

VOTE 2014: Gallo throws hat into mayoral race, challenging Dawe



By Brock Weir

Aurora's Mayoral race is on.

After months of speculation, Councillor John Gallo formally filed his papers to challenge incumbent Mayor Geoffrey Dawe for Aurora's top job in the municipal election this October.

He filed his papers Friday morning at Town Hall.

In a statement, Councillor Gallo said the time has come "for a modern, comprehensive vision for Aurora."

"I am very excited about putting forward a progressive campaign for the residents of this Town," he said. "It will be released in due course. I believe I am the right Mayor for the future of this Town. I have the passion, leadership experience and vision to lead Aurora into the future.

"I have a vision for what I believe Aurora means to youth, seniors, families, businesses and new residents."

He added he also wants to bring a "new sense of openness to the Mayor's office."

Mayor Dawe declared his intentions to seek re-election on February 14.

So far, just two candidates are formally seeking Aurora's top elected office. Seven are currently vying for eight Council positions, including incumbent Councillors John Abel and Wendy Gaertner.

After filing his papers last week, Councillor Gallo had little to add on his platform, but promised a "wait and see."

"In due course, the whole program will be laid out and described," he said. "I am putting forward a progressive platform that is going to resonate [with residents] and I feel very strongly they are going to get behind me and support it. It is going to be a dynamic, exciting campaign."

Before Christmas, Councillor Gallo would not rule out speculation he was gearing up to join the Mayoral race, saying he was "flattered" that some people were putting his name into the conversation, but said "you have to be in the right place at the right time in your life, and I don't know whether I am there or not."

Also playing a role in his consideration was his family, including a young son and daughter. Finding the right balance between home, his professional life, as well as Council, was delicate. Although he was uncertain at that point what role he wanted to play in the future, he said the Council table was where he saw himself in the future.

‘I want to be there until the point where I am not enjoying myself anymore and I don't think I can contribute,’ he said at the time. ‘I am not there yet. I am still enjoying myself and hopefully I am contributing in one capacity or another. I would still like to be there.

While he was then uncertain of whether he was ‘there’ at that point in his life before Christmas, he told The Auroran on Friday, he decided he was in the right place around the holiday season.

‘I have been thinking about this probably for the past year and a half,’ he said. ‘A lot of different factors played into [timing], my family, my kids, and I have a business I run so a lot of things needed to be lined up, so I can feel confident I can dedicate the time necessary to do the job. I really solidified that over Christmas.

‘I think it is time for a progressive vision to take Aurora in for the future, and I finally came to that realization that I am the one to do that.’

As far as priorities go, Councillor Gallo is currently scant on detail, but he has told The Auroran that for the remainder of this Council term he wanted to focus on bringing Aurora's Cultural Master Plan into fruition, implementing a ‘green’ procurement policy at Town Hall, and keeping a close eye on the developments of the Joint Operations Centre, as well as the Town's fight with Minto Developments over six acres of vacant land on Mavrinac Boulevard residents would like to see become a parkland.

John Gallo first became a member of Aurora Council in the 2006 – 2010 term. He was appointed to Council midway through the term, in 2008, to replace Grace Marsh, who resigned her council position.

He was elected to Council for the first time in 2010, where he placed fifth, behind Councillors Abel, Michael Thompson, Evelyn Buck, and Sandra Humfries.