a step back and say, ‘Do we really need this?’”

they get to Davis and Yonge. When I read the report, I was hoping to get some definition or idea on what we mean by [the term] or even just some images because surely someone has to have some thought or concept around that.

“Before I vote and say, ‘Let’s explore this idea.’ We would like to have some general sense of what we’re really talking about? What does it really look like? Conversations previously, I use the example that if a developer came to our podium and said, ‘I am going to build a substantial complex and I am looking to explore this opportunity,’ we would all say, ‘What do you mean by substantial?’ I feel the same way with regards to this.”

From the perspective of Mayor Tom Mrakas, a “substantial transit hub” is, to his mind, Aurora’s GO Station.

“Maybe if we looked at asking the Region to continue to consider the Aurora GO is a substantial hub and for them to continue building it as a substantive hub, I think maybe that is the direction we ask the Region to look through [their review] instead of adding another transit stop or hub,” said Mayor Mrakas. “I think we’re too small of a Town to consider having two basically substantial hubs within our Town. When I look at that and I see the wording [of the recommendation] I think of the GO Station and I think that is an area we need to concentrate on, in creating that transit hub, and I think that’s where we have to push the Region to make sure there is a focus there [to ensure] that transit hub is the best possible hub for our community and the Region as a whole.”

“There’s no intentions of bringing buses right down the middle of Yonge Street. That’s just not going to happen in the Town of Aurora. We have already had those discussions.”

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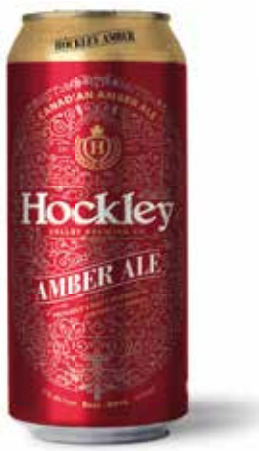




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Mayor Tom Mrakas, centre, presents a certificate of congratulations to Tsungayi Chigwamba of Microtel Inn & Suites Aurora at the hotel's formal grand opening last Wednesday. They were joined by Councillor Rachel Gilliland, members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and representatives from the culture and sport communities. **Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger**

Microtel helps Aurora place some missing pieces in tourism puzzle

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Last week, Aurora marked the formal grand opening of its latest hotel, Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham.

Attended by Mayor Tom Mrakas, members of the Aurora Chamber of Commerce, and other dignitaries, the formal opening of the hotel, which is

located on Goulding Avenue in the heart of the Leslie Street business lands, was heralded as a shot in the arm for local businesses and groups as they look to come out of the global pandemic.

“Four short years ago, we had no hotels and now we have two – it is very exciting,” said Mayor Tom Mrakas, referencing the Holiday Inn Express, which opened last year just up the street. “It’s an exciting time, I think, in our Town

[and] we’re exploding with enthusiasm. What better way to come out of the pandemic than to have a second hotel opening! We’re very excited to have you guys join the Town of Aurora and our business community in providing a wonderful service that is going to be much-needed, from a cultural aspect to our sporting community. Thank you for picking Aurora.”

This enthusiasm was shared by David Donaldson of MasterBUILT hotels.

Based out of Calgary, this is MasterBUILT’s first foray into the GTA.

“We’re very excited about having this hotel open,” said Donaldson. “It has been a long development cycle for us, most of that is internally in terms of the things we needed to do to get ourselves organized to come out east. We have a number of projects we’re building in the eastern part of Canada and into the Maritimes. We’re very excited about Aurora being the first.

“It’s a great community. It’s nice to have 100 rooms open. This is going to be a great market for us. The construction costs, relatively speaking, came in at around \$22 million [which] is a big commitment for a four-person-owned company from Calgary! We’re thrilled to be able to push into the eastern market and thrilled to be here in Aurora.”

The Town, from a tourism perspective, is also thrilled to have another hotel open in the community – with a third now in the site plan development stage, again in the Leslie and Wellington area.

“This is a huge opportunity for our hotels, and also for our Town, to be able to promote new assets for groups and tournaments,” says Lisa Hausz, Economic Development Officer for the

Town of Aurora.

Looking down the road, Ms. Hausz says the two current hotels will become involved in sport tourism strategies through hosting tournaments, offering packages to incoming groups, and more.

“The hotels are very keen to participate in that piece,” she says.

Both hotels have opened during the global pandemic, which might make it difficult to gauge metrics on how they might help the community reach its tourism goals, but that is something the Economic Development department is tackling.

“We want to know where the future is going to be,” says Hausz. “Do you compare [metrics] to 2019, which is a very different view, or through the pandemic? One of our best resources is Central Counties Tourism, a regional tourism office of the Province and I have tapped into their resources for exactly that kind of data. What they’re going to be helping us in are the impacts for 2019, comparing 2020 and 2022, and helping us try to forecast what that could look like going forward. It’s a huge resource for us since Aurora hasn’t really been in the tourism business before, but now with hotels we see that opportunity.

“I think there is definite potential with having Niagara College and the Canadian Food & Wine Institute using the Armoury at Town Park. It is an asset that started during the pandemic and being really able to leverage that partnership in attracting a major food competition and all accessory attractions that we can get from that – it will fill hotels, it will have people in the Downtown, and it is definitely an opportunity we’re looking forward to.”



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Mayor Tom Mrakas

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STANDING WITH UKRAINE



A powerful demonstration of solidarity with Ukraine at Newmarket's Riverwalk Commons took place on Sunday afternoon, attracting scores of people from across northern York Region. (Clockwise from top left) Traditional Anishinaabe Grandmother Kim Wheatley sings as Newmarket Mayor John Taylor looks on. Rabbi Mendy Grossbaum. Newmarket-Aurora MP Tony Van Bynen. Rev. Linda Wheler of Trinity United Church, Newmarket. Imam Mohammad Bemat of the Newmarket Islamic Centre.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger

Magna halts Russian operations in the face of war

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

As Russia continues to advance its war in Ukraine, Aurora-based auto parts giant, Magna International has announced it will halt operations in Russia.

In addition to stopping operations in Russia, Magna announced its support for the United Nations Refugee Agency, which has been working to assist Ukrainians fleeing violence.

“Like most in the international community, we remain deeply concerned with the very unfortunate situation in Ukraine,” said Magna in a statement. “Given current conditions, Magna is idling its Russian operations. Although we do not have facilities in Ukraine, we have the privilege of working with thousands of Ukrainian colleagues in our Magna operations around the world as well as those from Russia who share the same values of human rights, diversity and inclusion. We are making a significant donation to the UN Refugee Agency and will match employee contributions for the well-being and safety of Ukrainian people, which remains a paramount concern during this difficult time.”

Starting on Friday, Magna encouraged employees to make donations to the UNHCR with donations “automatically counted towards the Magna Match.”

“The Office of the UNHCR, also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights, and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities, and stateless people. UNHCR works to ensure that everyone who has fled violence, war, disaster or persecution at home, has the right to seek asylum and find refuge,” said the company. “Magna’s donation will provide humanitarian relief through protection, shelter and monetary assistance for refugees and displaced people affected by the Ukraine crisis.”

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We would recommend and have recommended Frank and Laura to others. They are our first choice for any future purchases or sales. Throughout this process – not only were they our realtor of choice they have become friends.

Thank you, Frank and Laura!”

- K. Douglas

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Museum could be under Town Square manager in new governance model

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The Aurora Museum & Archives, which has been without a curator since the departure of Shawna White last fall, could soon come under the management of the Aurora Town Square project manager.

This is just one change suggested by staff in a new governance model proposed to Council.

At last week’s Committee meeting, staff were asked to sign off on transforming the current contract position of Aurora Town Square’s project manager to a permanent position, along with the conversion of Town Square’s Marketing Creative

Specialist to a permanent role as well.

“Both positions have been instrumental in supporting the Aurora Town Square project to date and it is expected that they will be needed on a permanent basis once the facility is open,” said Robin McDougall, Aurora’s Director of Community Services, in her report to Council. “The [Manager’s Role] has been critical in ensuring the facility hits the ground running and is well prepared for success upon opening. This role has been responsible for engaging the community, partners, and artists along with confirming the staffing needs in preparation for opening the facility.”

“The position will transition from project start up to the day-to-day management of Aurora Town Square

“They’re overseeing cultural partners’ relationships, the development of our cultural partners in the community, and overseeing implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and the Public Art Master Plan. It is a much broader scope than just [the 22 Church Street] building and putting bums in seats at the Cultural Centre.”

who might be qualified and are looking for a full-time position. In that case, we did quite well in the contract positions that we have filled, but when we’re transitioning and I am glad to hear it is not a simple transition, not that I have an issue with the individuals, but the process, that there may be many people who now would be interested because it is a full-time position as opposed to the contract.”

On the marketing position, however, Councillor Gallo questioned why this isn’t a role that couldn’t be fulfilled within the Town’s existing communications department.

