

Festival founders disagree with letter

(Councillor responds to Jazz, August 28, 2013)

Some would have citizens believe the Aurora jazz+ Festival left Aurora by choice! Those who followed this story remember what really happened.

Organizers of the 2013 Aurora jazz+ Festival placed a hold on Town Park as of August 2012 for the 2013 August festival. We had glorious plans for the 150th Birthday Celebrations too! Oddly, on October 23, a motion was put forward indicating Town Park was up for grabs on the weekend established for the Aurora jazz+ Festival for someone else to create a music festival on that weekend in that park.

To our knowledge, a motion such as this one targeting a particular, well established, successful event in the Town of Aurora had never been tabled before. Organizers, volunteers and music/art lovers worked hard, investing time and money to establish the Aurora jazz+ Festival as a Top 100 music/art festival in Ontario.

The unusual Motion was passed by a majority of Aurora's Council members, including Councillor John Abel. This Motion, plus comments published in local news and blogs indicated festival organizers were not welcome by some in Aurora.

The 2012 Aurora jazz+ Festival received no financial support whatsoever from the Town of Aurora. Lack of municipal funding and council support hinders successful development of a community festival. Council members repeatedly refused to meet festival organizers to discuss festival development and level of support.

As regards placement of logos on festival materials, this requires a level of sponsorship. Town logos were not included in 2012 inasmuch as the Town chose not to provide an appropriate level of sponsorship.

Organizers struggled annually to get limited support to develop and nurture the festival. That said, we must note, it was a pleasure to work with supportive Town Staff and Councillors over the years.

Denigrating letters about the festival and its organizers published leading up to 2012 festival did not support the festival. Therefore, once the festival proved successful yet again in 2012, it was inappropriate to welcome authors of these letters to take glory for work done by true festival supporters. They chose their position. We respected their choice.

We respect the residents of Aurora who have supported and volunteered with us during the birth of the 'jazz+' brand in York Region. We welcome you to enjoy music and art with us throughout the Region!

We are grateful and thrilled to be able to continue developing the Arts and Music in our Region supported in large part by sponsorship and support from Newmarket Celebrates the Arts, the Newmarket Downtown Development Sub-Committee and Town of Newmarket CAO, Mayor and Council members and Newmarket Main Street BIA members.

The new festival attracted 10,000 patrons, many of whom are Aurorans! Thanks to all who volunteered with us this year!

Sher & George St. Kitts
Aurora jazz+ Fest Founders