

# VOTE 2014: You have to be in the right place at the right time of your life, says Gallo

**By Brock Weir**

As Councillor John Gallo enters the final months of his second term on Council, he looks back on a term very different from his first.

Although this is his second term as a Councillor, it is his first full term in the role, having been appointed midway through the last Council. Having been elected in 2010, he came in at the ground floor this term comfortable in both his knowledge and position, and that has been an asset, he says.

‘I find that I do well when that comfort level is there, that I am confident in what I am saying and what I am doing that I can contribute so much more,’ he says. ‘I find I am almost there.’

That being said, however, with election season officially kicking off Thursday, he is weighing his options on the future. He says he has put a lot of thought into ‘different things’ and is ‘excited’ about things outside of politics, but has not made a decision one way or another.

Over the last several months, speculation has percolated from time to time the Councillor might be considering a run for Aurora's top job. He says he is ‘flattered’ by mayoral speculation, but will not rule it out.

‘In that position, 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,’ he says. ‘I think I am going to have to think long and hard on what position I want to be in for the next four years. I want to be [in the Council chamber] until the point I am not enjoying myself anymore and I don't think I can contribute. I'm not there yet, I am still enjoying myself, and hopefully I am contributing in one capacity or another.’

Factoring into his decision will be his family. It is a big commitment, he says, adding he does not take his ‘presence’ at Council lightly. Finding balance between his professional life and family is key before he likely makes his decision early in the year.

While he says he is still enjoying himself on Council, he has mixed feelings on the current term.

‘I think we started off well, but I think at some point personalities started getting in the way of our town business,’ he says. ‘Generally speaking, I found people turned off depending on who was speaking, not necessarily what they were saying, and I found that very frustrating.’

‘It's pretty clear with some people around the Council table, unfortunately, when you say something they attack you personally rather than what you actually contributed to the discussion.’

Among the highlights of the Council term from his perspective is the establishment of Aurora's Strategic Plan, moving forward with the Joint Operations Centre on Industrial Parkway North, as well as public engagement at the committee level. When asked if he had any goals he wanted to achieve off the bat when returned to Council with a mandate, he said he does not find it particularly valuable to set specific goals.

‘I didn't go into the term saying I wanted to build a youth centre or implement something; it is always very focused on what is in front of me and making it the best it can be. I think the way Council sits, it is very tough for any one person to move a particular project forward,’ he says.

Looking back on the term, however, one particular item he says he would like to hang his hat on is the new agreement between the Town and the Aurora Cultural Centre, something that ‘came out of a negative.’

"It remains intact and I put a lot of effort in to fight for that place," he says. "I think it probably didn't require the effort we put into it to get it where we are now, but it was something that I needed to be done that I didn't really want to do and I didn't think was really necessary, but I felt I had to contribute to making sure that place remained what it was."

With little over 10 months left of the 2010-2014 Council term, Councillor Gallo says staying the course on the Cultural Centre remains on his to-do list here on out. Seeing through Aurora's Cultural Master Plan is a top priority, along with bringing in a green procurement policy for giving greater weight to purchasing "green" at Town Hall, keeping his eye on the potential for a six acre park on Mavrinac Boulevard, and securing a place for himself on the board of the Aurora Cultural Centre.