

Revitalization is ?being short-circuited?

About a month ago, I praised Councillor John Abel's suggestion that a co-operative approach be used, to get on with the need to move to a serious stage towards Aurora's downtown revitalization.

Since then, a few things have transpired relative to the downtown area.

There was a consultative meeting that dealt with input from the business oriented stakeholders, and the public, as to what they thought should happen.

On the same night, there was the 'library square' meeting, where the inputs from the public were invited, re what should be considered for the site on which the former library, and the former fire hall/Seniors' Centre are located - a key downtown area, currently in Aurora ownership.

The difference between the two concurrent meetings: One was advertised in three consecutive editions of the Auroran; the other, the Library Square one was advertised once, in the edition that appeared two days before the public meeting, an edition that did not become available to some Auroran readers until the day of the meeting.

At that library square meeting, several citizens advocated for a more holistic approach to downtown planning. Attendance was roughly equal, about a dozen people at each meeting, in spite of the variance in the notice period.

But I do not call that co-operative, forcing the public to choose between meetings that are both very much relevant to our downtown's future.

That does not bode well for a co-operative approach to our downtown revitalization intentions.

In the last month or two we also found out about a heritage park, involving John McIntyre's home, and the Hillary House.

That park would be in the downtown area. It is a key development that is being advanced in isolation of an overall strategy, advanced apart from any co-operative, overall approach to the downtown revitalization.

As you might gather from the above, if you asked me, the key to successful downtown revitalization is a well thought-out overall strategy. That's why I liked Councillor Abel's letter - it advocated for a co-operative approach.

But that is not what is happening.

Councillor Abel might want to make a motion, at Council, to stop this piecemeal approach to an effort that is indeed so much needed, for the successful revitalization of Aurora's downtown.

This is criticizing what is happening. I am waiting to lay out some of my ideas as to what should happen, and how to go about it. I don't think I am alone, judging by a dozen people showing up to a meeting of which they had, at best, two days' notice.

Councillor Abel, are you ready to stop this nonsense, and get on with your plan - with a visionary, co-operative approach? Will you champion an overall strategy, with concrete objectives?

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