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2021 YEAR IN REVIEW



Dr. Pearl Yang

Stouffville's ultimate
pandemic mom
page 14



2021
O T R



FROM THE EDITOR:

Within the pages of this *Year in Review*, you will witness many different conditions of the human mind and spirit.

It has been a challenging year, a troubling year, a triumphant year.

When the calendar changed to January 2021 almost 365 days ago, we were all hopeful that this virus was on the way out. We were hearing promising news about vaccines and the possibility that our social distancing activities may actually be working.

What followed was a year of ups and downs. In addition to the pandemic headlines, terror and sorrow reached our ears when thousands of unmarked indigenous graves were found throughout Canada. Stouffville needed to do something.

Many emotions flowed, but the underlying one of disappointment cast a shadow. Tensions rose again when diversity and inclusion made headlines. Stouffville needed to do something.

And Stouffville did. And we rose high. Seeing no challenge as unacceptable, a team of local doctors, lead by Dr. Pearl Yang jabbed 50000 arms this summer. Triumph prevailed.

These stories are in these pages. The stories we live everyday, not just in 2021.

I would like to thank the numerous people who helped make this issue a success, especially Hayley Saramaki, David Tuley, Dennis Hristovski and Candace Darbyshire. And all the staff of the Town that contributed to these words.

Enjoy, and have a great holiday season!

Glenn Jackson, Editor
glenn.jackson@townofws.ca

5 DAY IN THE LIFE

Whitchurch-Stouffville's demographics have changed a lot over the past few years and no doubt they will continue to change well into the future. Explore a day in the life of Stouffville....

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With the establishment of new initiatives, Stouffville is ensuring that our programs, and services continue to meet the needs of our diverse and growing community.

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Not only did the Mansion House hotel on Main Street get added to the Province's protected heritage list, but the former downtown grain elevator gets the recognition it deserves.

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Stouffville's ultimate pandemic mom took the bull by the horns and started the drive-thru COVID clinic at SoccerCity this summer. This is the story of Dr. Pearl Yang.

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Stouffville is getting a new GO Station with construction well underway. But not only will it provide more efficient transportation for thousands of people, but it is also saving the environment.

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A skating trail, a toboggan hill, new tennis courts, pickleball courts, and a kids scooter track are some of the new features coming to Memorial Park over the next couple of years.

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It has been a tough year in Canada for indigenous relations, however Stouffville is taking the lead in creating a shared path to reconciliation. Education, art experiences, land acknowledgements highlight 2021.

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



Holiday Market

one of the year's many highlights

The inaugural *Stouffville Holiday Market* saw thousands of cheerful smiles crowd downtown Stouffville on the evening of November 26 and all day Saturday, the 27th. The two-day festival was highlighted by the annual Christmas tree lighting in Civic Square on the Friday evening.

Over 50 vendors helped patrons do their early Christmas shopping by setting up booths in 'vendor huts,' made from over 6000 building blocks. Some even said they had sold out of everything by Saturday afternoon!

Music, magic shows, horse-drawn carriage rides, carolers and entertainment for all ages were featured all down Main Street including at such locations as Stouffville Junction, '19 on the Park' and 6240 Main St. The annual *Santa Claus Parade* was the following weekend.

NEW TOWN BRANDING

For the first time in over 30 years, Stouffville got a new brand this year. After months of public consultation, research, designing and re-designing, the new brand was unveiled to the world in March.

Encompassing a new, vibrant multi-coloured logo, that reflects Stouffville's unique and diverse personality, the brand rejuvenates the Town on the economic and tourist frontiers.

But the brand is much more than a logo. It's a reputation - it's a livelihood - it's a feeling. Focusing on three characteristics, that we have a strong tie to the natural environment, we are powered by neighbourly vibes and are independently minded, the brand will serve the municipality for years to come.

RESIDENTS GUIDE

By now, you should have received the Town's new *Residents Guide* in the mail. It's a 40-page book crammed with all the information you need to successfully live here, play here and enjoy the great town of Stouffville.

Aimed to work in conjunction with the Town's websites (*townofws.ca* - our main site; *L4A.ca* - our tourism and business-focused site; and *cometogtherws.ca* - our community engagement platform), the residents guide gives you a jumping off point for such things as recreation programs and facilities, waste and recycling schedules, our forest and conservation areas, and our cultural events.

If your spouse stole your copy, you can pick one up at local grocery stores and Town facilities, such as the Leisure Centre.



40 yrs. 3 mo.

is the median age of a person in Stouffville

3.1

people make up an average family in Stouffville

33%

of Stouffville adults are single

14,711 families are living in Stouffville

40%
are families of 2

27%
are families of 4

23%
are families of 3

10%
are families of 5 or more

A day in the life...

Located 50 kms north of downtown Toronto, Stouffville is approximately 200 square kms of beautiful countryside on the Oak Ridges Moraine. We are known for our beautiful setting, which includes farmland, lakes and forests, our close proximity to the top economic areas in Canada and some of Ontario's friendliest residents.

Of all of our residents,

78% speak **English** most often at home

5% speak **Cantonese** most often at home

3% speak **Tamil** most often at home

3% speak **Mandarin** most often at home

1% speak **Italian** most often at home

36%

of people living in Stouffville are **third generation Canadian**



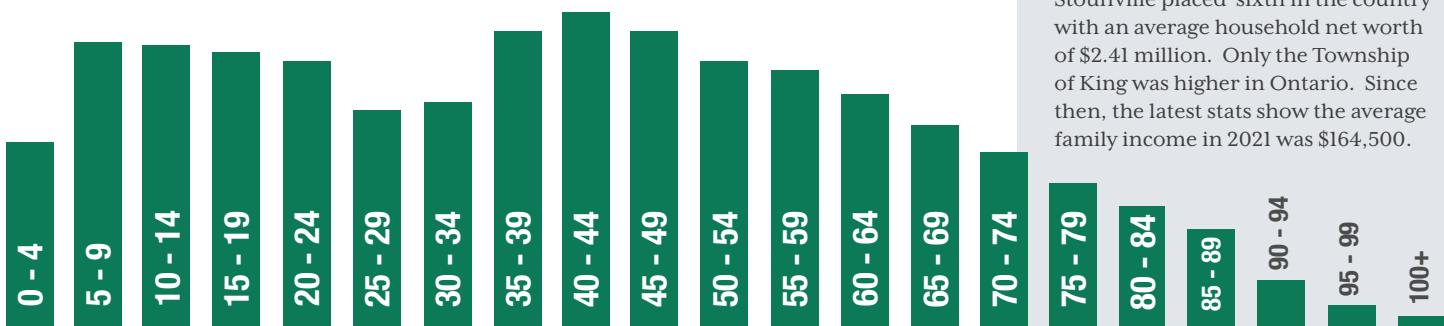
1 in 3 residents of **Whitchurch-Stouffville** were born outside Canada

0-14 **18.8%**

15-64 **64.6%**

65+ **16.6%**

Age distributions in Stouffville



51,311

people are living in Stouffville

51.1% identify as female

48.9% identify as male

DID YOU KNOW?

YOUR WARDS ARE CHANGING?

On October 22, 2022 you will be going to the polls to vote for Stouffville's mayor and your ward councillor. However, there is a very good chance your ward boundaries are changing from your current representation. Visit townofws.ca closer to the election to see who wants to represent you on Council.

STOUFFVILLE'S TAXES ARE RELATIVELY LOW?

In 2021 only six other municipalities in the Greater Toronto-Hamilton Area (GTHA) had a lower tax rate than Stouffville. Only Toronto, Richmond Hill, Markham, Vaughan, Milton and Oakville have a lower rate than us. By the way, leading the pack of 27 municipalities is Oshawa and Barrie.

STOUFFVILLE HAS VERY LITTLE DEVELOPABLE LAND?

Over 80% of the 206.2 km² of land in Stouffville lies on the provincially protected Oak Ridges Moraine. The majority of the rest is protected Ontario Greenbelt lands. Urbanization and development can only proceed around the existing communities of Stouffville, Ballantrae, Vandorf and Gormley and on a small portion of land south of Stouffville Road.

STOUFFVILLE HAS SECOND HIGHEST AVERAGE NET WORTH IN ONTARIO?

The last time *Maclean's* magazine ranked Canada's richest cities (2019), Stouffville placed sixth in the country with an average household net worth of \$2.41 million. Only the Township of King was higher in Ontario. Since then, the latest stats show the average family income in 2021 was \$164,500.

Iain Lovatt

MAYOR, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

“2021 has been a year full of ups and downs, challenges to adjust to, and transitions for which we needed to find our new groove.”

This year began much like how last year ended. COVID! Nine months headlong into the pandemic, the challenges we dealt with in 2020 felt like they would never end. When we started the year, there was hope for a vaccine, desperation from businesses to remain open, and a huge desire to gather as a community again.

On March 1, York Region took a bold step and launched its vaccine program two weeks ahead of other provincial health units. This jumpstart was key in seeing our most vulnerable seniors get their first shot first. Admittedly, seniors are not the most tech savvy demographic and many had challenges booking appointments online. That's when I reached out to a socially focused tech genius in Markham named Ray who had created the Markham Vaccinates initiative. With the help of WS Public Library staff and a group of dedicated local volunteers, Markham-Stouffville Vaccinates was quickly launched. We helped over 700 Stouffville seniors book vaccination appointments. This program ran for 5 months and was a massive success in helping our local seniors.

With Whitchurch-Stouffville Council's full support, we approved the use of Soccer City to become York Region's second, and in my opinion, best Drive-Thru Vaccination Clinic. In partnership with the Stouffville Medical Centre, York Region Public Health, and the Town, the first car rolled through on April 12. Over the course of 4 months, over 53,000 vaccines were administered at Soccer

City and the program garnered attention from media across the province. Welcoming the Premier back to Stouffville in June to see the clinic in operation was a great endorsement of our efforts and a highlight for staff and volunteers. The clinic officially closed August 20 and is now known as a model in public health execution. We have much to be proud of and thankful for. Also of note, Dr. Pearl Yang, the Clinic Director, was honoured for her efforts in receiving the WS Community Impact Award for Healthy Whitchurch-Stouffville.

As we have all discovered, navigating ourselves out of a pandemic is not quick or easy. Despite the many areas of our lives, seen and unseen that COVID impacted, the resiliency and generosity of our community has shone brighter than ever. The outpouring of support from our local restaurants and business community who provided lunches, water, snacks, and an ample supply of coffee to the clinic staff and volunteers demonstrated that the Stouffville Spirit of Generosity is alive and well.

In February, the Mayor's Diversity and Inclusion Committee hosted an interview with former Whitby MP Celina Caesar-Chavannes as part of Black History Month celebrations. It was a very insightful and powerful conversation that formally launched the efforts of this committee in the Town. This was a personal highlight for me this year. The video can be viewed on my Facebook page. Proudly, Council soon after endorsed the transition of the committee from my



office to an official Town Staff Working Group that will continue to focus on making Stouffville a more inclusive community.

Despite some of the negative impacts of the pandemic this year on businesses, 2021 saw over 50 new businesses open in Town adding to our much-needed ICI tax assessment. Some highlights include Bloom Stouffville, Tribute Packaging, End of the Roll, Royal Décor & Kitchens, AKT Supermarkets, Wool on Main and various cannabis outlets. This has been one of Council's strategic priorities this term and I am happy to report that we are working diligently at achieving this goal. Next year will see even more Commercial/Industrial growth with some major projects opening in 2022.



On March 1, I joined then Minister of Long Term Care Merrilee Fullerton and our MPP Paul Calandra to announce and welcome Schlegel Villages to Stouffville with the announcement of 196 new Long Term Care beds. Caring for our growing senior population is an important priority for us and adding Schlegel Villages to Parkview, Bloomington Cove, Stouffville Creek, Buckingham Manor, and our newest LTC Mon Sheong gives us a good footing for the future care of our seniors.

It is easy to underestimate the importance of the Town's relationship and partnership with York Region, the Province & Federal governments. Having the respect of upper tiers of government is something that eluded us in our recent past but I can assure

you all that the stability of Council this term has garnered the respect and support we require. Working closely with York Region Chair Wayne Emmerson, the Minister of Federal Economic Development Agency of Southern Ontario, MP Helena Jaczek (Markham-Stouffville) and Minister of Legislative Affairs, MPP Paul Calandra (Markham-Stouffville) has been a privilege. Together, we have advanced the priorities of Stouffville. Some of this year's successes include:

Over \$4 million dollars from the Federal and Provincial governments for the highly anticipated skating trail through Memorial Park; \$325,000 from the Province towards modernization of our Customer Relationship Management system; \$22,000 from the Provincial and

Federal governments for tree planting. These are just a few of the examples of funding received from our government partners.

Council and Staff remain laser focused on executing our Strategic Plan for the last year of this term and will continue to work hard to see the municipality achieve success, balanced growth and financial prosperity. Our future is bright and getting brighter!

Rob Adams

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

Again, and again, 2020 and 2021 have been described as unprecedented, unparalleled, or incomparable. There is no arguing these have been difficult, challenging years which may have changed “normal” forever.

Reflecting on 2021, the year started with hope changing to great trepidation with the pandemic’s third wave but the advent, then availability

providing the skills to modify and maintain the facility all came together in a seemingly indefatigable swell of energy, support and willingness. This was a magnificent thing to witness and to be a part of – we saw the great, heroic hearts of this community.

The pandemic and shameful revelations of systemic injustice of too many kinds have exposed

Technology improvements this year include implementation of budgeting software (its inaugural application is in drafting the 2022/2023 budget); installation of purchase order software – now in testing. The Town’s digital transformation continues in 2022 with implementation of a Human Resources Information System (now in testing) and securing and installing municipal government specific software.

Not all improvements come out of a box. Some come through technology but still more comes from staff applying innovative thinking, their willingness to collaborate and partner, creativity and sometimes, just imagination in finding solutions to meet the needs of the people in this town. **We are Creatively Minded.**

Staff constantly seek grant opportunities and has secured funding including towards modernizing our technology (Customer Relationship Management software); new and extra programs at the Museum and Latcham Art Centre; financial support for OTR (“On The Road”); capital projects (tree planting, sidewalk improvements, road reconstruction). Grant funding equals increased fiscal responsibility by lessening the tax burden while improving services. To serve this community, we also look for and welcome partnerships with the provincial and federal governments, the Region, other municipalities, universities, other agencies, businesses, citizens’ groups, and individual people. We look for **Natural Fit.**

I am very proud and thankful to work every day with the talented, committed staff and Council here at the Town. It is our honour and privilege to serve 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!



of COVID-19 vaccines completely changed the picture. Although the world still faces challenging times, we also saw great and amazing resilience during this time of near continuous crisis. As soon as vaccines were available, the race was on to get as many people vaccinated as soon as possible. We all waited with great anticipation for each announcement of which age cohort was next eligible for shots. We are extremely fortunate and grateful for the speed and leadership of York Region Public Health to very quickly rollout the vaccines and many vaccination clinics. We were immensely proud of the medical staff in our own community who partnered with us and the Region to launch the Drive-Thru Vaccination Clinic at SoccerCity within a very few weeks. The many volunteers, the Region, the medical staff who worked and provided clinical expertise, the Town staff who rallied to manage much of the logistics, administration,

many flaws in our overall society in recognition of which more resources and more of us are working towards correcting those flaws. Discussion and solutions are being sought at all levels whether grassroots, municipal, provincial, national, or international. This can and should when everyone’s focus is on how we can all do better for everyone through greater understanding, recognition, fostering diversity and inclusion. We know this is a town truly **Powered by Neighbours!**

Staff are committed to excellence in customer service and the seamless delivery of services by constantly looking for and finding more effective, efficient ways and means to provide the services which enrich the lives of those who have chosen to live, invest or work in the town. We continue to work to ensure that our master plans, actions, processes, and procedures are contributing to the current and future needs of the community.

Diversity & INCLUSION

Diversity encompasses all the ways we are unique as individuals. It is our obligation as humans to provide equal access for everyone who might otherwise feel excluded or marginalized.

Diversity celebrates the unique facets of what make each of us individuals. Visible differences such as physical appearances, age, gender, ethnicity, and physical abilities are often what first comes to mind when contemplating individuality. Our religions, socio-economic statuses, refugee or asylum statuses, belief systems, sexual orientation and genders, nationalities, education levels, criminal histories, and marital statuses are just some of the seemingly endless invisible differences hidden under the surface of each person. Diversity is about knowing, understanding, accepting, and valuing the unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics that we all possess. Inclusion is about creating an environment wherein all people can develop to their full potential, participate freely, and live in communities with respect, dignity, and freedom from discrimination.

Stouffville identified diversity and inclusion as a priority in 2021. As a result, numerous initiatives were begun to identify, and act upon, the importance of recognizing our diverse community and making everyone feel comfortable and included.

In May, town Council approved two very important steps in the Town's recognition of the municipality's diverse community.

STRATEGIC PLAN

First, approval was given to create a *Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan*. Amongst many facets, this *Plan* will help identify groups within the community who may benefit from special provisions to better engage them in the Town's service delivery model. It will then build upon this by identifying, developing, and implementing processes to improve relations amongst all people within the community.

STAFF WORKING GROUP

At the same time as the approval of the *Strategic Plan*, a Diversity & Inclusion Staff Working Group was approved and was formed to assist the Town in advancing its Diversity and Inclusion efforts. The group's mandate includes: review best practices of the *Plan* and make recommendations on diversity and inclusion advancements; provide input to employment practices, such as outreach, advertising, recruitment; and provide input on programs and services that will support greater participation and foster inclusion for all.

The group is expected to meet for the first time in early 2022.

HERITAGE & COMMUNITY INCLUSION

To help foster the Town's diversity and inclusion efforts more efficiently, the new staff position of *Manager, Heritage & Community Inclusion* has been created. It is part of the Town's Leisure & Community Services Department and oversees special events, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre and the "Nineteen on the Park" theatre.

The Town is proud to be considered a welcoming and inclusive community, however much more work lies ahead in ensuring that our programs, services, and employment continue to meet the needs of our diverse and growing community.



HERITAGE Preserved

2021 saw Main Street's "Mansion House" hotel added to the Province's Heritage Trust register of protected properties, and a plaque erected to commemorate our downtown grain elevator.



