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THE AU 20 YEARS RAN

Aurora's Community Newspaper

Vol. 21 No. 14 905-727-3300 TheAuroran.com FREE Week of January 21, 2021 CMCA AUDITED



POWER OF JOY – Jenny Beal, a resident of Kingsway Place Retirement Residence, chose some fitting reading material as she received her COVID-19 vaccine at the Murray Drive home on Friday. The vaccination clinic brought happiness and joy to residents, staff and their families, according to staff.

Photo courtesy of Kingsway Place

Vaccine brings happiness, relief to long-term care homes

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Christmas was always going to be a difficult time for residents of retirement and long-term care homes unable to spend the festive season with their families. For individuals living at Aurora's Kingsway Place Retirement Residence, the season was especially challenging as they

were declared in an active COVID-19 outbreak situation on Christmas Eve.

The outbreak, which York Region Public Health closed on Tuesday, January 19, ultimately took the lives of three residents and, this past Friday, there was a much-needed dose of "relief" and "elation" as residents and staff received the COVID-19 vaccine.

Kingsway Place was one of

several retirement and long-term care residences across York Region to receive the Moderna vaccine last week.

As of Friday, January 15, 5,190 doses of the vaccine were delivered to long-term care homes and 1,620 to retirement homes. 2,831 had been administered to residents of long-term care, not including staff and

Continued on page 6



COVID COMPOUNDS ALZHEIMER'S PROBLEM – "Alzheimer's is bad, but COVID Alzheimer's is just insulting," says Aurora resident Kerri Thompson, pictured above greeting her mother, Joyce, through the window of her assisted living residence, alongside her son. Kerri shares their story, in conjunction with Alzheimer's Awareness Month, on Page 10.

Contributed photo

Community Energy Plan for Aurora set to move forward

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Council is poised to give the green light to a new Community Energy Plan this month, one which sets environmental and sustainability goals for decades ahead.

Lawmakers gave the tentative

Continued on page 8

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TOWN OF AURORA Notice Board



Council & Committee Meetings

Date	Time	Location	Meeting
Monday, January 25	7 p.m.	Video conference	Environmental Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 26	5:45 p.m.	Video conference	Council Closed Session (if required)
Thursday, January 26	7 p.m.	Video conference	Council
Monday, February 1	7 p.m.	Video conference	Heritage Advisory Committee
Tuesday, February 2	5:45 p.m.	TBD	Council Closed Session (if required)
Tuesday, February 2	7 p.m.	TBD	General Committee

*Meetings can be viewed online by visiting aurora.ca/livecouncilmeeting

What's Happening



Online Skylight Gallery Exhibition Artist: Irene Schaefer

During the month of January, enjoy the exhibition 'Inspiration from Outside'. Using vivid colours and soft brush strokes, Irene Schaefer shares the beauty of line and shapes found in nature. Schaefer dove into her art practice later in life, and is now devoted to the visual arts. With acrylic as her medium of choice, she paints a variety of subjects, such as landscapes, flowers, and still life. Her work is nostalgic and reminds others of a place previously visited, bringing light and joy to the viewer experience.

View this online gallery at aurora.ca/skylightgallery.

Town services affected by second state of emergency and stay-at-home orders

On **January 12, 2021**, the Ontario Government declared a second state of emergency. Effective **January 14, 2021** at 12:01 a.m., stay-at-home orders are in effect for at least 28 days to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

This stay-at-home order will require all Ontario residents to remain at home and only leave their homes for essential trips such as going to the grocery store or pharmacy, to exercise or access health-care services or essential work. Subject to limited exceptions, employees who are able to work from home are required to work from home.

"With the announcement from the Province of Ontario, I encourage all residents to take these new orders seriously. Please stay home, only go out for essentials and together we can all help curb the spread of COVID-19. I ask that you continue to support our local businesses by shopping online and ordering takeout. As a community, I know we will get through this tough time and prevail," says Aurora Mayor Tom Mrakas.

All non-essential retailers, including stores currently offering curbside pick-up, will be required to adjust their operating hours and must not open earlier than 7 a.m. and close no later than 8 p.m. These restrictions do not apply to grocery stores, pharmacies, convenience stores, gas stations, other stores that primarily sell food and restaurants operating takeout or delivery. Non-essential construction will also be restricted, including below-grade construction.

In addition, schools in York Region will not return to in-person learning until at least **February 10**. Outdoor organized public gatherings and social gatherings have been further restricted from 10 people down to five.

All municipal facilities are still closed to the public under provincial orders.

Updates on the status of our municipal operations, cancellations and disruptions will be posted on aurora.ca/covid19 as the situation changes. For information on what is open or closed in Aurora, please visit aurora.ca/reopen.

Outdoor skating rinks in Aurora

The Town of Aurora will have six outdoor rinks opening on **Friday, January 22**, weather and rink conditions permitting. Pre-registration is required. Register online at **e-PLAY**.

The following locations below will contain outdoor rinks:

- **Town Park - Two rinks**
- **Ada Johnson Park - Two rinks**
- **James Lloyd Park - One rink**
- **Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park - One rink**

In the current provincial State of Emergency, maximum capacity for all rinks is 25 people, except at James Lloyd Park where the maximum capacity is 10 people. Use of the outdoor rinks will be limited to Aurora residents only. We ask that residents use the rink for a maximum of 45 minutes per person to allow others to enjoy the outdoor activity. Ice rinks will be available for use from 9 a.m. until 11 p.m. by registration only. Please note, James Lloyd Park rink closes at 10 p.m. nightly.

Residents are asked to follow all Public Health recommendations and ask that you wear a mask and maintain a distance of 6 feet from others while using the rink. No shinny, hockey games or other sports will be allowed (no sticks and no pucks) and helmets are recommended for all participants. Town security will be on-site to ensure that all COVID-19 protocols are in place and that residents are compliant.

We ask that residents only use the Town constructed ice rinks and that everyone stay off large bodies of water, ponds and storm sewer ponds as water levels can quickly change underneath the ice and the unpredictable weather can pose a danger to those who use it.

For full registration and participation details, please visit aurora.ca/outdoorrinks.

What's Happening

Recreation at Home

It's easy to stay actively engaged at home with more than 200 online resources available on our Recreation at Home webpage. There are activities for all ages.

Please visit aurora.ca/recathome for more details.

Club Aurora Virtual Group Fitness classes

Join us for a Group Fitness Class in the comfort of your own home by pre-registering for one of our exciting virtual classes.

Learn about our virtual programs and view the schedule online at aurora.ca/fitness.

Seniors' Centre Without Walls (S.C.W.W.)

Seniors' Centre Without Walls (S.C.W.W.) is a free program, providing community outreach to seniors and adults via telephone and Zoom.

Check out the monthly schedule online at aurora.ca/scww.

Cabin Fever Reliever photo contest

Aurora's Cabin Fever Reliever photo contest runs until **Monday, January 25**. Bundle up and take a photo of your favourite outdoor places.

Please visit aurora.ca/cabinfever for more details.

FRIDAY FAMILY CAMPFIRES

Friday Family Campfires

Family Campfires are coming to Aurora Town Park weekly on Friday nights on **February 12, 19 and 26**. Pre-registration is required.

Please visit aurora.ca/campfires for more details.



Geocaching activity for the family

Geocaching is a great outdoor activity and adventure that you can safely do with your family. The Town of Aurora will launch a new geocache weekly.

Please visit aurora.ca/geocaching for more information.

THREE BAG OR CONTAINER LIMIT

DID YOU KNOW?

Town of Aurora residents can place up to three (3) bags or containers out for pickup every other week on regularly scheduled collection days.

All garbage should be placed in a Town approved container or black plastic bag.



No more than 133 litres or 50 pounds maximum. No loose material, all items must be bagged and tied.

Effective January 2021, bags will not be collected beyond the limit.

Additional waste will have a non-compliant sticker placed on it and will be left behind.

Additional waste can be kept until the next waste collection week or dropped off at the closest waste depot transfer station.

As outlined in **Bylaw #5590-14** section 4.16, the number of items put out for collection from any premise on any collection day shall not exceed a total of three (3) garbage bags and shall not exceed a total of five (5) bulky items.

For more information, please visit:
aurora.ca/wasteandrecycling
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What's Happening

AURORA'S 2021 ARCTIC ADVENTURE

Celebrate Family Day with a weekend full of adventures for the whole family!

Friday, February 12 to Monday, February 15

Distance & Virtual Experiences

- Geocaching Adventures
- Keeping Active Adventures
- Virtual Family Zumba classes and Paint sessions
- "Taste of Winter" Cooking Demos
- Community Zone - Interactive activities
- Ice Sculptures
- Intriguing Family Adventures with Science, Magicians and more!

aurora.ca/arcticadventure

905-726-4762 • #AuroraArcticAdventure

Please note, we reserve the right to cancel, amend or change activities.

Additional funding provided by Ontario, Municipality of the Year, and Aurora.

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Artist videos
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Artwork, installed at the Aurora Town Hall, is available for viewing online at AuroraCulturalCentre.ca

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CYFS Acting Captain wants to be role model for girls and boys



CYFS Acting Captain Kristy Patterson has made a historic first for the local fire department, but just wants to inspire girls and boys alike.

Contributed photo

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

She has served as a member of the Central York Fire Services for more than a decade.

It is a job she loves, serving the community which has become a second home and, earlier this year, Kristy Paterson became a somewhat reluctant trailblazer as the Central York Fire Service's first female Acting Captain.

A historic first, to be sure, but Paterson has a different perspective.

"I am proud of my accomplishment because I think it is a great position, but I don't think it is special that I am the first woman," Patterson tells *The Auroran*. "I am super happy for everyone who passed the test and was a successful candidate, but I don't think I should be given any more recognition as the first female because everyone passed the same time. The public doesn't care, or shouldn't care, if it is a man or a woman who is responding to [a call], all they really care about is if you can do the job when the time comes."

Instead, the Barrie resident wants to be seen as a good role model for all genders, regardless of whether they want to follow in her footsteps to a local fire station.

Being a fire fighter was not a life-long dream for Patterson. As a student at the University of Toronto, she was a player on their varsity hockey team. Athletics came to her naturally and she focused on kinesiology. In her fourth year, however, a conversation with a firefighter left her pondering a career pivot.

"It just sounded like a super interesting path to follow," she says, noting she undertook college training to become a firefighter soon thereafter.

It didn't take long for her to be hired by the CYFS – and, perhaps most importantly, realize she made the right choice.

"I loved it probably from Day One," she says. "Every day is different, you're always learning. It's a team environment and everybody works together. You're constantly learning new things and every shift is different and you don't know what you're going to get. You're not confined to an office; you're out, you're helping the community, you're involved and you're just helping people. It is a good feeling to be there for the community."

"I am super happy to come to work every day and to work with really awesome people just being part of a team and knowing we get to help the towns of Aurora and Newmarket."

Currently stationed in Aurora,

Patterson hopes that in her new role she will continue learning and being there for the community.

"In my new role, I want to be a good role model to not only young girls but young boys as well, that if you work hard, you're able to achieve it," she says. If it is something you want, then work hard, take the right schooling and you will be able to do it. I understand the support [stemming from being the CYFS' first female Acting Captain], but at the same time, why is it special? I am proud of my accomplishment and it didn't have anything to do with being female. My goal is to just be better every day than I was yesterday. It doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman, it is just that you're capable of doing the job."

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SEEKING APPLICANTS FOR THE TOWN OF AURORA'S COMMITTEE OF ADJUSTMENT



Aurora Council is recruiting citizen members for the Committee of Adjustment. This is a statutory committee that considers the merits of applications for land severances and minor variances to land, buildings or structures, in accordance with the Planning Act.

Members of this Committee also sit on the Aurora Appeal Tribunal which conducts quasi-judicial hearings in respect to appeals pertaining to the Town's Licensing By-law and Animal Control By-law, and the Property Standards Committee, a Committee that considers appeals of any Orders to Comply issued by staff under the Town's Property Standards By-law relating to the conditions of properties in Town.

Remuneration is provided for Committee of Adjustment meetings.

Application deadline is
Tuesday, February 9 at 4:30 p.m.

FOR MORE DETAILS VISIT:
AURORA.CA/COMMITTEES



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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Voltaire vs. the Epitaph

I recently stumbled upon a quote from Voltaire that seemed appropriate to the times.

“To the living we owe respect, but to the dead we owe only the truth”

These words stay with me as I read the various tributes to former Mayor Buck, a woman who demonstrably didn't keep her tongue in her pocket nor her opinions to herself.

I was motivated to write this letter when I saw a comment on a Facebook group, describing the gay community as parasites that likely contributed to her early demise.

I never knew her, nor did she me.

She has been a mentor to many and a worthy adversary to others in politics. There is much admiration for her and those opinions she freely distributed over the years. In fact, she dismissed me as an unknown in local political circles and opined that my understanding of how politics work lacking. It was on Facebook regarding the rainbow crosswalk debate. Fair enough, as this was her opinion, and I am nothing more than a constituent after all.

What she, and many of you who jumped in to defend her, failed to realize at the time is that I was also offering my opinion, moreover an LGBTQ2+ perspective. She described my text as a litany of gay history or something and dismissed it as trivial stating, “it no longer surprises me how much some members of the gay community love to talk about themselves.”

This statement came from a woman with a blog where she waxed non-stop about her own past, her achievements, and the challenges she faced thusly - not to mention her unsolicited commentaries on social media. The irony was palpable if not laughable. Would anyone dare to have told her to shut up and get on with her life as she told the gay community in July 2020?

Well, yes, admirably there were many brave souls in Town who did ask her to watch her words, but she only doubled down on her vitriol sparing no one. She was unrelenting. It's curious, however, when a gay slur was spray painted on the bandshell, the crosswalk vandalized, she remained silent. She did offer, “I'm not saying a word!”

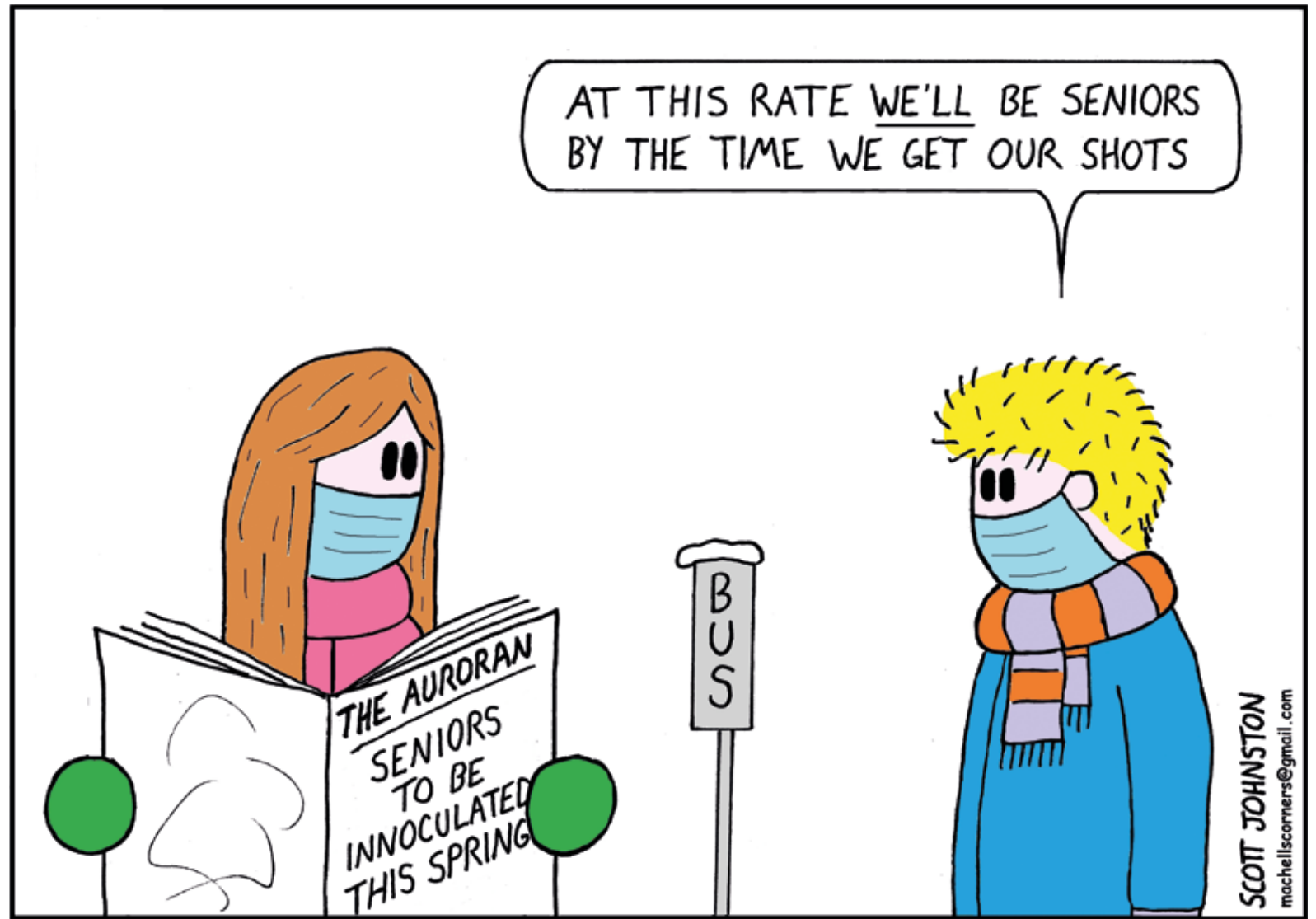
I wish to neither praise nor deride the former mayor. I know her family must be grieving. My condolences go out to them. Losing your mother can be a bitter pill to swallow. I too have been there. My mother was of the same generation as Ms. Buck, also lived into her 90s. My mother was a role model to me. She accepted me for who I am, she loved me unconditionally and she protected me and my siblings as any momma bear would. It was never “a bad day” that she had not one but two gay children. Instead, she opened her heart and her arms more than I thought humanly possible. I will never shut up nor move on from that reality. Why should I or anyone for that matter?

I do not wish to erase Mayor Buck's community achievements as a politician. Her record stands as it is. All I ask is that we understand that the homophobic statements some of you openly defended last summer as her rightful opinion remain as such and remain part of her legacy alongside those often-mentioned grandiose achievements.

If the hateful opinions stood then, they stand now. Accept that they were directed towards and hurtful to a segment of the community where

Continued on page 14

Machell's Corners



The war being waged behind closed doors



BROCK'S BANTER

Brock Weir

Little more than a year ago, it wouldn't have been a big deal.

In fact, it wasn't. It was almost routine.

Yet, when I got ready over the weekend, it was anything but.

Given the earliness of the morning hour, it would have been a simple matter of getting out of bed, hopping in the shower, getting dressed and going out the door bound for due north.

This time around was a little bit different.

A mask? Check. Check. Check. Three, just to be sure. Some latex gloves? Sure, a couple of pairs just to be sure. A Health Card? Never leave home without it.

We're often told that it – and I don't think we need to define what “it” is these days – is going to get worse before it gets better, but sometimes you have to hedge your bets.

Just how much worse is it going to get? Once the worst passes, just how much “better” can we expect in short order?

As the weekend approached, the clock was ticking down on a long-standing medical appointment. Just routine, but it had already been put off once thanks to the pandemic. Rebooked at the beginning of December, I was fully prepared for it to be cancelled again due to “it” but that call never came. The ball was in my court and it was a matter of weighing the options: head over to the hospital and get it over with in the middle of a surge or re-book it a few months down the road in the hopes that “better” would be clearer in sight.

Without any degree of certainty as to what the next few months might hold, I resisted picking up the phone and putting it off in the hopes that whatever date landed upon was much sunnier than it is now. It was time to bite the proverbial bullet and tick that box on my “to do” list that only seems to expand with each passing week due to all the things we can't.

The sun hadn't yet risen by the time I arrived at Southlake for my appointed hour.

I have to say in all honesty getting out of the car was not without its fair share of trepidation.

invisible enemy a floor or corridor away.

It was an unsettling feeling and a stark reminder that the way we conduct ourselves has immediate impact not only on ourselves, our families, and anyone else who happens to be in our immediate households, but very real impacts on the community as a whole, especially those who are working tirelessly day in and day out to keep us safe.

Perhaps it can be chalked up simply to COVID fatigue, but there seems to be a distinct shift in sentiment in this second wave. Focus at the moment appears to be largely trained on businesses, and rightfully so, but other areas of focus are all but falling by the wayside. Granted the ground is less penetrable during these winter months, but the lawn signs that were, for a window in time, a ubiquitous part of our landscape thanking our myriad frontline heroes have been packed away. Hand-made banners and messages of hope that once filled the windows and doors of countless home windows have left noticeable voids, and parades in front of the hospitals to support those fighting the good fight inside have largely fallen by the wayside.

The time for these shows of support is needed now more than ever.

Well, perhaps not the parades. In the lead-up to the holiday season, the local hospital said while frontline workers appreciated parades of support, a better show of community support for the work they do is abiding by public health measures and doing our part to stay healthy. That holds true now that the holidays are firmly behind us.

Whether or not you dust off your signs and decorations and poke them into your lawns or tape them back up in your windows is up to you, but doing our part, following directions and, when your time comes, getting your vaccine is the greatest show of support we can offer.

We may not see the battles being waged behind closed doors at our hospitals every day, but they are happening and our frontline heroes are warriors. With our collective efforts the war can be won.

THE AU 20 YEARS RAN
Aurora's Community Newspaper

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Main number 905-727-3300
Fax number 905-727-2620

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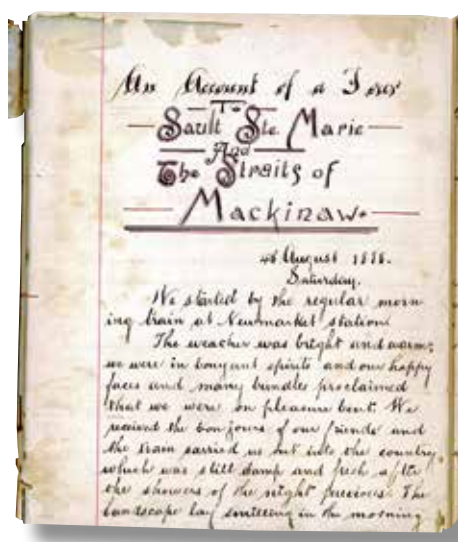
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To submit a letter to the editor, please send your email to brock@lpcmedia.ca
Deadline for submissions is Sunday at 1 p.m.



The Aurora Museum & Archives is celebrating...

Handwriting Day!

(January 23)

Every year on John Hancock's birthday, we celebrate Handwriting Day. Cursive writing is a disappearing art that once made up a large part of a student's day and was a skill expected in adulthood. Jesse M. Walton, later the Mayor of Aurora, recorded his journey to Sault Ste. Marie in handwriting in 1888 at age 22, and we are fortunate enough to have his journal (74.2.3) preserved in its entirety. Walton's account displays considerable acumen with a fountain pen, which, at the time, was still only filled with ink by hand. His controlled and carefully weighted script is refreshingly easy to read, provided the idiosyncrasies of his spelling don't distract too much!



Time Travellers Diary

By Jacqueline Stuart

Will our anchor hold?

As yet another gaping space appears on Yonge Street in the first block north of Wellington, the prospect of that block becoming an anonymous condo canyon looms ever more likely. I find myself viewing the surviving business block south of Wellington with increasing appreciation.

A while ago I strolled through the history of the building at the south-east corner; the Whimsey Block. Time now to visit the building anchoring the south-west corner of the intersection. And an appropriate time, too, as it turns out: an important change in the use of that site occurred in January of 1913.

The buff stucco which now clads the building at the corner and the two south of that on Yonge is not just a modern blending of the three sites. The buildings were erected at the same time in 1882 by a syndicate of the owners of the adjoining pieces of land. The brickwork on the building fronts paid no attention to property lines, just as with the present stucco. (The southernmost building was severely damaged by fire in 1954, necessitating the removal of the upper storey)

The 1882 owner of the building right at the corner was John Lloyd, a merchant specializing in books and stationery. I decided to pay him a visit, choosing a random day in 1886.

As I entered the shop Mr. Lloyd was putting on display a copy of the recently published Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He had just welcomed me when a bell rang, and he disappeared into a back room. I could hear his side of what sounded like a brief and rather odd telephone conversation. In 1886?

When he reappeared, I boldly asked him if he had one of those uncommon instruments, the telephone, and he told me that he was in fact the Bell agent for Aurora and the switchboard for the whole Town was in that back room. He showed me the telephone directory, listing twenty-eight numbers in Aurora, six of them attached to private residences.

I slipped out when someone else entered the shop, and came home to do a bit of online research – no switchboard required! I learned that the corner building continued to serve as a store, with changing owners, until 1913. In January of that year the Imperial Bank of Canada (a predecessor of CIBC) opened its Aurora branch. The bank stayed there only four years before moving to the east side of Yonge, and a bit farther south.

With the departure of the bank the corner site became a store again for several decades. One big name got my attention: I dropped into the Dominion Store which was there from the 1920s until the 1940s. It would fill only one small department of the huge Dominion supermarkets we came to know.

For over fifty years now, that corner site has accommodated professional offices rather than retail premises; it is vacant at the moment.

I always hesitate to travel forward in time: in this case I fear an appearance of the Dr. Jekyll of increased more-or-less affordable residential space who is also the Mr. Hyde of erasing our community's visible history.

THIS WEEK'S POLL

Will the new stay-at-home measures last more than 28 days?

Yes No Unsure

www.theauroran.com

RESULTS TO DATE	YES	NO	UNSURE
January 19, 2020	100%	0%	0%

I would like to wish everyone in our beautiful Aurora community a happy and healthy New Year. Though the start of 2021 may look a little different, I am inspired by the spirit and resilience of our community as residents and businesses continue to come together to support one another.

Now more than ever, it is critically important that all Ontarians continue to follow public health and workplace safety measures to protect our communities and most vulnerable populations, and stop the spread of COVID-19.

In response to the alarming and continuous rise in COVID-19 cases across the province, Ontario declared a second state of emergency and issued a provincewide stay-at-home order that came into effect on January 14, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. Under the stay-at-home order, Ontarians should only leave home for essential purposes such as food, health care, exercise or work. These difficult, but necessary decisions were made by the Government of Ontario, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, to help stop the trend of high COVID-19 transmission in communities, prevent our hospitals from being overwhelmed, safeguard vulnerable populations and those who care for them, and save lives.

The government recognizes that businesses impacted by these necessary public health measures



CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES

Christine Elliott, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

require additional support so they can continue serving their communities and employing people in Ontario once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. The new Ontario Small Business Support Grant will provide a minimum of \$10,000 and up to \$20,000 to eligible small business owners to help navigate this challenging period. Applications opened on January 15. I encourage all small businesses owners to visit Ontario.ca/smallbusiness to learn about the supports available to them.

The government is also supporting non-profit organizations in our community. In the latter part of December, over a half million dollars in new funding was provided to seven non-profit organizations in Newmarket-Aurora through the Ontario Trillium Foundation's Resilient Communities Fund Grant. This grant will help these organizations rebuild and recover from the impacts of COVID-19.

I want to reassure our community

that despite the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a light at the end of the tunnel. With the arrival of two Health Canada-approved COVID-19 vaccines, Ontario has entered a critical new stage in the fight against COVID-19.

On December 14, 2020, Ontarians watched as the very first COVID-19 vaccine doses were administered to frontline health care workers. Since then, the province has continued to roll out Phase One of its three-phase vaccine implementation plan and has administered over 200,000 doses of the vaccine. During Phase One, limited doses of the vaccines will be available to health care workers, essential caregivers, long-term care home and retirement home residents, and First Nation communities and urban Indigenous populations. I'm very pleased to share that all residents, essential caregivers and health care workers in long-term care homes in York Region have been vaccinated.

I would like to extend a special thank you to Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Region's Paramedic Services, and the partners of the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team for collaborating on a very Canadian solution to vaccinate our health care workers. As some of you may have heard, on January 6, Southlake Regional Health Centre partnered with York Region Public Health and the Town of Newmarket

Continued on page 11

Voting



FRONT PORCH PERSPECTIVE

Stephen Somerville

would be legitimate.

These same people further argue that the collective voice of a large amount of people – sometimes as many as sixty percent of the electorate – are often unheard when a majority is elected. While this has validity, some make the case that a government elected with fifty-one percent of the vote, still doesn't represent the concerns of the other forty-nine percent. No matter what you do, some people will not be happy with the electoral outcome.

The existing system does afford people lots of choice. You have the three main parties plus a number of others. Each of them offers differing perspectives and solutions.

The existing system is also both simple and practical. Everyone understands how the process works.

The existing system, despite some obvious flaws, does work.

You may be asking yourself: "That may be all fine and good, Stephen, but in the grand scheme of things how come the voting percentage continues to decline?"

That is a good question, (and one that I will offer thoughts on in the future) but as I look at this issue I ask myself a different question; why change the voting system if people are not taking their civic responsibility seriously? Why make it better or easier to vote if a large number of people are already apathetic? Voters should show us that they care – by using their franchise - before any changes are

Aurora has adopted a ward system which will be utilized for the next municipal election in the fall of 2022.

This had me thinking about a discussion that I had with a first-time Council candidate in 2018 at a Mayoral Debate. I asked the person how things were going on the campaign trail. The candidate said "pretty well, but that it is very hard trying to campaign all around Town." She said that for this simple reason that she was very much in favour of a ward system.

I will deal with this issue specifically in an upcoming column, but I have something to say about voting in general that is much more basic than that.

About a decade ago the provincial government appointed a Citizen's Assembly to look at potentially changing our first-past-the-post system to a proportional representation approach.

They considered eight principles and characteristics as it evaluated electoral systems. These principles included, legitimacy, fairness of representation, voter choice, stable and effective government, effective parliament, stronger voter participation, accountability and simplicity and practicality. The regulation also allowed the Assembly to consider any other principles or characteristics it believed were important.

Let's take a quick look at a few of these principles and how they stack up against our current system.

While I agree that majority governments in this country have been elected with as little as forty percent of the popular vote, any voting system employed in Canada is legitimate if the people of our society accept it as so.

Individuals may not like the outcome of a particular election, but as long as everyone agrees with the rules going into the game, the results are legitimate. It is like changing the rules for a hockey game. If people agree that both sides should use ten men on the ice instead of five (plus the goalie), the final score of the game

Stephen can be contacted at stephengsomerville@yahoo.com

Vaccine rollout brings much-needed ray of light to senior care

From page 1

essential caregivers. 1,320 doses were given to staff and essential caregivers in long-term care and a total of 1,569 residents and 91 staff of retirement homes have received doses.

“The safest place for our residents was their suites and when the vaccine rolled in on Friday of last week, it has been tremendous because it has given people the sense that as a little more time goes past, they are getting some level of safety against the virus and that has been huge for people,” says Ray Barlow, Director of Operations for Fieldgate Retirement Living. “There was a lot of elation, families were extremely happy, residents were incredibly relieved. York Region did a tremendous job bringing in the paramedics. They were on site, the family doctor was here, Southlake was here, and York Region Public Health nurses were on site, so there was a real show of force to come in and get the job done quickly and efficiently. They all worked extremely hard and gave a lot of confidence to our residents that they were on the road to safety.”

Mr. Barlow praises staff for their response to the outbreak, noting that not one of the caregivers left once the outbreak was declared. In fact, many stayed nights at the residence to pitch in to combat the outbreak.

“That tells a real story and I think that is a testament to the staff at Kingsway,” says Mr. Barlow.

In his weekly update, Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health, said work continues “diligently” between York Region Public Health, Paramedics, hospital

partners and nurse practitioners in the community to get the job done in long-term care and retirement settings.

“These are places that the majority of the outbreaks have been happening and these are the places where about two-thirds of the deaths have been experienced in York Region have occurred,” he said. “As more and more vaccine becomes available, we’ll be moving into other groups, but we have to work very closely with the Province to ensure equitable distribution of vaccines across the Province.”

That being said, the delivery of the Moderna vaccine to retirement homes has been temporarily stopped by York Region Public Health to “re-allocate the Pfizer vaccine to homes in an effort to hold back a second dose for long-term care home residents, staff, and essential caregivers who received a first dose of Moderna,” according to Patrick Casey, Director of Corporate Communications for the Region of York.

“As such, the remaining doses, 2,190, are being held back as second doses for those in long-term care and retirement homes who already received the first dose,” said Casey on Friday. “Immunization with Pfizer is ongoing in retirement homes and will be continued over the weekend and on Monday. Some catch-up of long-term residents, for example those not able to receive the vaccine at previous visits due to being COVID-19 positive or consent not provided by substitute decision-makers were done on Saturday, January 16.”



Dorothy Agnew receives her vaccine at the clinic held at Kingsway Place last week.

Contributed photo

Four more Aurorans lost to virus as new cases see slight decline

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Nearly 30 Aurora residents have now lost their battle with COVID-19.

This grim milestone approaches as York Region overall sees a slight decline of new cases.

Between January 13 and January 16, York Region Public Health reported the deaths of six residents of Willows Estate Long Term Care in Aurora’s south end.

An 86-year-old woman lost her battle with COVID at the residence on Thursday, January 7, after first being diagnosed with the virus on January 4. On Sunday, January 10, a 77-year-old man succumbed after receiving test results on January 4. A 90-year-old woman, who also received positive test results on January 4, lost her battle on January 11.

Two further deaths – an 88-year-old man and a 74-year-old woman lost their lives on January 14 and, the following day, an 86-year-old woman succumbed.

But, as the outbreak continues at Willows Estate and a newly-reported outbreak at Chartwell Hollandview Trail continues, Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, says the rate of new cases across York Region is showing signs of slowing but the emergence of the UK COVID variant is a cause for concern.

“Our case numbers have been declining slightly thanks to all your help,” said Dr. Kurji on Monday. “We are now slightly lower than the incidence figures for Toronto, however we do have the variant in our midst. The UK

variant has been found in seven of our residents. In three of them, there was no connection to travel and, therefore there is community transmission going on.

“With such high numbers in the community, it is important that we try and trace expeditiously the close contacts of cases and make sure that they are self-isolating as well. To that effect, we need your assistance. When we send you texts, we would like you to complete the questionnaires as fully as you can. Even if you complete them partially, they are still useful for us. It enables our case managers to very quickly get in touch with the close contacts.

“The most important safeguard for us is to continue to stay at home and not mix with anybody other than our immediate household. The stay-at-home order, which is in effect until February 11, requires you to stay at home and only go out for essential visits such as to the pharmacist, grocery shopping or your healthcare provider. Certainly, we do encourage you to go out for exercise, as fresh air is good for you and we don’t want you to get too mentally isolated.”

At press time this week, Aurora was grappling with 66 active cases of COVID-19.

The community had seen a total of 785 confirmed cases as of Monday, 690 of which are now marked as recovered. Of the active cases, 39 are attributed to local transmission and close contact, 26 to institutional outbreak, and 1 related to workplace cluster.




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Dentist who lost wife and daughter on Flight PS752 fights to seek justice

By Alyssa Parkhill

January 8 marked the first anniversary of the tragedy of the crash of the Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752.

176 passengers were on board the flight, in which 138 of them had ties with Canada.

Minutes after the plane took off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport in Iran, Flight PS752 came down in a field where all passengers on board lost their lives. The cause was first said to be due to a mechanical error; but evidence was later discovered that the plane was hit by an Iranian missile.

Area dentist Dr. Hamed Esmailion was one of the members who lost family on that fatal flight.

His wife, Dr. Parisa Eghbalian, also a dentist, and daughter Reera Esmailion were two of the 176 victims.

Dr. Esmailion, who has been working in the dentistry industry for the past 17 years, has practiced in Aurora, Caledon and Richmond Hill since moving to Canada in 2010. His wife and daughter were visiting family in Iran over the holidays and were returning home where they were transferred to a connecting flight – Flight PS752.

"This whole year has been like a nightmare for me," he said.

In the beginning, Iranian officials declared no participation in the events. As investigations were pursued and evidence collected, Iran admitted to their involvement.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau later assigned Ralph Goodale in March as his special advisor in order to "examine lessons learned from the crash of Flight PS752 and other air disasters, develop a framework to guide Canada's response to international

air disasters, provide recommendations on best practices, including advice on tools and mechanisms needed to prevent future events."

Mr. Goodale released a report this past December which strongly underscored the importance of taking care of the families who've lost loved ones.

"Each encounter is profoundly emotional because the families' grief and anguish are so real and ongoing," he stated. "They tell their personal stories. They describe their loved ones, now gone. They mourn the rich human potential so cruelly destroyed. They ask questions. They yearn for the truth."

Families from Iran, Afghanistan, Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom also lost loved ones.

After the loss of his two family members, Dr. Esmailion went back to work but found he couldn't continue full-time. In order to work and fight towards getting the truth behind the tragedy, he, along with other family members of the victims of Flight PS742, organized an association in order to inform the public of recent news and to seek justice.

"I lost two people," said Dr. Esmailion. "We passed one year. One year is nothing compared to the life span of a human being. I couldn't do anything else, I needed to know what happened to my wife and my daughter."

PS752Justice is a non-profit organization developed by the group of families of the victims of Flight PS752, for which Dr. Esmailion is the spokesperson.

Their mission, according to their website is "to unite the grieving families, keep the memories of the passengers alive, and most importantly seek justice. We are determined to uncover the truth and find out why a commercial flight was

shot down by IRGC's (Islamic Revolution Guard Corps) missiles. We will staunchly seek justice until the culprits, perpetrators and commanders of this atrocious crime are identified and brought to justice before an impartial and independent court."

"The story behind it is very complicated. It's very hard to understand the chain of events that ended up murdering 176 people," said Dr. Esmailion. "It's a constant fight. Before all this we were ordinary people living in Canada, living in Richmond Hill. Then in three minutes, life changes. You have to tell yourself why, why this happened to me and it's very difficult to answer. But you have two options: just sit at home and cry for the rest of your life or stand up and fight. So, [the] majority of the families chose the second one."

The downing of the Flight PS752, came about during high tensions between Iran and the United States. Just five days beforehand, the US launched a drone that killed Iranian Major General Qasem Soleimani. The same day as the downing of Flight PS752, Iran launched missiles at the U.S military bases in Iraq.

A timeline of events is provided on the PS752 Justice website along with other updates, news, and actions being held in order to seek the truth, as well as justice.

"Justice for us, and closure for us is to see the criminals in an international court," said Dr. Esmailion. "There's a long way to go. We are fighting with the government of Iran, but here we have to encourage and push our government forward. They have been very supportive, but after a year, there's no truth. There's no justice yet."

A major virtual memorial event was held to honour the victims of Flight PS752 on January 7 and January 8. The event was live streamed on the association's YouTube channel, beginning at the same time the

fateful flight took off one year ago.

The event included videos and photos provided from the families of the victims and biographies were read out. A short movie of the children who lost their lives was aired, as well as a social distanced rally took place in Toronto where family members of the victims walked together from University of Toronto's front campus and concluded at City Hall.

Government officials also shared their words on the anniversary, including Premier Doug Ford who stated, "All Ontarians grieve with you. Our government continues to support our federal counterparts working with the international community to pursue accountability, reparations and justice."

Said Dr. Esmailion: "Everybody sees themselves in that flight. That's why it's not difficult to keep the memory alive among the Iranian Canadian community."