Ms. McDougall said that through consultations with Carley Smith, the Town’s recently-hired Manager of Corporate Communications, it was determined that the job should be a full-time one.

and will evolve to oversee a Cultural Services Division. To make the best use of the resources and to meet deliverables, we will be restructuring the staffing model for the Aurora Museum & Archives, integrating them into a cultural services division. The division will oversee the management and operation of the Aurora Town Square, Aurora Museum & Archives, and support for Aurora’s cultural community through partnerships, cultural experiences, and the creation of new programs.”

“I am trying to streamline the number of management roles and subsequently the management duties would be coming to this position,” added Ms. McDougall at the Council table. “They’re in that site, it makes sense to me to oversee that area of the responsibilities as well as expand as noted not only Town Square as an entity, but the Cultural Services provisions. Subsequently they’re overseeing the cultural partners relationships, the development of our cultural partners in the community and overseeing the implementation of the Cultural Master Plan and the Public Art Master Plan. It is a much broader scope than just that building and putting bums in seats at the Centre.”

“We see this centre continuing to grow,” said Ms. McDougall. “It is certainly not going to go backwards and less busy.”

“The Town will have very specific programming that that space, notwithstanding that we have excellent staff already that do community events,” replied Councillor Gallo. “I am going to have to wrap my head around how efficient it is to isolate this space and, at the same time, we have staff that do events across the whole Town.”

Similarly, Councillor Michael Thompson said he was concerned a standalone marketing position might result in communication taking place in silos.

“While I understand the position is really focused on Town Square, I have always been of the belief that communications should house everybody and should be under roof,” he said. “There should be no silos.”

Councillor Gaertner also questioned the marketing position, stating the Town’s Communications Department was running well. Pressing for a business case, she asked whether there was capacity for the new manager to take on this role “at least initially until we see how much work is required.”

“We should have an idea of what we’re going to bring in before [we decide] what to spend,” she said of revenues. “The first part of the process has to be done before we open [and then the second] a year or two after opening.”

But a different view was offered by Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who said, “I feel both of these positions are important.”

“We are going back to market for these positions because the roles and responsibilities are a lot more and the marketing position is crucial at this point, in my opinion,” she said. “If we are planning on opening sometime soon, we have to have our ducks in a row and our plan in place to have a successful opening and move forward.”

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Lions defeat Mustangs 5-3 at the Trisan Centre



Auroran photo by Robert Belardi

By Robert Belardi

The St. Maximillian Kolbe Mustangs fell to the King City Lions 5-3 in quite a nail-biter in YRAA Tier 1 hockey last Thursday afternoon.

The Mustangs went up against a Lions team in good form. The Lions were coming off a 7-3 victory against Newmarket High School.

On the other hand, the Mustangs were coming off two consecutive defeats against Stouffville and St. Theresa Of Lisieux.

The Lions came out swinging in the first period and took advantage on the power play. Gavin Torkhoff ripped a point shot that trickled through Mustangs netminder John Paul Prohilo.

It took the Mustangs a little bit of time to get into the game and a few saves from Prohilo surely helped with that. He denied Christian Velocci on the breakaway.

In the second period, Mustangs forward Zaid Soliman showcased to every spectator

that he is able to create moments of magic.

Soliman went coast to coast, bobbing and weaving through Lions players before sniping one past Blake Bowler to tie it up.

Shortly after, the Mustangs briefly took the lead. On the power play, a slick pass from Gabriel Oldenhof found Clayden Connelly at the point. The defenceman saw his shot hit the back of the net.

The Lions, unfazed by going down by one goal, seemed to have taken their game up a notch. Captain Michael Critelli dispossessed a Mustangs defenceman in the offensive zone thanks to his relentless forecheck.

Critelli found David Paglia all alone in front and he tied the game right up at two.

In the third, the Lions opened up the floodgates. Critelli, Velocci and Paglia added three goals as the Lions downed the Mustangs in Schomberg.

After the game, head coach and team manager Bradley Matwijec said that defensive zone is the biggest area of

improvement.

“Big time. The first three games (of the year) we were trying to sort that out. We are now figuring that out. The guys feel I have the best defenceman in David Paglia. It’s just getting him ice, but not overusing him,” Matwijec said.

“I have a couple of other kids that are good hard workers. Then it’s team defence. It’s your forwards getting back and helping. When we play team defence, we feel we can be a really good hockey team.”

In the other locker room, the Mustangs have lost some players from their starting lineup due to hockey commitments outside of school. Assistant coach Sal Di Maria praised the call-ups for their efforts.

“Our AP players really stepped up today.

They helped us in the back end. Tight game all game. Couple of bad calls. Couple of bad changes. It could have been a different game,” Di Maria said.

“We have two games left, both winnable games. We can come out with two wins and hopefully finish mid-table in order to play a decent team in the playoffs. Everyone makes the playoffs.”

SMK took on Cardinal Carter this past Tuesday as one of their final games of the season. Results are up on YRAA.com. Prior to the game, the Mustangs were 1-4 on the year.

As for the Lions, the boys are 2-4.

They play Sacred Heart at the Trisan Centre Thursday at 2:30 p.m.

Tigers drop another two, losing streak now up to seven

By Robert Belardi

The Aurora Tigers have now dropped seven straight games, losing to the Collingwood Colts and the Pickering Panthers over the weekend.

In all of the OJHL, the Tigers rank 12th in goals for and goals against. The boys hold the 13 ranked power play and the sixth ranked penalty kill.

This resilient group averages 32.43 shots per game, just slightly beneath the league average 33.08.

There are always pre-conceived notions in sport: that sometimes it really doesn’t matter how you win, as long as you get the result. Not every victory is going to be the flashiest and prettiest on the win column. Moving forward in the regular season, that’s exactly what these boys could use to gain some sort of momentum as we approach the start of the playoffs.

Of course, there is a lot more to play for now. The Tigers, who predominantly held on to second place in the North Division standings since the beginning of the new year, have fallen to third. The Collingwood Colts now sit three-points

ahead of the boys with 10 games left.

Upon viewing the standings of the entirety of the league, it was addressed earlier in the year the Tigers would like to improve their record at home in The Jungle. It seems they’re not the only ones.

Out of all clubs currently in playoff positions, only the Tigers, Oakville Blades, Stouffville Spirit and Toronto Patriots have a negative home record.

The Tigers are 10-11-0-2 at the ACC. The boys best the other three clubs currently in the same boat. On the road, the boys are 11-7-1-2.

Of course, fate hasn’t exactly been friendly. The team has battled numerous injuries to key players and has had to play with call-ups.

Health could not come fast enough; it is most likely their biggest enemy up until now.

As the road gets tough, the tough will get going. The Tigers head out on the road this Friday to take on the Burlington Cougars. Puck drop is at 7:30 p.m.

For those with a HockeyTV account, you can stream the game live at home.

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Capital Campaign for Aurora Town Square hits snag after Councillors question naming rights

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A capital campaign to help offset the cost of the Aurora Town Square project hit a potential snag last week after some Council members voiced concerns at the March 1 General Committee meeting about selling off the naming rights for various parts of the redevelopment.

Capital fundraising efforts have included approaches to “high net worth” individuals and companies who might want to contribute to the project, including the potential sale of naming rights to the outdoor space at the heart of Town Square, the bridge connecting the Aurora Public Library to the new addition to the historic Church Street School, to the heritage building itself.

According to a report before Council

from Phil Rose, Project Manager for Town Square, Council received an update in Closed Session last July with a “shortlist of donor prospects” that could be approached to contribute.

“It was noted that the fundraising goal was designed so that the funds raised could support a variety of opportunities, including but not limited to, asset replacement, program subsidy, facility enhancement, public art, operating budget offset and capital costs,” said Mr. Rose. “During negotiations with donors, it would be determined how they prefer their funds to be assigned/collected.”

A full review of all components related to Town Square identified 33 possible naming opportunities “representing over \$5 million in possible naming gifts.” 155 potential donors were also identified in the process, with 103 still left to be approached.



An artist’s concept of how the completed extension to 22 Church Street will look in winter.
Image courtesy of the Town of Aurora

APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Join our Board of Directors!

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2. Transferable skills for Board governance particularly in Legal, Financial, Contracts, Governance, or Human Resources sectors.
3. Personal attributes of benefit to the Cultural Centre e.g. active contributor, team player, personal network, problem solver, creative thinker, etc.
4. Time and energy to contribute as a member and volunteer on committees, fundraising, special events and other activities.

For further information email: info@AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

Please send a brief outline of your interest with a resume or CV by email to: info@AuroraCulturalCentre.ca by March 31, 2021 with the subject line **Board of Directors**.

Please note that all candidates must be residents of York Region.

AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

But despite the work being done to date, alarm bells were raised by a number of Council members who said they wanted a bit more input into the process, including Councillor Wendy Gaertner who said selling the naming rights to the local landmark schoolhouse was not what she had in mind for the project.

“The Church Street School is the Church Street School, and one of our foremost heritage sites,” said Councillor Gaertner. “I don’t think we should be selling the naming rights for that.”

While Robin McDougall, Aurora’s Community Services Manager, said that the nature of the site can be preserved with the naming rights zeroed in on just the addition to the building, Councillor Gaertner said she was under the impression what was up for sale, as far as naming rights were concerned, were amenities within the new build.

