

Durrant launches Mayoral bid



Local business owner Phiona Durrant has launched her bid to become Aurora's next mayor.

Ms. Durrant, founder of the Aurora Black Community Association (ABC), filed her nomination papers at Town Hall on Thursday afternoon, stating that ?work is needed? when it comes to leadership in Aurora.

?One of the main issues for me [running] is very simple and that is bringing a community together,? she said. ?I want [to provide] leadership for all people, and I feel ? and have experienced ? this as one of the things that has been lacking. I have talked to people for years, listened to their thoughts and concerns, and what I know and have witnessed is when residents feel listened to and heard we can see how successful Aurora can be.?

As she pursues Aurora's top job, Ms. Durrant says she wants people to see "a strong person who has lived here for 16 years, raised her children, run businesses, and been a voice of advocacy for leadership.?

As she begins her campaign, she says she is looking forward to meeting residents, hearing their concerns, and looking for ways to make a difference.

As President of the ABC and former member of the Town's Anti-Racism and Anti-Black Racism Task Force, she says these experiences have shown her that making that difference takes ?work, commitment and dedication.?

?It is not about being popular, it takes dedication,? she says. ?I am really focused on the people.?

?Give me a chance,? she continues. ?Nobody starts out in any position knowing everything. I want to be given the opportunity to be heard, not to be judged on [the basis] that I'm a woman, Black, or have not been on Council before; that pushes you to work as a team and you're also open to learn more things.

?The campaign I'm running is to bring the community together. It is not to support division. I am not here because I am a ?this' hater or ?that' hater; we are here because of our love for community.?

Ms. Durrant plans to outline her campaign platform at a formal launch next month.

As of Thursday, July 21, Ms. Durrant is the only Aurora resident who has filed to run for the office of Mayor.

Others in the Council race include incumbents Rachel Gilliland, who is seeking re-election in Ward 2, Wendy Gaertner, who is seeking re-election in Ward 3, and Harold Kim, who is seeking re-election in Ward Six, while newcomer Iwona Czarnecka has filed to be elected in Ward 5.

There were no registered candidates for Wards 1 and 4.

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter