

IN GOOD COMPANY: An Honour & Pleasure

It has been an honour and a pleasure

By Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

It is hard to believe this is my last In Good Company column before the municipal election on October 27.

I would like to thank Brock Weir and The Auroran for generously extending the opportunity to write a monthly feature to keep residents informed and updated on Town matters.

It has certainly been a whirlwind four years since I ran for the Mayor's job in 2010. In my Keynote Address to the Chamber of Commerce earlier this year, I reflected on my term as 'the toughest job I've ever loved.' It has been immensely rewarding and decidedly challenging. Looking back, it's a challenge I'm glad I accepted.

During my term as Mayor, our Council accomplished a great deal. Municipal politics is a passionate arena, and emotions often run high on all sides of issues. Strong, stable leadership can channel these passions into constructive and progressive dialogue. Absence of leadership causes fractiousness and political paralysis.

During our council term, we have had our moments of divisiveness, but by creating a forum where differences can be discussed openly and respectfully, we successfully channeled our passion into tangible benefits for our community. To my colleagues on Council, I thank you for your commitment to our community and to furthering my vision for a tolerant, respectful and constructive Town Hall.

Our accomplishments are too numerous to mention, and my articles over the past two years have detailed our many successes, but I would like to mention a few items of which I am particularly proud.

Our Aurora 150 sesquicentennial celebration was an incredible milestone, and I was honoured to be Mayor at such an important juncture in the history of our Town. We had four celebrations that fêted our past, present and future, and brilliantly showcase how a small village along Yonge Street developed into a community that is the envy of many.

After 17 years of indecision, Aurora will have a Youth Centre! This was a tremendously gratifying accomplishment and one long overdue. The need for a youth facility was identified in the mid-1990s and I am glad that we were able to forge ahead with the new space at an upgraded Aurora Family Leisure Complex.

I was very passionate about bringing accountability to our contractual relationship with the Aurora Cultural Centre on the provision of cultural services. Providing funds with no oversight is a recipe for disaster and one that we circumvented by re-negotiating terms of our contract. Today, there is a fully-accountable process in place, an excellent working relationship between the Town and the Cultural Centre and the centre continues to provide exemplary cultural experiences to our residents and visitors.

Aurora is a growing community. As such, we cannot rely on the ad-hoc practices of the past to govern municipal affairs. I am very proud of the business processes we have put into place to plan for the long-term, including the establishment of reserves for future needs. Many communities are grappling with the complexities and expenses of rapid growth. We are ably putting the pieces into place to strategically meet these growth needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate MPP-elect Chris Ballard once again for his recent provincial election victory. With respect to the upcoming municipal election in October, Aurorans will be making a decision on several fronts. In addition to electing a Mayor and eight Councillors, you will also have the opportunity to decide whether you would prefer to implement a ward system and whether you would like to reduce the number of Councillors.

These are issues that shape our community. Make sure you exercise your democratic right to vote! Until next time, all the best!