

## Second hotel coming to Leslie & 404 area

**By Brock Weir**

Aurora has been without a hotel for years, but now that a new hotel is set to break ground near Leslie and Highway 404 before the end of summer, a second hotel is following its lead.

Revised plans for a new six storey, 122 room hotel slated for the corner of Leslie Street and Don Hillock Drive are expected to come before Council within weeks, hopefully by the end of September, according to Marco Ramunno, Aurora's Director of Planning. Although Mr. Ramunno says the brand of hotel is yet to be decided, it will be built on the land just north of the York Regional Police Headquarters, a plot that has changed ownership a number of times over the years.

“Council approved the site plan a few years ago,” says Mr. Ramunno. “The problem was there was a change of ownership and, with the economy, nothing happened. There is a new owner and we're expecting them to come in with their revised application.”

Developers originally envisioned a four storey, 87 room hotel. This past May, however, a height variance to six storeys received approval at the Town's Committee of Adjustment.

Given that timeline, the Planning department was originally expecting final plans to come before Council by July, but there has been a slight delay on the side of the incoming hotel.

Plans for the second hotel follow on the heels of the announcement earlier this year that Microtel Inn & Suites by Wyndham Hotel Group would construct a four storey, 108 room hotel just a stone's throw away from Leslie Street and Don Hillock on Eric T. Smith, all part of the Leslie Street Business Park.

That announcement was warmly lauded by politicians, business leaders, and sports, culture and tourism advocates who had long been pushing for another hotel as a key economic driver in Town.

Aurora's former hotel, Howard Johnson's, has been shuttered for years but remains in private ownership. The ground floor of the building were recently boarded up as per property standards set by the Town. Mr. Ramunno says there is still no news on the Town's efforts to work with the property owner to find a solution for the property.