As the majority of the news since March of last year has revolved around the COVID-19 pandemic, PS752 Justice wasn't able to clearly state their mission, but as the anniversary came around, they were able to speak to a wider audience.

They fear they will be put into the dark once again but will continue to work together as a unit to inform and educate the public and seek justice.

"My whole life is dedicated to PS752 Justice," said Dr. Esmailion.

A fundraiser is also continuously ongoing to help PS752 Justice continue to conduct their work. They have organized a Go Fund Me page which has reached over \$160,000. The fundraiser can be found at gofundme.com under 'Help Us to Keep Up the Fight for Justice'.

To learn more about PS752 Justice please visit ps752justice.com or on their social media platforms.

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Miranda's Pick

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Community Energy Plan sets green targets through 2050

From page 1

green light to the Community Energy Plan (CEP) while meeting at the Committee level last week and the Plan could receive final ratification on January 26.

First proposed to Council by John Abel, who served as Councillor from 2010 – 2018, the resulting CEP provides recommendations on how the community as a whole can improve energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions while also fostering “a culture of conservation for Aurora.”

“Community energy planning helps address Aurora’s role in the global climate crisis and is aligned with the Town’s 2019 Climate Energy Declaration,” said Natalie Kehle, Energy and Climate Change Analyst for the Town. “By declaring a climate emergency, the Town deepened its commitment to reducing emissions and protecting the community from the impacts of climate change, in keeping with the Paris Accord.”

“Aurora’s Official Plan directs the Town to develop policies and programs designed to reduce per-capita greenhouse gas emissions by two-thirds by 2031 and to

reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the industrial, commercial and institutional sectors. The Official Plan also requires the development of Town-wide Community Energy Plan to detail energy use requirements, establish a plan to reduce energy demand, consider the use of alternative and renewable energy generation options, and ensure that communities are designed to optimize passive solar gains.”

If adopted, the CEP will provide “a pathway towards the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 80 per cent from 2018 levels by 2050.”

Strategies within the plan includes the design and implementation of a tiered building code or “green standard.” The plan finds that homes are responsible for 45 per cent of all energy use in Town and 37 per cent of total emissions. In the plan, developers of new homes would be “encouraged to meet higher levels of energy efficiency when building new homes.” There would also be, if adopted, a voluntary “deep energy” retrofit program for existing homes, looking at ways to increase energy efficiency through a whole-house

lens.

Businesses, which the study finds are responsible for 16 per cent of all energy used in the community and 14 per cent of emissions, would be subject to similar proposals.

Transportation and transit also figure into the CEP. Findings in the report indicate that transportation was found to be responsible for 26 per cent of total energy used in the Town and 37 per cent of total emissions. A personal vehicle, the report notes, is responsible for 99 per cent of all transportation energy and emissions.

“The first strategy aims to reduce the impacts of travel through ‘mode shift,’” said consultants leading the CEP. “This means encouraging other methods of travel such as cycling, walking or taking transit instead of driving. The second strategy aims to support the adoption of electrical vehicles by developing a plan to increase EV charging infrastructure.”

This infrastructure would be contingent on support from upper levels of government, as is the overall goal of the CEP.

“A significant effort will be required to meet these reductions by the Town, agencies, homeowners and businesses. While the CEP strategies are significant, there remains a gap in achieving 80 per cent emissions reduction by 2050. An additional effort by federal and provincial governments, as well as advances in technologies will be needed. The plan intentionally sets a 30-year planning gap horizon, and the Town will continue to evaluate progress over time and identify ways to close the gap. The CEP will guide the Town of Aurora and the wider community to reduce energy and greenhouse gas emissions. A strong focus on implementation, governance and modelling is essential to the Plan’s success.”

At its first sweep of the plan, Council signalled its overall support.

While both Councillors Harold Kim and Wendy Gaertner expressed reservations on the emphasis on EVs, citing the large amount of resources needed to produce the lithium required to power them, they said a CEP was the right way forward.

“I think the community energy plan is necessary and anything that is important, especially like the environment, has to be a grassroots

movement that has to start from the ground up from an action perspective,” said Councillor Kim. “...Getting individuals activated, municipalities have a big role in the education, marketing and communication.”

Added Councillor Gaertner: “I am fully in support of the vision, the goals and the targets of the CEP. The bottom line is that we are at war with nature, or maybe nature is at war with us, and we just can’t keep going on the way we were. An energy plan is a no-brainer.”

Councillor Rachel Gilliland, who made the original motion for Aurora to declare a Climate Emergency said the report before Council, and the draft CEP, was “the very first step” in moving forward.

“I have seen some really great results from this report, everything from identifying the energies, where efficiencies are, compact housing, carbon sequestering, all these really major points,” she said. “We need to identify how we’re going to actually be reducing energy and we have to start somewhere. We have to do it by educating ourselves, educating the public and getting that buy in.”

Additional concerns were noted by Councillor Michael Thompson, who questioned the financial implications of the plan. While he didn’t disagree with the findings, funding was a missing piece of the puzzle, he said, particularly rebate and retrofit programs for homes and businesses.

“I think it is important to just clearly communicate there is a cost to this program,” he said.

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas: “We are taking a leadership role here in the Town of Aurora but at the same time we don’t want to give people a false impression that we can achieve all of these things without the other two levels of government helping us out. It will take all of us working together on this.”

“We have a lot of great ideas, we have a great plan, and we’re putting it out there... and doing all this work to find efficiencies to create a better environment for our community, but we have always said the environment doesn’t just end at our borders. This is right across our community, the next community, the province, the country, the whole world. We all need to work together on this.”

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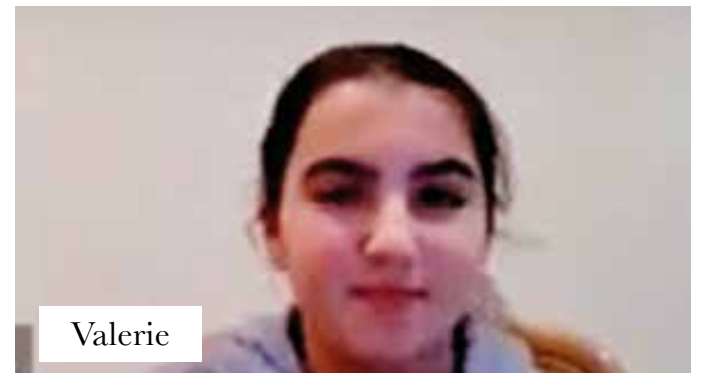
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Area students Lexi, Sumaya and Valerie delegated to Council members at last week's General Committee meeting to show their support for the Town's draft Community Energy Plan.

Photos: Town of Aurora/YouTube

Youth give resounding thumbs-up to Community Energy Plan

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

Although it might be at least another week before Aurora's Community Energy Plan receives its final ratification from Council, local youth have given the goal to slash greenhouse gas emissions and find efficiencies an enthusiastic thumbs-up.

Council, meeting at the Committee level, gave its tentative approval to the Town's draft Community Energy Plan, one which identifies sources of emissions and proposes solutions, all with a goal of cutting emissions down by 80 per cent from 2018 levels by 2050.

Before the official debates could even get under way, however, three elementary students stepped up to have their voices heard on the issue. And their message was clear: it's time to get moving to improve the environment.

"I have always loved the environment and the older I get the more I see what climate change is doing to our planet," said Lexi L. "I love our community and I would love to help as much as I can. Because I realize what is happening to our earth, I would like to change the

environmental impact we're having on our plants and animals.

"This is a huge step in the right direction and hopefully in the future we will be able to see the change it has made. I am well aware of what is happening to our earth and humans are the cause. We are also noticing how it is already impacting ecosystems, some more than others, and communities play a huge role in these impacts. Luckily, just as we are the problem, we can also be part of the solution."

By taking these steps towards sustainability, we will be on the road towards healthier lives, she said.

"By activating this plan, it can also create job opportunities for citizens as we need people to create these electric car stations and solar panels," she said. "It can be extremely beneficial financially for you and the community as well. I don't see how there could be any downsides to this plan and I really hope it becomes a reality as it will impact the environment in the most positive way possible. I can finish growing up in this community in the years to come by watching how this plan evolves to create a better world."

Students Valerie S. and Sumaya C. offered similar viewpoints, presenting together, albeit separately, during last week's Committee meeting held over

Zoom.

"The next years are the last we can really make a difference," said Valerie. "The plan will help the community of Aurora to develop an eco-friendly environment which can really help us in the future. We think the ideas in this plan...are beneficial and can be put to great use by our Town."

Added Sumaya: "We think that becoming more sustainable is immensely important. Becoming more sustainable and eco-friendly would be more cost-effective and could help save money in our community. We could use that money for more eco-friendly and sustainable changes throughout the Town or [for] new programs in the future."



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Social isolation has had “heartbreaking” impact on those living with Alzheimer’s

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

When Kerri Thompson was allowed to see her mother once again as an essential visitor to her assisted living residence, it was a lifeline for the family.

Kerri’s mother, Joyce, was a regular visitor to the Alzheimer Society of York Region’s D.A.Y. program six days a week. Her visits to their Edward Street facility offered social interaction that was not only craved, but needed.

She was busy, staying active and, in doing so, remained vital, engaged and interested.

But, when COVID-19 forced the shut-down of the regular D.A.Y. programs and Joyce was largely confined to her room, Kerri saw Joyce begin a rapid decline.

“My mom’s world was narrowing with COVID and now it’s literally one room,” says Kerri. “Each day, all she wants to do is do what she always loved to do, which is go for a walk. That one small pleasure and a sense of normalcy has been taken away. For her own health, she cannot leave her room and yet, for her mental health, all this is just devastating. She is losing her strength and her confidence to walk.”

Kerri being deemed an essential visitor helped to a degree. Although her mother was still confined to her room, Kerri was allowed to visit after following all protocols, but four days after Joyce was out of lockdown, Kerri tested positive for COVID-19.

Not being able to visit her mother as an essential visitor during that trying time was understandable and necessary, but no less difficult. While Kerri was sick with mild symptoms, Joyce, who tested negative, saw isolation set in even deeper. It goes without saying that COVID-19 is devastating, but “COVID-Alzheimer’s” is another thing altogether.

“Thank God for the wisdom of the government officials and general managers at the respective retirement homes to understand that COVID is absolutely too isolating for seniors and that we had to do something different from what we did in March, April and May, which was to lock them in their rooms,” says Kerri. “For the people lucky enough to be on the first floor, they got to wave to their loved ones and all the rest, but others missed even that little glimmer of interaction. There were a lot of people trying to do the right things for the right reasons, but not looking at the total impact of keeping people alive. There’s more to it than that that we have to consider. It is a no-win situation. If just one person gets sick from this idea [of essential visitors] then the public is in an uproar.”

By the time Kerri was first deemed an essential visitor, she had to re-learn the rules of the game.

Not only were there new and strict screening measures, she couldn’t take her mother into common areas. Confined to their room, both Joyce and her daughter were required to mask up. They couldn’t hug, hold hands or otherwise touch. They could not eat or drink when they were together and they had to sit six feet apart.

“But, the fact that we were able to be in the same room was wonderful,” says Kerri. “With my mum having Alzheimer’s, which is an isolating disease because they get lost in their own locked room in their mind, kind of being in that locked room physically too, I lost a lot of her. Her Alzheimer’s came on harder and faster, not to the fault of anybody, but just to the reality of a pandemic.

She’s less interactive. She wouldn’t get as excited. It was just so long that she had done anything but stare at those four walls that there wasn’t that same amount of energy, desire and remembrance of some of the fun things she had done more recently while having Alzheimer’s. She even lost that.”

Joyce was first diagnosed with Alzheimer’s Disease 18 months ago, but Kerri says the reality of the situation was her fight has been “twice as long as that.” It was a difficult but necessary decision to put her in an assisted living facility so she could get the help, care and safety that she needed.

“I knew she was fraying around the edges, specifically because she had lost her sense of time,” Kerri shares.

In a pandemic, that has been a mixed blessing. While Kerri says Joyce doesn’t have a concept of how long this pandemic has been going on, there is a huge negative in that every day there could be a disappointment in waking up and not fully understanding why you can’t leave your room or receive visitors.

“At the first stages of this pandemic, I couldn’t even visit her. I was the person standing outside her window every single day, usually with my then-15-year-old son just waving to her. We weren’t even allowed to have the window open to try and communicate with her out of logical fear of the virus. Some days you would see her in tears and some days you saw a smile on her face, but you didn’t know what you were going to get. Every day I was distracted – never with her safety, because the retirement home does a great job – but it was more her happiness.

“Sitting alone in her room has taken away the joy. She knows enough about what she is missing to say, ‘Kerri, sometimes I just want to scream.’ I get you, mom. Go ahead and I will scream with you. Please, we need the vaccine faster so mom can go to the Alzheimer Society of York Region D.A.Y. program and fight to keep what abilities she has.”

Kerri’s quarantine ended on January 8 – 14 days are an “eternity” when it comes to Alzheimer’s, she says – and she can’t wait to be with her mother once again, but this difficult journey has only underscored that the isolation that is a by-product of COVID can have unintended consequences.

“I have nothing but applause to give to the caregivers and management of the facility that my mom is at,” says Kerri. “To be honest, there isn’t a single thing that I truly think they could do differently, except one little thing that would make me and my mother happy is if I could bring her in the car and just drive her around.

