

Skate with your hockey heroes ? and take your ideas to Council ? Saturday at new Levee

By Brock Weir

It's been five years since the Aurora Council last had a levee ? then, it was a frigid day in Town Park to mark the Town's Sesquicentennial ? but Aurora is set to mark the start of a new, warmer tradition on Saturday.

Aurora residents and visitors are invited to celebrate the start of the year with Mayor Geoff Dawe and the rest of Council at the Mayor & Council New Year's Levee, which is billed as a new way to ?give [elected officials] a chance to connect with the community.?

Running from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex, the event will feature cake, hot beverages like hot chocolate and coffee, face painting and crafts from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m., and then Aurora's Junior A Tigers will take to the ice for a free skate with members of the public from 11 a.m. to 12 noon.

?On behalf of Aurora Town Council, we look forward to enjoying this fun-filled day with our Aurora community and their families,? said Mayor Dawe in a statement. ?The Town of Aurora has several new and exciting projects planned for 2018. The Levee is another opportunity for residents to engage with Council and share their ideas and feedback on what's to come. We look forward to seeing you there.?

The Levee has its roots in France, where the King would be ceremonially woken up by members of his court to start the day, part of an entrenched social ritual. In time, this tradition evolved into a New Year's tradition where the Monarch, Governor General, or other elected officials would meet constituents and hear their concerns.

Here at home, the fledgling roots of this ?new tradition? were planted, according to Mayor Dawe, by Councillor Sandra Humfries and the ball just started rolling.

?I have been at the East Gwillimbury Levee for the last couple of years and I thought about it here, but when Sandra suggested it, it made sense to see where we could start and where something like this might go. One of the challenges is always getting people engaged and there is a goodly number of people who come out to the skates on Saturdays and Sundays. This is an opportunity to perhaps get a few more people out to the skate and see some of the facilities we have, as well as talk to members of Council, which is always a good thing. The Tigers will be out, so maybe you will have a chance to give an aspiring young hockey player a chance to skate with the Tigers!?

For Lisa Warth, Aurora's Acting Director of Community Services, job number one in getting this off the ground was giving the general public a fun chance to ?mix and mingle? with their Council.

?We decided to do it at the SARC and combine it with the already scheduled leisure skate, so the skating is sort of the central focus,? she says. ?We will have face painting and crafts for the kids, then the Aurora Tigers will be there to mix and mingle as well. They will be there for the whole period of time and then go in the ice to skate with kids and families at 11.

?I am interested in seeing the families come out and have a good time. It is always nice to see the kids out participating and to see the smiles on their faces when they get their faces painted and make a craft. I would also be interested in listening to some of those conversations the members of the public might have with their members of Council and hear what people are interested in.?

For more on the Levee, call Aurora's Special Events line at 905-726-4762.

MP TO HOLD LEVEE AS WELL

Aurora's Mayor and Council are not the only ones holding their New Year's Levee on Saturday.

Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill MP Leona Alleslev will host her own event at her constituency office from 1 ? 3 p.m.

The free event will feature hot chocolate and other holiday treats, along with a chance to mix and mingle with Ms. Alleslev and your neighbours.

?This is a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together and celebrate the beginning of the New Year,? she said. ?I look forward to meeting with you and your friends, families and loved ones to reflect on 2017 and discuss the future of our community and our country.?

Ms. Alleslev's office is located at 12820 Yonge Street, Suite 202, in Richmond Hill.