“I think it is just improper what we’re trying to do here,” said Councillor Gaertner, adding she was also uncomfortable with selling the naming rights for the outdoor component of the square. “With respect to the bridge, that’s right up front and Centre in our Aurora Town Square, so that would depend on the size of the lettering and where it was going to be placed on the building. I know we would like to have the money, but on the other hand, I don’t want to sell any naming rights that are going to diminish the identity of Aurora Town Square. I just don’t agree with this at all.”

Also voicing concern was Councillor Rachel Gilliland who said she would welcome another closed-door discussion on Capital Campaign negotiations.

Responding to her questions on how these negotiations were being handled, Ms. McDougall told the Councillor that the negotiations are being led by consultants hired to drive the campaign, Mr. Rose in his capacity as Project Manager, and also by Mayor Tom Mrakas.

The discussions, she said, included what potential owners might be interested in, the threshold of their contributions, and what they would like to see in return, such as their name put on an amenity or just a donation.

“Council should have some sort of input in deciding what would be the best course of action moving forward in what that monetary revenue would look like in the best interests of the Town and taxpayers,” said Councillor Gilliland. “We’re leaving the door open as to whether we want it to be a philanthropic or reoccurring revenue. We really haven’t stipulated what those rules of engagement are. I just feel like we never really had that conversation. Maybe I assumed we would have that conversation after we agreed we wanted to do naming rights. I am supportive of that, but it is understanding what business model we want to go through and support. If someone wants to come in and do a one-time contribution that we can’t say no, I am not saying I am against that, but I am trying [to understand] what we’re trying to achieve as far as a business model.”

Council approved a motion from Councillor Michael Thompson calling on staff to report back with their findings and to make their findings subject to Council approval.

Event Committee Volunteers Needed!

We are looking for community volunteers to support Margaret Bahen Hospice and Doane House Hospice in our efforts for this year’s signature events!

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Our committees meet virtually once a month and play a big role in our efforts to raise essential funds for our Hospices!

Reach out to us at events@myhospice.ca or call (905) 967-1500 x632 for more information on how to get involved in our events committees.



Programming plans begin to take shape at Aurora Town Square

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Community groups that will soon call Aurora Town Square home are beginning to find their respective places within the downtown revitalization process.

Last week, the Aurora Cultural Centre lent its support to a Town Square governance update presented to Council.

The latest update includes a draft policy outlining how space will be permitted within the Town Square buildings to ensure that space is allocated fairly and transparently.

The draft policy provides clear rules on how space will be allocated for the Aurora Cultural Centre, the Aurora Public Library, other cultural groups, existing user groups and Town-run programs. It also looks at grandfathering rights and making sure that groups that had regular use of pre-existing space will once again have first crack at them when the development fully opens.

“The policy establishes a ranking that prioritizes the allocation of space and how to address conflicting requests when they arise,” said Phil Rose, Project Manager for Town Square, in his report to Council.

The priority order is the Town of Aurora (including the Aurora Museum & Archives), the Aurora Cultural Centre and the Aurora Public Library (APL), “Cultural Partners” as defined through the Town Square development process, Aurora-based not-for-profit groups, local school boards, Aurora-based commercial groups, and other groups or individuals.

The policy notes that in the case of a conflict between the Cultural Centre and the Library, priority will be given to the Cultural Centre on space at 22

Church Street and first priority would be given to the Library for space adjacent to APL.

“We know it is the Town that determines what moves forward and we will work with how the facility is built,” said Suzanne Haines, Executive Director for the Aurora Cultural Centre, of the overall governance model. “I see the hybrid governance model as... a leadership opportunity in the arts community and industry. What has evolved is a way to take the best skills available and through collective discussion and consideration build a model that is unique and strong.”

“I am excited about the proposed programming and value the roles we each play in making Aurora Town Square a success.”

While Ms. Haines and Cultural Centre Board Chair Eric Acker spoke in favour of staff’s recommendations, similar delegations were not brought forward at the meeting from other partners, including the APL. Council sought assurances that they too were on the same page.

“We have had a lot of conversations with Bruce Gorman, CEO of the Library, and he has had some higher-level conversations with our CAO and his Board,” said Mr. Rose. “In those conversations, we have come up with a general consensus that both the Magna and Lebovic rooms (meeting spaces within the APL building) for 2022 meet their needs for this year.”

“We have had great conversations [in] a collaborative nature. Those discussions have been welcome and we have made a lot of progress with our conversations with the Library, just as we have with the Cultural Centre.”

Additional questions included just which community groups would be considered grandfathered in under this policy.

“For an example, if the Cultural

Centre in the past had used Brevik Hall or the Red and Blue Galleries (at the Church Street School) as their original dedicated space, we would be looking at offering that to them,” said Robin McDougall, Director of Community Services. “If there was another pressure or need for that space, it would be honoured if that’s what they had in the past.”

Although Council did not request any changes to the policy itself at last week’s Committee meeting, they did ask for the policy to come back directly to them for final approval rather than to CAO Doug Nadorozny under

delegated authority.

“We often talk about Council’s responsibility to implement, develop and approve policies,” said Councillor Michael Thompson. “It is staff that drive the direction out of those policies. My preference is...to see the final draft policy, myself.”


Added Councillor Kim, “This is a policy document for the biggest project the Town has seen, so I think it is reasonable for us to receive that.”

Staff noted a formal policy could come back to Council for final review and implementation as early as next month.



A theatre and performance space is one of the many amenities that will be part of the Town Square redevelopment.

Image courtesy of the Town of Aurora



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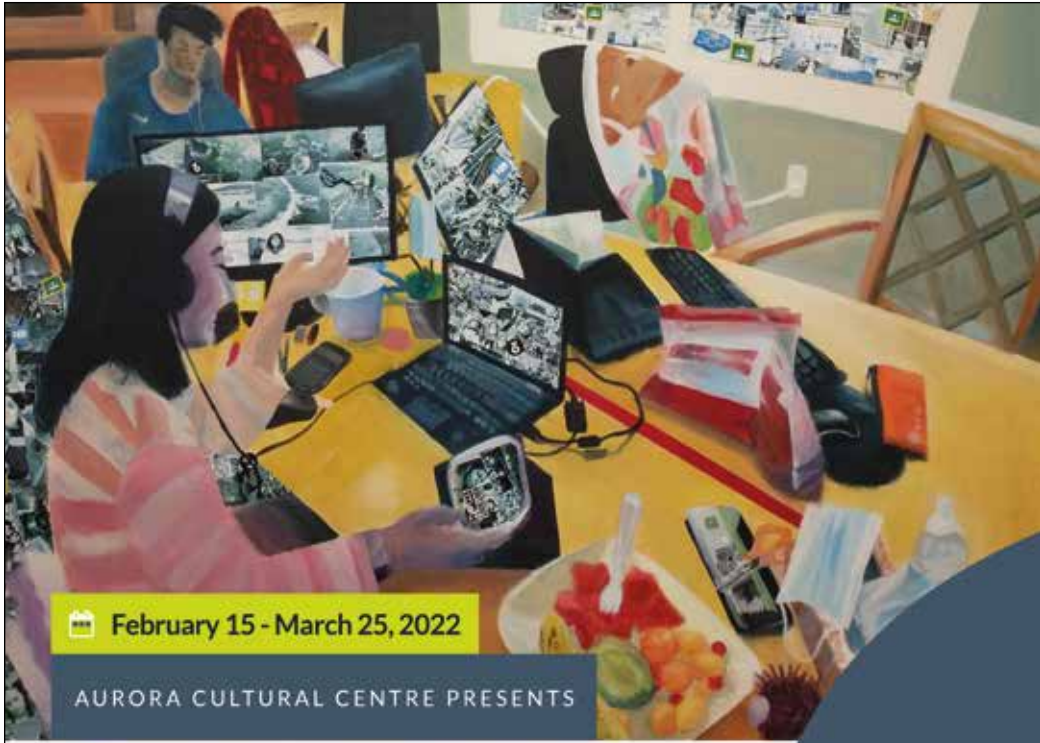
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“Caring” women continue to raise tens of thousands for community

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

The pandemic has been a challenging time for everyone and there has been no shortage of ways that individuals and groups have found to lend a hand – and throughout it all, whether in-person or virtual, 100 Women Who Care Central York Region hasn’t let a few hurdles get in the way of making a difference.

The group, which was founded locally six years ago, continues to go from strength to strength, regularly raising more than \$10,000 every three months for community groups in need.

The concept of 100 Women Who Care is simple: all you need is \$100 in hand and 60 minutes of time. At each meeting, even in the virtual realm, participants donate \$100 to the cause and within that hour pitches are made by respective members on why that evening’s pot should go one of up to three charities.

At the end of the hour, the vote is taken, and the largest vote-getting organization has thousands more to further their mission.

Among their members is realtor Kristina Wilton who first joined 100 Women Who Care (CYR) just after having her second child.

As a business owner, she was very busy but still wanted to find a way to give back to the community she calls home.