"MANSION HOUSE" HOTEL

Currently standing on the corner of Main and Edward Streets in downtown Stouffville, the Mansion House Hotel was built in 1879 by Elijah Miller (1831-1887), a local farmer turned businessman who first operated a guesthouse in Ballantrae until 1877. Miller was married to Mary Jane Reid and together they had six children.

In ca. 1875 Miller built a hotel in Stouffville adjacent to the newly installed station for the Toronto and Nipissing Railway. After a fire destroyed the original frame building, Miller had a new hotel commissioned on the site in 1879, built in the Second Empire architectural style. The hotel was one of the first standalone buildings immediately west of train tracks and west of Duffins Creek.

Miller died in 1887 and his son Franklin Delos Miller (1866-1912) took over operations of the hotel along with his wife Julia.

Numerous historical sources, including local newspapers,

point to the hotel having been lavishly decorated and featuring accommodations notably luxurious for the late 19th century. In 1895, the *Illustrated Free Press of Stouffville* noted: "It is heated with a combination of hot air and hot water, lighted by electricity, and the rooms are supplied with electric bells. The Mansion today reckoned among the really first-class hotels north of Toronto." Into the 20th century, sources indicate that it was elegantly furnished with crystal chandeliers, red velour drapes, and plush red carpets. *A Pictorial History of Stouffville 1877-1977*, edited by Jean Barkey, notes that the building could accommodate "seventy-five to one hundred guests."

The Mansion House Hotel was built during the late 19th century building boom, which resulted from the completion of the Toronto and Nipissing Railway in 1871 and the Lake Simcoe Junction Railway in 1877, connecting Stouffville to Toronto, Uxbridge, and Lake Simcoe. The hotel functioned as a social hub for the community, hosting galas, parties, and

other local events, as evidenced by local newspaper archives.

The hotel also provided an economic function, serving travellers and business figures connected to Stouffville's burgeoning industries. The building is historically connected not only to the downtown train station but also to nearby industries purposefully located at the transportation hub. The former railway-industrial precinct along the rail line once included a foundry, a planning mill, a warehouse, two grain elevators (Stiver Brothers and Todd & Co.), a marble works, and an agricultural works.

The Mansion House Hotel was built in the distinctive, French-inspired Second Empire style, popularized between 1860 and 1900. The hotel contains the following distinctively Second Empire characteristics: tall casement windows, a mansard roof with decorative patterning, distinctive roof dormers, decorative bracketing, and hood molds above windows and doors.

During the 19th and early 20th



centuries, a number of frame structures were built attached to the hotel. Historical photographs from the period show large livery stables and an attached open-air drive-shed. The complex of buildings also appears to have connected, at one point, to the buildings J.A. Heise's planing mill (to the north).

Throughout the 20th century, the building hosted a number of other uses including: a shoe repair shop, an Eaton's distributive office, and fast-food restaurants, amongst other commercial uses. Upper floors have historically provided residential uses. Despite a variety of different uses over the years, the building has been poorly maintained and underutilized.

A current private development company has restored the landmark with the hope of providing new commercial and residential opportunities and injecting life into the downtown.

HISTORIC GRAIN ELEVATOR

On April 11, 2005, the Provincial government designated the "Stouffville Grain Elevator" to the Ontario Heritage Act Register. In October of this year the Town unveiled a new historical plaque at the train station commemorating the structure. The plaque reads:

"On July 1st, 1871, the Toronto Nipissing Railway opened to traffic. Shortly thereafter, a Prairie Style grain elevator was constructed by W.P. Hartney adjacent to the tracks, immediately north of this location.

Lou Todd and William Cook purchased the elevator circa 1898. The station lands quickly became the local centre of agricultural and commercial activity as produce from local farms was milled and processed here, loaded on to railcars and delivered to Toronto and beyond.

The elevator burned down in December of 1916 but was quickly rebuilt. Then, in 1945 it was sold to the Stouffville Co-operative Association.

ABOVE: A wintertime parade passes in front of the "Mansion House" hotel on Stouffville's Main Street in the early 1900s. The "Mansion House" has been designated as a "property of cultural heritage value" under the Ontario Heritage Act and has been added to the list of protected properties by the Ontario Heritage Trust. *Photo courtesy of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre. Accession number 998.001.058.*

ABOVE LEFT: An undated postcard showing Stouffville Junction with the Stiver Brothers' grain elevator on the west side of the tracks. Previously designated under the Heritage Act, the Town erected a historical plaque at the Train Station in October. *Photo courtesy of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre. Accession number 992.001.076.*

The Co-op and the grain elevator together became a significant rural institution in Stouffville, selling a wide variety of farm equipment and seed grains.

The mill ceased operations in 2005. Despite a number of attempts to save and re-purpose the elevator, the structure was demolished in 2015."



Ken Ferdinands

COUNCILLOR, WARD ONE

Despite the adversities that we all endured over the past 12 months, it appears that our resilience, although bruised, has prevailed in that we adapted and found the means to do what needed to be done while preserving our well-being despite being required to employ a variety of precautionary measures.

The availability of vaccines and their delivery in manners that exceeded expectations was a demonstration that government can, with the help of dedicated non-governmental agents, such as local health care professionals, make what was previously unimaginable a reality.

In order to exercise the levels of caution that our current situation demands our offices remain closed to the public although services can be accessed by telephone and other electronic means; we hope that the downward trajectory in COVID-related numbers will continue and allow us to resume a normal level of service early in 2022.

2022 will be a busy year on the political front with elections being

held at both the Provincial as well as Municipal levels. Locally, you will notice that ward boundaries have changed. Ward 1 will have doubled in area with the amalgamation of Wards 1 and 3. The urban area will gain a ward. While I am on the subject of elections, it is perhaps appropriate to announce that it is my intention to retire from politics at the end of this term; therefore, not run for office in the upcoming election. Being afforded the opportunity to serve as your representative has been and extraordinary privilege for which I will always be grateful. Being an elected official is truly the experience of a lifetime. Thank you.

The task of improving internet access in Ward 1 was an undertaking I commenced over 10 years ago. Having the end user contribute a portion of the capital costs was a bold idea and one without precedent. I believed that the only way to get this service in a low density environment was to eliminate the political aspect and bypass the due process that politics demands. I am grateful to Michael Cleverdon, Dave

Beauchamp, and Lloyd Cooper for the leadership, trust and confidence they displayed through the difficult early days and beyond. The ability to endure the current crisis in many population clusters within the Ward would have been quite different without the common vision we shared with respect to the critical role of the internet.

