

## Future of Aurora's Canada Post bylaw remains 'elephant in room'

**By Brock Weir**

Earlier this year, Aurora followed in the footsteps of the City of Hamilton in trying to regulate where Canada Post places new community mailboxes as they phase out door-to-door mail delivery service.

While Hamilton's bylaw was ultimately thrown out by a judge after Canada Post took the municipality to the Federal Courts, Aurora's bylaw still remains on the books.

The bylaw in question, which was passed by Council this past spring on a 7-2 vote, was first floated by Councillor Tom Mrakas. Its intent was to require Canada Post to apply for permits with the municipality in the same way other companies like Rogers and Bell do on the placement of their street hardware.

Its effectiveness and its future, however, were called into question when representatives from Canada Post appeared before Council last month to answer community concerns over mail services and their community mailbox installation plans.

They said they brought forward mailbox agreements hammered out at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to Aurora's attention when they found out the agreement had not already been shared with the local municipality and also as the wheels began to advance Aurora's own bylaw. They said they hoped the agreement might facilitate 'an agreement going forward without going forward with that bylaw.'

'As you can appreciate, every municipality in Canada [is moving towards the phasing-out of] door-to-door delivery,' said Canada Post representative Andrew Walasek. 'Having to work with individual bylaws really isn't feasible. That is why we do have this umbrella agreement we use. Unfortunately, this didn't get into the hands of the proper people back when this process started.'

Councillor Mrakas, on the other hand, highlighted the agreement in question acknowledges the municipality has jurisdiction of the roadways and rights of way impacted by the placement of these boxes and questioned why the issue of applying for a permit for their placement isn't feasible.

'It comes down to an issue where this is being [rolled out] across the country over the next five years,' said Mr. Walasek. 'I can certainly appreciate municipal jurisdiction and that is why we try to speak with municipalities. We try to work with municipalities to find the best sites that are possible. We have had a lot of success across the country working in places that have already been converted and our hope certainly today is we will have that in Aurora as well.'

Despite the delegation, Councillor Mrakas said he remained glad Aurora enacted its own bylaw because, in its absence, the 'meaningful consultation' now underway would not have been happening. For Councillor Michael Thompson, however, whether or not Canada Post intended to 'adhere' to Aurora's bylaw remained 'the elephant in the room'.

'This is a discussion we will certainly have to follow up,' said Mr. Walasek. 'Perhaps this forum isn't the ideal one to have it at the moment, but there will certainly need to be discussions with the municipality.'

Added Councillor Thompson: 'Certainly from our perspective, that would ensure that there is meaningful consultation because it provides us with that meaningful opportunity as opposed to some of the discussions earlier where the driver was meeting deadlines.'