

1867-built homes will be Canada 150 proud

By Brock Weir

On Saturday, Canada will mark very important milestone, but as old as the nation gets, Aurora will still have a few years on it. Those homes that were here at the moment Canada was actually a unified nation will soon be able to bear that mark of distinction with a special commemorative plaque issued by the Town of Aurora.

Council recently greenlit a heritage plaque program that will see the owners of homes that built in Aurora the year Queen Victoria unified Canada East (Ontario), Canada West (Quebec), along with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick receive these special markers. The plaque initiative was brought forward by Councillors Tom Mrakas and Jeff Thom.

In their motion, they said it is a matter of taking pride in ? and promoting ? heritage properties.

?We sat down and talked about this and I think it is a great thing to move forward because it is a great way to celebrate the 150th birthday of Canada while also promoting and celebrating our Town heritage at the same time,? said Councillor Mrakas. ?I think it is an excellent way to combine them both and utilize the fact that it is Canada's 150th birthday. I am looking forward to identifying those properties that were constructed in 1867.?

Added Councillor Thom, ?I am sure all of Council is interested in heritage preservation and commemoration and I am happy to support this.?

Looking ahead to the actual plaque program, Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Public Planning, said Aurora has an inventory of at least 20 homes built on or before Confederation and, using this information at their disposal, it would be relatively simple to whittle down a list of homes and buildings to be honoured.

The final number is 24.

Before Council approved the program, however, a note of caution was offered.

In some cases, heritage plaques signify a heritage designation. This, they said, would not be the case with the Canada 150 plaques. ?We already have commemorative plaques that we give out,? said Councillor Mrakas. ?If you do get presented this commemorative plaque, it does not mean that your house or property will be designated or listed. It will just celebrate the fact that your property was constructed 150 years ago.?

The motion received widespread support of Council.

?I think it is a really great way to use the Heritage Reserve Fund,? said Councillor Wendy Gaertner on how the Town plans to pay for it.

The design of the plaque ? and the list of homes set to receive them ? will be unveiled during Canada Day Celebrations at Lambert Willson Park on Saturday morning.