



O T R

2020 YEAR IN REVIEW





From the Editor

Social distancing. Flatten the curve. Quarantine. Zoom. Asymptomatic. CERB. None of us thought that by April of this year, those words and terms would be ingrained into our minds.

Last March, seemingly overnight, many aspects of how we interact with our world changed dramatically. We all began to fight a virus that we had never heard of last Christmas. We faced health challenges, we couldn't visit relatives, we had difficulty paying mortgage payments. It was a learning process for everyone.

But Whitchurch-Stouffville pulled together. This *Year in Review* is our story.

Within these pages we profile people, organizations and businesses that went above and beyond to become Local Heroes during this difficult time.

We focus on the positive amongst the difficulties we have all faced.

I would like to thank the numerous people who helped make this issue a success, especially Jim Mason, Dennis Hristovski, Jake MacAndrew and India Burchell.

Enjoy, and have a great holiday season.

Next year will be better. I promise!

Glenn Jackson, Editor | glenn.jackson@townofws.ca

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

Whitchurch-Stouffville's demographics have changed a lot over the past few years and no doubt they will continue to change. Our Community Snapshot shows our population as it stands in 2020.

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BUILDING TO MEET FUTURE NEEDS

Our community is growing and future needs are becoming very evident. Seniors' housing, commercial buildings, and mixed-use live/work residents are all being planned for the near future.

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2020 TIMELINE

It seemed everyday something new happened in 2020. If there was ever a year in which we were 'flying by the seat of our pants,' this was it. Relive the highlights in our year timeline.

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LOCAL HEROES SHINE IN 2020

This year a number of people, organizations and businesses demonstrated that there really are clouds with silver linings. And if there was ever a year to need them, it was 2020.

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NEW WAYS OF THINKING

This past year forced us to think in new ways. Many things that we had routinely done were changed drastically and we suddenly needed new ways to accomplish the small things.

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STOUFFVILLE'S FUTURE?

We don't know what 2021 and beyond will bring. But the events of this past year could have significant effects on the way Whitchurch-Stouffville grows, our people behave and how we live.

2018-2022 Whitchurch-Stouffville Council:



Iain Lovatt
Mayor



Ken Ferdinands
Ward One



Maurice Smith
Ward Two



Hugo Kroon
Ward Three



Rick Upton
Ward Four



Richard Bartley
Ward Five



Sue Sherban
Ward Six



2020 HIGHLIGHT

Return of the Farmers' Market

It has been a long time coming, but the Farmers' Market returned to downtown Stouffville this summer.

The weekly marketplace, previously held at either 6440 Main Street or in Memorial Park, made its triumphant return under the sunny skies of June 27 behind "19 on the Park."

The live market featured seven farmers and nine craft booths. The curb-side pick up for online orders was situated on Main Street, at the Clock Tower.

The new *L4A.ca* website served to promote the market, its farmers/vendors and their products, and allowed the public to connect directly to participating farmers so that online orders could be purchased and delivery to the market coordinated.

Closely following the guidelines of Farmer's Market Ontario and York Region Public Health, staff developed a fifteen-week market which followed all COVID-19

safety protocols, including specific event configuration, vendor layout, entry and exit points, sanitizing stations, public notices and event occupancy limitations. The market was a mask-mandatory event for staff, volunteers, farmers/vendors and patrons.

The market ran every Saturday until October 3.

Attendance was monitored closely at the entry gate on market days and the numbers exceeded staff expectations. Over the fifteen-week span, the market

saw 7,864 individual visits and an average market day attendance of 524 patrons.

Staff fully expect the market to return next summer with some modifications. In discussion is the possibility to start the market earlier in the day at 9:30 a.m.

The location of next year's market and the viability of online sales on *L4A.ca* will be highly dependent on whether COVID-19 protocols will need to be in place or not.

For more information about the Market, check out *On the Road* magazine, and the *L4A.ca* website.

 **7.9k**

people visited the Farmers' Market in Downtown Stouffville this year.

 **4.5k**

people visited the Farmers' Market web pages on *L4A.ca* this summer



14,711

families in
Whitchurch-Stouffville

The population of
Whitchurch-Stouffville
has gone up

12%

between 2016
and 2020



40%
are families of 2



23%
are families of 3



27%
are families of 4



10%
are families of 5
or more

Community Snapshot

It is no secret that Whitchurch-Stouffville is growing. A matter of fact, our population has grown close to 12% since the last time the Canadian Census was completed in 2016. This trend will no doubt continue for the foreseeable future as more and more people want to call Whitchurch-Stouffville home.

As we mentioned in the 2019 Year in Review, we have a very diverse population. Close to 40% of our entire population belongs to a visible minority group. The four largest groups, as defined by population, are South

Asian, Chinese, Black and Filipino.

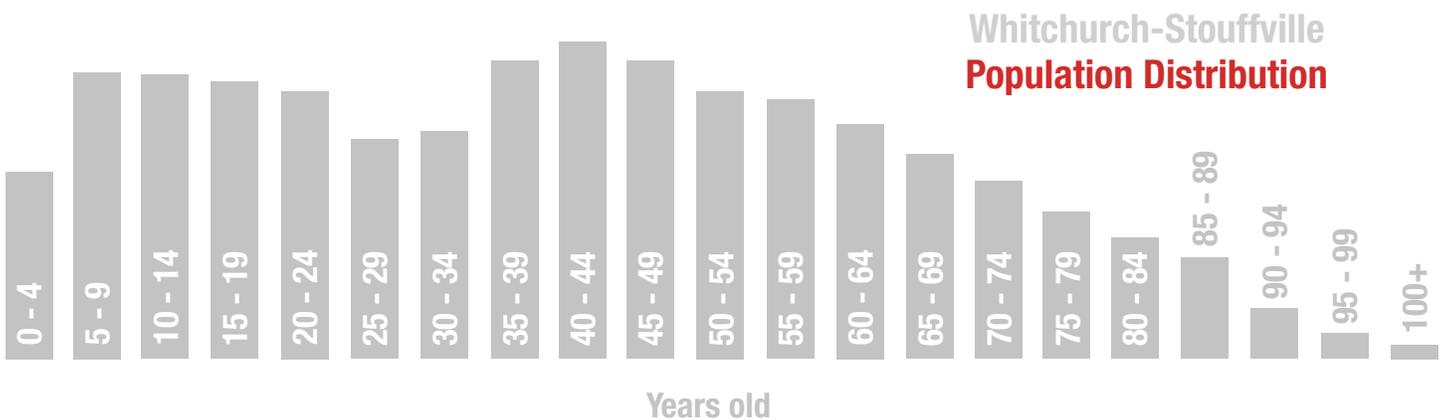
Our deep Canadian heritage runs throughout the community, with over 36% of our population enjoying third-generation status in Canada. Our ancestors, however, hailed from many parts of the globe. Over 59% of our residents have European ancestors, while 37% of people in Whitchurch-Stouffville have ancestors from Asia. 67% of our population was born in Canada.

We are also a community of young families. Not only are there over 14,000 families in

Whitchurch-Stouffville, but 5 to 14 year olds own one of the largest demographic groups, only out numbered by those their parents age.

We also tend to stay put. According to the 2016 Census, 74% of the population of Whitchurch-Stouffville in 2016, lived here in 2011. Not only do people love to move here, they want to stay, raise a family and enjoy retirement within the beautiful town we call home.

There are **51,311** people living in Whitchurch-Stouffville



36%

people living in Whitchurch-Stouffville are third generation Canadian

34%

people living in Whitchurch-Stouffville are first generation Canadian

1 in 3 residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville were born outside Canada



77%

people speak **English** most often at home

5%

people speak **Cantonese** most often at home

3%

people speak **Tamil** most often at home

3%

people speak **Mandarin** most often at home

1%

people speak **Italian** most often at home



Message from the Mayor

Iain Lovatt

2020 has been a year no one saw coming. What started out as a year full of potential and excitement for a new decade quickly changed direction when COVID-19 took its hold on the world, and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

It has been the major, unavoidable theme of 2020 that, if we are honest, no one wants to have to deal with, including me.

The challenges COVID-19 has brought on all of us are significant. There are many areas of our lives, seen and unseen, that COVID-19 has touched but in spite of the adversity and the needs COVID-19 has exposed, the resiliency and generosity of our community has shone brightly over the last 9 months. For many, the changing landscape COVID-19 has brought has required us to pivot and innovate at break neck speed.

As I look back on my communications to you, I note the first COVID-19 message occurred on March 17 regarding our local supermarkets dedicating the first hour of opening to our seniors and those with disabilities to avoid the huge lines and rush to buy toilet paper. Remember that? Almost every communication since has had some COVID-19 related message to try and inform, educate and keep the public safe.

While many are looking forward to saying goodbye and ushering in 2021 and a post-COVID-19 world, I would be remiss not to highlight some of the great things that happened in Whitchurch-Stouffville this year that would be too easy to forget in the backdrop of COVID-19.

Early on in the pandemic, many vulnerable people in our community needed help. Many seniors were afraid to leave their homes and get the necessities they required- food, prescriptions etc. The Stouffville Community Care Network was launched in April to connect our most vulnerable with residents who were more than happy to volunteer their time to grocery shop or do a pharmacy pick up. The response was outstanding and the volunteers outnumbered the need 2-1 demonstrating again, the generous spirit of our community.

When the Province extended its state of emergency in April and schools stayed closed, we saw a local initiative called *Students Helping Students* emerge. Former SDSS students offering free homework assistance to any WS student requiring help and navigating online learning.

Also in April, our Economic Development team launched *L4A.CA* - a FREE website dedicated to our local merchants and entrepreneurs as they tried to navigate the lockdown, and stay financially afloat. To this day, *L4A.CA* has had tremendous success and is now working with local restaurants to provide a free delivery service trying to maximize profits that many convenient food apps take as a service fee. Remember to #skiptheapps.

June saw two initiatives launch that had an immediate impact on our community in very positive ways. The relaunch of the Stouffville Farmer's Market and the launch of the Mayor's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee.

The Farmer's Market launched June 27 and ran for 15 weeks behind '19 On The Park' and saw over 7800 visitors over the summer. Surprisingly, the market quickly grew to capacity with vendors and a wait list for next year already exists!

Around the same time, events of racial unrest in the United States were broadcast into our lives in real time. The death of George Floyd impacted many of us and defined a call to action. While the Town had planned to launch a Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2021, I felt it was incumbent on us to respond immediately. The response was overwhelming and 48 volunteers now meet monthly in 6 sub-committees (Purpose, Inclusive Language, Education, Pledge, Web & Socials, Library) and are working diligently to make WS a better community to call home. This committee will transfer to staff oversight as planned

in 2021 and I am very thankful and proud of the work they are doing that will set us up for success moving forward.

We were proud to support the making of the #forStouffville video that beautifully captured the spirit of who we are as a community in our response to COVID-19. The town launched *Stouffvillereopens.ca* to help the community track all the government assistance programs. Masks, patios, Zoom meetings, popup shoppes and social distancing became the focus of the summer.

But in the midst of COVID-19, business at the town hall never stopped. Some significant initiatives were launched this year and resident feedback has been received at record levels. *CometogetherWS.ca* is the hub for consultation and communication activity which includes our Ward Boundary Review, Branding study, our Official Plan Review, Downtown Stouffville Revitalization Project, the Lincolnville GO Land Use Study, the 2020 Parking Study and the Highway 48 Visioning Exercise, to name a few. All of these studies have been opened for public input at various stages throughout the year and the use of technology and online meetings have facilitated the public's involvement with tremendous success.

Council and Staff remain laser focused on executing our strategic plan while working hard to prepare the municipality for success, growth and financial prosperity. The future is bright and now more than ever, I can confidently say, the best is yet to come. Bring on 2021!

Be well.



Message from the CAO

Rob Adams



This has been an unparalleled and challenging year for the entire world. All our lives have been impacted severely, and will be for a still-unknown duration, by the COVID-19 pandemic. During times of crisis citizens count on their local government more than ever to provide the services that they rely on every day. Despite the uncertainty and upheaval brought by COVID-19, we, the staff at the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, have increased our efforts to safeguard your municipal services. You can have confidence those services will continue to be delivered seamlessly with the same or even better quality.

We understand that you, as residents, local businesses, investors and stakeholders, rely upon and expect high quality services from the Town. We are committed to ensuring you can depend on us.

I am proud and privileged to work with a group of amazing people. Staff has

responded, with dazzling speed and agility, to providing customer service through the pandemic with the implementation of technology, streamlining processes and launching initiatives that enable you to interact with the Town online 24/7 from the safety of your homes. We have had to pivot and we've made, and will continue to make, improvements to the website including increased accessibility for you to make inquiries, conduct information searches, pay bills, buy permits and licenses and make appointments for calls or meetings. More improvements are on their way.

In addition to the importance of the usual maintenance of the whole Town, the importance of keeping our community thriving and connected has not been neglected. The website *L4A.ca* was created to support our local businesses, giving them a venue in which they could promote and showcase their operations, and their

business services as they moved online. The sidewalks on Main were widened so restaurants could have outdoor areas for patrons. The Farmers' Market was launched and ran with great success for 15 weeks supporting local farmers and other merchants.

You have been able to take advantage of the continued offerings of 19OTP, the Museum and many favourite annual events with imaginative and modified versions of Ribfest, Moonlight on Main, Movies in the Park, Art in the Park, Canada Day, day camps, virtual programmes and events, museum tours by appointment to name a few. Attendance for all activities has met or surpassed expectations. And, the Museum has just received an Award for Excellence in Exhibitions from the Ontario Museum Association for "Archaeology Alive! The Jean-Baptiste Lainé Site in Whitchurch-Stouffville". The exhibit is open until August 2021.

For 2021, the Municipal Digital Transformation will continue with the implementation of Virtual Town Hall, a refreshed customer-service call centre and new phone systems, all of which are being implemented to better serve you. On the horizon there are projects for the development of an WS app which give you faster access and an even easier customer experience. You will also see the Town rebrand and the website revamped to make information and resources even more accessible.

I am very proud to work everyday with the talented and committed staff here at the Town. It is our honour and privilege to be of service to this community. While we may not see each other as often, we are paying close attention to any ways that we can better meet your needs. We remain available to you by phone, email and by appointment.

Please keep well and stay safe!

Building to meet future needs

YORK REGION HOUSING

A few years ago, the Region of York purchased a 3.7 acre parcel of land on Main Street just west of Palmwood Gate (between Betz Pools and Metro grocery store) with the goal of building an affordable housing complex. It looks like that goal will become a reality in 2021 when shovels hit the ground.

York Housing Inc., is hoping to begin construction of the 97-unit complex in the spring. The proposal calls for a 6-storey apartment building with small-scale non-residential units as well.

For more information, including how you can apply for a unit, visit york.ca/housing.

BLOOM RETIREMENT

Earlier this year construction began on a new seniors complex on Mostar Street by Fieldgate Construction.

According to their website, the rental office will open in winter 2021 where one may learn about “our 248 apartments located on six floors. Studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units will be available to rent.”

The complex will be 228,000 sq. feet and is located across the road from the Stouffville Legion and behind the Longos’ plaza which Fieldgate also constructed.

OFFICIAL PLAN REVIEW

One of the most important projects the Town is currently working on is the Official Plan Review. When completed, it will be a statement of the Town’s growth vision.

In the review, three important aspects will be covered: planning for growth, including intensification, transportation and infrastructure; planning for the environment, including agricultural and natural resources, and planning for healthy communities, including housing, and sustainability.

For more information about the Review, visit cometogetherws.ca/opr.

1959



seniors care units to be opened in next two years

158



apartment units to be opened in the next two years

671



freehold, semi- or townhouse units to be built in the near future

152



condo units to be opened in near future



639
building permits issued in 2020

\$176.9_m
in work value in those permits

24
site plan applications received in 2020

14
site plan applications approved and building begun in 2020

It all started on Friday the 13th

Three days after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville closes all facilities to the public on March 13 in order to take “a proactive approach at ‘social-distancing.’”

This closure affected all Town services, programs and events that were to be held at these facilities, including all March Break camps and programs.

Tuesday March 17

After the Canadian government issued a travel advisory to avoid all non-essential travel outside of Canada, and urged all Canadians to return home as soon as possible, the Government of Ontario declared a **provincial state of emergency** on March 17th to help contain the spread of COVID-19 and protect the public.

