

36-year-old faces murder charges following Edward Street fire



By Brock Weir

A 36-year-old Aurora woman is facing second degree murder charges following a fatal housefire in the early hours of Saturday morning.

On July 27, just before 1 a.m. York Regional Police and Central York Fire Services were called to an inferno on Edward Street, between Metcalfe Street and Harrison Avenue.

There, officers found the house, which had recently been sold, fully engulfed.

Central York Fire Services had knocked down the fire by 2 a.m. and when they were able to enter the home, they found the body of an individual, believed to be an adult man, deceased.

By the end of the day on Saturday, the York Regional Police Homicide Unit had arrested Melissa Galea, 36, a resident of Aurora, and charged her with Second Degree Murder.

Ms. Galea was held in custody and made her first appearance before the Ontario Court of Justice on Sunday.

York Regional Police Constable Andy Pattenden told The Auroran that the suspect was arrested at her residence, which is not far from the location of the homicide.

Constable Pattenden said Tuesday morning the homicide took place in a tight community and investigators have been on the scene since the fire broke out speaking to neighbours and potential witnesses.

One such witness, Dave Cook, who has been living part-time in the community since June, said he was woken up at the time of the

fire by the sounds coming from the scene.

There were two girls who stopped [when they saw the fire] and called it in," said Mr. Cook. "When I went out, I was talking to them and stuff, but I didn't see anything except for a lot of flames. The fire was huge."

Mr. Cook said he was surprised he didn't see more neighbours come outside at the time of the fire, including the residents of homes on either side of the inferno.

"I was pretty much alone out there," he said. "I never saw [the owner of the home] outside, so I thought he was still inside when the whole house was engulfed by the time I was out there and the firemen were there, but apparently it wasn't him inside but somebody else."

While Mr. Cook said he has not seen the primary resident of the home on the scene since the fire and he understood the resident was not affiliated with the victim, Constable Pattenden said more details would be coming within days as the investigation continues.

"At this point in time, we're awaiting the results from the post-mortem," said Constable Pattenden. "From there, we will be able to confirm the identity of the victim and the cause of death."

Last weekend was a tough one for the York Regional Police, who are also in the midst of investigating a quadruple homicide in Markham, which took place Sunday.

"We should have more information before the week is over," said Constable Pattenden. "Right now, we're kind of at the mercy of the coroner who is very busy. If anyone has any other information and they haven't spoken to investigators yet, definitely come forward and speak with us. At this point in time, we're not looking for any other suspects and we do believe the person we have in custody is responsible for this and that's why they have now been charged. Our investigators are still working through a lot of evidence and all that forensics work is still going on, but if [any members of the public] know anything and haven't spoken with Police, please come forward."

Anyone with information is asked to contact the York Regional Police Homicide Unit at 1-866-876-5423 x2865 or via email at homicide@yrp.ca. Tips can also be left anonymously with Crime Stoppers by calling 1-800-222-TIPS, or logging them online at www.1800222TIPS.com.

The charges have not been proven in court.