

Reader fears Council history will repeat itself

John Gallo and Wendy Gaertner formed part of the bloc of six on council from 2006 to 2010 and there were countless news stories, cartoons, letters to the editor and editorials that painted a picture of their style of government.

I think that it is worth considering a sampling of a few of the headlines to the editorial written by the late Dick Illingworth between 2006 to 2009, keeping in mind that Dick was a well-respected past mayor and councillor, who also had provincial government experience. This is the kind of government that Geoff Dawe inherited and, in my opinion, turned around with the support of a new kind of majority.

These are the headlines that most people in Aurora had to read when Gallo and Gaertner were in the majority?

- Council should not meddle in school board's business
- Things that bug me at council meetings are in abundance
- Letters reveal what people are thinking
- Council split in two camps
- Too many items being discussed away from public
- Traffic calming plan now biting council
- Aurora Council is a paradox
- Public has a right to know the outcome of that meeting
- Financial burden on the horizon
- Town will have tough time winning issue
- Time is now for a decision on power
- Information still held from public
- This council is an embarrassment and a disgrace
- Aurora Council needs to make a few decisions
- Controversial group is still differing decisions
- Province may decide where plant is built (NOTE: which the province ultimately did)
- Council walks a narrow line
- Citizen's lose battle between council, staff
- Conflict of interest rules are confusing members of council
- Soothsayer wonders what is going on at political level
- Frustrated, Aurora Annie talks politics
- The whole year a roller coaster ride for council
- Council running out of time before next election

Dick Illingworth passed away in March 2009, not long before the former council agreed to fund a private defamation lawsuit with the use of public funds and the Town's solicitor.

Master Hawkins of the Superior Court of Ontario ultimately determined that the private defamation lawsuit was a strategic lawsuit against public participation (i.e. a SLAPP litigation).

Can we afford to risk going back to those days?

Richard Johnson
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(Editor's Note: Mr. Johnson was one of three defendants in the defamation suit referenced above.)