

INSIDE AURORA: Alternate Reality

By Scott Johnston

"Next up on the agenda is the motion to provide the Town of Aurora with a second seat on Regional Council."

This was one of the first items to be considered at that month's Regional Council meeting. The Chair looked up from his notes, and addressed his colleagues.

"This is an issue that has been under consideration for some time. As you will recall from our last meeting, there were a number of impassioned statements on both sides of this subject."

"Some members felt that Aurora had grown large enough to merit additional representation at this table. Others argued that based on the overall regional population, and the current number of seats on this Council, a single seat for that town was the appropriate number for at least the next few years."

"It was a pretty lengthy discussion, and we have a full agenda tonight, so I don't think we need to rehash any of those previously expressed views and opinions at this time. So, if there are no new points to raise..."

He paused to ensure that no one wanted to take advantage of this final opportunity to bring forward some new angle on this subject that had yet to be considered.

Although there were a few glances around the table, the Chamber remained quiet.

"Then, in that case, it's time to vote."

He looked around the room. "All in favour of the motion on the floor?"

A series of hands went up. He waited while the Clerk recorded the numbers.

"All opposed?"

More hands were raised

Giving the Clerk another minute to finish counting, and documenting the vote, the Chair finally asked, "Would the Clerk please advise us of the results?"

"It was a tie, Mr. Chair."

There was a low murmur from those assembled.

"A tie?! Are you sure?"

"Yes, sir. I checked it twice. Ten in favour, and ten opposed."

"Well then," the Chair said, looking around the room. "As you know, a motion is defeated on a tie vote. Let it be recorded that this body has determined that there will be no additional seat for the Town of Aurora at Regional Council at this time. We'll reconsider this item again in ...", he checked his notes to see what timeframe had been previously established, "...three years."

"And now, on to the next item."

As the Chair continued working through the agenda, a member sitting a few seats away quietly nudged her neighbour. Indicating an empty seat across the floor she whispered, "Where's the Mayor of Aurora? I thought for sure he'd be here for this."

"I expect he wanted to be, but I hear he's really sick today."

"Too sick to come in?"

"Apparently."

"That's too bad. If only Aurora had followed the lead of King and permanently appointed an alternate to fill the Mayor's place in his absence."

"Yeah," her neighbour agreed. "With that back-up member present, their deciding vote would have carried the motion for an additional representative in Aurora's favour."

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