

Town to correct name of street dedicated in memory of fallen air man

The memory of a local RCAF member who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the Second World War will continue to live on in Aurora ? correctly ? after Council voted last week to rectify the spelling of a local road bearing his name.

For nearly a decade, the legacy of Eric Walter Folliott has lived on through a street bearing his name ? with one minor problem. The official name of ?Folliot Street? has been missing that last letter.

Council, however, voted to right this wrong on September 24.

The name change followed long-standing advocacy of local historian Christopher Watts of the Aurora Heritage Authority, who made a number of appeals to both Council and the Town's Heritage Advisory Committee asking for the correction.

While the correction will mean some challenges to residents as they will need to update their addresses where applicable, Council agreed that righting the wrong was just the right thing to do.

?He is one of 14 fallen RCAF members from World War 2 with ties to Aurora,? said Watts at last week's Council meeting, pointing lawmakers to a number of examples where his name is spelled correctly, from a memorial scroll created for Aurora High School students who gave up their lives for King and Country to the Golden Book of Remembrance now held in the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. ?Folliott has no descendants, no immediate family, and no one to speak up for him when he is wronged in this manner.

?We often, with the military, speak about leaving no man behind but it seems to have happened here. This whole thing is being left this way for over a year. I came to staff with this concern back in August of last year thinking this is great, they will take it, they will see the mistake, and internally they will change it. Didn't happen. I had to come through and present a delegation the Heritage Advisory Committee, I came before this body in October of last year, we thought Q1 to Q2 for this report. We're back in September. We're over a year and the sad thing with that is it is beyond the time that Eric Walter Folliott served. In the time this has happened, we've actually eclipsed the 80th anniversary of his death.?

Watts' ask of Council was threefold ? to correct the spelling of the name, work with the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion to ensure Folliott is included in street banners remembering those who served, and for the Town's street-naming policy be changed to ensure mistakes like this don't happen again and, if they do, they can be corrected quickly.

?I feel strongly that the fallen veteran should have their named spelled correctly and we should be able to admit that error and be able to inform the residents on the street not only is there an error, [but] the reason for the error? and why we wish to correct it,? said Ward 1 Councillor Ron Weese.

These sentiments were echoed by Ward 4 Councillor Michael Thompson.

?I think it's the right thing to do. It's long overdue. I get that there is a process, I get there's lots involved, but it's about doing the right thing,? he said, adding to the motion that staff both correct the spelling and communicate directly with those impacted by the change. ?There's no reason not to do it, but there's every reason to do it.?

By Brock Weir