

INSIDE AURORA: 2014 In Review

By Scott Johnston

Jan 9 ? Being built to serve Aurora's growing population, the new Joint Operations Centre (JOC) displays similar growth by having its budget increase from \$14 million to \$19 million.

Jan 22 - Council confirms it will seek to recoup the cost of damages from the December ice storm, but is thrown off when a staff report notes that you can't sue Mother Nature.

Feb 2 - It's not a good sign for an early spring when the groundhog emerges from his burrow, sees his shadow, and books a one-way ticket to Tahiti.

Mar 6 ? In an effort to de-beautify Aurora, Council considers mandatory use of clear garbage bags for curbside pickup.

Apr 10 - Council approves a proposal to make Ribfest an election-free zone, providing citizens with a brief few hour respite from 10 months of election campaigning.

Apr 17 - For those who placed bets 15 years ago as to which would be done first, the Town's first Habitat for Humanity house is completed prior to the Youth Centre, meaning that the winners can collect their prizes: free passes to the Aurora Fair and Horse Show.

May 2 ? Aurora gets a failing grade when it is not short-listed as a possible site for a new university slated for the region.

May 22 ? There're no more rooms at the inn when Aurora's only hotel, the former Howard Johnson's, closes its doors for the last time.

Jun 19 ? Foreshadowing residents' vote in the fall election to decrease the size of Council, Chris Ballard's departure to the provincial legislature reduces Council by one member.

Jun 26 ? Despite the east side of Aurora clearly being the current centre of retail and residential development in Town, the Chamber of Commerce grumbles about the Home Show's move in 2015 to the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, suggesting that no one will find it there.

Jul 3 - The accessible playground proposed for Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park proves to have an inaccessible budget of \$600,000.

Aug 21 ? Council approves an increase in the JOC budget to \$26 million, despite a lack of a corresponding increase in population since January.

Sep 11 - The Town ponders the introduction of LED street lights, until it is realized that this might make it easier to see the Town's crumbling infrastructure.

Sep 18 ? Setting a good example for kids goes up in smoke when Council allows the use of e-cigarettes in public facilities, such as the library.

Oct 27 ? The Buck stops here, when the long term councillor loses her seat by 41 votes.

Oct 30 - Sports enthusiasts saddened by the planned closing of the Timberlane Athletic Club take heart in the fact that they can still golf at Highland Gate.

Nov 7 - It's announced that Highland Gate is closing.

Nov 20 ? Canada Post's announcement that it will stop home delivery to 4,500 houses in Aurora next year in favour of super mailboxes raises the question: ?people still receive real mail through Canada Post??

Nov 27 ? Taking a page from its many books, the library announces plans for its own sequel when it says it wants to expand its services.

Dec 11 ? Council demonstrates its addiction to purchasing local buildings for which it has no immediate use, by suggesting adding Readman and Horton Houses to its collection which currently includes the still vacant Petch House and Aurora Armoury.

Dec 30 ? With lawsuit payments, proposed property purchases, significant infrastructure projects, and other big ticket items on the horizon for 2015, 2014's tax increase of 3.75% may seem like ?the good old days?.

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