“We’re trying to be smart but at the end of the day the most important thing is their happiness in the last years of their life. Let them have meals together as opposed to going into these outbreak situations where everyone has to stay in their room and there are no activities. I am hoping once the vaccination moves through retirement homes, essential workers, that they can look ahead and say, ‘We have the vaccine. What did this allow us to do different from where we were a month or six months ago because to die of loneliness – that, to me, is the cruellest thing of all, when there are all these people around who are loving and caring and just can’t get access. That goes for the people who work in the retirement home: they are loving and caring and they are not allowed right now to do the activities, to give hugs, to hold people’s hands. They would if they could, but they dare not to.’”



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Vol. 21 No. 14 905-727-3300

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Week of January 21, 2021



WAITING GAME

Town of Aurora staff are pictured flooding the outdoor rink at Town Park last week. Weather permitting, outdoor skating will still be permitted under Ontario's stay-at-home orders with physical distancing and face masks. 25 registered participants per time slot will be allowed. To book your space, visit aurora.ca/outdoorrinks.

Auroran photo by Glenn Rodger

Sport Aurora receives lofty grant from Ontario Trillium Foundation

By Robert Belardi

Sport Aurora was on the receiving end this time.

The not-for-profit organization, which has been a staple and advocate for sport in the community, has received \$105,300 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), they confirmed last Wednesday over a virtual meeting.

“Sport Aurora, has shown that it’s been a team player in the sports community. You put together a strong game plan and a compelling case for how \$105,300 resilient communities fund grant will help you meet the challenges that COVID has created,” said Shelley Wister-Smith, the part-time chair of the grant review team in the Simcoe-York area.

Since the start of the pandemic, Sport Aurora has held Return To Play sessions to assuage the impact of COVID-19 in local sport.

Sport Aurora President Ron Weese and Executive Director Laurie Mueller brought in coaches from various local clubs, and awarded athletes their annual player and coach awards safely throughout the year.

“Ultimately, this grant is to help Sport Aurora rebuild and recover and

continue delivering the programs the community relies on,” Wister-Smith said.

In front of MPP Michael Parsa, Wister-Smith and representatives from MPP Christine Elliot’s office, Sport Aurora pinpointed areas they will look to improve.

The first being communication; that is an ever-changing climate in these trying times.

“We’re going to provide targeted surveys to sport organizations, to coaches, to volunteers and to the general public, to find out and take the temperature of what’s going on,” Weese said. “Based upon that we will be doing some webinars. If there are concerns about safety, we’ll bring safety experts in.”

Sport Aurora intends to build on the relationship with the general public and stakeholders. It also intends to further enhance volunteer involvement within the community.

Chair of Sport Volunteer Development Jim Clark elaborated on what the Board intends to accomplish with sports volunteers.

“One of the results of a survey that was done, was almost 75 per cent of active volunteers in Canada are over

65,” Clark said. “Their fall-off in volunteering has been costly to sports organizations.”

One of the intentions is to collaborate with local stakeholders to learn how they recruit volunteers. Sport leaders will be brought into the fold to learn of the necessity of volunteers and to ensure a safe environment.

What Clark has also learned is there isn’t a good program around to track and trace volunteers.

Sport Aurora, he says, wants to track and trace volunteers to streamline the process.

The organization intends to continue to revamp their communications digitally with an avid interest in increasing their interactions by 20 per cent.

The company will also be using this grant to plan an all-inclusive event

for children to try all sports. Which sports that will be available is yet to be determined.

The biggest obstacle moving forward is the current status of public health. Sport Aurora will be looking to introduce this around the springtime and begin outdoors for this event, Ryan Gardner said in the meeting.

“Kids have the opportunity and will have the opportunity to fall in love with something they didn’t know,” Gardner said.

As an umbrella organization for numerous community sports groups, and an unequivocal avenue for children of all ages and family status’ to be involved in sport, this grant will grow Sport Aurora.

Look for Sport Aurora to be more involved in the community in the coming weeks.

CHRISTINE’S CHRONICLES

From page 5

to turn the arena at the Ray Twinney Recreation Complex into a COVID-19 vaccination centre. This site and the assembled team will be able to vaccinate 1,000 people per day with the potential to expand operations as the vaccine supply becomes available.

As we look forward to the many opportunities 2021 will bring, I am encouraged by the resilience of our community and compassion of our residents and businesses. Thank you for continuing to do your part in the

fight against COVID-19. We will get through this together. I wish you all the best this new year.

For regular updates on our community and the provincial government, please visit www.christineelliottmpp.ca. Due to the stay-at-home order, my constituency office staff are currently working remotely. To contact my office for any provincial matters related to Newmarket-Aurora, please reach out by calling 905-853-9889 or email christine.elliottco@pc.ola.org.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PROCEEDING COMMENCED UNDER subsection 222(4) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25, as amended

Appellant: Robert Bruce Orrell
Subject: By-law No. 6271-20 (Ward Boundary), to divide the Town of Aurora into six (6) wards
Municipality: Town of Aurora

LPAT Case No.: MM200018 **LPAT File No.:** MM200018 **LPAT Case Name:** Orrell v. Aurora (Town)

NOTICE OF CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE BY VIDEO

The Local Planning Appeal Tribunal ("Tribunal") will conduct a Case Management Conference ("CMC") by video for this matter.

This CMC will be held:

AT: 10:00 AM
ON: Thursday, February 25, 2021
AT: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/264001477>

Access Code: 264 001 477

The Tribunal has set aside one (1) day for this CMC. This event is conducted under Rule 20 of the Tribunal's Rules of Practice and Procedure and will be held using the **GoToMeeting** platform. The appellant, municipality and those persons who intend to request party or participant status are asked to log into the video hearing at least **15 minutes** before the start of the event to test their video and audio connections.

Persons who experience technical difficulties or who only wish to listen to the event can connect by calling (Toll Free) 1 888-299-1889 or (647)497-9373. The access code is **264 001 477**.

If you do not attend the event, the Tribunal may proceed in your absence and you will not be entitled to any further notice of these proceedings.

Persons who are not parties or seeking party or participant status are asked to observe the event on the Tribunal's **YouTube channel** at <https://youtube.com/channel/UCxDacq6BD8wgOUfSV-yGVRA>

Please contact the Tribunal's case coordinator, Tome (Tommy) Kondinski, at tome.kondinski@ontario.ca or by telephone at 437-228-4796 for further details on pre-filing documents and submitting party and participant status requests.

PURPOSE OF THE CASE MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

The CMC will deal with preliminary issues, including:

- Identification of parties, participants and issues.
- Possibility of settlement and/or mediation of any or all of the issues.
- Start date of the hearing.
- Duration of the hearing.
- Directions for pre-filing of witness lists, expert witness statements, and written evidence.
- The hearing of motions.
- Such further matters as the Tribunal considers appropriate.
- Everyone should come prepared to consider specific dates for proceedings in this matter.

For further information, please see the Tribunal's Rules of Practice and Procedure.

Pour recevoir des services en français, veuillez communiquer avec la Division des audiences au (416) 212-6349, au moins 20 jours civils avant la date fixée pour l'audience.

We are committed to providing accessible services as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If you have any accessibility needs, please contact our Accessibility Coordinator as soon as possible by emailing ELTO@ontario.ca.

If you require documents in formats other than conventional print, or if you have specific accommodation needs, please let us know so we can make arrangements in advance.

DATED at Toronto, this 12th day of January, 2021
Becky Fong, Registrar

EXPLANATORY NOTE

On July 14, 2020 The Town of Aurora enacted By-law No. 6271-20 to establish Ward boundaries, effective for the 2022 Municipal Election. Currently the Town of Aurora does not have any existing ward boundaries. The boundaries of the six (6) wards enacted in the by-law are as follows:

Ward One (1) Description

Beginning in the northwest corner of the Town of Aurora; Thence easterly along the northerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the centre line of Bayview Avenue; Thence southerly along the centre line of Bayview Avenue to the centre line of St. John's Sideroad; Thence westerly along the centre line of St. John's Sideroad to the centre line of the railway tracks; Thence southerly along the centre line of the railway tracks to the intersection of the railway tracks and the centre line of Yonge Street; Thence northerly along the centre line of Yonge Street to the centre line of Orchard Heights Boulevard; Thence westerly along the centre line of Orchard Heights Boulevard to the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence northerly on the Town of Aurora westerly limit to the point of beginning.

Ward Two (2) Description

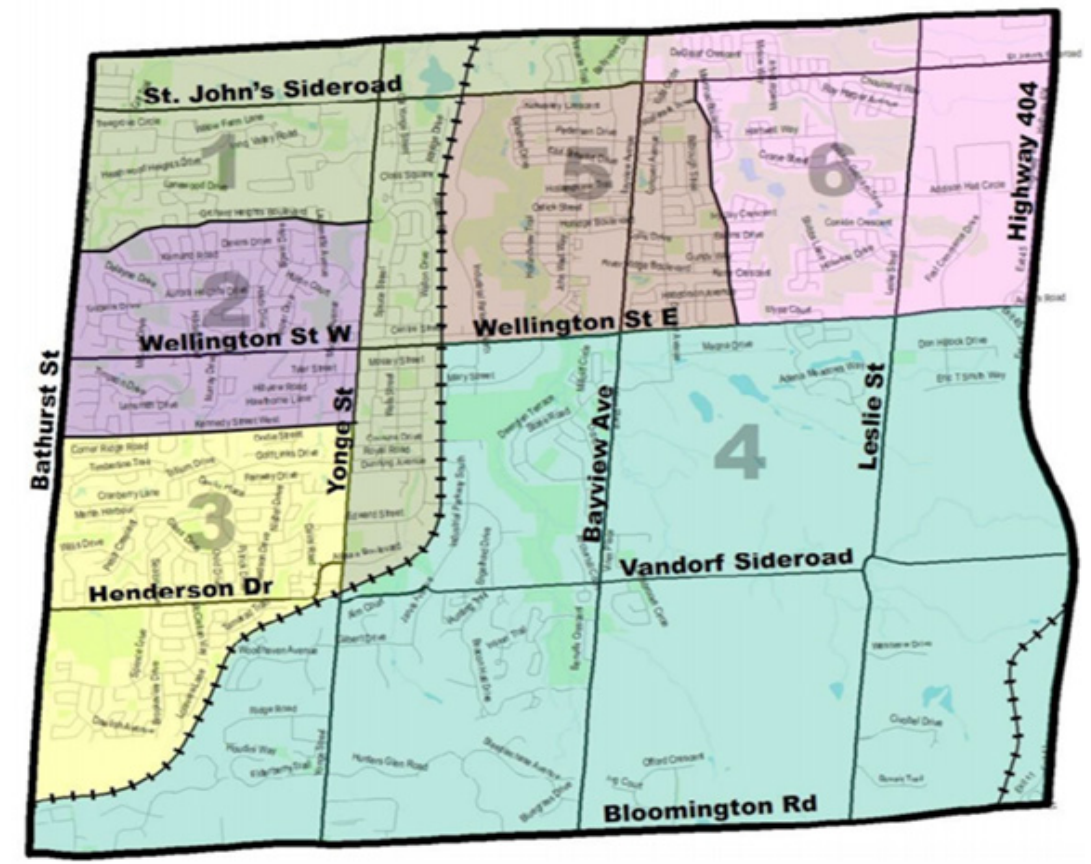
Beginning at the intersection of the Town of Aurora westerly limit and the centre line of Orchard Heights Boulevard; Thence easterly along the centre line of Orchard Heights Boulevard to the centre line of Yonge Street; Thence southerly along the centre line of Yonge Street to the centre line of Kennedy Street West; Thence westerly along the centre line of Kennedy Street West to the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence northerly along the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the point of beginning.

Ward Three (3) Description

Beginning at the intersection of the Town of Aurora westerly limit and the centre line of Kennedy Street West; Thence easterly along the centre line of Kennedy Street West to the centre line of Yonge Street; Thence southerly along the centre line of Yonge Street to the centre line of the intersection of the railway tracks and Yonge Street; Thence southwesterly along the centre line of the railway tracks to the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence northerly along the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the point of beginning.

Ward Four (4) Description

Beginning in the southwest corner of the Town of Aurora; Thence northerly along the westerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the centre line of the railway tracks; Thence northeasterly along the centre line of the railway tracks to the intersection of the railway tracks and the centre line of Wellington Street; Thence easterly along the centre line of Wellington Street East to the easterly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence southerly along the easterly limit of the Town of Aurora



to the southerly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence westerly along the southerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the point of beginning.

Ward Five (5) Description

Beginning at the intersection of the centre line of the railway tracks and the centre line of St. John's Sideroad; Thence easterly along the centre line of St. John's Sideroad to the centre line of Mavrincac Boulevard; Thence southerly along the centre line of Mavrincac Boulevard to the centre line of Wellington Street East; Thence westerly along the centre line of Wellington Street East to the centre line of the railway tracks; Thence northerly along the centre line of the railway tracks to the point of beginning.