The following establishments are required to close: all bars and restaurants, except to the extent that such facilities provide takeout and food delivery, all facilities providing indoor recreational programs, all public libraries, all private schools, all licensed child care centres, all movie cinemas, all theatres, including those offering live performances of music, dance and other art forms and all concert venues.

Friday March 20

Whitchurch-Stouffville reports its first case of COVID-19.

Monday March 23

All non-essential workplaces in Whitchurch-Stouffville close when Premier Doug Ford announces the mandatory closure.

Tuesday March 24

Following a similar announcement the day before from the Region of York, Mayor Iain Lovatt declares a **state of emergency**, the first ever declared in Whitchurch-Stouffville in its 49 year history.

Wednesday March 25

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville waives interest charges and penalties on the next installment of property tax and water bills until the end of May. The deadline is later extended in July.

Friday March 27

Travellers returning to Ontario are required to self-isolate for 14 days. They may not visit stores, family or friends.

Tuesday April 7

The Town hosts its second online “virtual” Council meeting. This was made possible by changes in provincial legislation in order to allow municipal councils to carry on both critical and routine business while obeying current guidelines on public gatherings.

Thursday April 9

The Town creates a new *Business Continuity & Economic Recovery Plan* to help deal with the challenges presented by the global COVID-19 pandemic.

The Plan outlines how Town services are being conducted and what economic measures need to be implemented to avoid serious financial hardships.

Thursday April 9

Also on April 9, the Mayor’s Office announces the launch the *Stouffville Community Care Network*, a website that “connects those in need of help with those willing to offer assistance because of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

Monday April 27

The Town launches *L4A.ca - Everything Stouffville*, a dedicated website to help support local businesses during the crisis.

With a large business directory focusing on retail, food, services and health, the site aims to list all of the businesses that are





open and catering to their clientele during the pandemic. As the year continues, the website grows into a resource for special events, including the farmers' market, and the town's monthly magazine, *On The Road*.

Monday April 27

On the same day, the province releases *A Framework for Reopening our Province*. It outlines the principles the government will use to reopen businesses, services and public spaces in gradual stages.

Monday June 22

In an effort to help struggling downtown Stouffville eateries, the Town creates patio zones along Main Street where patrons can sit outside and enjoy the summer sun.

Town spray pads, skate parks and basketball courts open as the province moves into Phase Two of reopening.

Thursday June 25

The Town announces it is launching a modified in-person summer camp program.

These camps will provide care, education and recreational activities for children ages 6-12 years of age.

Thursday July 2

The Town launches a new website outlining their reopening plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. *StouffvilleReopens.ca* outlines the Town's plan for a gradual, safe and measured reopening of municipal facilities and the restart of Town services and programs.

Friday July 17

York Regional Council votes to make masks or face coverings required in all public enclosed places in York Region.

Tuesday August 25

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Library reopens its doors to the public under the province's Phase Three reopening phase. The Town's fitness centre and Museum reopen the same week.

Friday September 4

For the first time in over 160 days, Whitchurch-Stouffville reports no active cases of COVID-19.

Thursday September 10

The Town announces that Town Hall will remain closed to the public until at least January 2021.

Tuesday October 16

With Regional and Provincial COVID-19 cases climbing again, the province announced that York Region will be placed under Modified Stage 2 COVID-19 restrictions. '19 on the Park,' the fitness centre and gymnasiums all close.

Monday November 30

In less than 90 days Whitchurch-Stouffville goes from no active COVID-19 cases to 51. As of the end of November, five residents have died and over 330 have contracted the virus.

Local heroes shine in 2020

If there was ever a year that needed heroes, 2020 was it. And Stouffville was full of them. From community organizations, churches, restaurants fighting to stay alive, to everyday ordinary citizens, our community rose up in the time of need. This feature highlights some that stood above and beyond all others. Continued on page 24.

LAURA CUSACK & THE HUMMINGBIRD HUB

Laura Cusack saw red flags in her community and took action.

In 2016, the Stouffville mom was watching her children and their classmates struggle with a laundry list of issues: stress, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, substance abuse, bullying, gender identity and homelessness.

With no support structures in Whitchurch-Stouffville, or easy access to them elsewhere, “It was heartbreaking”.

Inspired, Cusack investigated the “neighbourhood house” concept in Vancouver. Two years later, executive director Cusack and a team of fellow volunteers opened Hummingbird Hub inside a Main Street storefront in the shadows of the clock tower.

“Our mission is to provide a safe, inclusive location for anyone in the community to pursue their interests, develop an initiative, promote a talent (particularly in the cultural arts areas) or find a support community for the life challenges they are coping with.”

In less than two years, the hub became a beehive.

It hosts 13 ongoing activities and eight weekly and eight monthly activities.

A wide range of one-offs and workshops have been held in the facility.

There are no paid staff – but 30 volunteers, 20 high school students earning community service hours and others collecting court-ordered hours or employment skills,

All this happened while Cusack and crew were constructing a network with area businesses, non-profits and organizations.

That was pre-COVID-19.

The hub has since pivoted to help clients stay illness-free while providing food, PPE and “a place to go for refuge”.

The success stories include two people who met during an open mic night, began dating and now are a family with a young child.

Two homeless residents seeking refuge now run the hub through the day, offering a safe place to others. They implemented a seed/seedling exchange with a local horticultural group, internet/ computer kiosk with the town, donation exchange and food security programs and helped create a community garden.

The to-do list includes supporting students and parents struggling with online school and artisans and providing a pop-up market for entrepreneurs and small businesses.

The hub began working with Routes Connecting Communities, a York Region not-for-profit, to help local restaurants interested in an alternative delivery option last month.

Hub workers co-ordinated the recruitment of the volunteer drivers for the service, which is an alternative to commercial food delivery services. Drivers are paid by the kilometre.

Routes Connecting Communities specializes in organizing volunteer drivers within the community for those that find conventional methods of transport to be a challenge.

“With no revenue since March 2020, donations have become critical,” said Cusack. “We have successfully met our expenses and are on track with current obligations. However, a creative COVID compliant programming and an aggressive fundraising campaign is required to ensure financial stability through our next year and for future growth.”







Ken Ferdinands

COUNCILLOR, WARD ONE

As we collectively struggle through this historic and previously unimaginable global event, the disruption we witness on a societal level has left us with an ever growing list of perplexing questions as we navigate this unpredictable environment.

As a member of your municipal leadership team, I can assure you that we are doing our best to create a resilient structure within the organization in order to prepare ourselves for a prolonged period of adversity.

Early in April we recognized the scope of what was about to descend upon us; in response, we implemented a number of countermeasures to rationalize our fiscal position. The action we took will see us through until the end of 2020. Further adjustments designed to address the long term will be undertaken as a part of the budget process.

Despite our present preoccupation we need to prepare for a post-pandemic future. A major undertaking is the preparation of a new electoral map that is more reflective of our population distribution. The new ward alignment will be in place for the next election in 2022. It is highly improbable

that Ward 1 will bear any resemblance to its present configuration.

All municipalities are eager to attract clean industrial/commercial/institutional uses to their jurisdictions because these functions provide employment and much-needed assessment to support the needs of the residential population. Less than 10% of our revenue comes from these sources; this low level ICI-derived income is something that concerns us.

We have asked the Province to provide us some relief by releasing land around the #404 interchanges and the Region to provide servicing to this focused area in order to give us the means to allow for the development of these lands.

As you have probably noticed the construction of a parking garage and a Metrolinx terminal building at Bloomington and Highway 404 continued this summer with visible signs of progress. The main goal with respect to this undertaking is to provide a rapid transit alternative to reduce the gridlock that exists during most hours on the 404/DVP combination. The Town of Richmond Hill and the Town of Whitchurch-

Stouffville have petitioned the Province to allow for the development of surrounding lands in order to unlock the potential that these lands can offer.

Ward 1 is home to thousands of acres of green open space. Most of us can access a forest tract within walking distance of our homes. Our present circumstance may be the perfect opportunity to embark on a new daily journey, one that will offer numerous health benefits without the risks that one would encounter in a gym or shopping centre.

As 2020 draws to an inauspicious close, it is evident that the adversity we are experiencing will never be forgotten in our lifetimes. You have demonstrated resilience, determination, understanding, compassion and innovation. Above all, your patience is most appreciated. Thank you.

I want to take the opportunity to wish you all an enjoyable Christmas Season and I hope that 2021 ushers in the successes that may have been delayed or eluded you in 2020. Stay well.



Maurice Smith

COUNCILLOR, WARD TWO

It is difficult to look back on what happened anywhere in the world in 2020, let alone Ward 2 in Whitchurch-Stouffville, without relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected so many in various ways they are hard to be counted. From construction supplies being in short supply, to having to sit on the patio of our favourite eating place, cancellation of most public events and wearing masks when we go inside all public facilities. Hopefully 2021 will see most of these put behind us. But one thing COVID-19 has done, is make us slow down, which provided us an opportunity to consider what is really important in our lives; family, friends and neighbours.

However, 2020 is almost over. Ward 2 saw the construction of the new plaza at the corner of Highway 48 and Aurora Road come to a stand still due to a shut down of product suppliers. It is now anticipated it will be completely opened and occupied, in spring 2021.

Effective internet service is still a challenge in a number of localized areas of Ward 2. However, the Federal government announced in November that they are once

again putting funds aside, reaffirming their position that high-speed internet is an essential service and should be provided in all areas of the country. Your councillor and town staff are well aware of the short-fall in this area and will once again be pursuing financial assistance as it becomes available.

The staff of our Development Services department saw a great influx of developers wanting to take advantage of the Provincial government's push for new housing starts. Ward 2 alone has three or four significant residential developments coming in the near future. As much as some want their community to remain, "Country close to the City," new subdivisions are becoming inevitable.

There have been a number of tax dollars invested in our area such as the repaving of a very large section of Ninth Line. Speaking of Ninth Line, the speed limit was reduced in the stretch from Aurora Road north to Davis Drive.

The mandatory ten-year Ward boundary review is presently under way. When completed I suggest the boundaries of Ward 2 will be expanded significantly. This is

necessary in order to make more equitable the allocation of voting residents throughout the town in a productive and positive way.

Personally I would like to thank all residents for your continued support, comments and involvement during 2020. On behalf of my wife and I let me extend to you and your family all the best for the upcoming holiday season. Be assured it will be a different one this year. My hope for you for 2021 is that you and your family stay healthy and you enjoy all this great involved community has to offer.

Reshaping Ringwood

The area around Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48 has been fairly stagnant over the last dozen years or so.

The last major development, the addition of SmartCentres, anchored by Walmart, Winners and Canadian Tire, occurred about 15 years ago but since then, not much else has happened.

A few stores and restaurants have come and gone, with the most exciting news being the addition of the town's second Tim Hortons.

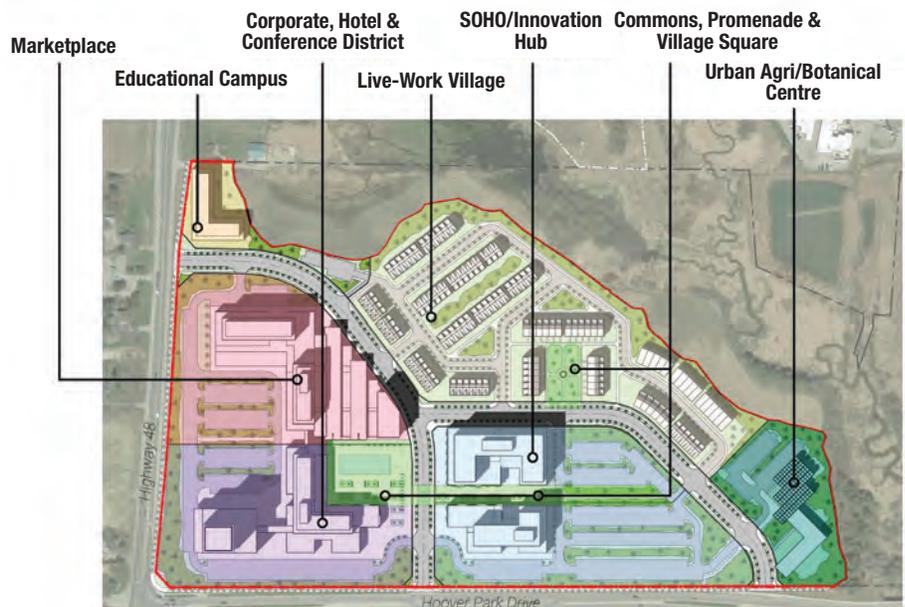
A large field still borders the area to the north and the east, and except for a few decades-old houses on the west side of Highway 48, very few people live within walking distance of the area.

That could all change within the next couple of years. In a big way.

No less than four development applications or concepts have been presented to the Town centered around the intersection Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48. Two of those were recently endorsed, in principle, by the Region of York within the last month, including those by SmartCentres and Corebridge (aka "Zhawd Corporation").

Both developments would alter the landscape drastically.

Last year, Corebridge applied to the Region to convert the parcel of land on the northeast corner from 'employment land' to 'mixed-use land.' 'Mixed use zoning' allows





LEFT: Corebridge's vision for the northeast corner of Hoover Park Drive and Highway 48 includes a hotel, library, marketplace, conference center, innovation centre, live/work townhouses and apartment units. The zoning change for the property was recently endorsed, in principal, by the Region of York. A development application may come forth in 2021.

for a multitude of permitted uses, including residential, something 'employment land' does not.

When the application went to the Region, Corebridge was interested in building Stouffville Commons, a complex containing a marketplace, a library (not municipally owned), offices, a hotel and a conference centre, school/residence, agricultural centre, live/work townhouse units and apartment units. They estimate that the proposal will generate approximately 1,940 jobs and accommodate 2,929 residents.

According to Corebridge the development would "provide(s) a unique opportunity to create an attractive gateway to the community of Stouffville for visitors and residents approaching from the south along Highway 48." It would also "provide(s) an opportunity to attract small incubator

businesses in either the office space proposed... or for residents who choose to work from home."

Now that it has been endorsed in principle by the Region, Corebridge will no doubt present the formal application to the Town for consideration. During the application process, the public will be able to submit opinions and comments.

Not to be outdone, SmartCentres developed a concept for their remaining 111 acres on the southeast corner of the intersection.

Within the deemed employment zones, SmartCentres wishes to create a community that "would attract high paying jobs," including manufacturing, warehousing and office jobs. They say this will translate into 3,600 permanent jobs.

The mixed-use portion of their land,

which encompasses much of the existing retail stores, would "be transformed into a vibrant place, inclusive of parks and gathering spaces... a livable community for all ages, with residential options for all stages of life."

According to SmartCentres, all of this would be "designed for pedestrian connectivity, facilitat(ing) interactions between residents, office workers, and (the) commercial amenities that serve them."

The entire area would have "connectivity easily accessed by car and public transit" and pedestrians.

Applications from both SmartCentres and Corebridge have not been received by the Town yet.

The intersection of Highway 48 and Stouffville Road has not been forgotten.

In 2018 the Town approved the Western Approach and Gateway Study that dictates the development of the entire Ringwood area on Stouffville Road. These are a set of zoning and planning guidelines that will hopefully make the area, frequently described as an "eyesore," to become more welcoming to the community of Stouffville.

The Town has received numerous applications over the past couple of years, including the desired re-development of the northwest corner that is currently Gallo Real Estate. Applications for residential development has been received for the northeast corner and applications are expected any day for developments on the southwest corner where Petro Canada once stood.

Next stop, “Stouffville Junction”



The year was 1879. Elijah Miller opened a “first-class” hotel on the corner of Main and Edward. He called it “The Mansion House Hotel”. It is said that the Mansion House was very modern for the time. It was referred to as “one of the best hotels of the first grade north of Toronto”. Guests were provided with amenities such as hot water, heat, and electric light.

The Mansion House Hotel welcomed many guests over the years. Not only people traveling by carriage but also travelers on the Toronto Nipissing Railway line - a railway system that brought dozens of trains a day through Stouffville’s Train Station... the Stouffville Junction.

In the 141 years the building has stood next to the train station, the Mansion House has seen its fair share of transformations. Since Elijah Miller’s original construction of the building, the rear of the structure has had a few additions. As well, a few fires in the building have led to the reconstruction of certain areas. Fast forward a few decades, the 1980s welcomed the addition of the ever so familiar orange stucco. Since then, the building looked fairly similar... until this year.

