

Slammed candidates rejected claims on campaign flyer

By Brock Weir

While nine candidates recommended by an anonymous individual or group last week were quick to deny any association with its origins, incumbent candidates were also quick to denounce the claims contained on the flyer.

In fact, by Friday, mayoral candidate Geoff Dawe had a card sent out to the majority of Aurora homes refuting the claims made against himself, as well as incumbent candidates John Abel, Evelyn Buck, Sandra Humfries, Paul Pirri, and Michael Thompson.

Speaking to The Auroran as the counter-flyers were being distributed, Mr. Dawe characterized the initial pamphlet as "pretty disgusting and full of lies."

"Or, as I like to say, untruths, half-truths and innuendos," he said. "The facts aren't even close to being right."

While he said the points raised on the pamphlet were untrue, one he found particularly offensive was the claim Aurora's Sesquicentennial cost Aurora \$250,000 when, in reality, the actual cost was closer to \$100,000.

"To take something that was celebrating the Town's history and to try and turn it into something that was grossly wrong or inappropriate just beggar's belief," said Mr. Dawe. "It is such a slam on volunteers because the whole thing was volunteer-led. It is so offensive it is difficult to put into words."

After one woman received the pamphlet, Mr. Dawe says she came to Town Hall to say she was "just disgusted" this sort of politicking was going on in Aurora. He reiterated, he said, he is focusing on a positive campaign.

"We're concentrating on making sure we continue to prosper as a Town," he said. "We're going to stay on the positive road and we're going to stay on the high road. If special interest groups want to exercise this way, so be it. There is nothing we can do about that, but people should be well aware that it is a special interest group that is driving it. We're interested in running a positive campaign, we're intent on stressing what our vision and goals are for the future of Aurora and we're staying that way all the way through."

A similar view was offered by council candidate Michael Thompson, who said he is countering the claims with literature of his own that he is taking door-to-door as he hands out his own flyers. In it, he says "negative ads only serve to perpetuate the politics of division."

"It is always unfortunate to see that kind of negative ad," Mr. Thompson told The Auroran. "I would hope this time around it would be a much more positive campaign that is based on ideas and vision, but I guess these things do happen. It's a small special interest group with an axe to grind. The general consensus [has been] it is disappointing something like that would be out in the marketplace. The reaction was opposed to these kinds of negative tactics."

Claims that the Joint Operations Centre budget is now \$30 million simply aren't true, he said, nor are claims that the reserves are overdrawn by \$8 million. He also refuted the claims about the Sesquicentennial figures.

"I am hopeful that if anyone were to get [the flyer] they would pick up the phone and call any of the Councillors who are on the front of the flyer and we would be happy to speak to any one of those points," he added. "To me, I think part of this is geared towards those who are not as engaged in what is happening in Aurora as much as the others."