

Aurora deserves good government

Re: Brock's Banter ? The Money Pit (July 24, 2013)

Your article hit the nail on the head, if I may add to your cliches.

The issue of cost escalation has become a matter of trusting our local government to conduct due diligence and to be open with citizens. Surely the present state of the AFLC should have been assessed and duly presented to Council before any financial approval was given. Throughout we have been subjected to creeping variable increases.

When the subject first came to Council, I believed that the Recreation Department survey was not well done. It didn't sound as though the survey was randomized. It would be interesting to see how the questions were presented. For some time I have been skeptical when hearing a Rec Department presentation that expands its activities; sometimes called empire building.

I don't have the answer to the following question but it should have been debated at Council, "What is appropriate for a local government to provide for youth development, and occupation of leisure time?"

Before proceeding with more funding, I suggested that there should be an inventory of all facilities and services in Aurora of which youth may take advantage, for example schools, churches, Cultural Centre, privately operated sports and arts businesses, as well any town facilities, including the Seniors' Centre.

Then a youth centre could be designed to fill any gaps. This should have been accompanied by a determination of the rate of youth participation in existing programs.

Early in the discussions I sent these comments to Councillor Pirri, "I find your quoted comments in The Auroran on this subject (youth centre) very disturbing in that you seem to deem that your responsibility to support staff, overrides your responsibility to the citizens of Aurora, (i.e. to ensure that our taxes are used wisely).

Staff deserves to be challenged to ensure their conclusions are not biased. I would appreciate seeing a clear vision of the need for this youth centre before our funds are expended on any consultants."

There also appeared to be reluctance by the recreation director to provide a business plan. Again, judging by his quote in The Auroran, he seemed to say he couldn't develop a plan until a facility was chosen.

Surely his responsibilities include being able to envisage and to develop complex proposals without having a specific location and facility.

In the end, the agenda was pushed forward without a comprehensive vision and business plan in spite of some thoughtful Councillors pushing for them.

I am sure that this process does not meet the standard that Dr Ursula Franklin, a noted Canadian scientist and social activist, had in mind when she put forward her concept that, "Canadians deserve good government."

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