

INSIDE AURORA: Year in Review (Pt. 2)

By Scott Johnston

We continue our look back at 2013 in Aurora with events that took place in the latter half of the year.

Jul 13 ? Aurorans are given the option of enjoying their summer theatre either in the park, with an open air production of Shakespeare's 'As You Like It', or in the courtroom, when a former mayor launches a lawsuit against the town.

Jul 23 ? In a case of which cost-overrun project to proceed with, the Town decides to throw in another \$2.6M to keep going on the Youth Centre, but pulls the plug on the increasingly costly Town Hall renovation plans.

Aug 17 ? When it was discovered that 30% of the locations featured in last year's Doors Open event in Aurora didn't have doors, organizers, fearing Aurora would no longer meet national standards for this event in 2013, significantly reduce the number of doorless locations.

Sep 1 ? Because a new cell tower proposed for Bayview and Wellington will be disguised, residents' concerns are allayed, until they find it is being disguised as a different type of cell tower.

Sep 12 ? Justifying the \$283,000 cost to add 16 new parking spaces at Town Hall, staffers suggest that they'll be needed if the average attendance at Council meetings increases by 16.

Sep 19 ? The Town unsuccessfully applies for charitable organization status when Aurora's Terry Fox Run and Hoedown together raise several hundred thousand dollars to support local non-profit groups.

Sep 25 ? In an effort to keep the Parks Department budget in check, it's suggested that the proposed Clean Yards Bylaw, which will mandate that residents maintain the town-owned boulevards in front of their homes, be extended to include parks and other public places adjacent to residents' properties.

Sep 29 ? Club Aurora fitness members work up a sweat protesting the planned year-long closure of the Leisure Complex.

Oct 2 ? No one believes suggestions that next year's tax increase could be 8.1%, not because they have faith in Council's desire to keep costs in line, but because Council would never allow that high an increase in an election year.

Oct 11 ? A study that finds Aurorans pay more for municipal services than neighbouring municipalities surprises everyone except the Aurora taxpayers who pay for the services.

Oct 23 ? After years of debate and an investment of \$146,000, Petch House is converted from a pile of crumbling logs on Leslie Street with no apparent purpose to a new log structure on John West Way with no apparent purpose.

Nov 4 ? When a lawsuit begins between a Councillor and former colleagues, residents react with surprise, as four months in Aurora is an unusually long time between municipal lawsuits.

Nov 23 ? A blinding blizzard turns the annual Town parade from Santa Under the Stars to Santa Under Three Feet of Snow.

Nov 28 ? To the horror of those working to beautify Aurora, the Town proposes the mandatory use of clear trash bags for curbside garbage.

Dec 5 ? Plans are presented to charge admission to Ribfest, which traditionally has been free. In case that's approved, staff starts preparing admission fee proposals for the Arctic Adventure, Concerts in the Park, Street Festival, Santa Parade, and Aurora Council

meetings.

Dec 16 ? After the jury has spent five weeks attentively listening to the legal case of one Councillor vs her former colleagues, the judge gives them either an early Christmas present or a lump of coal, by dismissing them prior to the case's conclusion.

Dec 22 ? When ice storm blackouts occur throughout Aurora, those who needlessly bought generators thirteen years earlier to prepare for Y2K get the last laugh.

Dec 31 - In a closely contested race, 2013 is proclaimed The Year of the Lawsuit in Aurora, over runners-up Year of Even More Reports and Studies, Year of the Cell Tower, and Year of Project Budget Overruns.

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