As we prepare for the Christmas Season and New Year I would like to express my gratitude to the many who displayed and demonstrated infinite levels of patience and good will as we shared this once in a lifetime calamity. No doubt the experience has left an indelible imprint on our psyche and altered so much of what we took for granted. I hope that this Christmas Season brings with it the care and spirit of generosity that sometimes gets left behind in the rush to celebrate. Furthermore, I hope that 2022 brings the success and prosperity that may, for some, have eluded you for the past 20 months.

Stay well.

My sincere best wishes.



Maurice Smith

COUNCILLOR, WARD TWO

Ward 2 of Whitchurch-Stouffville, as with the rest of the world, was greatly affected by the continuing impacts of COVID throughout 2021. The pandemic changed many things about how our community operated and how we lived our lives. I am proud of the way so many residents adapted and changed their routines while living through the last number of months. Hopefully the end is in sight.

As 2021 comes to an end, I am happy to reflect on the year, and comment on a few matters related specifically to residents of Ward 2.

Town staff worked with outside consultants to conduct an in-depth study of Ward boundaries. The new boundaries were presented in March of 2021 and will be in effect for the next Municipal election in October 2022. Of particular interest to Ward 2 residents, the new Ward 2 is larger and encompasses the communities of Ballantrae, Musselman's Lake, and Bloomington. The new allocation achieved what I believe is fair for both residents and councillors alike, and it will make a more equitable

distribution of voters throughout the town.

Perhaps the biggest change in Ward 2 this year has been the opening of a number of stores in Ballantrae Gates, the new plaza at Aurora Rd and Hwy 48. Ballantrae Gates offers more opportunity for our residents to shop local. Be sure to drop by all these new stores to see what they have to offer and to say hello.

Surrounded by green space and including 94 units, the Wedgewood Homes community built by Ballymore Homes on the east side of Highway 48 is now well under construction. Homeowners will be moving in before mid-year 2022.

Personally, I would like to thank all residents for your continued support, feedback and involvement once again this past year. Communication is a two-way street and I appreciate residents contacting me with questions and concerns. It allows me to learn more about you, and I enjoy being able to help whenever I can. In 2021, some of the concerns brought to my attention included subjects such

as traffic calming, a potential ban on recreational fires, new developments, the condition of paved roads, and the condition of public properties. Being your advocate and assisting with these matters is only one part of my job as councillor, and it is part of the job I enjoy the most.

As a final comment, on behalf of my wife Jane and myself, I extend to you and your family all the best for the upcoming holiday season. Hopefully we will enjoy a more traditional Christmas by spending more time with family and friends. My hope for you for 2022 is that you and your family stay healthy and that you enjoy all our community has to offer.

Stouffville's Ultimate Pandemic Mom

DR. PEARL YANG

“I think we need to be more concerned about each other’s happiness.”

Stouffville has been praised by the Region for its initiative to assist with the provincial COVID-19 vaccine rollout through 2021, but in truth, this wasn't a Town initiative at its core. While the municipality was heavily involved in terms of staffing, execution, and publicizing the clinic, it was the brainchild of Dr. Pearl Yang - but you'd hardly know it. Endlessly humble, and the definition of a team player, when asked about the process, planning, and overall success of SoccerCity, Dr. Yang never takes credit for the groundbreaking number of individuals vaccinated at one location; in her eyes, everything comes back to her amazing team of upbeat healthcare providers and logistical facilitators on staff.

Throughout the past year, the SoccerCity vaccination staff had been collectively praised as a well-oiled machine, and the clinic was commonly referred to as “the happiest place in Stouffville.” While the team on the front lines were worth every ounce of praise from residents and Dr. Yang herself, the reason why the innovative drive-through vaccine clinic was wildly successful is because

of Dr. Yang's ingenuity, integrity, and desire to provide authentic one-on-one patient care to everyone who came through.

When COVID began impacting the province in March 2020, like all other health centres throughout the country, Stouffville Medical Centre quickly became low on PPE essential to continue patient care, like masks and gloves. Restrictions on the number of patients within the office also became a concern as the healthcare professionals province-wide worked to mitigate opportunities for the novel coronavirus to jump from person to person.

In April 2020, to help decrease the foot traffic within the office and minimize the number of people through the physical walls of the clinic, Dr. Yang and her team of exceptional healthcare providers established drive-through immunization appointments. This sparked the idea to tackle seasonal flu shots in the same manner, wherein patients could roll up their sleeves as they rolled up in their vehicles to get the seasonal jab instead of waiting in lines in person.

Recognizing that a flu shot clinic was the perfect opportunity for a pilot project for the COVID vaccine roll out, Dr. Yang contacted Stouffville's mayor Iain Lovatt to see if the Stouffville Medical Centre could be given the greenlight to test a satellite flu shot clinic at a larger Town facility, with the intention of adapting the process to mass vaccination once COVID vaccines became available. In September 2020, Dr. Yang was granted the use of SoccerCity, a large recreational facility that was otherwise sitting idle due to the strict provincial COVID restrictions in place at the time to help curb the spread of the virus and relieve overwhelmed hospitals. Flu vaccinations were being administered to the community by October of 2020.

Following the success of the drive-through flu clinics, and lobbying York Region Public Health to choose Stouffville as a mass vaccination site, Dr. Yang and her Stouffville Medical Centre colleagues were granted the opportunity to proceed with SoccerCity as a physician-led site in February of 2021. This was incredibly exciting since the clinic had the capacity to administer over a thousand shots daily.

Using Dr. Yang's meticulously planned drive-through model, there was virtually no wait as everything was appointment-based, there were multiple lanes to be able to conduct the administrative procedures, several tents for the vaccine administration, and a monitored rest and recovery area where patients were safe in their family bubbles behind the wheel. With the support of the town and York Region, Dr. Yang had just over a month to put staff together, develop these protocols and processes, all while maintaining her own practice at Stouffville Medical Centre. With true team spirit, Dr. Evan Chong, her colleague, also took on the vaccination clinic as priority on top of his practice to help with operations, recruitment of clinical staff, and clinical decisions.

