

One piece left in new Cultural Agreement with Town and Centre



(Five year old Braden met Santa on Saturday at the annual Aurora Community Band Holiday Open House hosted at the Aurora Cultural Centre. Auroran photo by David Falconer)

By Brock Weir

Aurora Mayor Geoffrey Dawe will be one of two Council representatives on the new Board of the Aurora Cultural Centre.

Councillors filled one of two available places on the board at last week's Council meeting, but the second spot will have to wait.

The new agreement between the Town and the Cultural Centre was signed earlier this year but, until last month, a key sticking point had yet to be resolved: whether or not Councillors sitting on the Board could find themselves in a Conflict of Interest situation if items related to the Centre came up at Town Hall.

These potential concerns were voiced by Councillor Chris Ballard as the agreement neared completion, and Councillors voted to send their concerns to the Ontario Superior Court for review. After the court reserved its decision for months, it ruled in October there is no reason for the Mayor or Councillor to be in a conflict if they served on the Cultural board.

‘I am glad to see there is a decision there,’ said Councillor John Abel last week, after Councillor Paul Pirri nominated Mayor Dawe for the first slot. ‘I had every confidence there wasn't a conflict and a bit of oversight and participation by Council should be in place for such an important facility that we fund.’

Mayor Dawe's nomination was carried 7 ? 1 on a recorded vote, with Councillor Ballard remaining the lone dissenting vote.

Speaking in favour of the new arrangement, Councillor Michael Thompson said it was important for Council to be involved in the Centre. Although he said there was some concern expressed that not all their meetings are open to the public, that should not be a problem.

‘I had the opportunity to broach that subject with members of the Board and they said they have discussed that and have no problems with reporting out or sharing the motions they discussed,’ said Councillor Thompson. ‘There may be times when they feel the need to go in camera and maybe there is something sensitive and they wish members of council would use their discretion and not share what is confidential, and I think that is reasonable and respectful.’

He also voiced his support of Mayor Dawe taking the first spot on the Board ‘only for the sake of continuity’ as Mayor Dawe has been ‘unofficially’ sitting in on the meetings; but he said the Mayor's presence didn't need to be set in stone in the next term of Council.

Discussions, however, took a different direction after Councillor Ballard nominated Councillor John Gallo for the second spot on the board. While he said he was willing to accept the nomination, Councillor Thompson interjected a concern that Members of Council has already submitted their names and Councillor Thompson himself had previously expressed interest.

?Three people sent me an email indicating they would be interested in sitting on the committee,? concluded Mayor Dawe before Council voted to delay filling the second slot on a later day after all Councillors had a crack at expressing an interest.