“A lot of other organizations require a lot of commitment and time and I was worried I would never be able to give back,” says Wilton. “But I also wanted to be a part of something I knew is making a difference, especially in something local. Sometimes there are great charities I support, but they’re not necessarily hyper-focused on our community.

“What attracted me to 100 Women CYR was the little commitment and the big impact because I think that is what everyone is worried about: commitment and not being able to really commit to something and give it that much time.”

Wilton says she knew the second she attended her first meeting that it was the right fit for her.

“The impact was immediate,” she says. “We hear from two charities every evening and then we vote on the charities we feel need it the most at the time. The impact was noticed immediately because you hear firsthand from people at these charities what they’re doing in the community, where the money is going to go, why they need it and what it is going to do for them.

“We were a little worried [virtual]



100 Women Who Care Central York Region is still going strong and looking forward to getting back to in-person meetings. Last fall, they raised more than \$11,500 for St. John’s Ambulance’s therapy dog program. **Contributed photo**

wouldn’t have the same impact or we would lose members. I think women sometimes had used it as their night out or their social thing, but we talked about it a lot when we were first pivoting to virtual: would we have the same impact? Would it be the same? It turns out it has actually been amazing. Life can be very busy and stressful; going virtual allows people such as myself to be on the road or to be somewhere else and still be able to plug in and not miss out. You always feel the momentum in the room; you feel the energy there, but how amazing it was to get off those virtual calls and still have the same feeling of being uplifted, that you’re still having that same impact.”

100 Women CYR is following trends to determine when they might be able to resume in-person meetings. Not everyone is comfortable doing so just yet, says Wilton, and another challenge has been finding a venue that can accommodate such a large group with the restrictions of the day.

“We have only been holding back based on the restriction at this point in time,” she says. “In the near future, we will be having a conversation about going back to in-person and that is happening very quickly. In the meantime, we’re always reaching out to our communities to find local charities. Let us know about them and nominate them. You don’t have to be a member of 100 Women Who Care to present; anybody can present these charities and we’re always looking for them. You just have to reach out to a member or email us to let us know what the charity is and one of the committee members will present on their behalf.

“I think we’re one of the most successful groups. We have maintained ourselves well, adding new members throughout the last two years and I would love to see us continue to grow. I would love to see us back together as a group just continuing to grow and raise awareness of what we’re doing so we can continue to help on a larger scale.”



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Soroptimists, CFUW mark International Women’s Day with LUNAFEST screening

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

International Women’s Day was marked Tuesday with a series of in-person and virtual events throughout our community, but it is not the end of the celebration of strong women here at home and around the world.

On Friday, March 11, the York Region branch of the Soroptimists, in conjunction with the Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora-Newmarket (CFUW) will host LUNAFEST 2022, a virtual presentation of eight short films written and shot to empower and inspire.

Proceeds from the presentation will benefit both organizations as they spearhead programs locally, including grants, to further their own efforts to empower and inspire women of all ages.

This year’s LUNAFEST films are “told from a variety of perspectives that champion women and gender nonconforming individuals, highlighting their aspirations, accomplishments, resilience, strength and connections,” say organizers.

The themes of the eight short films are very much in keeping with the mandates of both the CFUW and the Soroptimists and joining forces to present the films together virtually for the second year running came without question.

“This is our fourth year doing this and our second year of doing it virtually,” says Pat Giusti of Soroptimist York Region. “Both of our charities raise funds for women in our local communities, and, in our case, we have a scholarship for women [who support their families] who have gone back to school and to help out with whatever their financial needs are at the time.”

Ms. Giusti says she was brought into the Soroptimist program by friends and she stuck around because it gives her a way to give back to the community while also juggling her full-time job.

“It’s all about being with friends and giving back to the community where I could.”

Valerie Hume of the CFUW found the Federation in a similar way.

Marking its 65th anniversary in Aurora and Newmarket this year, the Canadian Federation of University Women has been working hard during the pandemic to ensure that their fundraising programs, which also provide grants to women in the community, do not lose momentum.

Before the pandemic hit, Ms. Hume says the CFUW had about 235 active members. This tally has taken a bit of a hit over the last two years, with their numbers now standing at 195, but they are looking at ways to rebound, remount their in-person events, and to continue finding ways to build community.

“One of our signature events is a home and garden tour which will take place on June 18,” says Hume. “We are trying to build up our student awards. It has been difficult for students because they haven’t had places where they can work and build up their stash of cash to go to university. We are trying to increase the number and the amount

“We are trying to build up our student awards. It has been difficult for students because they haven’t had places where they can work and build up their stash of cash to go to university.”

of awards we can give. Hopefully we will do well with this tour and in the fall we’re looking forward to getting around

in person.”

In the meantime, however, the focus for both organizations is ensuring LUNAFEST reaches the community and supports their work in turn.

LUNAFEST films will be available to ticket holders beginning at 7 p.m. this Friday until Sunday, March 13, at 6.59 p.m. Once you begin watching you will have 48 hours to finish watching.

Tickets are \$20 and are available through www.lunafest.org/screenings/virtual-york-region-on-031122.

For more on Soroptimist York Region, visit them on Facebook, and for further information on the Canadian Federation of University Women Aurora-Newmarket, visit www.cfuwauroranewmarket.com.



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Christine Elliott leaves Newmarket-Aurora race open after deciding not to seek re-election

From page 1

workers. I want to express my profound admiration of and gratitude for all who provide care to Ontarians each and every day. They do so bravely, selflessly, and at great expense to their own personal lives and circumstances.”

Ms. Elliott was appointed Ontario's Minister of Health shortly after the 2018 Provincial Election, which saw Aurorans pick the former Progressive Conservative leadership candidate over NDP candidate Melissa Williams and incumbent Liberal cabinet minister Chris Ballard.

Less than two years later, the Health Ministry was thrust into the spotlight as the world grappled with the global pandemic.

“Following a photo-finish leadership



Aurora resident Dawn Gallagher Murphy will replace Christine Elliott as the Progressive Conservative candidate for Newmarket-Aurora, the party announced shortly after Ms. Elliott's announcement.

Contributed photo

race, I was thrilled when Christine became a key part of our team and campaign,” said Premier Doug Ford on Friday on his closest rival in the leadership race. “After voters placed their trust in us to form government, she was at the top of the list to serve as Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, posts she has held since the day we were sworn in and will continue to do so until the election.

“Christine has been at my side since the start of the pandemic. She remains instrumental in helping steer Ontario through one of the most difficult periods in our province’s history, especially now as we continue to protect our hard-fought progress and ease public health measures. I will continue to rely on her advice and counsel.

“In the shadow of the pandemic, it would be easy to forget all of Christine’s many accomplishments as Minister of Health. Because of her reforms standing up Ontario Health, we have been able to reinvest hundreds of millions of dollars a year previously wasted on unnecessary bureaucracy directly into better patient care. Ontario Health Teams are up and running, providing more seamless care for patients. Roadmap to Wellness, unveiled by Christine in 2020, is better connecting the Province’s long-neglected mental health and addictions system, enabled by historic funding.”

But these health measures, particularly related to the global pandemic, were not without controversy and as the Newmarket-Aurora ballot has taken shape in recent weeks, candidates with health backgrounds began lining up to challenge Ms. Elliott for the seat, including public health epidemiologist Denis Heng for the NDP and neuropsychologist Dr. Sylvain Roy for the Liberals.

Replacing Ms. Elliott as the Progressive Conservative nominee for Newmarket-Aurora is Dawn Gallagher Murphy, who has served as Ms. Elliott's constituency manager since her election.

“I have no doubt the people of Ontario will return [Premier Ford and the PC team] to government to continue the critical work of protecting Ontarians’ health and safety while recovering from the pandemic,” Ms. Elliott continued in her statement. “I want to thank my staff, as well as the public servants, particularly at the Ministry of Health, for their tireless efforts supporting and executing the absolutely herculean task of managing a once-in-a-lifetime crisis like COVID-19.

“To the people of Newmarket-Aurora and all the volunteers who have supported me, I thank you for

giving me the opportunity to serve and fight for your interests at Queen's Park. I know that my successor will continue to advocate strongly for what matters most to you. Finally, and most importantly, I must express my love and gratitude to my family for their unconditional support not only over the past almost two decades, but throughout the last 24 months in particular. Like many Ontarians, I would not have been able to do my job day in and day out without their support.

"I am truly thankful for the journey I have taken in public life and am looking forward to what the next chapter will bring."



Getting Things Done

**Mayor
Tom Mrakas**

Each month – and each season,
for that matter – brings us little
gems to enjoy.

In March, for me, it is all about renewal.

The weather is changing and with it I am reinvigorated to tackle a whole new list of to-dos, continuing to lead and serve my community on the issues that matter most.

With this in mind, my annual State of the Town address at the Aurora Mayor's Luncheon couldn't be better timed. Hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce and taking place later this month at the Royal Venetian Mansion, I'll be sharing information and answering key questions about growth, development, the status on existing projects and how our community is rebounding from the pandemic.

We have some amazing projects on the go and great plans to continue to improve and invest in our Town. I hope you can join me for this event. More details are available at aurorachamber.on.ca.