April 12, 2021 was the opening day



OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Dr. Yang (center left) with fellow Stouffville Medical Clinic doctors. From left, Dr. Yasmin Ladak, Yang, Dr. Zahara Rasul, and Dr. Evan Chong.





for dry runs at SoccerCity, with less than 100 cars booked to be able to iron out kinks in the system. Everyday the bookings increased in capacity; 1316 was the record number of shots given in a 5-hour span, made on June 28th. This was a vast improvement from the average hourly vaccination rates at COVID vaccine clinics in the early days of the province's dose administration back in December 2020.

The SoccerCity team grew to have almost two hundred top-notch clinical and non-clinical staff, as well as volunteers on their rotating roster ready to be called in at any time. "It was a pleasure and privilege to have been able to work with such a wonderful group of people from all disciplines, who were committed to helping the community, and willing to brave whatever weather we faced in our outdoor set up. Surgeons,

emergency physicians, obstetricians, family doctors, pharmacists, nurses, students, retirees, community members – everyone was so generous with their time to help get vaccines in arms."

Like all Ontario parents, the divide between work and home life blurred back when her kids were abruptly shifted into homeschooling for the remainder of the 2020 school year. This was especially difficult on Dr. Yang's son, who was starting junior kindergarten at the time. Being unable to see his teachers, not having access to tactile materials and toys, as well as the inability to be physically close with his classmates made the transition difficult, and weighed on Dr. Yang's family.

"Part of the aim of the vaccine clinic was to make this stop," said Yang. Like all of us coping day by day through

TOP: With soccer balls in hand, Dr. Yang poses with members of the hardworking clinic staff, including Dr. Chong (top row, far right) and Erich Baumhard, Staff Supervisor for Non-Clinical Staff (front right). BOTTOM: Dr. Yang chats with Markham-Stouffville MPP Paul Calandra during a visit in June.

the pandemic, Dr. Yang desperately wanted things to once again return to normal. "My push to do something like this was to get everyone vaccinated as soon as possible, so they could return to school and regular life." Of the possible considerations, anxieties, complications, that could arise while working two incredibly demanding jobs, the only reservation that Dr. Yang had about spearheading the vaccine clinic while continuing to support her patients through her family practice was the threat of more time away from her family.

While work-life balances can be difficult for most people, frontline workers made some of the ultimate sacrifices through the pandemic, often going above and beyond their job descriptions to provide exceptional patient care and fight to keep communities as safe as possible. Running this clinic of course wasn't something that she could accomplish from a home office with her family's new pandemic puppy at her feet. In order to make everything work, Dr. Yang arranged for her three young kids to use an otherwise empty room on site to continue their schooling, alleviating her conflicting visions to be present for her children first and foremost while working towards



public safety. “It was both stressful and relieving to have had the kids back online for school almost at the exact same time we were opening the clinic. It was really nice to be able to pop in and see how they were throughout the day. If they weren’t with me at SoccerCity, I don’t know that I could have ran the clinic for that long.”

The final key to Dr. Yang’s success of the clinic was her own mantra and training of staff to never forget the patient’s experience. Her desire to help and provide positive interactions for each person that came through SoccerCity, led to daily debriefings and on-going training for staff of how to process and be supportive through expressed fear, anger, and abstinence, while promoting wellness of her own staff. There were times she and other clinicians took over an hour with individual patients to answer questions and coach them through phobias and fears about the job itself, while continually verifying that they were there because they themselves wanted the protection from the vaccine.

“That is our job as family doctors, to help patients through their anxieties and difficult times, and this is (the pandemic) definitely one of them,” said Dr. Yang passionately. “I understand hesitancy. I am happy for people to be able to ask questions and choose what medical procedures they want to have done. There is a fear out there and it is real. It’s not just people trying to be defiant. A fear of the unknown is totally understandable.”

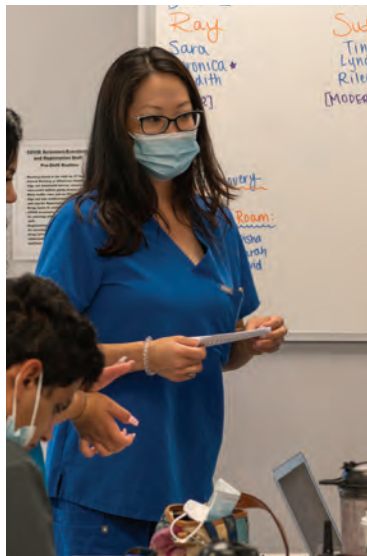
Dr. Yang explains, “I like knowing the evidence behind what I’m doing,

if it’s available.” In her earlier years as a graduate student, Dr. Yang excelled at her rehabilitation work and loved the research that came with it. After her doctorate, she realized that her biggest desire was to combine her research background with patient care, leading her to recalibrate her schooling and career path to focus on family medicine. Dr. Yang approaches her practice through a meticulously researched-based lens to help her patients make informed decisions that are best for them and their families.

When asked if she could look into a crystal ball and receive only one answer from it, aside from the answer to when the pandemic would truly end, she remarked, “I think if I wanted to know one thing right now, I would want to know how we can heal our society and relearn to be better together, following these months of

being trained to stay apart? How many people would now choose to stay home rather than get together with friends or family? How many people are afraid to go out into the public, or even afraid to be near family members either for fear of getting sick or getting them sick? Being together, appreciating each other, being physically close and not zoom-close, is such a core part of humanity and our happiness. I hope we don’t lose sight of this.”

BOTTOM CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Dr. Yang presides over staff scheduling; literally rubs elbows with Ontario Premier Doug Ford during a June visit; handing out lunch to the countless staff and volunteers that helped keep the clinic humming all summer; and enjoying the comforts of Town staff member Stephen Foster’s umbrella on a rainy July day.





Hugo Kroon

COUNCILLOR, WARD THREE

The end of the year is traditionally the time that people look back at the accomplishments of that year. And under normal circumstances, this would be the proper thing to do. However, this year, like the one before it, has been anything but that-normal. COVID continues to have its impact on every facet of our lives and in many cases made progress difficult. And as such, a “normal” life may seem to be a ways off yet.