Enter the developer - a private development company known as “The Stouffville Junction” led by Kelly Carrick. The group, who have deep roots in our town, seek to attract people and business to Stouffville just as Elijah Miller did over a century ago. For this project, the Stouffville Junction is working with local construction management firm, Harrington and Associates Ltd.

Construction on the exterior of the Stouffville Junction started earlier this year. It features a slate tile roof provided by North

Country Slate, copper trim, gutters and downspouts, newly installed dark windows, and much of the original brickwork. Early on in construction, the work crew removed the stucco and took down the exterior walls. During demolition, many original bricks were saved and used in the reconstruction of the building. As Vice President of Harrington and Associates, Chris Flanagan said, “As many original bricks as possible were salvaged for re-use.”

For this project, Harrington and Associates aim to use Canadian products and services whenever attainable.

A few of their suppliers are just next door. As the Stouffville Junction Team says, “Schell Lumber has been able to keep us fully stocked [...] even in a year where supplies have been limited.” Also working on the project is local carpentry company Hughes Brothers Construction and Atkins + Van Groll (who have played an integral role being the project’s prime consultant working with the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Planning Department).

The interior will offer 4200 square feet of commercial space on the ground floor currently being discussed with different hospitality groups to find the right partner for the space. As well, the building will include ten boutique “purpose-built” suites on the two upper levels. H.Bee Architectural Design has played an instrumental role in the interior design of the residential space.





As Chris Flanagan said, “The suites will be full of original character. Each will have unique features such as exposed brick, coffered ceilings, plaster details, strip hardwood floors, exposed wood ceilings, operable windows and many new finishes that compliment the heritage elements of the building.” Each suite will include a bedroom, kitchen, three-piece washroom, and resident’s very own individual laundry.

As the development team puts it, “The goal of this development is to combine modern infrastructure with old-world charm.” The Stouffville Junction has been working with local historians and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Heritage Committee to uncover pieces of the historic puzzle. “The history of the building plays a major role in selecting the design elements of the building.”

When the building is set to open in mid-2021, it will not only be a community hub but a “piece of history the community can once again be proud of.” During a time when the number of new developments is on the rise, we need to save the historic buildings we have at the same time. As Kelly Carrick said, “Hopefully, the Stouffville Junction will be one of many historic restorations. Hopefully, we can set an example.”

2020 Ushers In New Ways of Thinking

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck earlier this year, we didn't know how it would affect our community engagement efforts. At any given time, we may have dozens of projects that require the public's comment, and we certainly did not want to limit that in any fashion.

The Town has "Come Together Whitchurch-Stouffville" (*cometogetherws.ca*) as our primary online community engagement tool, however we do run public open houses, information sessions and Public Meetings where residents and businesses can offer opinions about issues.

After taking a small break from engaging the public on certain issues, online virtual meetings became the norm. What we didn't expect were the high number of citizens contributing! Community engagement hit a new high with open houses and Public Meetings being attended virtually by upwards of 300 people at times. Significantly more people than the traditional 'in-person' meetings of the past.

Online platforms like *Zoom*, *Teams* and *Facebook Live* became the new normal and no doubt will continue to be the "normal" from now on.

L4A.CA WEBSITE

L4A.ca was launched in April amidst the early stages of the pandemic when local businesses required immediate action. The goal of the website, which was conceptualized, designed and updated by the Economic Development Office, was to reach consumers who frequented these

businesses. Customers needed to know what businesses were operating and, more importantly, how they were operating.

"This wasn't planned. No one saw the pandemic coming. We had no money budgeted for it, but it had to happen," Economic Development Officer David Tuley said at the time. "No matter what we do, it still falls short of the need – thank goodness that the Stouffville Chamber, social media channels, churches, foodbank and volunteers have stood up as well."

L4A.ca has continued to evolve, to include virtual art festivals, forest walks, a community calendar, virtual exhibits at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and the "What's for Dinner" campaign.

You can view the website at, obviously, *L4A.ca*

INNOVATION AWARD WINNERS

Innovation has always separated the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville from the rest of the crowd. During the past few years, we have seen many new innovative approaches to many aspects of our civic responsibilities. And earlier this year we are happy to have been recognized with prestigious awards for some of those accomplishments.

"*On the Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville*," our monthly magazine, was recognized with a Gold Award from the *Hermes Creative Awards*, whose judges include members of The Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals.

Also winning Gold Awards were the "2019 *Year In Review*" and our educational



video "*How's Your Roundabout Etiquette?*" Winning the highest honour, Hermes' Platinum Award, was the publication "2020 Whitchurch-Stouffville Operating Budget." All the awards winners were produced by the Corporate Communications and the Economic Development divisions of the Town.

In October of this year, the Museum received the distinguished 2020 *Ontario Museum Association Award of Excellence* in Exhibitions for the exhibit *Archaeology Alive! The Jean Baptiste Lainé Site in Whitchurch-Stouffville*.

The Town's recreation department also enjoyed many accolades this year with Town staff receiving kudos from the Commonwealth Honour Awards and Parks and Recreation Ontario.



ABOVE: Krista Rauchenstein, Curator/Supervisor of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum and Community Centre (center), Ohan Stambouljian (left), and Christina Salemi stand amongst artifacts in the *Archaeology Alive! The Jean Baptiste Lainé Site in Whitchurch-Stouffville* display. The exhibit won a 2020 Ontario Museum Association Award of Excellence in October.

MUSEUM REWRITES HISTORY

After a brief closure due to the pandemic, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum reopened in mid-August with new COVID-19 safety measures in place. By implementing these measures, they have been able to offer tours, small events for families, research appointments, and workshops. It is also open for civil wedding ceremonies. It also received the #SafeTravelStamp from the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario this year.

For those who prefer to stay at home, the museum is also offering virtual programming through the townofws.ca website. Current virtual programs include "Hungry for History" which focuses on historical cooking recipes, the award-winning "Archaeology Alive Exhibit" focusing on the Jean-Baptiste Lainé site in town.

Virtual Education Lessons are also available through the Museum and meet student's curriculum requirements.

After successfully receiving \$49,500 from the Government of Canada COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Heritage Organisations, the Museum was able to continue to care for their collections and remain accessible to the public.

Visit the museum at 14732 Woodbine Ave. in Vandorf or online at townofws.ca/museum

195,800

copies of "On The Road in Whitchurch-Stouffville" mailed to 17,800 households in 2020

234 local business promoted

60 local events promoted

66 pages of Town services & initiatives promoted

5 DIGITAL ONLY

issues of "On The Road" were produced promoting local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic

129%

of the total visitor goal obtained for the COVID-19 affected Drive Thru Country Ribfest

6.4k

pages viewed on L4A.ca within the first 2 weeks of launch. Farmers' Market dominated summer viewership

671k

people reached through 494 posts on the Town's corporate Facebook page.



Hugo Kroon

COUNCILLOR, WARD THREE

This term began with a renewed determination by this Council to ensure the future viability of the Town, a large part of that future lies in Ward Three, which I have had the honour and privilege to represent for the last six years.

The Town has long faced an uncertain future due to an imbalance in the assessment that our tax base currently provides. In short, not enough commercial activity puts the bulk of the burden on the residential property owners, and that is unsustainable. There needs to be a change, and that is where Ward Three, specifically the 404 corridor comes in.

I am happy to say, that this council understands that properly managed growth will help ensure our future stability and provide much needed jobs and value to our Town, while continuing to protect and enhance that agricultural, rural residential, recreational and natural areas of the Town, especially in our ward.

Council, with the support of staff are looking for every opportunity to facilitate that growth with the help of the Region of

York and the Province, especially in regards to bringing water and wastewater serving and infrastructure to 404 corridor. While we are not there yet, we are inching closer to that reality every day.

In the meantime, exiting things are happening in the Gormley area. A new EMS station is being built to bring much needed additional emergency service protection to our Town. As well, Farsight Homes is now constructing its corporate headquarters there. Other projects are poised to begin construction as well, including a major furniture manufacturer/distributor, a corporate office for an international construction/engineering firm and much more.

