

GETTING THINGS DONE

By **Mayor Tom Mrakas**

This is the first of what will be weekly columns in The Auroran, by me, your Mayor.

This will be done after every Council meeting to inform and engage you the residents about what is happening at Town Hall.

Well, I can't think of a better way to start this off than with the topic that Council dealt with on January 22.

Council held a Special Council meeting to deliberate on the issue of whether Aurora should opt in or opt out of allowing a retail cannabis store. After much discussion, Council voted 5-1 to opt-In and allow a retail cannabis storefront to operate in the Town of Aurora.

In speaking to this issue, I stated that I believe that rather than focusing on highly-regulated retail sales, that our focus should be on developing a task force to deal with enforcement issues as they relate to public health, cannabis use in public spaces, impaired driving and safety issues related to home growing.

Whether we have a retail outlet or not, we still must deal with enforcement issues for which taxpayers will bear the cost. Opting in will allow us to partially offset those costs by receiving additional funding from the government.

Residents have been very passionate about this issue ? both for and against. While some may not agree with the majority of Council's decision, or may not agree with others' points of view, I am confident that regardless of one's position, we recognize that we are all Aurorans and respect the opinions of our friends and neighbours.

As I said at the table, Council's role is to make decisions that are in the best interest of the community as a whole. And that those decisions should be informed decisions, based on the best available information -- and leave the emotions aside.

And that is what Council has done.

Aurora joins the approximately 81 per cent of municipalities across the province that have opted in to allowing a federally legislated legal substance to be sold in a highly regulated retail storefront.

Going forward, my focus will be to work together with municipal colleagues across the Region to address issues of enforcement and zoning controls within our municipalities. We will ensure that our voices continue to be heard by other levels of government.

There are a number of very strict rules and regulations in place regarding the public use of cannabis. If you would like more information, please visit aurora.ca/cannabis.

Well, that is all for the first column of ?Getting Things Done? I am looking forward to working together with all of you as we move forward over the next four years and if you would like to get into contact with me please feel free to contact me anytime by phone 905-727-3123 ext. 4746 or by email tmrakas@aurora.ca and if you would like to sign up for more newsletters and council updates then please visit Mrakas.ca/contact to join the growing list of Aurorans that are staying informed