As we head into spring and patio season comes into sight, I am very happy to share that Town of Aurora will be continuing its seasonal patio extension program in 2022, in our ongoing effort to support the local business community through the COVID-19 pandemic.

20+ patio permits were issued in 2020 and again in 2021 for restaurants and eateries across our Town, allowing for the temporary expansion of patios onto private or Town owned property to safely accommodate more customers.

Once again, businesses can take advantage of the quick renewal process utilizing an approved site plan from last year's program.

If you have an approved site plan from last year and are not making any changes to your patio, please contact our Economic Development team right away at planning@aurora.ca. For all the details, visit: aurora.ca/businesssupport.

Lastly – and most importantly – March Break is almost here. Wishing kids and their families an awesome week off! If you are planning a staycation, you'll want to check out the day camps, drop-in programs and other activities the Town has going on.

If you have any questions about or concerns, please contact me by email tmrakas@aurora.ca or by phone 905-726-4746.

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SOUTHLAKE REGIONAL HEALTH CENTRE BOARD SEEKS DIRECTORS

Southlake is building healthy communities through outstanding care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people. We deliver a wide range of healthcare services to the communities of northern York Region and southern Simcoe County. Our advanced regional programs include Cancer Care and Cardiac Care and serve a broader population across the northern GTA and into Simcoe-Muskoka.

Our team of nearly 6,000 staff, physicians, volunteers, students and Patient and Family Advisors are committed to creating an environment where the best experiences happen. As a recognition of our commitment to quality and patient safety, we have received the highest distinction of Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada.

With an annual operating budget of over \$500 million, we care for a rapidly growing and aging population and have developed an exciting plan for new facilities to serve our communities into the future. A member of the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team, we are working with our partners to deliver connected care to northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

The Southlake Board of Directors currently seeks to elect new Directors. To complement our skills-based Board, we invite applications from qualified individuals with governance expertise and knowledge, and/or experience or skills in human resources, information systems, government affairs or finance and accounting.

Board members must possess a strong commitment to ethical standards, in addition to an appropriate level of education and skill. Preference will be given to candidates who demonstrate knowledge of the healthcare sector and understand what it will take to meet the future needs of the rapidly-growing communities we serve. Previous experience serving on a public Board of Directors would be an asset.

Board members receive no monetary compensation and are expected to devote approximately 12 hours per month to hospital matters. In addition to serving as a member of the Board, members must serve on a minimum of two Board sub-committees: Audit, Governance and People, Quality, Finance & Property. To learn more about Southlake and the role of the Board of Directors, visit our website at southlake.ca.

Please send a letter or email describing your background and your interest by **March 11, 2022** to the **Chair, Board of Directors, c/o Tracy Austin, Southlake Regional Health Centre, 596 Davis Drive, Newmarket, L3Y 2P9** or via email to taustin@southlake.ca. Candidates will also be required to provide one or more letters of reference.

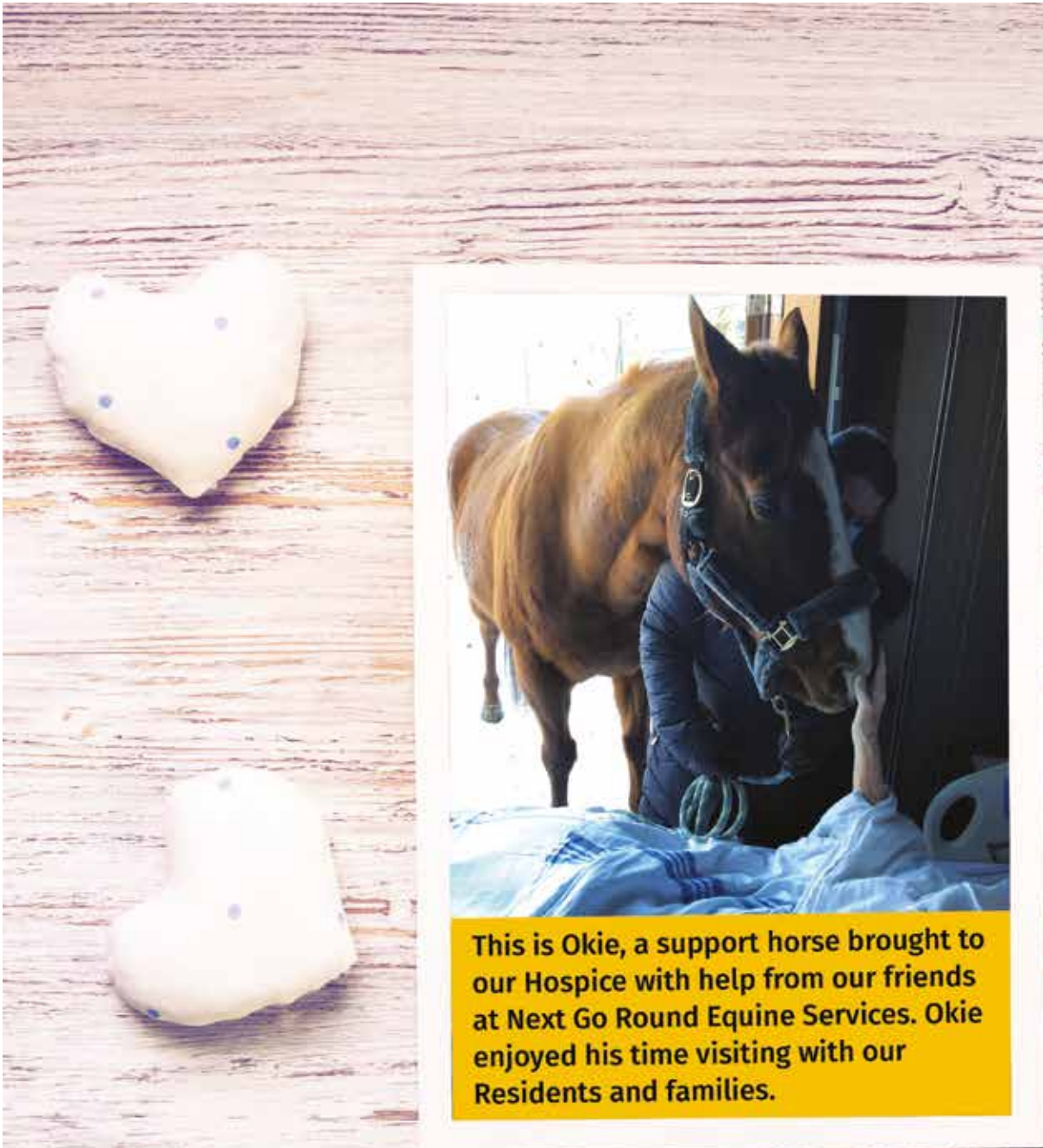
We thank all applicants who apply but regret that only those selected for an interview will be contacted. Applications received will be considered for the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY OPEN HOUSE



Residents of Aurora and Newmarket celebrated International Women’s Day, marked around the world on March 8, when local first responders held an open house to mark the occasion on Saturday. Held at Central York Fire Station 4-1, the event was a chance for community groups in both Aurora and Newmarket to raise awareness and serve the community. Clockwise from Top Left: Cheyanne, Keisha, Suzette and Dominic represented the NACCA - Newmarket African Caribbean Canadian Association. Flying high. Mayor Tom Mrakas meets with members of the Ontario Provincial Police. Jessica gets a taste of life as a member of the Central York Fire Services.

Auroran photos by Glenn Rodger



This is Okie, a support horse brought to our Hospice with help from our friends at Next Go Round Equine Services. Okie enjoyed his time visiting with our Residents and families.

At our Hospices we help to create special “Hospice Moments” that give our residents and their families memories that will last forever.

Recently our staff learned that one of our Residents at Margaret Bahen Hospice had a great love for horses. Our care team quickly sprang into action to create a special Hospice Moment, which ended up being a beautiful experience for our Resident, their family, and our staff.

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

The Aurora Cultural Centre's Great Artist Music Series presents Sarah Hagen in "Perk up, Pianist!" Set to be held at the Aurora Armoury with doors opening at 6.45 for a 7.30 p.m. concert, the concert will offered in-person and virtually. Often referred to as the next Victor Borge, Sarah has transformed her award-winning role as "concert pianist" into a stand-up, or rather, sit-down comedy. Pairing anecdotes with music, "Perk up, pianist!" takes audiences deep inside the world of a classical musician as she shares her earnest efforts to keep her spirits up in the midst of troublesome times. Described as "one of the best hours I've ever spent at the Fringe" (The Coast, Halifax), "Perk up, pianist!" tells the tale of a touring classical musician remaining optimistic in the midst of challenging and ridiculous situations. Of the show's debut at the Toronto Fringe Festival, Montreal Rampage wrote, "Hagen reminds us the beauty of how an honest solo performance can make you so easily fall in love with its performer." Directed by Rick Roberts. Created, written, and performed by Sarah Hagen, with original compositions.