I am also happy to say that Gormley is now home to an LCBO agency store at Harry's Esso on Woodbine, and Gormley Cannabis has just opening in the Famous Sam's plaza.

At the same time, internet coverage continues to be a much needed service in the rural areas, and many private ISPs are expanding their networks in the rural areas. Vianet for one has now crossed

Bloomington on McCowan with a goal to bring their fibre network to Stouffville rd and across Bethesda to Kennedy, dependant on funding. But with recent announcements from both the Federal and Provincial governments, I believe it is not a matter of if, but certainly when.

Although we continue to face many issues regarding traffic, unauthorized dumping of fill and others, along with the overarching concern of COVID-19, I am confident that together we will rise to the challenge and get through this, and move toward a brighter future.

At this is time of year of sacred commemorations, holidays and celebrations for many of the different cultures represented here in our Town, it important to remember that by working together we can all make Whitchurch-Stouffville a happy and vibrant place for as all to live, work, play and celebrate. So from my family to yours, I will say merry Christmas, and also it is my sincere wish that you and yours be healthy, safe and have a happy and prosperous new year.



Rick Upton

COUNCILLOR, WARD FOUR

What a year!! It goes without saying COVID-19 made 2020 a challenging year in so many ways. It has tested everyone's physical and mental endurance, fortitude and strength. If there is any comfort, we realize the whole world is in the same situation. Stouffville should be very proud on the way we have responded and protected ourselves against the pandemic. We have and must continue to support our local businesses showing our genuine community patronage. Well done Stouffville!

Our Town's number one concern is speeding. It affects everyone. The frustrating part of speeding is our neighbours are responsible for 90%! The YRP is limited in resources and we all must assist. We can do this by becoming knowledgeable about ROADWATCH. Please go to onlinereporting.yrp.ca/RoadWatch.html and review the form.

Ward 4 has had a busy year with residential and commercial development.

In terms of residential development, there are plans for 700 condos and 230 townhouses and 161 apartments. Included in the count of

the 161 apartments is 100 affordable housing units which are being build on Main Street on the old Chas. Richards property beside Metro. Construction will start in the next couple of months with occupancy planned in 2022.

We have had a submission for an 18-storey condo tower on Main Street, just east of Ringwood Drive, very exciting.

On Sandiford Drive and Hoover Park, Mon Sheong Foundation is building a new long-term care facility. When the facility is completed it will employ over 1,000 people, ranging from nurses to housekeeping to administrative staff. Phase one will be ready for occupancy 2021

At 5769 Main Street (directly behind Longo's) is the site of a new 6-story Seniors Building being built by Bloom. The facility will consist of 100 independent beds, 117 independent beds with support and 31 assisted living beds. Construction is well on its way with occupancy planned for 2022.

Stouffville Commons is 67 acres at the East/North of Hoover Park and Highway 48. There will be development of non-residential

that includes offices, hotel, convention centre, education centre, agriculture centre, and a public centre. There will also be 1,871 residential units. This development will create 1,940 jobs.

SmartCentres is 43 acres at the East/South of Hoover Park and Highway 48. Their approved conversion plans will turn SmartCentres into a active and dynamic community that will include a mix of offices, industrial, retail, green space and residential. There will be over 3000 permanent jobs created.

One of the exciting features about *Stouffville Commons* and SmartCentres is the opportunity for the residents to be able to meet their daily needs within 15 minutes of home on foot or bike.

If you have any questions about any of these updates or anything happening in Ward 4, please do not hesitate to contact me at rick.upton@townofws.ca of 647-542-4046

Please be safe and have a great holiday and a very Merry Christmas!

Pandemic only one of Food Bank's challenges this past year

It's been a year of change at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank.

And it wasn't all COVID-19 related.

Still, thanks to the pandemic, clients no longer enter the Ringwood Drive facility. They take a number, wait outside and a prepared order is handed to them at the door.

Other safety precautions include increased disinfecting and cleaning and the use of gloves and masks for a smaller crew of volunteers.

"The food bank has always prided itself on its warm, welcoming environment for our clients," said Julie Stevens, who co-chairs the food bank with Susan Smith. "Our volunteers know our clients, their stories and what is happening in their lives. Previously, we were able to welcome clients directly into our facility and they could tell us what items they needed most. We were often able to provide both food and non-food items, as well as some little toy or book for children's birthdays, personal care items for adults..."

Now, cleaning and hygiene supplies are in demand.

In the early stages of the pandemic, some of the 100 to 150 individuals and families who regularly used the food bank came in less often or stopped attending, thanks to CERB payments.

But new faces soon replaced them and, when the emergency revenue benefit ended, the regulars returned.

What remained throughout was the "amazing community support," including food bank raffles and donation drives.



ABOVE: Julie Stevens (left) and Susan Smith (right), co-chairs of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Food Bank, sort donations with Charlotte Chesham, volunteer operations manager. Among many other challenges in 2020, the food bank is looking for a new location.

From the children donating the proceeds from their lemonade stand or asking for non-perishable gifts at their birthday parties, to the businesses – some hard-hit by the pandemic themselves – donating supplies and offering the services of their employees.

The food bank, which opened in 1990 at Churchill Community Church north of Musselman's Lake, moved to Stouffville five years ago – to two industrial units provided by SmileVille Dental and SMC Project

Realization and Management.

For now.

One of the units is being sold, forcing volunteers to consolidate operations into half the usual warehouse space.

"This is a temporary change for us, and we have been working with a wide range of donors, real estate specialists, etc. to find our perfect 'forever home' in Stouffville," said Stevens.

Need help with food insecurity? Call the food bank at (905) 591-4443.

“Take what you need. Give when you can.”

Church leaders at St. James Presbyterian had a food pantry penciled into development plans for its empty lot next door.

The congregation was well aware of the needs of the community.

Then suddenly, COVID-19 pushed more of its neighbours into food insecurity – and St. James into action.

The congregation, which formed in Stouffville in 1859, unveiled a Little Free Pantry on its Main Street lawn, on the edge of downtown Stouffville, October 6.

With a lot of help from its friends – all free of charge. Schell Lumber supplied and delivered the material needed to build the structure and local family, the Dekkers, built the pantry at their cottage. Local artist Jaelyn Mason completed the painting.

Within two weeks, the pantry was being installed by volunteers Gary Ackerman and George McGowan.

The grassroots mini pantry movement was launched in 2016 in Fayetteville, AR – a spin on the Little Free Library®.

The concept is simple: Take What You Need. Give When You Can.

So far, it's working at St. James.

STOUFFVILLE LEGION

More than 20 branches of the Royal Canadian Legion closed permanently over the course of the coronavirus pandemic.

Another 350 branches remain “in deep trouble,” the legion says.

In Stouffville, Branch 459 remains active – and thankful. But it hasn't been easy.

“The mandated closure in March put a huge financial strain on the branch and has been incredibly challenging ever since,” said president Murray Pattenden. “All utilities and inventories have been scrutinized and cut and staff laid off. Banquet hall bookings have cancelled with very few future inquiries coming forth.”



ABOVE: Rev. Joan Masterton, of St. James Presbyterian Church on Main Street east of Park Dr., stands by the ‘Little Free Pantry.’ With the help of Schell Lumber, and a number of Stouffville families and volunteers, the pantry supplies food and other goods to people in need. Drop off what you can any time!

“With no incoming revenue from hall rentals and kitchen operations we have no extra financial income to help us,” said Pattenden.

Branch 459 did host the annual Whitchurch-Stouffville Remembrance Day service again – online only. And there were three senior fundraising events, including barbecues and car washes, held in the branch parking lot.

“Our members remain optimistic and focused and are looking forward to getting through this pandemic and to brighter days when we have Branch 459 in full operation in the near future,” Pattenden said.

GIRL GUIDES & SCOUTS

A pandemic couldn't pause the storied history of the Girl Guides and Scouts across Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The youth groups simply improvised.

With indoor, in-person meeting places no longer a safe option, they simply went somewhere they're most familiar with – the great outdoors.

Exhibit A? The 3rd Stouffville Brownies,

one of 10 Guide units in Whitchurch-Stouffville.

They were only permitted to meet online last spring. That included a virtual campout complete with crafts, snacks and a sing-a-long.

The year-end advancement ceremony was a drive-by affair.

