

# INSIDE AURORA: The Decision

By Scott Johnston

'I'm afraid we have a problem with the nominees for Councillor, Mr. Mayor.'

With the recent departure of Councillor Ballard, there was a vacancy on Council. With several months until the next election, the Municipal Act dictated that the Town couldn't leave the seat empty that long. It would have to be filled.

After much discussion, it was decided that the position would be open to any Aurora resident over the age of 18, who wished to apply.

Candidates would be given a few minutes to present their arguments for consideration. The evening of July 29 had been set aside to hear them, and for Council to render a decision.

It was a bother to have to go through all this for the sake of an extra attendee at the few remaining Council meetings of the term, but the Mayor was sure that wasn't the issue the staffer was bringing to his attention.

'What sort of problem?' he sighed.

'There are too many nominees.'

'Well, that's a good thing. It'll give us a variety of skillsets to consider, and' wait a minute,' he paused, looking the staffer in the eye.

'Just how many?'

The man shuffled slightly and cleared his throat.

'3,487.'

'What! That many?!'

The staffer counted off on his fingers.

'Maybe it's because there were no restricting qualifications, or it's summer when people have time on their hands, or maybe because it would look good on a resume, or a Fall campaign sign' In any case,' he concluded, stating the obvious, 'a lot of people decided to apply.'

'But three thousand plus?'

'I agree there's no way we could hear them all in one night. In fact, my team crunched the numbers, and if Council listened to nominations for four hours a night, five days a week, we should be able to go through them all by' he consulted his notes,

'November 20.'

'November 20!' sputtered the Mayor.

'That's assuming three minutes of speaking time each, plus a minute and a half for questions, and 30 seconds to line up the next person, plus a few nights off for holidays and regular Council and Committee meetings, and some time for Council to properly deliberate on the nominees before making a decision.'

'But late November? the election is October 27, and the Act says we have to have someone in place by the end of August.'

'Well, we could speed up the process by going 5 hours a night, and throwing in a few week-ends. If we really pushed it, maybe we could be done in late October.'

'Well, that obviously won't work, either,' said the Mayor. 'What other options do we have?'

'We could allocate less time per person.'

'Would that save us enough time to do them within say, a week?'

'Well, not really.'

The Mayor's office was quiet for a minute as the men thought.

'We could go with the original idea of just choosing the 9th place finisher from the last election.'

'No,' said the Mayor, rubbing his temples. 'We've already committed to this process, and all these people have applied. We can't go back.'

The staffer snapped his fingers. 'Why not just dispense with the meeting and questions entirely, and evaluate them based on what they included in their applications?'

'Perfect,' beamed the Mayor. 'Your team could prepare a report and recommendations for Council.'

'I'm sorry, but that won't work, Mr. Mayor. The Act specifically says that Council has to make a decision based on its own evaluation.'

'You mean?'

'Yes, you and the other Council members will have to go through the applications yourselves,' he confirmed, dropping a file box on

the Mayor's desk.

The Mayor pulled out a random bunch of papers. ?Well, I suppose one box isn't so??

?I'll have the other 63 boxes brought right up,? interjected the staffer, stepping out of the room.

The Mayor sighed again. It was going to be a long two weeks.

Feel free to e-mail Scott at: [machellscorners@gmail.com](mailto:machellscorners@gmail.com)