

IN GOOD COMPANY: Looking ahead to the future in hotel development

By Mayor Geoff Dawe

Welcome to Spring! With the warmer weather approaching, I hope that you and your families take this opportunity to explore the many parks and trails in Aurora.

Don't miss Aurora's Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, March 26 from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Aurora Seniors' Centre. There will be a variety of fun activities including face painting, an egg hunt, craft making and more. Wristbands for the event must be purchased in advance. The cost is \$5 per child. Parents are free.

Activities for the event will inside the Aurora Seniors' Centre and outside along the Arboretum Trail. Please dress for both indoor and outdoor activities. Don't miss the annual Pancake Breakfast offered by The Optimist Club of Aurora. A nominal fee will apply. For more information on Aurora's Easter Egg Hunt, please visit www.aurora.ca/easteregg hunt.

Aurora is flourishing with many new housing and business developments underway. With more visitors and activity in Aurora, the need for accommodations within the community is crucial. Currently, Aurora does not have a hotel in the community. Most municipalities in York Region and across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) have at least one hotel in their vicinity.

As mentioned in my Aurora Chamber of Commerce Luncheon address, the Town has connected with several potential investors interested in developing a new hotel in Aurora. There is a site at Leslie Street and Don Hillock Drive that has all approvals in place for a new hotel. However, a substantial barrier to this development is high development charges (DCs).

What are development charges and why are they important?

Development charges are fees that developers pay when a building permit is issued. The fees help pay for costs to provide municipal services and fulfill infrastructure requirements such as roads, transit, water and sewer infrastructure, community centres and emergency services.

The DCs have increased over the past few years, impeding hotel expansion in York Region.

The current methodology to calculate DC rates is 50 per cent of the non-residential rate plus the small apartment rate for each unit in the hotel. Since these DC's have been in place, there has been no new hotel development in York Region.

I am currently lobbying Regional Council to reduce their portion of hotel DC's which amounts to the largest share of the charges.

Council understands the extreme importance of hotel development in Aurora and the positive impact this will have on local businesses.

Development of a hotel is one of our main focuses and we are working collaboratively to achieve this goal.

Stay connected to find out what's happening in Aurora. Visit the Town's website, read the local Notice Board, subscribe to our social media feeds and sign up for our monthly e-newsletter, Aurora Matters.

Stay tuned to In Good Company for more information about Aurora.