Having said that, activity in our Town maintains a brisk pace. Our Planning Department is working with many landowners and investors wishing to bring new businesses and housing stock to Whitchurch-Stouffville. New commercial builds are happening as we speak in Gormley, Vandorf, and other parts of the Town. Plans for both infill and new housing are before us and going into the ground, the recently completed EMS station on Woodbine, and new retailers and services are opening across Town as well. Progress yes, but the reality is, the large employers and big box stores that are mainstays of

many other municipalities may yet be a few more years off.

At present, our Town thankfully continues to maintain that “small town” feel, a lot which has to do with the small to medium sized businesses that make up the majority of the commercial activity here in Town, including in the rural areas.

From the farm families raising livestock and growing food, to the pool and landscape companies, builders, renovators, plumbers, electricians, and other construction services. Entrepreneurs of all kinds, online service providers, small craft and niche retailers, bakeries, restaurants, and every other kind of business you can imagine. In doing my job as councillor and reaching out to residents in Ward 3, it seems at times that behind every other door and laneway there is a local entrepreneur doing their part to provide services, jobs and value to our Town. An example is Stefcu Racing Engines (pictured) which has been operating for over 35 years here in town. Well respected across the province and

beyond as a premier engine builder for both the racing and automotive enthusiast communities, this is one of our many hidden gems providing said community value.

And as we look to next year and beyond, it will be the continuing strength and resilience of these small businesses and people like you that will help our Town recover, grow, and prosper. So help do your part and shop local, volunteer, greet your neighbours. Enjoy local events, the library, gallery, museum, and our leisure facilities. Enjoy nature in our parks, trails, and regional forests. Your Town has so much to offer.

As always, it has been my honour and pleasure to serve the people of Ward 3 and the Town for these many years alongside the rest of Council and our hardworking and dedicated staff. Thank you so much.

From my family to yours, here's wishing you a great Holiday Season with your family and friends, and a successful (or at least normal) New Year.



Rick Upton

COUNCILLOR, WARD FOUR

When this pandemic started none of us expected to be still fighting it twenty months later. Unfortunately, it is still having a major impact on our daily lives. Needless to say, everyone is encouraged to have your guard up and protect yourself. It is vital that we all get two shots and a booster. If you have children between 5 – 11 you are urged to have them vaccinated. This is the number one way to be safe and beat this ugly monster. Remember your health is the key to happiness.

So, what is going on in Ward 4?

Last summer Stouffville opened a drive thought clinic at Soccer City. We were fortunate to have Dr. Pearl Yang operate it. We did over 50,000 vaccinations, so thank you Dr. Yang for your commitment and dedication to the residents of Stouffville.

Ward 4 has had a busy year with development, residential as well as commercial. Mon Sheong Foundation located on Sandiford Drive, has just completed their new long-term care facility. Patients are now being accepted into their 320-bed LTC facility.

Stouffville Commons (Corebridge) is on 67 acres on the northeast corner of Hoover Park and Highway 48. There will be development that includes offices, a hotel, convention hall, education centre, agriculture hub, a public centre, and much more. There will also be 1,871 residential units. When completed, this development will create 1,940 jobs. Ground-breaking will be in 2022.

Schlegel Villages has applied for an Official Plan Amendment to build a 6 story, 192 -bed, Long Term Care facility at Smart Centre on Hoover park. Ground-breaking for phase one in 2022. In the next few years phase 2 and 3 will be developed which will include over 500 retirement beds and apartments.

With the residential development, the landscape of Main Street will change. On the North side of Baker Hill and Main Street, there are 147 Townhouses being built. Across the street there will be a 309-unit condo building breaking ground soon. There will be over 450 homes within 15-minute walking distance of many

needed services. This creates a healthy environment, with less need for as many cars and helps preserve our precious farmland.

On the old Chas. Richards property beside the Metro, 97 affordable housing units are being built. These are breaking ground in 2022, with occupancy in 2023.

On Main Street behind Bank of Nova Scotia, there are 75 Townhouses being built, occupancy in 2022.

On the corner of Weldon and Main, 97-unit condo building by LivGreen 1, occupancy by 2023. To the east will be LivGreen 2 with some commercial and 162 units, with occupancy in 2024.

As always, 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 or my cell at 647-542-4046.

Let's all continue to support our local businesses. Visit discoverstouffville.ca for all the local businesses.

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

Full steam ahead at Old Elm

The area of Tenth Line and Bethesda Sideroad will look a lot different in a few years time. And it all starts with a new GO station settled beside one of the oldest trees in the town.

The Lincolnville GO Station, located north of Bethesda Sideroad on the Tenth Line, has been the end of the Stouffville GO line since September 2008. Now, significant changes are coming.

The station was built to relieve the line's previous terminus, the Stouffville GO Station located on Main Street. After an expansion to the Stouffville station's parking lot off Edward Street in 2005, it reached its parking capacity. Coupled with connecting bus route hardships, it was evident a new station was needed in Lincolnville.

Constructed next to the existing Stouffville layover facility, the Lincolnville station extended passenger service approximately 3 kilometres. Thereby reducing the driving time of transit users in Goodwood and the Uxbridge area.

In 2011, 410 additional parking spots and a bus storage facility were built.

Metrolinx, managers of GO Transit, is now relocating the station to the intersection's southwest corner. The new station will serve more customers and, according to Metrolinx, will help introduce two-way, all-day GO train services to Stouffville in the future.

Improvements to the new station will include 672 parking spaces, an accessible platform, bike lane, and a bus loop connecting GO Transit customers to local transit options.

OLD TREE SPURS NEW NAME

On October 16, 2021, Lincolnville GO Station was officially renamed Old Elm GO Station to acknowledge a historic 200-year-old elm tree that sits on the site of the relocated GO station.

During the planning and consultation phase for the station, Metrolinx learned of the importance of the 200-year-old elm tree to the community. In collaboration with Stouffville Mayor Iain Lovatt and local ward five Councillor Richard Bartley, Markham-Stouffville MPP Paul Calandra and Ontario Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney





A GO train approaches Bethesda Sideroad from the site of the soon-to-be-completed Old Elm GO Station. The new station, featuring a bus loop, an accessible platform and parking for 672 vehicles, is named after a 200-year-old elm tree that was preserved on the property during construction. BELOW: A concept drawing of the entrance to Old Elm Station from the Tenth Line.

worked with citizens and local stakeholders to preserve the tree.

