

Lions eye old library for new home as membership grows



By Brock Weir

As membership waned in the last decade, the Aurora Lions Club sold their Downtown Aurora hall to a church, and moved their operations to the Royal Canadian Legion. But, now that their membership is on an upswing once again, they're looking for new permanent digs.

Enter the Old Aurora Public Library building, just steps from the old Lions Hall, now home to a Romanian church. The old library building, which has been subject to considerable debate over the last decade as Council considers the future of Library Square, would be the ideal home for the growing pride of Lions, according to club president Don Lewis.

Mr. Lewis made his pitch for permanent space in the building to Council this month, citing the Lions as key fundraisers in raising money to pay off construction costs of the old library to start with.

?We are currently without a home and we are asking for this space at no cost,? said Mr. Lewis. ?Some of you might remember back in 1978 [then councillor] Dick Illingworth approaching the Lions Club and myself to help him pay the balance owed by the library. The Lions Club stepped up and raised \$7,500 to pay out the balance of the loan.?

Should Council agree to their request, Mr. Lewis said there are a number of renovations needed to the existing space in order to suit their purposes, including a new set of doors to ensure they can lock their premises when they are not there.

?The Lions Club has served the community of Aurora for 70+ years,? said Mr. Lewis. ?The club is presently in the process of rebuilding. We have recently increased our membership by 10, plus four new members to be inducted. We need a new home and a place to work as we strengthen and grow so we continue to serve the community of Aurora.

?Right now we're operating out of the Aurora Legion. Our hall was sold about two years ago and, of course, we had no place to go. We need our own home. We have a lot of equipment now. We have a mobile kitchen and have been very successful with that, having something like 18 functions we have attended. Our members are coming in and we are getting more and more all the time. We have about 27 members right now my goal is [to have] 40 members by the end of my term and we have more people coming asking for it.?

Council received Mr. Lewis' comments and their request for free space at the building will be subject to a report back to Council, potentially as early as next month.

?I know the Lions have a huge positive effect on our community and I hope we can help somehow through staff to provide the space you need to grow your community because you do such good for our Town,? said Councillor Sandra Humfries. ?I look forward to seeing what we can do for them.?

The issue of Library Square was last touched upon at the August 11 Council meeting where Council approved a motion from Councillors Tom Mrakas and Michael Thompson to issue a Request for Proposal hoping to catch the interests of design firms to chart a vision for the ?cultural precinct? defined in the Aurora Promenade Plan.

This includes a number of heritage and cultural features radiating westward out of, and including, Town Park, encompassing the Aurora Armoury, various churches, the Aurora Cultural Centre, and the buildings now occupying Library Square.