

Stouffville Free Press

Whitchurch-Stouffville's Independent Community Owned Newspaper

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A DOWNTOWN RENEWAL

Although, inevitably, the latest plans for a theatre at 19 Civic Avenue didn't please everyone, acknowledgement of the need for a performing arts space and the preservation of an important heritage building are very hopeful signs for the community.

It has taken a long time to get to this point, in a process that involved seemingly endless studies and much heated debate both amongst those for and against a theatre, and those who were in favour, but had very different visions of what that theatre should look like, or where it should be located.

This torturous process, of course, is the result of living in a free society, where everyone has a right to express his or her opinion. It's slow and messy and frustrating, but it's a lot better than the alternatives. As Winston Churchill observed, "It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."

Council should be applauded for moving ahead with this project despite the sometimes rancorous debate surrounding its establishment. In our view, those who enter local politics deserve a medal for the flack they take and the well-documented fact that you can't please all of the people all of the time.

It's amazing that more of them don't publicly echo the sentiments of one Frank Owen, a disgruntled British politician whose constituents eventually voted him out of office. "In 1929 the wise, far-seeing electors of my native Hereford sent me to Westminster and, two years later, the lousy bastards kicked me out."

Meanwhile, downtown Main St. is becoming a fun destination again, with unique stores, cafés and pubs, not to mention The Latham Gallery, which will be hosting the annual Juried Exhibition, one of its most popular events, beginning April 14. A new arts centre is bound to enhance the mix.

Another major improvement, for which the previous council can take credit, is the re-routing of trucks, with the exception of those making in-town deliveries, from the downtown core. This innovation didn't receive much fanfare at the time, but it is something that has made life much pleasanter for those who live or work on Main St. and for anyone who enjoys a stroll in the village.

Come downtown and enjoy an oasis away from construction traffic, mud and the unlovely beep-beep-beep of trucks backing up.

Readers Write

An open letter to council

Dear Mr. Mayor and Members of Council:

Congratulation on addressing the arts and culture needs of Whitchurch-Stouffville. But is this not a band-aid approach? Can you really justify spending \$1.5 million dollars on a project that only serves the half of the needs, particularly when Music Mania and YDAPA have indicated that the space would be too small for their performances? And although you estimate the cost at \$2.64 million, with the municipal share being \$1.5 million, you don't say how the remaining \$1.14 million dollars will be raised.

Wouldn't it be more feasible to address all the arts and cultural needs at one time? In the not-to-distant future they will have to be addressed. Why not include them at the outset? With all the other needs of the town (roads, sidewalks, transit, leisure services etc.) we cannot afford a second facility. In your planning for this project, I implore this council to plan for the long term and build a facility that will accomplish all.

Wilf Morley
Stouffville

Free Thoughts

The launch of Whitchurch-Stouffville's very own radio station will be celebrated with a Guinness Book of World Records attempt: the most number of people whistling the same tune!



Who are they?

