

Resident counters election claims on development

As a resident of Aurora for nearly 60 years, who has taken the time to be an informed member of the community by participating in almost every Council Meeting, Committee Meetings, Public Planning Meetings and Financial Advisory Committee Meetings over the past five years, I was profoundly disappointed by K. Savage's cynical attempt to misinform the Aurora electorate with her biased and grossly inaccurate Letter to the Editor in last week's Auroran.

I am not a letter to the editor writer, but in this particular instance I felt it was of paramount importance to set the record straight for the benefit of all residents, all incumbent councillors and for all new candidates.

In this Trumpian era of personal attacks and 'fake news,' it is more important than ever that people have all the facts when making their decision regarding political representation, including hidden agendas.

Further to this, I am curious why Ms. Savage chose not to reveal to your readers that she is actively campaigning for Candidate Mrakas, a political challenger to Incumbent Mayor Dawe. Her endorsement appears on Candidate Mrakas' website. Her lack of candor seriously undermines the credibility of her letter.

I myself am an enthusiastic Geoff Dawe supporter. I was proud to vote for him in 2010 and in 2014. I don't feel any need to hide this, because I understand that openness and transparency are integral elements of the truth.

In mocking tones, Ms. Savage dismissed the Town's development approvals a 'rubber stamp.' This is a patently false statement that does a tremendous disservice to the staff that put thousands of hours of work into ensuring development conforms to our Official Plan and the Places to Grow Act. It also belittles and disparages the efforts of all Aurora Councillors 'mayoral challengers included' that listen to residents and meticulously review all applications to ensure they align with the interests of our community. I know this to be factual from the hundreds of meetings and thousands of hours I have personally invested in these meetings.

When mocking wasn't enough, Ms. Savage chose to misinform. Asserting the Highland Gate application was approved is patently false. Neither the Mayor nor any Councillors approved the initial Highland Gate Development application. The Mayor and Council only voted to accept an OMB-mediated agreement between the Town, the Developer and the Highland Gate Ratepayers Association. Mayor Dawe fought to have these local residents directly involved in the process and he and members of Council voted to follow their wishes. The three parties involved found acceptable resolve to agree to minutes of settlement. I know this, because I was there and I participated in these many lengthy and robust discussions with Mayor Dawe, staff, Councillors, HGRA and with Highland Gate Developments directly.

As our community reaches full build-out, Mayor Geoff Dawe undertook a coordinated effort with other GTA mayors to advocate for a pause in development. I couldn't agree more. Now is a strategic time, while we remain under our mandated growth targets, to re-evaluate how and if we want to grow further.

Mayor Geoff Dawe is running for re-election on a platform of Facts Matter and Integrity Counts. He is correct on both fronts and has consistently measured up to these ideals. I would invite K. Savage and her camp to do the same.

Terry Jones
Aurora