

Former mayor threw councillor "under the bus", testifies resident

By Jeff Doner & Brock Weir

Former mayor Phyllis Morris threw Councillor Evelyn Buck "under the bus" in events leading up to the Councillor's lawsuit against Ms. Morris, and members of the last term of Council.

These were the words of Aurora resident Peter Storms as he took to the stand as one of the final witnesses called to testify on Councillor Buck's behalf last week. David Boghosian, lawyer for Ms. Morris, Councillors Wendy Gaertner and John Gallo, and former councillors Stephen Granger, Evelina MacEachern, and Al Wilson made their case the following afternoon.

Mr. Storms, an Aurora resident of 20 years, and a campaign volunteer for former mayor Tim Jones, told the court he reached out to Councillor Buck's lawyer that weekend after reading *The Auroran*. What caught his eye were comments relating to a May, 2009 Council meeting where volunteer Sher St. Kitts came to Council's Open Forum to raise issue with what she claimed was "harassment" from Councillor Buck.

Mr. Storms said he saw the meeting unfold on television that evening and Ms. Morris did not "defend" her fellow Council member. He then claimed he had a chance encounter with Ms. Morris at a local supermarket soon after where he mentioned the "interesting theatre in a recent Council meeting."

Mr. Storms said he observed Ms. Morris as "agitated" and "almost angry" before she referred to Councillor Buck as an "old cow", "senile", and "a nuisance."

It seemed to him, he said, that Ms. Morris had thrown Councillor Buck "under the bus again."

Countering his claims, Mr. Boghosian underscored Mr. Storms' volunteerism with Mr. Jones' campaign, including his last mayoral campaign in which Ms. Morris handily beat Mr. Jones to the post.

Ms. Morris disputed Mr. Storms' claims on Monday.

Last Tuesday's testimony included words from Town Clerk John Leach, and former councillor Grace Marsh who served on the 2006 term of Council until her resignation in 2008, who spoke of her relationship with Councillor Buck during their Council time together.

"I believe Evelyn is extremely honest," said Ms. Marsh. "I think she has a high level of integrity with me, personally."

Ms. Marsh's testimony was followed by John Rogers, CAO for the Town of Aurora between 2005 and 2008. Mr. Rogers told the court he had known Ms. Buck professionally for over 25 years and characterized her as an "extremely honest person" with an honesty "so strong and direct you don't want to hear it."

"Integrity has always, in the political arena, been there," he said.

Mr. Boghosian pointed out Mr. Rogers was terminated as CAO by the former Council of which six of his clients were members.