

Federal grant will help Aurora tell the history of Town Park

By Brock Weir

For nearly 150 years, Town Park has been a magnet for the Aurora Community.

It has provided a backdrop to countless community celebrations, a place for the community to gather to give the boys going overseas in the First World War a proper send-off, and the scene of at least one definitive speech in Canada's history.

It has a storied history and now these stories will be told thanks to a grant from the Federal Government.

The Aurora Museum and Archives has received a \$10,000 infusion from the Virtual Museum of Canada's Community Memories Investment Program to develop an online exhibition turning the spotlight on Town Park.

Announced earlier this month by Councillor Paul Pirri, the Town announced how the money would be used last week.

"This investment from the Virtual Museum of Canada will enable the Aurora Museum & Archives not only to share historical stories relating to Town Park in a compelling format, but also to document the continuing narrative of this special place from current residents," said Shawna White, Curator of the Aurora Museum and Archives in a statement.

The project was also welcomed by Mayor Geoff Dawe.

"I am pleased to receive this federal investment that will help highlight one of the oldest treasures in Aurora," he said. "This funding not only showcases an important piece of Aurora's history, but also focuses on the importance of the past and how it relates to the future. Thank you to the Virtual Museum of Canada for recognizing this important piece of history in our Town."

This important piece of history is one of the many facets of Downtown Aurora currently being examined by the Aurora Museum & Archives in their ongoing exhibition focusing on the Town's proposed Cultural Precinct. The online presence, however, will focus specifically on this one important section of the precinct from its establishment in the middle of the 19th century to its place in the Aurora of today.

"As part of the research process, the Aurora Museum & Archives will be hosting a series of story-sharing events with their project partners: the Aurora Public Library and the Aurora Historical Society," said the Town. "These events will provide individuals with an opportunity to contribute their own personal Town Park stories and memories."

"Aurora's Town Park is a remarkable example of an intentionally planned green space that, throughout its history, has been bordered by a mix of residential, industrial and commercial buildings. The activities and events in Town Park have changed over the years, but its function as a community space has been constant."

The exhibition is expected to launch in June of 2017.