

INSIDE AURORA: Grumpy Town

By Scott Johnston

Why are Aurorans so grumpy, all of a sudden?

I know this sounds like a bit of a blanket statement, and I suppose there must be the odd cheerful person out there, but it seems that we've gotten decidedly unhappy lately.

Take what was supposed to be one of the big good news stories this year.

The Town spent millions of dollars renovating the Leisure Complex. You'd think that would bring leaps of joy, but all we're hearing are complaints: there were too many delays in completing it, there aren't enough showers, the lockers are too small, there's not enough room to stretch and warm up, my towel isn't as fluffy as it used to be?

Okay, so maybe we haven't heard that last one yet, but I'm sure someone's been thinking it.

The curbside clear bag program is another recent example. Who doesn't want to promote recycling and being green? No doubt many do, but a large number were less than enthusiastic about their neighbours being able to see their innermost secrets every other week, and complained about it, pushing Council to hold off on its implementation.

And when was the last time you heard people cheering for the Town's budget? You got it: Grumpy Town.

That negativity is usually based on the traditional large annual tax increase. But I expect that even if the Mayor himself personally delivered generous tax rebates to every resident, they'd still find something to complain about, like the font used on the cheque, or that they'd gotten a paper cut when they opened the envelope.

And the sources of all this local venting are not limited to government. The private sector is causing its share of frowny faces in Town, too. Just ask the folks who live next to the proposed redevelopment at Highland Gate. They bring unhappiness to a whole new level.

It's not that these and other people are naturally of a glass half empty frame of mind, or want to be this way, but events at this time have transpired to make them so.

While historically there has always been something to complain about in Aurora, the number of upset people lately seems to be escalating, which is puzzling.

It's not like we don't have a lot to smile about in Aurora.

This Town has caring residents, a wealth of cultural and recreation opportunities, good stores and services, lots of green space, volunteers galore, and an inspiring number of kids who will obviously play a part in making our world a better place.

And who wouldn't be happy that after several long months, winter finally seems to be over?

But, for every small ray of sunshine in Town, there's a larger dark cloud in the form of a new cell tower for folks to whinge over.

And if it's not a cell tower, it's the lack of parking in library square, or another delay on a decision on the Yonge Street promenade, or traffic calming, or water bans, or some similarly hated thing.

It's unfortunate, but the list of subjects Aurorans seem bent out of shape over seems truly endless.

Hopefully, things in Aurora change soon, and a more positive outlook starts to predominate, or we could end up taking the place of Vancouver, which was recently recognised as the saddest place in Canada.

But at least that would give our West Coast friends something to smile about.

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