Ward Six (6) Description

Beginning in the northeast corner of the Town of Aurora; Thence southerly along the easterly limit of the Town of Aurora to the centre line of Wellington Street East; Thence westerly along the centre line of Wellington Street East to the centre line of Mavrincac Boulevard; Thence northerly along the centre line of Mavrincac Boulevard to the centre line of St. John's Sideroad; Thence westerly along the centre line of St. John's Sideroad to the centre line of Bayview Avenue; Thence northerly along the centre line of Bayview Avenue to the northerly limit of the Town of Aurora; Thence easterly along the northerly limit of the Town of Aurora to the point of beginning.

Residents' push-back prompts re-think of Town's dog park policy

Community garden in northeast gets resident support

BY BROCK WEIR
EDITOR
LOCAL JOURNALISM
INITIATIVE REPORTER

A strong negative reaction from members of the public to an off-leash dog park being included in designs for a new greenspace on Hartwell Way could prompt a re-think to the Town's policies on rec spaces for four-legged friends.

Last week, Council received revised plans for the proposed park in Aurora's northeast, a new design which includes naturalized features and, in response to a community survey, no off-leash dog park.

Council received initial concepts for the park in March of 2020. At the time, two designs were on the table which they directed be put out to the public, particularly residents in the homes within a short walking distance to the land in question, and that consultation process began last fall.

According to a report from Sara Tienkamp, Aurora's Manager of Parks and Fleet, approximately 720 letters were delivered to residents within a 500-metre radius of the land. The letters directed residents to take a look at the concept plans and weigh in on them virtually through the Town's Engage Aurora platform. Out of these 720 letters, the Town got 178 responses and while the overall feedback was positive, it was a very different story for the dog park.

Posed with the question, "Do you agree with the proposal to have a small, fenced dog run in this park?" 119 respondents said they disagreed

with this component of the plan, with 40 saying they agreed, 11 voting for "somewhat agreed" and just two residents falling into the "somewhat disagree" camp. Just two respondents said they neither agreed nor disagreed.

"Residents were concerned about the potential for noise from barking, security of dogs, odours and inappropriateness of an off-leash park in a residential area," said Ms. Tienkamp. "As such, staff have removed the amenity from the design plans and the area will be programmed as an open space turf area for residents to utilize for recreation."

"Staff have standing direction from Council to incorporate off-leash components in park design. Resident feedback on park design where off-leash parks have been included in design continues to be met with strong opposition. It is recommended that staff continue to pursue off-leash park opportunities but not as a part of park design where lands are located within a residential neighbourhood with bordering homes."

Conversely, a proposal to include a community garden in the area received a much warmer reception.

In previous neighbourhood-adjacent parks, plans to include community gardens have received push-back from residents, who have cited odour, aesthetics and the potential to attract pests among their concerns.

This case, however, might be an exception.

"Community gardens have been suggested in other new park design/retrofits and unfortunately have not been well-received by the public; however, the respondents to the public consultation for this park were very pleased with the natural

aesthetic of the design and inclusion of a community garden with raised accessible plots for gardening," said Ms. Tienkamp. "In addition, residents expressed a strong interest in assisting with the administration of the community garden."

"As such, the community gardens will remain part of the park design and staff will work to engage a group partner for the governance of the plots by creating an administration model similar to the York Region Food Network's management plan for the current Aurora Community Garden."

Reviewing the report at last Tuesday's General Committee meeting, lawmakers said that further work is needed to identify appropriate locations for off-leash amenities.

"I understand the rescinding of incorporating the dog park areas," said Councillor Rachel Gilliland. "I certainly wouldn't want to eliminate all options or opportunities to have dog parks located in alternative areas."

Asking staff whether there would be any further efforts to identify appropriate locations, Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Operations, said the last Council was provided with a list of criteria for dog parks and potential locations.

"The direction was that there was no direction coming from that," said Mr. Downey. "Council had not asked us to identify any particular area. I would be more than happy to reintroduce that to Council. I think dog parks have to be looked at separately. It is an issue people would like to see them [but] they don't necessarily want to see them in their neighbourhood but [close to] their neighbourhood."

"We looked at hydro corridors and some of those areas [as potential locations] and those are somewhat problematic because they are not our lands [and] would take some negotiations, but I will do my very best to look at those reports and see if I can get that to Council as soon as possible."



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TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF COMPLETE APPLICATION

The Town of Aurora is in receipt of the following Complete Application under the Planning Act.

APPLICATION: The Town of Aurora has received a complete application for an amendment to the Town's Official Plan and Zoning By-law to permit an 8-storey mid-rise mixed use building containing 361 units and 3 townhouse blocks containing 18 units.

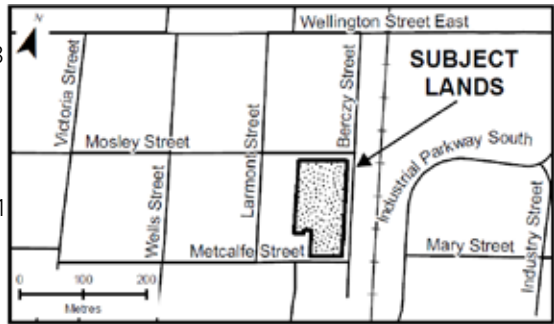
PROPERTY: 101, 103 & 120 Metcalfe Street

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Plan 68 Lot 23, Plan 68 Lots 11 TO 15 W Berczy St Pt Lot 11 E Larmont St and RP 65R38145 Part 2 & Plan 68 Lot 16 Pts Lts 17 18 19

APPLICANTS: Atria Development

FILE NUMBERS: OPA-2021-01 & ZBA-2021-01

RELATED APPLICATIONS: N/A



SUBJECT LANDS

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Town Hall is currently closed to the public and additional information and material regarding the proposed Applications may be requested by contacting the Planner for this file, **Carlson Tsang** of the Planning and Development Services Department, at 905-727-3123 extension 4349 or at ctsang@aurora.ca.

Should you wish to provide comments, they may be provided by mail to the Planning and Development Services Department at the 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora, Ontario L4G 6J1, or by fax to 905-726-4736 or by email to Planning@aurora.ca. Please quote the File Name and Number.

A Statutory Public Meeting to obtain input on the proposal will be scheduled in the future. Notice of the Public Meeting will be provided in accordance with the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.P.13.

INFORMATION ABOUT PRESERVING YOUR APPEAL RIGHTS:

If a person would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Town of Aurora to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the Official Plan Amendment is adopted and the Zoning By-law Amendment is passed, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submission to The Town of Aurora before the proposed Official Plan Amendment is adopted and the Zoning By-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to add the person or public body as a party.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of The Town of Aurora in respect to the subject Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment applications, you must make a written request to The Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning & Development Services.


PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website. The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 21st day of January, 2021.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
aurora.ca/publicnotices • 905-727-1375

TOWN OF AURORA
PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING

AURORA TOWN COUNCIL will hold a Statutory Public Meeting to receive input on a proposed Zoning By-law Amendment Application.

Tuesday, February 9, 2021 at 7:00 pm

APPLICATION: A Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment application to rezone the property to permit the development of a four (4) storey apartment building with 26 units which will be connected to the existing three (3) storey apartment building on the subject lands. Overall, the proposed and existing buildings will be 3,917 square metres (42,162 square feet) in total gross floor area (GFA), and will contain 34 units and a total of 42 parking spaces across one level of underground parking.

PROPERTY: 25 and 29 George Street **LEGAL DESCRIPTION:** Plan 246, Pt Lot 27

APPLICANTS: 2300485 Ontario Inc. and 2333564 Ontario Inc. **FILE NUMBERS:** ZBA-2020-06

RELATED APPLICATIONS: N/A

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION:

At this time, the Municipal Offices are closed and meetings are being held electronically in accordance with recent the Municipal Act. Meetings will be live streamed at: [youtube.com/TownofAurora](https://www.youtube.com/TownofAurora)

Delegations will be allowed in writing, by video conference and by phone. To delegate at a meeting pre-registration is required, please visit aurora.ca/participation for further information.

The Planning Report will be made available the Tuesday before the Public Planning Meeting date on the Town's website, by visiting the Agendas and Minutes section, located at: aurora.ca/agendas

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Additional information and material regarding the proposed Zoning By-law Amendment Application is available by contacting **Matthew Peverini** of the Planning and Development Services Department at 905-727-3123 extension **4350**, or by email at mpeverini@aurora.ca.

Comments may be mailed to the Planning and Development Services Department at 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON, L4G 6J1, faxed to 905-726-4736, or emailed to planning@aurora.ca prior to the meeting. Please quote the File Name and Number.

INFORMATION ABOUT PRESERVING YOUR APPEAL RIGHTS:

If a person or public body would otherwise have an ability to appeal the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora to the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal but the person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the proposed By-law is adopted, the person or public body is not entitled to appeal the decision.

If a person or public body does not make oral submissions at a public meeting or make written submissions to the Town of Aurora before the proposed By-law is passed, the person or public body may not be added as a party to the hearing of an appeal before the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal unless, in the opinion of the Tribunal, there are reasonable grounds to do so.

If you wish to be notified of the decision of the Council of the Town of Aurora on the proposed By-law, you must make a written request to the Town of Aurora to the attention of the Director of Planning and Development Services.

PERSONAL INFORMATION COLLECTION NOTICE

The Town of Aurora collects personal information in communications or presentations made to Town Council and/or its Committees under the legal authority of the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, Chapter c.P.13, as amended. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act. If you are submitting letters, faxes, emails, presentations or other communications to the Town, you should be aware that your name and the fact that you communicated with the Town will become part of the public record and will appear on the Town's website.

The Town will also make your communication and any personal information in it, such as your address and postal code or email address available to the public unless you expressly request the Town to remove it. Questions about this collection should be directed to the Town Clerk, Town of Aurora, 100 John West Way, Box 1000, Aurora ON L4G 6J1 905-727-3123.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Town audio and/or video records Public Planning Meetings. If you make a presentation to Town Council or its Committees, you may be audio or video recorded. Pursuant to Section 27 of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. M.56, as amended, (the "Act") public feedback to planning proposals is considered to be a public record and may be disclosed to any individual upon request in accordance with the Act.

DATED at the Town of Aurora, this 21st day of January, 2021.

Town of Aurora 100 John West Way, Aurora, ON L4G 6J1
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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

From page 4

some of us find our place. Statements such as hers oppress a group of people who may be members of your family, your neighbours, your colleagues. If I must find it my heart to accept her opinions, you must also accept them as part of the entire legacy that is Evelyn Buck, all of it. This was her humanity and she defended it fiercely until the end. You admired her for it. By her own logic, we owe her "only the truth."

If you believe my opinion is offensive, please consider some advice Ms. Buck gave the LGBTQ2+ community last summer: "twist and swirl yourselves into a tizzy about that but you won't batter me into submission".

RIP

Sonny Henie
Aurora

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A note of thanks from Bereaved Families of Ontario – York Region

An open letter to Mayor and Council

On behalf of The Bereaved Families of Ontario - York Region, Brian North and I, I want to thank you and the members of the Town of Aurora staff for assisting us in bringing this Remembrance Memorial concept into reality and for participating in the ribbon cutting ceremony. We would also like to thank Brock Weir and The Auroran for the wonderful coverage given to the ribbon cutting ceremony.

This wonderful journey to completion began after you recommended we

contact Sara Tienkamp, the Town's Parks and Fleet Manager. Sara was a godsend who not only helped us by researching a number of parks for this Memorial but also by recommending the best possible location.

Sara also put us in touch with Steve Filippelli. He met us at Fleury Park and helped us decide on a site that would be not only be visible to all but be respectful and easily accessible. After having the location inspected to determine if any electrical lines or other underground obstructions were present, Steve marked the area and advised us that we could proceed.

Brian and I went to install the footings on a cold and blustery day in early December and with the assistance and guidance of

Greg Scott and Mike Bishop, we were able to get the footings poured. These gentlemen were instrumental in ensuring that Brian and I could get this job completed before night fall and before colder weather occurred. Everyone gave us such a feeling of pride, not only for being residents of Aurora, but for knowing that so many fine people act as goodwill ambassadors for our Town. We should all recognize and thank these employees for their contribution to this wonderful town we all call home.

Hopefully this initiative will spread to all the municipalities in York Region.

Keep up the excellent work.

Vern Cunningham & Brian North
Bereaved Families of York Region



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Reader "disheartened" by sidewalk letter

It was disheartening to read the January 7 letter calling for better sidewalk maintenance. In the area of Aurora that I regularly walk, Town Staff are constantly clearing snow, sanding and salting walkways.

Town staff have been praised in Auroran letters in the past, and I echo that praise.

Bill Hack
Aurora



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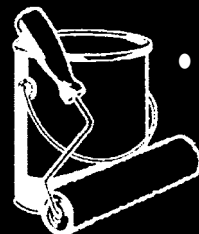
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The past year has redefined what community means to many of us. It reminded us how closely we're connected, as we were forced to be physically apart. It revealed vulnerabilities in our society and pushed us to innovate to find new solutions. Hospitals like Southlake aren't just on the front lines of this terrible pandemic – they've become focal points for other challenges within our communities, including mental health and elder care. At the same time, they have also become shining examples of what's possible when we face these challenges together.

At the start of the New Year, I joined Southlake Foundation as President and CEO. This new role is giving me a first-hand education in the staggering efforts of the staff, physicians and volunteers at our hospital. Despite confronting this global health crisis, they continue to offer compassionate and leading edge care to every patient, every day. They're still pushing the boundaries of medicine with innovative technology, techniques and spaces to help patients and families begin the road to recovery. I am humbled and inspired, as I learn about the scope of their work.

