

Long distance calls to short haul places could be history

By Brock Weir

We all know the feeling of placing an urgent call to Markham or Georgina only to hear the ringer kick in before you've reached the last number ? the dreaded sound of the unexpected long distance phone call.

Aurora Council could take it upon themselves to help remedy that scourge of telephone users town-wide with a notice of motion from Mayor Geoffrey Dawe this week.

In his motion, which will likely come up for discussion on May 21, he calls on staff to begin an application process with Bell Canada to increase Aurora's local calling area. He notes residents can call down to the City of Toronto, but calling places ?such as Maple and Markham which are physically closer? entail long-distance charges.

?A couple of people have been chattering about it and I made a commitment to do that,? said Mayor Dawe on getting the ball rolling on this. ?It is a process that takes a while to go through. A similar one came up in the 1980s and it comes up every now and then. If you have relatives in Markham you can't call them, but you have relatives in The Beaches you can call them without incurring long distance charges.?

When asked if this motion is ultimately approved by Council whether this new tango with Bell Canada will be more successful than their discussions surrounding the controversial cell phone tower in King Township, Mayor Dawe gave a resounding ?absolutely.?

With its introduction at Council this week, it will return for thorough discussion in two weeks unless Councillors vote for bringing it up for consideration ahead of time.