

Canada Post delivery changes debated at Council

By Brock Weir

As parcels finished rolling in for the holiday season, it was likely the last time for many Aurora residents these cards and packages will be delivered directly to their door by Canada Post.

This year, the Crown Corporation plans to discontinue home mail delivery for the nearly 4,500 Aurora homes still receiving their mail door-to-door in favour of installing community mailboxes. It is the next phase of their nation-wide plan to eliminate door-to-door residential delivery to save money.

The decision, however, received a lukewarm reception from Council at a recent meeting, but members fell short of following in the Town of Collingwood's footsteps to formally object to the change.

Collingwood's motion was placed on December's General Committee agenda by Councillor Wendy Gaertner. Although she said it was a "difficult and contentious issue" as it involves Canada Post's financial picture, it was important to speak out about the impact the switch might have on seniors or the disabled.

"We might not have much power as a municipality, but I don't think this is the right way to go with Canada Post and, perhaps if a lot of municipalities send their comments into the Federal government, it is the squeaky wheel," she said. "I am trying to look out for our community as it is and as it ages."

While Council tentatively discussed the merits of delivery and formally objecting to it, the motion ultimately failed for several reasons. Among the reasons were concerns, particularly from Councillor Jeff Thom, that the motion was not Aurora-specific.

As Aurora is a growing urban area, older, less dense subdivisions still enjoy door-to-door service while denser, newer subdivisions have used community mailboxes since their inception. This divide led Mayor Geoff Dawe and Councillor Michael Thompson to question the impact such a motion would have on neighbourhoods that are already using the community mailbox system.

"It is my understanding that all of 2C will be serviced by community mailboxes," said Councillor Thompson. "Probably 40 to 50 per cent of homes in Aurora will be served by community mailboxes. While it is great to say reconsider the decision from home-to-home, what about the other half of the Town that is currently using community postal boxes?"

At the end of the day, however, whether the motion came from Collingwood or Aurora, it would likely have little traction in Ottawa, according to Councillor Paul Pirri, who serves on the board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

"This is something they have been looking at for a while now and although it is not a position I hold, a lot of other municipalities who are members will look at us and say, 'what is the big deal?' We have been using community mailboxes for years, especially in most of the rural communities," said Councillor Pirri. "This is something new for an urban community like Aurora and York Region to be dealing with on a town-wide scale."