SATURDAY, MARCH 19

The Aurora Cultural Centre Kaleidoscope Family Series proudly presents the

THINGS You Ought To Know

"Nearly World Famous" DuffleBag Theatre in Robin Hood. Hilarious, interactive March Break fun for kids ages 4+. Presented a Theatre Aurora. For info, or to purchase tickets, visit auroraculturalcentre.ca.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

The Aurora Historical Society's Speaker Series will continue tonight from 7 - 9 p.m. with "Embedded: Two Journalists, A Burlesque Star, & The Expedition to Oust Louis Riel," presented by Ted Glenn. In 1870, Garnet Wolseley set off for Red River with 1,110 soldiers to put down the rebellion started by Louis Riel. Two reporters accompanied the expedition, the Telegraph's Robert Cunningham and the Globe's Molyneux St. John. And also along for the journey was St. John's wife, international burlesque star Kate Ranoe. Ted Glenn tells this remarkable story and shares rare images in this presentation. Registration required. Tickets are \$8.50 for AHS members and \$10.50 for the general public. For more, visit aurorahs.com or call 905-727-8991.

THROUGH MARCH 25

The Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts 2022 featuring the work of Aurora's graduating visual artists is now open for both online and in-person visits! Presented in the Centre's temporary gallery on the second floor of Aurora Town Hall, timed entry appointments are available to book in advance. Online gallery also available, including an interactive 3-D map, accompanying ArtByte videos. To visit or make your free appointment, head to auroraculturalcentre.ca/mcoya22.

CONTINUING

Partagez le Français: Ce groupe accueille les ADULTES / 18+ (des francophones aux débutants capables de converser) - qui cherchent à mettre en pratique leurs compétences Conversationnelle en français. Over Zoom with a nominal fee of \$2.50. RSVP by visiting meetup.com/Partagez-le-francais. For more information, email partagez.york@outlook.com.

Support AbuseHurts' Delivering Hope

Full Circle Program textile recycling and donation program. In the current COVID climate, a greater number of people are wanting to donate or get rid of unwanted items, increasing the need for more outlets being available to receive the items. This program will provide a convenient way for people to donate or get rid of used/unwanted clothing, blankets, linens and furniture and will help lessen the amount of items ending up in landfills. Materials that were previously perceived as waste will now be seen as a valuable resource further encouraging redistribution. The items will be recycled in the following ways: To be given to individuals who are survivors of violence and are transitioning from shelters into new homes; To be sold in our store; To be sold to a textile recycler, which makes for an ongoing source of funding for Abuse Hurts enabling them to provide their services to the thousands of people that require them each year. When and Where: Monday and Wednesday, every week, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., with 30-minute time slots - only 1 drop off per time slot. If you do not have an appointment, we cannot accept your donation. The Abuse Hurts Warehouse is located at 1208 Gorham St, Unit 4, Newmarket - rear unloading dock. Visit AbuseHurts.ca to select your drop off time slot.



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

no talk in Sweden about “lost” years of education.

The article, “More Than 400 Studies on the Failure of Compulsory Covid Interventions (Lockdowns, Restrictions, Closures)” is available at brownstone.org

Mr. Doust should learn what libertarians

believe in before belittling them. It would also be a good idea to find out why Television networks CNN, MSNBC, ABC, CBS, and NBC all ignored the anti-lockdown study.

Science is about questioning not censoring scientists.

Shelley Wister
Aurora

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- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- Sales Driven
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Works Well with Deadlines and Budgets
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COMPENSATION:

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Let's Talk.

EMAIL RESUME FOR CONSIDERATION:

Zach Shoub
416-803-9940
zach@lpcmedia.ca



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- Tour groups of students through houses and apartments to rent them out for the annual rental campaign.
- Plan, Prepare and Execute Advertising and Marketing Material for the annual rental campaign.
- Complete all necessary paperwork involved in lease signing and payment collection for newly rented units.
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EXPECTATIONS:

- Have a positive attitude
- Willing to work hard and enjoy rewards in a team environment
- Willing to take chances and learn from your peers

DESIRED SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:

- Sales Driven
- Work well in results based environment
- Goal Oriented
- Great Personal Skills
- Some Sales Skills Preferred but would be willing to train the right candidate
- Marketing and/or Communication education would be a great fit

COMPENSATION:

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By **Julien Laurion**
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

Dear Julien, a friend of mine just purchased a home and did not include a home inspection clause because of this crazy market we are in – is this a big mistake? Would you recommend a home inspection?

Sincerely, CarLover



Hey CarLover, good question!

A home inspection is not necessary for a transaction to occur, but it is always a good idea.

Purchasing a home is a major investment, so why not verify that the home is in good condition.

A qualified home inspector, performing a thorough inspection can spot potentially costly repairs that you, as the new homeowner, may have to undertake.

Prior to the 'COVID housing boom,' the market had cooled and corrected itself a little bit, and sellers were accepting conditional offers on a home inspection and financing.

Typically, if the offer is conditional on a home inspection, you have five business days to get the home inspected.

However, now that market is very hot once again, the majority of accepted offers are firm and over asking price.

Meaning – no conditions, no home inspection and more money!

Saying this, you can always include a home inspection clause, and if you are including a home inspection clause, the wording you choose is critical.

A good home inspection clause should typically include the following: "This offer is conditional upon the inspection of the subject property, by a registered home inspector, at the buyer's own expense and the obtaining of a report satisfactory to the buyer and the buyer's sole and absolute discretion." This type of clause will protect the buyer should

the inspection yield an unfavourable report.

If the inspection raises issues of concern, you will have some options.

One option could be to walk away from the purchase entirely; the second option is to allow the sellers to fix the identified issues before the completion date, or, lastly, reduce the purchase price reflecting the repairs needed.

CarLover, conditions in a contract are to protect you as the buyer from potential headaches.

The purchase of any property is costly and negative consequences could arise when they are not part of the purchase process.

Wherever possible, I always opt to include them. Cheers!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with

Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora.

I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been

involved in this community for over 20 years.

If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home

please feel free to call or email me directly

at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca

or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

MARKET UPDATE – FEBRUARY 2022

AURORA

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

\$1,596,556

AVERAGE 8 DAYS ON MARKET

NUMBER OF SALES

184

316 NEW LISTINGS

SALE TO LIST RATIO

115%

YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE

36.51%

KING

AVERAGE SALES PRICE

\$2,814,774

AVERAGE 21 DAYS ON MARKET

NUMBER OF SALES

56

99 NEW LISTINGS

SALE TO LIST RATIO

99%

YEAR OVER YEAR % CHANGE

38.82%

*The statistics provided were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board's Market Watch February 2022, Summary of Existing Home Transactions for All Home Types • Focus on the MLS Home Price Index for Composite for York Region's Aurora and King

As we approach spring market we are seeing a surge of new listings and while we are continuing to see good sales, things seem to have softened and we are no longer guaranteed multiple offers on a set offer date. Overall, the market is still favourable to Sellers, but Buyers are a little more cautious with the interest rate increase and uncertainty in world affairs. As we continue to see more new inventory in the coming weeks, things will start levelling out and we will start to lean towards a more balanced market.

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4 COMMON
home seller
QUESTIONS

The Michele Denniston team has twenty-plus years of collective real estate experience in the King and surrounding regions. Over our time serving King township, we have helped our clients sell tons of different properties; from modern townhomes to large century farms and everything in between – we have come across frequently asked questions by our clients and are here to answer them for you today!

When is the Best Time to Sell?
 The old rule of thumb when deciding to sell your home was to wait until the months start getting warmer. However, today the market conditions do not mirror seasonal trends. Inventory has become scarce and has increased demand exceedingly in the past few years. Listing today or as soon as possible gets you a great return on your transaction looking at the state of the current market; it is a great time to be a seller.

How Can I Prepare my Home Before Putting it Up for Sale?
 We offer our clients full-scale complimentary staging service and pre-photography consultations if your property is already furnished. However, we also provide our clients with packages outlining key things to prepare. Decluttering your home, dusting, making your home smell good, cleaning glass windows and doors, re-painting trims and door frames, doing other cosmetic jobs, or using our concierge service will help sell your home faster and for more money.

Does Listing Strategy Matter?
 Selling and marketing strategy is a huge reason we advocate sellers to hire experienced and reputable realtors for their homes. Having the ability to optimally strategize and know the best way to sell a property is a skill, not every realtor has. Being able to weigh in on the current market and properly pricing a home are the most important things to do to sell a home successfully. Hire a realtor who knows when to hold for offers or price traditionally and understand that first impressions are everything, and you only have one shot to impress & “wow” the buyer pool. A reputable buyer understands the concept of ‘If the price is right, it sells overnight, price it wrong, it stays on too long’!

How Should I Decide on the Right Realtor?
 We recommend finding a realtor specializing in the neighbourhood or type of home you are selling. It is also wise to look at the realtor’s reviews and testimonials from previous



clients, or even ask the realtor for references from previous clients; that is a great way to develop trust and confidence when hiring them. Lastly, meeting for an initial interview or listing appointment is good for getting to know your realtor personally and deciding if they are the right match for you.

If you are looking to buy or sell in King or have any other real estate inquiries, call our team at (416) 433-8316 or send us an email at michele@micheledenniston.com. We are proud to provide our clients with top-tier service and always offer our expertise.

If You Have More Questions, Call Your Local Real Estate Office Today!
 We hope highlighting these commonly asked seller questions and providing answers will give our clients more knowledge and confidence when looking to sell this spring or summer.

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RESALE
HOMES
COLLECTIONS

Spring home maintenance inside and out

(NC) With spring right around the corner, we're all looking to put those winter blues behind us and get our homes into tip-top shape. But with spring weather being unpredictable, sometimes it's hard to juggle work, life, interior and exterior maintenance.

Get a head start on spring by checking the interior of your home while it's still cold and snowy outside. Here are some of the ways you can be proactive about protecting your home and your health:

- Check and reset ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs)

- Test smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors
- Lubricate weatherstripping and sliding doors and windows
- Check that windows and screens are operating properly
- Check air ducts, remove covers and vacuum dust from vents
- Clean humidifier and check for condensation and proper humidity levels
- Check attic, basement and crawlspaces for leaks or moisture
- Clean or replace your furnace filter
- Check and clean the heat recovery ventilator (HRV); wash or replace the filter
- Check sump pump (if installed) for discharge
- Inspect water heater for leaks

As winter starts to break, you may have more opportunities to check on areas outside the home. In the long run, maintaining the exterior of your home can be just as

important as interior upkeep. When the weather is better, consider the following:

- Check eavestroughs and downspouts for debris
- Check roof for loose or cracked shingles
- Check driveways and walkways for frost damage
- Inspect fences
- Turn on exterior water supply
- Test septic system and clean if necessary
- Plan landscaping to avoid soil settlement and water ponding

Remember to always work safely and do your research before taking on an unfamiliar task. Consider leaving some of the more dangerous tasks, such as checking for mould or roof inspections, to a licensed professional.

Find more home maintenance tips at tarion.com.

www.newscanada.com

Melting rooftop snow can lead to big problems

(NC) Whenever the temperature rises after a cold spell, whether from a winter thaw or the beginning of spring, rooftop snow can lead to damage. Ice damming is a common occurrence, and it can affect both the exterior and interior of your home.

What causes ice damming?

An ice dam is created when snow melts during the day and then freezes again, usually at night around the edges of your roof or eavestroughs. As this barrier of ice gets larger, it prevents further melting snow from draining off the roof.

With no way of leaving your roof, meltwater pools there and backs up under the shingles and into your home, where it can cause damage to the wood structure, insulation, ceiling, wall finishes, furnishings and personal belongings.

Outside, ice dams are not only a safety risk, but they can also cause damage to eaves and lead to the buildup of a white, powdery residue called efflorescence on concrete and brickwork.

Homeowner dos and don'ts

The best thing to do is prevent ice dams before they happen. Soon after a snowfall, use a roof rake to remove snow from the first metre of your roof. If you already have ice buildup and want it removed, consider hiring an experienced professional to do it for you.

Don't climb onto the roof to try to clear snow or ice — you can damage your home and seriously hurt yourself. Throwing salt or de-icing chemicals on roof ice is also a bad idea, as they may cause shingles to deteriorate.

Warranty coverage for ice damming

In most cases, damage associated with ice damming isn't covered by Ontario's new home warranty because it's a natural occurrence that can be prevented through proper maintenance.

However, you may be entitled to coverage for up to two years if the water penetration into your home is the result of a defect in workmanship or materials. If you're unsure, talk to your builder. You can also contact Tarion, the organization that backstops your builder warranty.

Find more information at tarion.com.

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What is a VOC and why should I care?

(NC) Volatile organic compounds, also known as VOCs, are a large group of chemicals commonly found in both indoor and outdoor air that can affect air quality. There are many sources in your home, such as glues, paints, varnishes, adhesives, furnishings, flooring, cleaning products, cooking and tobacco smoke.



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While some VOCs give off distinctive odours, they are often present even if you can't smell them. Exposure to some VOCs indoors can affect your health, depending on which ones are present, the level present and how long you are exposed.

VOCs can cause a variety of health effects, including fatigue, headaches, breathing problems, and irritation of the eyes, nose and throat.

Should I be worried?

For most VOCs, levels found in indoor air in Canadian homes do not generally pose a significant health risk. However, some people may be more sensitive, such as those with asthma, those who are pregnant, children and seniors. That's why it's important to take steps to reduce VOCs in your home.

Simple ways to reduce exposure

- Avoid smoking indoors. Smoke contains many different VOCs.
- Increase ventilation. When possible, use a range hood exhaust fan that vents outside when cooking.
- Maintain your fireplaces and wood stoves, following the manufacturer's instructions, and clean your chimneys regularly.
- Open windows when outdoor air conditions are good. Check the outdoor air quality in your community by visiting the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI).
- Choose low-VOC products when possible.



Some composite wood products (such as flooring), paints, varnishes and cleaning products emit fewer VOCs than others.

- Ensure there is a good seal around any doors connecting the house to an attached garage.
- Open windows when using cleaning products, especially those that have a strong smell.
- Open windows when using home improvement products, including glues, paints, varnishes and adhesives.


Always read and follow label instructions of cleaning and home improvement products. Always store products according to label directions and tightly seal containers to prevent VOC emission during storage.

Minimize the use of scented products, such as plug-in or aerosol air fresheners. These products often contain or produce VOCs to mask odours.

Find more information at canada.ca/healthy-home.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

5 tips for discovering your new neighbourhood

(NC) Moving to a new place involves lots of changes, and it can take time to get used to your new surroundings, including new people, shops, parks and more. But living somewhere new is also an opportunity to explore and build community with your neighbours and in local spaces. Here are some tips to discover your area:

1 CHECK OUT LOCAL EVENTS. While indoor events may be on pause or restricted on and off during the pandemic, communities are still trying to keep outdoor and online events running and accessible. So, join a local online crafting event or virtual trivia games night. Head to an open-air farmers' market or even go to your local outdoor skating rink to get a feel for your neighbourhood. Your public library's website is a good place to find upcoming events.

2 SPEND MORE TIME OUTSIDE. If you're trying to meet people, it can be hard finding the right way to start a conversation. But if you take a long walk through your neighbourhood or take your pup to a nearby dog park, casual chats are more likely to happen naturally. You might compliment someone's outdoor entry arrangement or speak about the weather to a passerby.

3 TAKE A STROLL ALONG MAIN STREET. A great way to get to know your new community is by connecting with small businesses serving the area. Pick up some flowers or plants from your local florist, grab some takeout from the neighbourhood pub and buy some books from your local bookstore. Chat with the folks who work there to get recommendations and build connections.

4 GET ACTIVE IN PUBLIC SPACES. Whether it's a community garden, your local library or a neighbourhood park, find something that interests you and get involved. You can volunteer for a park cleanup, join a virtual book club or begin to plan out your own veggie patch in a community garden while learning about your area.

...A great way to get to know your new community is by connecting with small businesses serving the area...

5 GET TO KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH CENSUS DATA. The 2021 Canadian census data are being released all throughout this year, and it's a great way to find out more about your city, town, or neighbourhood. Use them to discover what languages are commonly spoken in your area, how many families have kids of similar ages as your own and more. By being more informed about your area, you can help drive informed decisions by leveraging your community leaders to consider whether a new school or retirement home is a valuable addition to your neighbourhood.

Find more information at statcan.gc.ca/census.

www.newscanada.com

5 tips for hibernating at home this winter

(NC) Whether it's because of rough weather or a desire to limit contacts during the pandemic, many of us will be spending plenty of time at home these days. Here are some tips to help you have an enjoyable and stress-free season in your refuge from the world:

1 CREATE A COZY SPACE. The first step is making sure you have a warm nest in which to watch movies, read books and cook delicious meals. So, outfit your home with the essentials, like fluffy blankets, fuzzy pillows and plenty of candles (real or LED). Choose colours that bring you joy, whether it's calming neutrals and pastels or bold, energizing shades.

2 DESIGNATE ACTIVITY AREAS. Things can get blurry when you spend lots of time at home, with work bleeding into fun spaces and kids' toys creeping into grownup territory. But even if you have a smaller home, you can establish dedicated areas for each activity using area rugs and hidden storage.

3 DREAM UP THINGS TO DO. While new shows and movies are hitting streaming platforms almost daily, taking a break from screens is a good idea. Prepare some no-tech activities that everyone can enjoy, from fun crafts you find on Pinterest to finally printing your digital photos and sorting them in albums.

4 BATCH COOK FOR LAZY DAYS. On a weekend when you're snowed in or it's way too cold to go outside, dedicate some time to cooking in larger batches and freeze portions of stews, soups, curries and casseroles that you can use later on. This will help you save time and effort in your day to day and means you'll have comfort food ready and waiting in the freezer for those busy workdays or lazy weekends.

5 BE READY WITH HOMEWORK HELP. Whether your kids are learning virtually, in person or a combination of the two, chances are they'll need help with their homework at some point. Easily accessible and user-friendly, online data tools from Statistics Canada are great resources. You'll find insights from the 2021 census that can be useful for many core subject areas, including geography, math, history and language. It's also a great way to help your kids learn about their community and Canada.

