



An open letter to Aurora residents from Mayor Geoffrey Dawe

On behalf of Aurora Town Council, I would like to extend a sincere and unequivocal apology to Elizabeth Bishenden, Bill Hogg and Richard Johnson, who were the target of a defamation lawsuit brought forward with the participation of The Town of Aurora in 2010.

In his ruling on October 22, 2012, Master Hawkins of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruled that this action was a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation (SLAPP), with the intention of silencing criticism leading up to the October 2010 municipal election.

The Town of Aurora encourages resident input and participation. The defamation lawsuit diametrically opposed this ideal and was inconsistent with the model of accessible and accountable government that I and members of this Council have worked diligently to establish.

SLAPP actions are intended to silence legitimate public debate through threat and intimidation and I deeply regret that The Town of Aurora was ever associated with such an action.

In an effort to avoid such actions taking place in the future, I will be writing the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario and the Honourable John Gerretsen, Attorney General of Ontario to encourage them to enact the October 2010 recommendations of the Anti-SLAPP advisory panel, convened at the request of the Attorney General, to prevent future misuse of our courts by those seeking to limit or silence public discussion on matters of public interest.

I genuinely hope that this effort and this public apology to Ms. Bishenden, Mr. Hogg, and Mr. Johnson, as well as their families, will bring much-needed closure to this whole unfortunate affair.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey Dawe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mayor Geoffrey Dawe