The work doesn't just happen behind hospital doors, rather as the African proverb says, "it takes a village." In 2020,

our communities came together to raise more than \$2.6 million for Southlake's COVID-19 response. That support funded critical ventilators, rapid testing equipment, and PPE, rising to meet an unprecedented need at unprecedented speed. And yet, there is more for us to do.

Ahead of us is growth. In the short term, it is in COVID-19 case numbers, in urgency, and in demand. In the longer term, it will be in changing demographics and population – this is, after all, one of the fastest-growing and fastest-aging communities in Canada. Southlake will grow to respond to each challenge. In fact, it's already happening. As the pandemic strains our mental health like never before, with your support, we've opened a new Emergent Mental Health Assessment Unit and are dramatically expanding Southlake's inpatient facilities to provide healing care for more people in our communities.



SOUTHLAKE SPOTLIGHT

Jennifer Klotz-Ritter
President of Southlake Regional Health Centre Foundation

Joining an extraordinary community, continuing remarkable work

Donors and supporters continue to rally around the Foundation's ongoing campaigns to continue this important work. Without our communities, growing challenges like mental illness would simply outpace our response. But as 2020 showed us, we are more than up to the task. People are my passion. In my previous position as the CEO of Make-A-Wish Canada, I helped build resilience in children with life-threatening illnesses, and their families, through the granting of life-affirming wishes. Now, I am thrilled to take on a role where I can more directly support improving health outcomes for children, families, communities and beyond. I am truly honoured to take on the role of leading the Southlake Foundation, working in partnership with our hospital, and our communities, to address the needs of today, solve complex problems of tomorrow and

shape the future of health care.

I speak from experience when I say passion is what drives success. Passion in the work, the cause, and the people you touch along the way. In my short time at Southlake Foundation, I've already seen the "power of many," one of the key values of our hospital. The dedication of the Foundation donors, team, board members and volunteers, and the tireless work of the hospital staff and physicians is incredibly inspiring and humbling for me. Having experienced this passion in my early days with the Foundation, I look forward, with great excitement, to what we will achieve in the months and years ahead. It will be my goal and pleasure to meet with and learn from members of our communities, so I invite you to reach out to me at the Foundation (foundation@southlakeregional.org).

On behalf of Southlake Foundation, I want to thank you for the remarkable support you're offering in difficult times. The work ahead may be urgent, and it may be challenging, but I'm looking forward to facing it together!

As we greet this new year, please consider donating to our Mental Health Campaign or other urgent priorities at southlake.ca/give. It makes such a difference.



From left: Vince's Community Ambassador Maria Ciarlandini presents a cheque to WCYR's Interim Executive Director, Kelly Broome.

Contributed photo

Vince's presents cheque to Women's Centre and announces 2021 recipient

Representatives from Vince's and from the Women's Centre of York Region (WCYR) assembled for a brief, socially-distanced presentation at the Sharon store last Friday. Here, proceeds from the 2020 Community Product Initiative were released after a successful year-long campaign, and the independent grocer was pleased to announce that \$18,393.68 was raised to help WCYR continue their life-changing work.

"We are thrilled with the response from our customers, staff and vendors in making this happen," said Giancarlo Trimarchi, partner at Vince's. "The Community Product Initiative has so far raised nearly \$60K over the past three years, and we expect continued, strong support in 2021."

As COVID-19 cases have surged, the Women's Centre of York Region has been dealing with more than just the virus. "We now have a 'Pandemic within a Pandemic,'" said Kelly Broome, Interim Executive Director, WCYR.

Following the province's stay-at-home orders, schools closed, and many workers were laid off or told to work from home. With personal movement restricted and people confined to their homes, regulations intended to protect the public and prevent widespread infection, left many intimate partner violence (IPV) victims trapped with their abusers.

"At the Women's Centre of York Region, our supporters are our heroes," added Broome. "Thank you, Vince's Market. With your support, our team has the ability to quickly provide urgent care for victims of IPV and can continue our mission to #HelpKeepHerSafe. We're all in this together and we'll get through this together. That's the power of the community."

Support for Mental Health

It is normal to feel anxious while dealing with the uncertainty of this pandemic. 2020 has been stressful for many, especially for those already

dealing with some form of mental illness. Resources that have been strained during pre-COVID times are quickly becoming overloaded.

The Mental Health Program at Southlake Regional Health Centre is one of these key resources, and provides a wide range of services for children, adolescents and adults. It comprises a multidisciplinary team focused on helping people through acute mental illness, allowing individuals experiencing an urgent mental health crisis to find immediate care in a safe, private environment as soon as they need it. But COVID-19 is just one piece of the challenge. As one of Canada's fastest growing communities with a rapidly aging population, rising rates of dementia, addiction and mental illness, combined with impacts of the pandemic, Southlake is facing the perfect storm of challenges in providing mental health care.

"Vince's is pleased to announce Southlake's Mental Health Program as the 2021 recipient for our Community Product Initiative," said Trimarchi. "The pandemic has severely stressed their resources, and we know how important this is for patients facing mental health challenges, and how this impacts them in their ability to contribute to their families, their workplaces, and to ensure their financial independence. I am honoured that we are able to help."

"We are so grateful to be partnering with Vince's Market to raise awareness and generate much-needed support for the Mental Health Program at Southlake," said Jennifer Klotz-Ritter, President & CEO, Southlake Foundation. "Vince's shares our commitment to create a healing environment that provides privacy, peace, dignity and security to ensure that we can make a vital difference in the recovery for mental health patients and their families. Together, we're building the right spaces at our hospital to give patients right here in our communities the leading-edge mental health care that they deserve, when it matters most."

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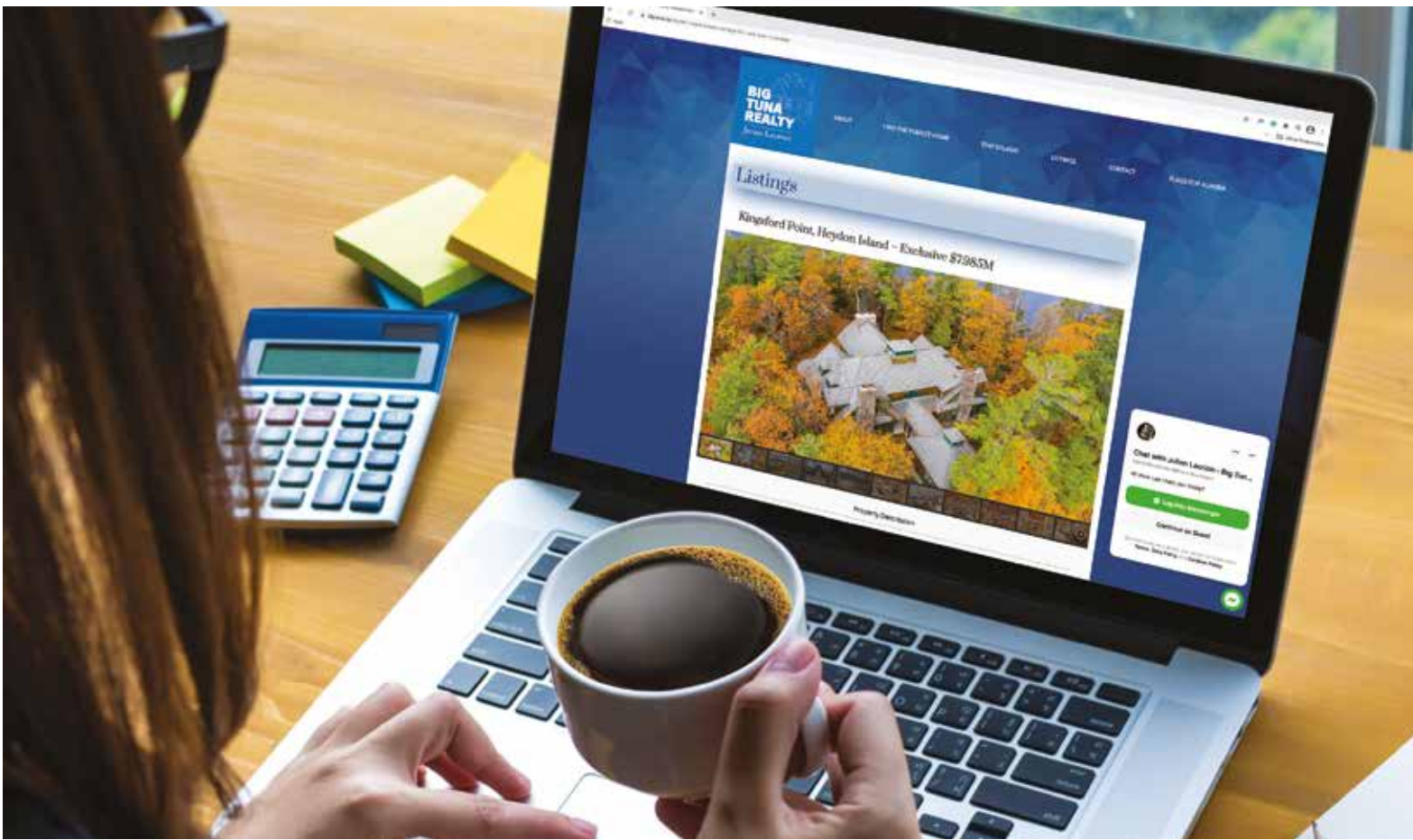
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Creative ways to get your photos off your phone and enjoy them

(NC) Did you know that today only an average of one in every 100,000 photos are printed?

With most of us taking all our shots on smartphones or digital cameras, we have more images, but fewer tangible records of our best memories.

Fortunately, there are many ways to enjoy your life's precious moments and make sure that they're not just another file in the cloud. Here are some key ways to enjoy your photographs to the fullest:

1 Don't just print the highlights: Every moment is print-worthy, from the candid to the curated. Print off and display photos that make you happy, even if they weren't taken in a studio.

2 Manage digital photos: Create a yearly album in your cell phone and print a photo book for each year. Instead of printing individual photos and putting them in albums yourself, you can upload them all to a photo book throughout the year. Pro tip: add your favourite photos to a folder on your phone as you take them to save time when sorting later.

3 Surround yourself with photos: Hang up, frame and show off your favourite moments with pride. Surrounding yourself with your favourite memories is a great way to decorate your home and brighten your day.

4 Gift photos: Use your favourite pictures with friends and family to create unique gifts such as blankets, puzzles, books and canvas art pieces. Fujifilm Printlife is a great and affordable service for making jaw-dropping, high-quality gifts locally in Canada.

Find more gift ideas and ways to enjoy your photographs at fujifilmprintlife.ca.

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Real estate and the pandemic

By Julien Laurion
The Big Tuna of Real Estate

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Even though the beginning of 2021 looks just like 2020, the great news is there is a vaccine on the horizon which is a game-changer! In the meantime, we must endure and abide by the stay-at-home order and health guidelines that are in place. The spread of COVID 19 is at alarming rates in the province and the GTA. The latest stay-at-home has created considerable confusion around a number of areas. I will try and clarify how this order impacts the world of Real Estate.

Masks are required to be worn at all times! Inside a home, outside a home and anytime you are with people. This has been the case all along, so no change there.

All open houses are BANNED. Full stop.

Virtual options are to be utilized first before an in-person viewing, which is permitted. Realtors are encouraged to use this option as much as possible and may replace an in-person visit if the purchaser is satisfied with what can be observed via video.

If a virtual tour is not available on a specific property, your agent could go into the home and walk you through with a Facetime or Zoom call. This reduces risk by quite a bit since the realtor would be alone in the home. If you would like to see a sample of a virtual tour, feel free to head over to my website bigtuna.ca and click on my listings tab to see an active listing where I had to employ all the virtual tactics. Not only because of the pandemic, but it's a luxury property on its own private island in Muskoka.

Should the purchaser wish to do an in-person tour of the home, PPE must be in place and all social distancing measures are to be followed. A detailed log must be kept on who enters the home. Additionally, a consent form must be completed certifying that you have not been in contact with someone who has COVID and you are free of any symptoms.

Real Estate transactions have been deemed an

essential business/service. However, it is not business as usual. We are all becoming very familiar with the procedures and protocols that have to be followed to keep everyone safe and healthy. By following them, you can comfortably sell or buy a home. I would be happy to speak to anyone who would like more information on how to proceed. Stay healthy everyone!

Julien Laurion AKA Big Tuna is a local Real Estate Sale Representative with Royal LePage Your Community Realty in Aurora. I am a real estate agent who has expertise in both Real Estate and Renovations and has been involved in this community for over 20 years. If you have a question for my monthly article or if you are considering buying, selling or leasing a home please feel free to call or email me directly at (416) 402-5530 or julien@bigtuna.ca or by alternatively visiting my website www.bigtuna.ca or Facebook page @bigtunarealty

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Planning a renovation?