Find more information at statcan.gc.ca/census.

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Hedge against inflation with these 3 real estate investment types

The annual inflation rate in Canada is currently around 5.1%—the highest it’s been in 30 years.¹ It doesn’t matter if you’re a cashier, lawyer, plumber, or retiree; if you spend Canadian dollars, inflation impacts you.

Economists expect the effects of inflation, like a higher cost of goods, to continue.² Luckily, an investment in real estate can ease some of the financial strain.

Here’s what you need to know about inflation, how it impacts you, and how an investment in real estate can help.

WHAT IS INFLATION AND HOW DOES IT IMPACT ME?

Inflation is a decline in the value of money. When the rate of inflation rises, prices for goods and services go up. Therefore, a dollar buys you a little bit less with every passing day.

The consumer price index, or CPI, is a standard measure of inflation. Based on the latest CPI data, prices increased 5.1% from January 2021 to January 2022. In comparison, the CPI increased 1.0% from January 2020 to January 2021.³

How does inflation affect your life? Here are a few of the negative impacts:

- **Decreased Purchasing Power**
We touched on this already, but as prices rise, your dollar won’t stretch as far as it used to. That means you’ll be able to purchase fewer goods and services with a limited budget.
 - **Increased Borrowing Costs**
In an effort to curb inflation, the Bank of Canada is expected to raise interest rates.⁴ Therefore, consumers are likely to pay more to borrow money for things like mortgages and credit cards.
 - **Lower Standard of Living**
Wage growth tends to lag behind price increases. Even as labour shortages persist in Canada—which would typically trigger pay raises—wages are not increasing at the same pace of inflation.⁵ As such, life is becoming less affordable for everyone. For example, inflation can force those on a fixed income, like retirees, to make lifestyle changes and prioritize essentials.
 - **Eroded Savings**
If you store all your savings in a bank account, inflation is even more damaging. As of February, the national average deposit interest rate for a savings account was around 0.067%, not nearly enough to keep up with inflation.⁶
- One of the best ways to mitigate these effects is to find a place to invest your money other than the bank. Even though interest rates are expected to rise, they’re unlikely to get high enough to beat inflation. If you hoard cash, the value of your money

will decrease every year and more rapidly in years with elevated inflation.

REAL ESTATE: A PROVEN HEDGE AGAINST INFLATION

So where is a good place to invest your money to protect (hedge) against the impacts of inflation? There are several investment vehicles that financial advisors traditionally recommend, including:

- **Stocks**
Some people invest in stocks as their primary inflation hedge. However, the stock market can become volatile during inflationary times, as we’ve seen in recent months.⁷
 - **Commodities**
Commodities are tangible assets, like gold, oil, and livestock. The theory is that the price of commodities should climb alongside inflation. But studies show that this correlation doesn’t always occur.⁸
 - **Inflation-Protected Bonds**
Real Return Bonds (RRBs) are inflation-protected bonds issued by the Canadian government that are indexed to the inflation rate. Bonds are considered low risk, but returns have not been rising at the same rate of inflation, making them suboptimal investments.⁹
 - **Real Estate**
Real estate prices across the board tend to rise along with inflation, which is why so much Canadian capital is flowing into real estate right now.¹⁰
- We believe real estate is the best hedge against inflation. Owning real estate does more than protect your wealth—it can actually make you money. For example, home prices rose 20% from 2021 to 2022, nearly 15% ahead of the 5.1% inflation that occurred in the same timeframe.¹¹
- Plus, certain types of real estate investments can help you generate a stream of passive income. In the past year, property owners didn’t just avoid the erosion of purchasing power caused by inflation; they got ahead.
- TYPES OF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS**
- Though there are a myriad of ways to invest in real estate, there are three basic investment types that we recommend for beginner and intermediate investors. Remember that we can help you determine which options are best for your financial goals and budget.
- **Primary Residence**
If you own your home, you’re already ahead. The advantages of homeownership become even more apparent in inflationary times. As inflation raises prices throughout the economy, the value of your home is likely to go up concurrently.
- If you don’t already own your primary residence,

homeownership is a worthwhile goal to pursue.

Though the task of saving enough for a down payment may seem daunting, there are several strategies that can make homeownership easier to achieve. If you’re not sure how to get started with the home buying process, contact us. Our team can help you find the strategy and property that fits your needs and budget.

Whether you already own a primary residence or are still renting, now is a good time to also start thinking about an investment property. The types of investment properties you’ll buy as a solo investor generally fall into two categories: long-term rentals and short-term rentals.

- **Long-Term (Traditional) Rentals**
A long-term or traditional rental is a dwelling that’s leased out for an extended period. An example of this is a single-family home where a tenant signs a one-year lease and brings all their own furniture.
- Long-term rentals are a form of housing. For most tenants, the rental serves as their primary residence, which means it’s a necessary expense. This unique quality of long-term rentals can help to provide stable returns in uncertain times, especially when we have high inflation.
- To invest in a long-term rental, you’ll need to budget for maintenance, repairs, property taxes, and insurance. You’ll also need to have a plan for managing the property. But a well-chosen investment property should pay for itself through rental income, and you’ll benefit from appreciation as the property rises in value.
- We can help you find an ideal long-term rental property to suit your budget and investment goals. Reach out to talk about your needs and our local market opportunities.

- **Short-Term (Vacation) Rentals**
Short-term or vacation rentals function more like hotels in that they offer temporary accommodations. A short-term rental is defined as a residential dwelling that is rented for 30 days or less. The furniture and other amenities are provided by the property owner, and today many short-term rentals are listed on websites like Airbnb and Vrbo.
- A short-term rental can potentially earn you a higher return than a long-term rental, but this comes at the cost of daily, hands-on management. With a short-term rental, you’re not just entering the real estate business; you’re entering the hospitality business, too.
- Done right, short-term rentals can be both a hedge against inflation and a profitable source of income. As a bonus, when the home isn’t being rented you have an affordable vacation spot for yourself and your family!
- Contact us today if you’re interested in exploring options in either the long-term or short-term rental market.

Since mortgage rates are expected to rise, you’ll want to act fast to maximize your investment return.

WE’RE INVESTED IN HELPING YOU

Inflation is a fact of life in the Canadian economy. Luckily, you can prepare for inflation with a carefully managed investment portfolio that includes real estate. Owning a primary residence or investing in a short-term or long-term rental will help you both mitigate the effects of inflation and grow your net worth, which makes it a strategic move in our current financial environment.

If you’re ready to invest in real estate to build wealth and protect yourself from rising inflation, contact us. Our team can help you find a primary residence or investment property that meets your financial goals.

The above references an opinion and is for informational purposes only. It is not intended to be financial advice. Consult the appropriate professionals for advice regarding your individual needs.

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Create your comfort zone with hygge style



(NC) Looking for design inspiration that doesn't sacrifice on comfort? Take inspiration from Hygge – the Danish feeling or atmosphere of warmth, relaxation and connection to bring a stylish sense of harmony to your home.

To help you achieve the look in your space, Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert, shares her top three tips.

HYGGE YOUR HOME.

Pronounced hue-guh, hygge is any place that's cozy, comfortable and welcoming. This makes it an ideal esthetic choice for family homes or anywhere you want to get snug. However, the concept is also a celebration of Scandinavian design, and embraces a simple, uncluttered and functional approach to living.

"Hygge is about comfort, but not about clutter," explains Grech. "To create a streamlined but cozy space, choose furniture with concealed storage and opt for pieces with clean modern lines for a Scandi-chic feel."

INVITING LAYERS.

A warm atmosphere is a hallmark of the style. From sitting surrounded by candlelight or next to a blazing fire with friends, creating a backdrop for peaceful moments will help you embrace hygge.

"Add warmth to any room with soft lighting, textiles and natural materials such as wood and wicker," suggests Grech. These elements invite you to linger and get comfortable.

LOOK TO THE SKIES.

For an easy way to get the look, consider repainting in a hue that evokes the colours of Scandinavian skies.

You can give your space a hygge makeover by painting a room or accent wall with a product like Aura interior paint in a matte finish that will stay true over time. "Steam AF-15 and Quiet Moments 1563 are colours that instantly create serenity and invite light into any space."

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"Many thanks to Daryl King and the entire Daryl King Team on the successful sale of our home. Daryl's expertise and assistance in preparing our home for sale together with his in-depth knowledge of current area market conditions were invaluable to our successful sale process. Daryl and his team were courteous, responsive and professional."



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"I would highly recommend Daryl King. When we were thinking of selling our house, we reached out to him as he has sold many luxury houses in our neighbourhood. After meeting with Daryl we knew we were in good hands. Daryl and his Team are very professional. He did an in-depth market analysis to help us determine a selling price. We sold our house in just 5 days for the highest price in the neighbourhood! If you are looking for an agent to sell your house, Daryl King should be your first choice."

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*The Daryl King Team consists of 43 registered Sales Representatives. **All data compiled by RE Stats Inc. from TREB for closed transactions +/- 2.5% on volume basis in 2020. Based on data collected within ReMax network in Canada in 2020. Not intended to solicit clients currently under contract with another Brokerage.