

## EDITORIAL

### Video stream, archive of council meetings long overdue

ork Region council is once again considering live video streaming and archiving its council and committee meetings. Such a move, if acted upon this time, would be long overdue.

Council last considered video streaming of its meetings in 2013, but balked at the costs and ultimately decided to live stream audio of its meetings only, with no archive of the recordings. Audio was first live streamed in May 2014 and because the region made use of existing equipment, the only added expenditure was \$65,000 for secure gateway hardware and new software.

Now, the idea of video streaming and archiving the recordings is back on council's radar. Although the cost to move forward on the proposal remains high — about \$125,000, according to a regional report — it's not a lot of money for a region with a multi-billion dollar budget to spend in order to make its business more accessible to the public it serves.

*Suggesting video streaming and archiving aren't worth pursuing because people might not watch is akin to saying that council meetings shouldn't be open to the public because so few citizens attend.*

The majority of York's local tier municipalities are already video streaming and making some form of archive available. Of the hold-outs, Markham offers only a live audio stream of its meetings and Whitchurch-Stouffville makes a live audio stream and archive available, while East Gwillimbury and King have neither audio nor video streaming in place.

Looking a little further, the regions of Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel and Waterloo all offer video streaming and an archive in some capacity, so it begs the question: why isn't York doing it?

No one expects that regional council meetings will be a ratings hit. The majority of the local-tier council meetings draw a dozen or so users — with the exception of Whitchurch-Stouffville, which had 170 people tune in for its first streamed meeting — so they could hardly be said to qualify as “must see TV.”

However, unlike many local-tier council and committee meetings, the region meets primarily during the day when the majority of residents are at work. Live video streaming and archiving the recordings would at least give people the option to view and review what council is considering and the decisions that are made. Isn't that what democracy is all about?

Suggesting video streaming and archiving aren't worth pursuing because people might not watch is akin to saying that council meetings shouldn't be open to the public because so few citizens attend.

We have the technology to make these meetings more open and accessible for the public. It's past time for York Region to move forward on this.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Kudos on recent Donald Trump editorial

*Re: Could Canada elect a Trump-like leader one day?, Sept. 29.*

With your “Could Canada elect a Trump-like leader one day” editorial, you have written a masterpiece!

It is the finest of your year, one ever so current in the minds of all of us as we try to comprehend the electoral circus taking place in our nearest and dearest neighbour.

With crisp and elegant prose — and yet in so few words — you have covered the issue there and here with perfection. Well done!

Tying the shock we all feel about the American election, (specifically at how far xenophobia and bigotry have risen among the voters there), to the statistics you quote showing 67 to 87 per cent of Canadians liking Simcoe-Grey MP and Conservative leadership hopeful Kellie Leitch's idea of screening out immigrants who hold “anti-Canadian values”, distressingly answers your title's question.

Beyond the repugnance of the concept itself, is the obvious

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impossibility of defining “Canadian values” (Whose? A Maritimer's? A Yukoner's? A Native's? The prime minister's? Kathleen Wynne's? A government panel's?).

Beyond that lies the insurmountable task for some poor consular official out there trying to judge how reasonable an applying immigrant's answer might be.

As someone who has recently come through the Canadian immigration and citizenship process, I can vouch for the clean and clear description of the country to which I was applying, along with the extraordinary thoroughness with which the process was handled.

Our immigration officials made it very clear what Canada was, how it was administered and governed, what its laws are, how they are administered and what my obligations were once I got here.

The origins of Canada, its history and the diversity of the

country today were highlighted in detail (from coast to coast). The process was accurate, its officials were courteous and much could be said for the numerical ranking system itself.

I am very pleased, too, that you pointed to Leitch's proposal as the possible starting point from which “it could happen here”.

The idea she made is beyond outrageous and she will hopefully have sunk her Conservative party candidacy with it despite the polls, which pretty much answer the title of your editorial.

This kind of thinking, whether a politician's trial balloon or the uncovering of latent bigotry among our fellow citizens must be called out at its source and it must be stamped out at its earliest stage.

Canadians have long struggled with how we distinguish ourselves from Americans. Well this is it: our tolerance, one that will not tolerate racism, bigotry and all the other forms of prejudice that lurk in the hearts of men, even those of our neighbors.

**HORST HELBIG**  
AURORA

## LETTERS POLICY

All submissions must be less than 400 words and include a daytime telephone number, name and address. The Sun-Tribune reserves the right to publish or not publish and to edit for clarity and space. E-mail jmason@ymg.com