“Two hours and 32 house visits, and yet you could not wipe the huge grins off our faces,” said Colette Larsen, one of 10 leaders who took part.

In-person meetings are permitted this fall – outdoors with social distancing and masks – but without singing. No problem. The 7 and 8-year-olds learned their songs in sign language.

The girls walked Stouffville's sculpture trail, did a shoreline cleanup at the reservoir, went apple picking, held a movie night and decorated a hay bale for a contest at Markham Fair.

Winter plans include snow-shoeing, skating and virtual events, including a presentation from McMaster University on women in engineering.

Fickle Pickle adapts

The Fickle Pickle is a downtown Stouffville institution.

For the past 23 years, Nick Paraskevakos, his family and staff have served up all-day breakfasts and Greek favourites to generations of Whitchurch-Stouffville residents and visitors.

Trivia? The West Wing, the political drama that won 26 Emmy Awards, shot part of an episode at the eatery.

COVID19 ravaged the restaurant industry, including the Fickle Pickle.

But that didn't stop the Paraskevakos family from remaining generous and community-minded.

Across Main Street, the Hummingbird Hub non-profit organization was providing dinners for nine clients every week all summer from Kitchen24, as part of a COVID-19 relief program.

Executive Director Laura Cusack asked the Paraskevakos family if they would prepare the nine thanksgiving dinners, which would be paid for with donations.

"They responded by donating an additional six dinners, so two more families received a special dinner," Cusack said.

The Fickle Pickle has also worked with the Canadian Care Collection Fund and the Lions Club of Stouffville in supplying affordable meals for Parkview Home during the pandemic.

"That's just who we are," said Beth-lee Kovinsky Paraskevakos. "We know there are people in a lot worse shape than us."

MARIO VELLA

Mario Vella is best known as "Pyro Mario" – the expert beneath so many fantastic fireworks displays launched above Whitchurch-Stouffville and beyond.

He's also heroic.

"Mario always steps up to help, but this pandemic has confirmed that," said his wife, Olympia Vella. "In the height of the



ABOVE: Joshua and Matthew Paraskevakos, along with their father Nick and mother Beth-Lee, have served up all-day breakfasts and Greek favourites at the Fickle Pickle in downtown Stouffville all throughout the pandemic. They recently partnered with the Hummingbird Hub and the Stouffville Lions to help supply meals all around town.

pandemic, and when restaurants were closed, Mario sent an email to many of our friends and neighbours and offered 'pizza for dinner! Just tell us your preference and come by and pick it up!'

"That night, Mario cooked up 24 large pizza-oven pizzas! It felt good to see our neighbours again, after many months of isolation."

The pizza man wasn't done delivering.

Upon hearing that the Whitchurch Stouffville Food Bank was running low on food, he went to a grocery store, filled up a cart and "donated bags and bags of groceries".

"He's always thinking of ways he can help, his family, his neighbours his community," said Olympia. "I am so proud of my husband, and my hero, Mario Vella."

JANE PHILPOTT

Stouffville's Jane Philpott was, as she put it, "kind of between jobs" when she jumped onto the front lines in the fight against COVID-19.

The long-time Stouffville family doctor

served as a federal cabinet minister and Member of Parliament for Markham-Stouffville from 2015 to 2019.

Appointed Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Director of the School of Medicine at Queen's University in February, her new "job" would not begin until July.

First stop was Markham Stouffville Hospital where Philpott worked in the COVID-19 assessment centre from mid-March.

She wrote about her experiences in an opinion piece for Maclean's entitled: Dispatches from the coronavirus front lines: 'I am afraid of what lies ahead for humanity'.

On Easter Sunday, she responded to an urgent call and began helping at Participation House, next door to the hospital. Forty of the 42 residents at the facility for adults with developmental and physical disabilities would test positive for the virus.

In June, Ontario's Progressive Conservative government appointed Philpott to lead its pandemic data effort, in a bid to better integrate the province's fragmented health care system in the face of the COVID-19 fight.

Fund helps family through tragic fire

When the Dimoff family was left homeless after a fire at their Bartsview Circle townhouse August 23, they received a hand up.

They weren't alone.

Since 2007, more than 70 cheques have been written by the Whitchurch-Stouffville Emergency Care Fund to assist residents who have found themselves in emergency predicaments.

Residents affected by a fire, car accident or other tragedy, including medical emergencies, have received help.

They have bills not covered by insurance or have immediate needs they need help with.

A neighbour of the Dimoffs reached out to Whitchurch-Stouffville Councillor Richard Bartley for help following August's fire, which was caused by lightning. The Ward 5 rep contacted the care fund committee.

A month after the fire, Adrian Dimoff thanked the community online. Adrian, wife Kristine, and daughter Ashlyn, now 18 months, no longer needed help, thanks to donations, including a *GoFundMe* campaign, insurance money and temporary lodging, provided by his in-laws. The Dimoffs asked that future donations be made instead "to people who may need it more than we do".

Fast-forward to mid-November and the Dimoffs are living in a rental property in Richmond Hill while their home is rebuilt.

"A sincere thank-you to everyone involved," said Adrian, who had special praise for his neighbours in north-end Stouffville. "It was really encouraging to see the outpouring of support that we received to help get us back on our feet."

"We are really looking forward to being back in our home and returning to Stouffville."

A son, Luke, was born to the family October 26.



ABOVE: The Whitchurch-Stouffville Emergency Care Fund came to the aid of Adrian Dimoff (center), wife Kristine (right) and 18-month old Ashlyn, after their house on Bartsview Circle was struck by lightning in August. Stouffville resident Kym Pyke (back row) helped start the fund after seeing similar initiatives work in Australia.

The family is still writing thank-you notes and looking to further pay the local good will forward in their community.

And Ashlyn's favourite stuffy – Mr. Geoffrey Bananas – was rescued from the fire and professionally cleaned. "Good as new," dad said.

The emergency care fund was created 13 years ago, kickstarted by initial donations from RBC of Stouffville and the then mayor Wayne Emmerson's charity golf tournament. Emmerson is now chairman and CEO of the Region of York.

Since then, local residents, companies and the organizers of charity events have given to the fund. Geranium Corporation made a significant donation. The Stouffville Christmas Home tour and Paddy Madigan Charity Hockey Tournament donated.

Stouffville resident and RBC employee Kym Pyke presented the idea for an emergency fund to local officials, after seeing a similar fund work successfully in Bunbury, a western port city in his native

Australia.

"Stouffville is a really caring community and there are many community-based organizations," Mr. Pyke said last month. "But our mandate is a little different. These situations can definitely fall between the cracks. We've been allowed to complement other groups. I think we provide that missing link, especially given the make-up of our committee and their involvement across our town."

The fund has also donated annually to the Stouffville Christmas Wish Dinner.

The fund was not meant to duplicate, but complement, work being done by Whitchurch-Stouffville's churches, service clubs, the food bank or other institutions.

The committee of local residents, including Ward 2 Councillor Maurice Smith, reviews requests and decides on funding. Application forms are available through the municipal offices on Sandiford Drive.

Donations to the fund can also be made at the municipal offices.



Richard Bartley

COUNCILLOR, WARD FIVE

I know that COVID-19 has effected everyone in one way or another. Small businesses have been some of the hardest hit especially our restaurants. I believe that small businesses are the backbone of our community; in the good times, these are the businesses we count on for sponsorships and donations for our children's sports teams, school trips or our charitable endeavours but now, these businesses need YOUR support. I am asking that as often as possible, you choose to support local so that these businesses can weather the COVID-19 storm. With that said, we hope there will be a vaccine soon and until there is we encourage you to continue to do your part to stay healthy and protect our community's most vulnerable.

Moving onto Ward 5 – here is what has been going on...

At our October 20th Council Meeting there was a presentation on the Lincolnville Go Station land use study.

This study will determine the planning and growth guidelines for this Major Transit Station area. We will determine what the

best land use for medium density, single-family residence as well as employment opportunities for the development of a complete community. More public consultation will be done regarding these lands at a later date.

The new Catholic school on the Ninth Line just north of Millard is under construction...

The Mayor and a majority of council are working to secure some employment lands on the Stouffville Road at the 404, and the Vandorf area as well as Highway 48 in an effort to increase our commercial tax base thereby lessening the burden on residents.

