

VOTE 2014: Dawe and Gallo to square off in two-man Mayoral race



By Brock Weir

Incumbent Geoffrey Dawe and John Gallo are set to square off in a two-man race to be Aurora's next mayor, after registration for the October 27 Municipal Election closed Friday afternoon.

While Aurora voters will have just two choices for their next mayor, the race for the eight available seats on Council is much more crowded. A whopping 28 residents, many first-timers to municipal politics, will be on the ballot.

On the education side of things, incumbent Elizabeth Crowe has been challenged by Mark Sullivan to be the next local trustee for the York Catholic District School Board. In the public board, incumbent Peter Adams-Luchowski, who was appointed to the position of trustee for Aurora and King mid-term following the resignation of Gord Kerr, is being challenged by Alex Noudelman and Liliana Usvat.

Candidates in all fields had little time to rest after their names were confirmed last week, as many were expected to be present at Wednesday's first mayoral debate hosted by the Aurora Chamber of Commerce.

As the two candidates prepared for their first showdown, they told *The Auroran* they each looked forward to sharing with voters their distinct visions of Aurora.

"We have to change our financial modelling and we started to do that," said Dawe when asked of his specific goals if re-elected. "We have been rebuilding our reserve funds which, in the last term, there was money taken out of them. We have implemented our 10-year capital forecast, which we do an update on a yearly basis, so we are updating it into the future. I am looking at a proposal for Downtown in order to work on revitalization. Private industry has put money in, we have stepped up to the plate with programs like the Community Improvement Plan, and there are a couple of other things I am fleshing out some details on in terms of what more we can do to support local business and get some traffic downtown."

Residents, he said, are also paying close attention to growth and development and once the 2C Development in Aurora's northeast quadrant is finished, they will be looking for new and innovative ways to develop within Town.

Dawe added he hopes voters "do their homework, look at what the two candidates have done over the past four years" and "[look at] our record and what we have done to improve the Town, how we have done that, how we have made a decision, and how we are going to take that forward." Particular pride is held in his efforts to bring back a "sense of dignity" to Town Hall, one that has "flowed through to the Council chamber."

‘There is less drama, we just get on with the job,’ he said. ‘[We have] also positioned the Town to move from a growth community to a sustainable, stable community. We need to look at how we’re doing our funding, how we are looking at moving forward, how we are shaping our future, and how we are going to do that in a financially responsible manner.’

In the other corner is Gallo, who said if elected he will ‘strive’ to provide ‘a more open government’ to Aurora where citizens can play ‘an active role in the decision-making process and feel empowered to be a part of it.’ This is a platform plank he said voters have particularly resonated with, particularly those who have ‘gone through the experiences of not being involved’ in things that are underway in their neighbourhood. When asked for specifics, Gallo cited the budget growth of the recently approved Joint Operations Centre as a prime example.

‘Mavrinac [Park] is another huge one,’ he said. ‘[Residents] had no idea what [council] were doing and it provide to be really good that they ended up getting involved and that they were part of the decision-making process because I stepped up to the plate and went door-to-door. The Aurora Family Leisure Complex and the so-called Youth Centre [is another] and I think people are really resonating with a lot of issues circulating on how it went about and whether that is the best place for a youth centre, whether it is even going to become a youth centre, and once again, spiralling costs.’

‘The thing I am most looking forward to is putting my platform out there and having people resonate with what I have to say’ and it is already happening. [I want] people to get to know me better and my perspective on business and the ideas I am going to be putting forward to stimulate business in the downtown core and the revitalization of Yonge Street and Wellington. I am really excited to put that message out there and I am convinced people will resonate with it.’

CROWDED COUNCIL FIELD

While Dawe and Gallo will present competing visions of Aurora over the coming weeks, one thing they can agree on is this: the whopping number of candidates vying to join either one of them at the Council table is encouraging and a sign Aurora residents are engaged in their community

Here are your candidates, in alphabetical order:

‘ John Abel
‘ Jim Abram
‘ Barb Barker
‘ Carl Barrett
‘ Terri Briggs
‘ Evelyn Buck
‘ Bob Chapman
‘ Ian Clark
‘ Roy Cohen
‘ Greg Cook
‘ Arshad Desai
‘ Mark Etwell
‘ Wendy Gaertner
‘ David Heard
‘ James Hoyes
‘ Sandra Humfryes
‘ Harold Kim
‘ Alice Lalas
‘ Tom Mrakas
‘ Michael Ney

- ? Paul Pirri
- ? Tom Plamondon
- ? Anthony Pullano
- ? Linda Stephens
- ? Jeff Thom
- ? Michael Thompson
- ? Svetla Topouzova
- ? Frank Vrbanatz

For full coverage of this week's Mayoral Debate, watch for the September 25 edition of The Auroran.