Staying safe is your number one priority



(NC) As we spend more time at home during the pandemic, we're thinking about our spaces differently so we can make the most of them. Reinvention can help you extend your functional square footage and ensure your home keeps up with your evolving needs. Here are some inspiring ideas to try:

RETHINK YOUR OUTDOORS

We've all fallen in love with spending time outside, as it's a safer way of seeing friends and family separate from our household. But as the temperature dips, it's time to get creative to keep these get-togethers going. You can continue to enjoy your backyard with an outdoor firepit or heating lamp. Your garage can function as a man cave with a well-loved couch and foosball table, while a screened-in porch can make the perfect sunroom when you add a comfy armchair and fuzzy blanket. To help make your garage, covered porch or patio feel cozy and inviting, lay down some subfloor panels from Dricore. They insulate against cold, hard concrete to create a softer and warmer environment.

REIMAGINE YOUR CLOSETS

Who says a closet can serve only one purpose? There are many creative ways to use these small spaces throughout your home. If you have a walk-in closet in your bedroom, consider turning it into a snug nursery with a basinet and a couple of chests of drawers for your clothes and the baby's things. If you have a traditional sliding-door closet in the kids' room, try pulling off the doors and using the resulting nook for a dedicated play space or at-home learning spot. If you're planning on keeping your closets for storage, then invest in quality organizers to fit more things and free up space in other areas.

RECLAIM YOUR BASEMENT

A chilly, damp basement is uninviting and doesn't encourage you or your family to spend time there. But what if you could turn it into a warm and comforting space? Dricore subfloors can also help in here by helping to protect against moisture, mould and mildew so you have peace of mind knowing your flooring is safe. Once you have this essential step down, you can transform your basement into a valuable area of your home, like a gym or playroom. And because subfloors provide cushioning and warmth, you can feel comfortable walking around in your bare feet while doing yoga or letting the kids have fun on the floor.

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Planning a renovation? Staying safe is your number one priority

(NC) Whether it's for safety, work, or play, many of us are spending more time in our homes. Renovations and DIY projects are great ways to enhance your living space.

Whether it is just a new coat of paint, wallpaper, or something more involved like updating your kitchen, safety should always be priority number one.

Here are six tips to keep you and your family safe during renovations:

- 1** Gather the appropriate personal protective equipment. Protective gear may include gloves, a proper mask or respirator and safety glasses. Product labels and additional instructions included with the product may provide more detailed information on what you need to wear, including special types of masks or respirators. Remember – a dust mask will not protect you from chemical fumes.
- 2** Some building materials (like wallpaper, cleaning products, glues, particle board, paints and sealants) can emit harmful gases called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into your indoor air. So be sure to buy low- and zero-VOC emission products wherever possible.
- 3** Keep your work areas well ventilated. This is especially important when refinishing furniture, using paints, varnishes, glues and adhesives, or doing other renovation projects that may create dust or release chemical fumes. Open windows and doors, run your exhaust fans and work outdoors, if possible.
- 4** Asbestos can be found in older building materials like insulation, cement, plaster, ceiling and floor tiles, house siding, and automobile parts. Hire a professional to test for asbestos before doing any renovations, remodeling or demolitions if you think you have some in your home. Never disturb or try to remove asbestos materials yourself. Hire an asbestos removal specialist.
- 5** Hire a professional to check for lead-based paint in homes built before 1990 as it can release harmful dust if disturbed or removed during renovations.
- 6** Find all mould and sources of excess moisture throughout your home. Depending on where you're renovating, check basements, closets, windowsills, roofs, and around sinks, tubs and pipes. Consider hiring a professional to clean it up, especially if there is a large amount of mould. If the mould keeps coming back after you clean it, seek professional advice for help identifying and repairing persistent moisture issues.

Now that you've done your all-important safety homework, you're ready to get down to business with picking colours and designs. Find more information on keeping a healthy home at canada.ca/healthy-home.

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Plow through layers of laundry with some simple hacks

(NC) Sometimes it can feel like we have an endless laundry list of chores to take care of around the house, and laundry is one of them. And as we start to bundle up, put on more layers and continue to swap out masks daily, it's important to work smarter, not harder.

Here are some easy tips to help you reduce your time in the laundry room and keep your clothes looking brand new.

- Preparation is key – purchase a multi-bag laundry hamper for you and your kids. This way, when it's time to throw things in the laundry, clothes can be sorted with little-to-no effort.
- Skip the detergent measuring. Did you know if you use too much detergent in your washer it can actually make your clothes dirtier? With Whirlpool's load and go feature, simply add detergent once and skip refills and measuring, so you get the perfect

amount of detergent for each and every load, meaning you never have to worry about too much detergent again.

- Use mesh laundry bags for small and delicate items like face masks to ensure they don't get lost in a pant leg or damaged during the cycle.
- There's nothing worse than staining your favourite new shirt. Avoid wasting your time soaking and scrubbing day-old stains, instead look for a washer that will fight the stains for you. While some stains dissolve best in hot water and others in cold, a Maytag washer can fight both in a single load with

its extra power button feature with dual-temperature wash. Easily transfer loads from washer to dryer and from dryer to laundry basket without worrying about clean clothes falling on the floor by getting a dryer with a hamper door.

Most importantly, picking a washing machine and dryer that do the hard work can help you spend more time with your family and less time doing laundry. Look for Wi-Fi capabilities so you can be notified as soon as your laundry is done, and you never have to worry about forgetting a load in the washer or dryer again.

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TOP TIPS FOR AFFORDABLE

winter storage solutions

(NC) It's time to pack away the last of your warm weather wear as we transition into another cold winter. But with home serving more functions than normal right now, space is at a premium and you may not have many places left to store things in an organized way.

To make this year easier, we spoke with Kevin Joyce in Hardgoods Buying, from Canadian discount retailer, Giant Tiger for some tips for affordable storage solutions for your home and car.

WINTER WARDROBE

When using and storing winter gear like scarves, hats, mittens and other knits, it's important to ensure they have air circulation. Many of these fabrics are at risk of being put away damp, which can cause odours if stored in plastic bins or air-tight containers. An easy solution is

to purchase a rolling rack with wire baskets. Each member of the family gets their own basket shelf, and the open-wire design allows air to flow and items to dry. If you buy a rack on wheels, it can be easily stored in your hall closet and wheeled out when needed.

WINTER FOOTWEAR

Make sure to protect your floors from salt or water damage caused by wet footwear. Keeping your outdoor shoes on a plastic boot tray may be one of the simplest and most cost-effective winter storage tips. Additionally, shallow plastic bins can be placed on the closet floor, perfect for organizing winter footwear that comes in various heights and sizes.

WINTER CAR STORAGE

From ice scrapers to extra gloves, chances are you've got a variety of seasonal accessories that are loose inside your vehicle. Try using collapsible organizers with multiple compartments to keep all your items in one place. This will help declutter your cargo space and prevent items from rolling around while driving. Any low-cost storage bins will do the trick, but if they are collapsible you can easily hide them under the seats when not in use.

Storage solutions come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes to meet your needs, but they also come in a variety of price points. Organizing your home for the winter doesn't need to break the bank, so try your local discount retailer like Giant Tiger where you can find quality items for less.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS

**RECIPE FOR STYLISH SPACES:
Designer tips to transform
your kitchen with colour**



(NC) The kitchen is truly the heart of the home, pulling more than just double duty by serving as study space, second living room, work-from-home zone and dining room.

With more of us spending more time at home – and more time cooking – now is the perfect time to transform your kitchen. Here Sharon Grech, Benjamin Moore colour and design expert shares her designer advice to give your kitchen a fresh new look.

TRUE BLUE This year, one of the hottest trends in kitchens is blue accents. “If you tend towards a more

neutral palette, blue is an ideal colour to experiment with as it pairs well with multiple styles and with other colours,” says Grech.

Stylish shades of blue-green, like the 2021 colour of the year Aegean Teal 2136-40, will make your kitchen a welcoming, comforting space for creativity and culinary adventure.

SERVE UP LOOKS One of the most impactful, fast and cost-effective ways to transform your kitchen is by painting your cabinets.

“I am an advocate for repainting, not replacing and with Benjamin Moore paint a DIY kitchen transformation with professional results is possible in a weekend,” says Grech.

The kitchen is the most high-traffic space in

any home making durability essential. “Opt for the hard, furniture-like finish of Advance interior paint, available in four popular sheens, including matte and high gloss, to suit any kitchen style from farmhouse to ultra-modern.”

Once you have repainted your cabinets, add new hardware to replace existing door pulls and handles to complete your DIY transformation.

ACCENT YOUR ISLAND Want to add just a touch of colour to your neutral kitchen? Painting the island in a complementary shade is a favourite designer trick to add style and a focal point to the kitchen.

Grech recommends shades like Hale Navy HC-154 and Van Deusen Blue HC-156 for blues that suit styles ranging from minimal to traditional.

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Remodel your kitchen habits for less waste

(NC) Although kitchen renovations can be very worthwhile, sometimes it's the little things that can make a big difference. For example, consider some more eco-friendly habits.

The kitchen has more potential for waste and inefficiency than other areas in the home, but there are easy ways to be less wasteful without a major overhaul, all while helping to take a load off the planet. Here's how:

RETHINK STORAGE FOR FOOD AND LEFTOVERS.

Swap single-use food wrapping for reusable elasticized bowl covers, beeswax wraps and non-plastic zipper-top storage bags. Use recyclable mason jars or glass containers with airtight sealing lids. These all come in pretty designs and colours to suit all tastes.

INVEST IN REUSABLE BAKING ESSENTIALS.

With home baking here to stay, trade in the disposable parchment paper and cupcake and muffin liners for eco-friendly silicone baking mats, pans and baking cups. The icing on the cake – pop them in the dishwasher for easy cleanup.

PREVENT FOOD WASTE WITH A MEAL PLAN.

Plan meals ahead with more mindful grocery shopping and do more home cooking. Learn how to use commonly discarded – yet still usable – parts of food, such as vegetable scraps for soup stock; think broccoli cores and kale stems. Get into composting what you can't use to keep it from landfills. Buy yourself a stylish compost tin for the counter to collect organic waste and discard appropriately.

USE THE DISHWASHER MORE.

Contrary to popular belief, running the dishwasher half full wastes less water and energy compared to handwashing those same dishes. An Energy Star-certified dishwasher uses 15 litres of water every cycle while a running faucet uses the same amount every two minutes. Consider Cascade Platinum ActionPacs, which save water by not requiring pre-washing.

Find more tips and information at cascade.takeahalloadoff.ca/en.

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RESALE HOMES COLLECTIONS



Organizing your home?

DON'T FORGET THIS IMPORTANT STEP

(NC) With many of us spending more time at home, we're tidying our closets, basements and storage spaces. While you're doing this, it's a great time to calculate the value of your belongings with a personal inventory.

Over the years, we accumulate a lot of things, and it's easy to lose track. However, all belongings are worth a price, and you may be surprised. That's where a personal inventory comes into play. To create your own and ensure you will be adequately compensated for your possessions if they are stolen or damaged, here are some tips to follow:

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Shopping addicts will be thrilled because an important step to creating your personal inventory is to identify the retail price of your goods. Do some online sleuthing at your favourite stores to have a better idea of what it would cost if you had to replace everything.

CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET

You don't have to wait for a change of season to tidy up your wardrobe. Go through your clothes and accessories one by one in order to have an accurate count and take the opportunity to donate what you don't want anymore. This will help you develop an estimate of what your closet is worth. In the future you can save your receipts to update your inventory with new items.

USE ONLINE TOOLS

Some insurance providers such as Belairdirect offer user-friendly forms to help you. They will speed up the process and make it easy to keep it updated, organized and accessible.

RENT WITH PEACE OF MIND

Even if you are a tenant, it is important to make an inventory of your belongings. Whether it's the fridge your aunt gave you when you moved out, your grandmother's sofa or your parents' old bed that furnishes your home, all your belongings must be listed so that you have an accurate replacement cost for all your household goods should anything happen.

After all the hard work you've done, it's important to stay on top of your list with check-ins every year or each time you make large purchases.

Find other tips and learn more about the importance of an up-to-date personal inventory at belairdirect.com.

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Real Estate Market Update – Aurora



Strong demand to lead into the New Year

With high anticipation for a fresh start to a healthy New Year, 74 homes were sold across Aurora at an average price of \$1,104,698 in December 2020. There were 66 new homes placed for sale, and on January 1st, 2021, only 92 homes were available for sale, making it a strong Seller's market with such a low inventory of homes on the market.

Sellers are typically yielding 100 percent of the asking price, and on average, all home types were sold in 31 days or less.

There were 17 percent more homes sold in 2020, translating to 1,125 sales across the ten neighbourhoods of Aurora, and the average price for a detached home at year-end was \$1,264,812 which is a 40 percent improvement year over year. In the month of December, the average price for a detached home rose to \$1,399,166, a 32 percent improvement compared to the prior year.

Low-interest rates are keeping Buyer's interested in the real estate market regardless of the COVID-19 concerns, and REALTORS® is continuing to serve clients

as essential service real estate professionals as safely as possible with COVID-19 protocols.

If you're considering selling or buying real estate, book an online virtual appointment with a real estate professional to safely review market statistics for the neighbourhood and to design the ideal plan of action keeping safety as a top priority.

– Written by Connie Power

Connie Power is the Manager, Real Estate Sales Representative CNE® SRS® ABR® SRES®, for RE/MAX Hallmark York Group Realty Ltd., Brokerage serving York region and beyond in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

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*The statistics provided herein were obtained from the Toronto Regional Real Estate Board; Statistics and Counts for York Region, Aurora for December of 2019, 2020.

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