I would like to assure you that the Mayor and all of council along with our tremendous staff are working hard for you, the residents of this great community day in and day out. We are so fortunate to live in Whitchurch-Stouffville!

Now on a personal note, I lost my father on June 3 to dementia and cancer. My dad Jim Bartley was one of the most positive people I have ever known. He loved people dearly and he loved this community very much. I would

give anything to have one more Christmas with him... that said, whether you and your family celebrate or not, please remember that family is everything.

Be safe and try and stay as positive as you can during these uncertain times, pay it forward whenever possible, shop local and be a helper as often as you can – you'll be helping yourself too, more than you know.

Merry Christmas and God bless you and your family.



Sue Sherban

COUNCILLOR, WARD SIX

This year has been uncertain, to say the least but, COVID-19 has not stopped us from working hard and making progress all the while staying safe thanks to virtual Council and Committee meetings.

As we have become more comfortable with the 'new normal', I am grateful to live in this wonderful community. As Ward 6 Councillor I represent a large number of residents whose neighbourhoods back onto the National Urban Park we have all come to know as "The Rouge". The Rouge has given us the opportunity to welcome many families seeking exercise all the while drinking in the sights and sounds of our greenspaces.

The Japanese practice of 'shinrin yoku', also known as 'Forest Bathing', is good for both physical and mental wellbeing. It is proven to improve feelings of happiness and free up creativity- I hope you all get the experience to enjoy our greenspaces during this challenging time.

As a trustee of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library Board, I am pleased to say we completed and adopted the strategic plan

which will set the direction for the next 4 years. The community was an integral part of helping us create the mission and vision statements as well as set the strategic priorities. You wanted a library that is innovative with demonstrable learning spaces, representative of the 21st century, and the strategic plan is set to deliver this.

Road safety is a significant concern in Ward 6 and with more residents working from home, our residential streets are busier than ever; it is incumbent on all of us to keep our streets safe. Due to COVID-19 the Road Watch Committee was slow to start however, virtual meetings have enabled the planning of new educational campaigns that are based on tested methodologies. This is our community where our family, friends and neighbours live, bad driving habits will not be tolerated. The committee is reviewing new visual devices designed to remind residents to slow down, we will be asking council to support this initiative and to find locations for new devices to be permanently installed.

Some exciting news! Council supported the Public Railway Grade Crossing Safety Assessment report in regards to GO Train whistle cessation for safe crossings. This is not an immediate implementation but it is a step in the right direction so we have funds set aside in the 10-year capital forecast for necessary upgrades that will support whistle cessation.

Business development growth is necessary. It takes focus, vision and partnerships and I am dedicated to helping council find new organizations that provide well paying, good jobs for our highly talented work force; we need corporate taxes to provide relief for our residents. In 2021 we will update our Economic Development Plan which will act as roadmap for how to attract new businesses to our town. Whitchurch-Stouffville is a great place for employees to live, work and play.

I look forward to what 2021 will bring our community.

Best Wishes for the Holidays and Merry Christmas!

Library assists with PPE production



The Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library supported Ontario front line health care workers during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two 3D printers, available filament and remote tech support were loaned to a local group of grassroots volunteers, the Ontario PPE Collective, to 3D print Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

The collective saw the challenges and concerns of health care workers not being able to secure enough PPE during the early stages of the pandemic. This led to the creation of an action group of local makers, businesses, and community members volunteering their time to help supplement the national backlog of PPE production by organizing and 3D printing PPE for local health care workers and organizations.

The collective 3D printed more than 8,200 face shields for health care workers in Ontario from April to September 2020.

The Stouffville library's involvement in this initiative started with a local health care provider, 1to1 Rehab, who was looking for innovative solutions in the Whitchurch-Stouffville community to address the PPE shortage.

1to1 Rehab reached out to Mayor Iain Lovatt to raise awareness about the need for PPE. The library was able to quickly answer the call and help contribute to the cause by lending the required equipment.

Finally, the collective was able to coordinate local makers, businesses, and other community groups to raise money for supplies, recruit knowledgeable makers to 3D print face shields and other community members to help clean, sort and distribute the printed face shields to the health care organizations in need.

Learn more about The Ontario PPE Collective visit ontarioppe.com

LIBRARY 2020 STATISTICS



473

virtual programs were offered between March and September



88k

virtual programs views were made during the same period

854 items were circulated in the first 10 days of the **curbside pickup** service

25k total items circulated through the curbside pickup service **during the summer**

35k eBook and eAudio offerings were circulated between May and September.

How could COVID-19 affect Stouffville of the future?

At about this time of year, it is fairly common to start thinking about New Year's resolutions. Whatever challenges we set for ourselves to make us, our families and our friends lead better lives, is largely dependent on making predictions – what will we face in the coming year that I can utilize to become a better person?

I think it is accurate to say that we have no idea what next year will bring. After all, did any of us see this coming? Did we predict we would be living the majority of 2020 fighting a pandemic? Fighting economic uncertainty? Fighting physical and mental challenges to the degree we are? Probably not.

As we continue to live through these challenges every day on a personal level, it is the responsibility of our leaders to look at the larger picture. How will this pandemic affect us, and our community over the long-term?

How will Whitchurch-Stouffville, all its communities, its businesses and its people, change?

This year has opened our eyes at several possibilities of change. One the easiest examples to find is the huge increase in the number of people working from home. The debate has raged, and I do mean raged, for years, but if one thing has proved correct this year, it's that working from home is a viable option for many people and, when staff are supplied with the proper resources, it works.

Statistics Canada reported 40% of Canadians can perform their jobs in remote settings. Telework capacity varies across industries, with those working in finance, insurance, education and professional services sectors more likely to have remote work options.

So, how does this change our communities? What will Stouffville look like in the future?

Governments, including York Region and Whitchurch-Stouffville, are looking at these long-term effects now.

Altered commute patterns

Since the start of the pandemic, telework arrangements have altered commute patterns. In York Region, traffic data showed reduced automobile trips in our communities compared to pre-pandemic volumes. Traffic volumes during rush hours continue to remain 15% to 30% lower than pre-pandemic levels. Ridership on York Region Transit and VIVA bus rapid transit services in August 2020 was 57% lower than the same time last year, impacted in part by telecommuting and physical distancing practices.

Denser Neighbourhoods are Healthier

Decades of research on community design and health outcome shows denser, walkable neighbourhoods with services and amenities nearby allow people to more easily incorporate physical activity into their daily activities. An active lifestyle is related to lower risks of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, and can strengthen immune system against viral respiration infections such as COVID-19.

Value of Green Space

During the pandemic, the closure of indoor spaces and amenities encouraged people to rediscover the benefits of outdoor spaces including greenspace, trails and sidewalks. Studies have found that outdoor spaces have provided opportunity for physical activity, outdoor play, and social interactions while respecting physical distancing requirements. This can reduce risk of transmission, alleviate stress and reduce social isolation supporting improved physical and mental health outcomes.

Larger Living Spaces

The pandemic has elevated interest in the design of flexible, adaptable and health-enhancing indoor space to include more natural lighting, improved ventilation and filtration systems, the use of non-toxic,

natural and anti-microbial materials, outdoor balconies, rooftop terraces and courtyards, etc.

Reliance on E-Commerce

The pandemic has significantly accelerated e-commerce activities. Physical distancing requirements and facility closures have prompted many consumers to purchase goods online. In York Region, growth in e-commerce will likely increase employment land demand for warehouse and distribution space. York Region's employment lands have convenient access to major goods movement corridors such as 400-series highways and are prime locations for distribution centres that receive, process and ship online purchases in a timely manner, as they are centrally located to consumers.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides opportunities and observations that lead to designing complete communities that are more resilient to change, disruption and crises.

Observations suggest trends such as shifts to telework and accelerated e-commerce activities may impact commute patterns, demand for larger and more flexible living spaces, access to open and green spaces, change in retail, office and employment space and land demand, and infrastructure and initiatives to expand mobility options.

All of this could make York Region, and Whitchurch-Stouffville very different places in the near future.

THANK YOU
STOUFFVILLE!

With all the orders
we are getting you
are keeping us in
business!



Town of
Whitchurch-Stouffville

111 Sandford Dr., Stouffville ON L4A 0Z8

905-640-1910 - Fax: 905-640-7957 Web: townofws.ca

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