To ensure the conservation, Metrolinx will re-route a planned bus loop around the 40-metre-tall elm tree.

“For two centuries, this elm tree has proudly stood in Whitchurch-Stouffville,” Mulrone said.

The new Old Elm GO Station is expected to be completed in 2022.

NEW FRONTIERS OPEN UP

As a result of the new, and drastically larger, Old Elm GO Station, the Region of York asked Stouffville Council to endorse a “Major Transit Station Area”

(“MTSA”) around the new station.

A “MTSA” is defined by the Province as an “area within an approximate 500 to 800 metre radius of a transit station, representing about a 10-minute walk” where minimum densities must be 150 persons and jobs per hectare.

As a result, this has provided an opportunity for the Town to examine the Old Elm GO station area as a possible MTSA in terms of its ability to develop a transit supportive community.

The Lincolnville GO Land Use Study is now underway with three important components: the Land Use study itself, the development

of urban design guidelines and the development of a land use policy framework.

Work on the project is continuing. Public consultation on the next series of documents is expected in 2022. For more information on the Lincolnville GO Land Use Study, visit cometogetherws.ca/lincolnville. For more information about Old Elm GO Station, visit metrolinx.com/en/greaterregion/projects/old-elm-go.aspx

Memorable changes coming to Memorial PARK

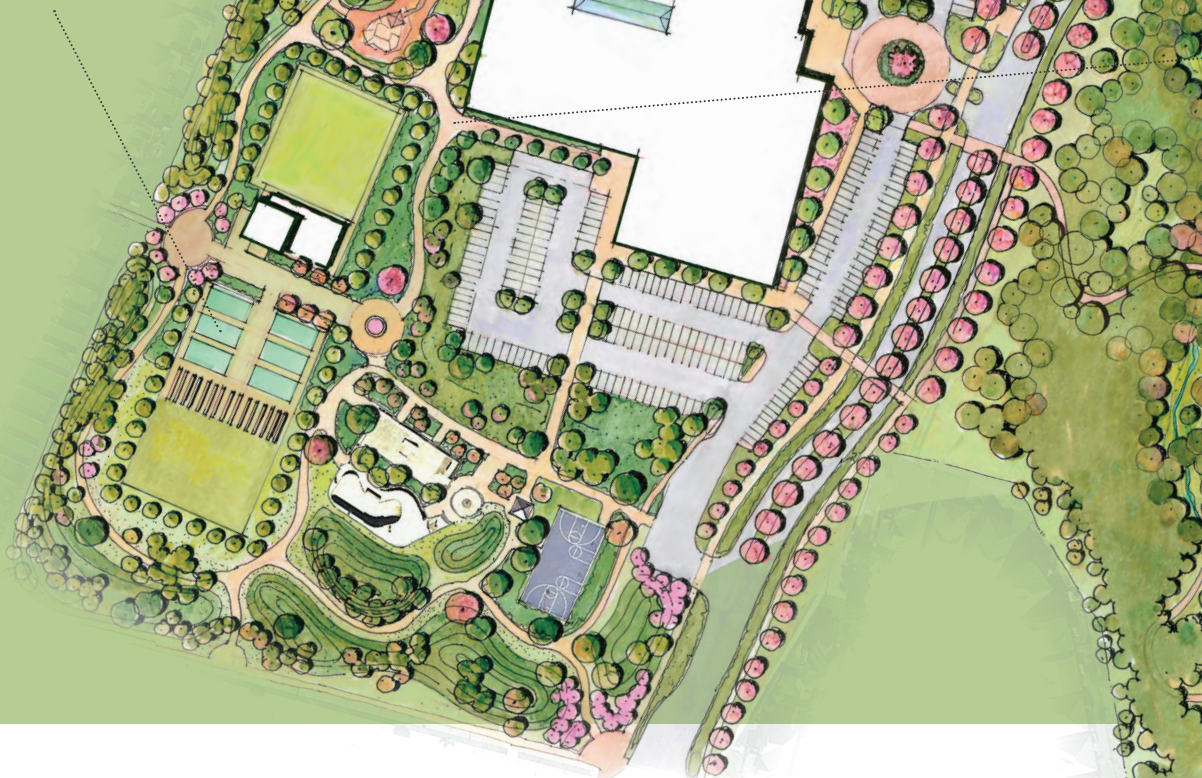
In a span of just a few months, town Council approved numerous new features as part of the *Memorial Park Master Plan*. Skating, pickleball, scooter track, all on the immediate horizon.

ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND & SPLASHPAD

Although not funded or designed, an accessible playground and a splashpad are planned for the area to the west of the Leisure Centre in the coming years.

TENNIS & PICKLEBALL

In November of this year, Council gave staff the go-ahead to hire a company to construct eight pickleball courts and two tennis courts in the southern tip of the park. The courts have already been designed as part of the project in 2020 and construction is expected to begin in early May 2022. The courts will be completed by August 30, 2022.





ROUNABOUT

From the middle of a roundabout a nurse may sell poppies from a tray. A war memorial is also being discussed but not yet approved or funded.

KIDS SCOOTER TRACK

As with the frisbee golf course, Council approved the funding for a kids scooter track but other details have not been worked out yet. It is expected the track will be constructed in the area northeast of the Leisure Centre.

TOBOGGAN HILL

At the end of October this year, town Council authorized the construction of a new toboggan hill. Given the current projects underway in the park, including the pickleball courts, tennis courts and the new skating trail, the toboggan hill will remain in the current location on the east side of Park Drive. The berm will be reshaped to accommodate a north facing toboggan area.

Construction has already begun and town Council hopes it will be ready later this winter.

SKATING TRAIL

In October of this year, town Council approved the hire of a company to administer the construction of a skating trail in the southern portion of Memorial Park.

The skating trail received funding through the *Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program*, which sees the provincial and federal governments matching funds with Stouffville. The project is slated to begin in early 2022 with construction to follow in 2023.

Originally positioned in Memorial Park to the east of Burkholder Drive, just north of the Leisure Centre, the town has decided to move the skating trail to the open space directly west of the Leisure Centre and away from the flood plain that cascades through the area.

FRISBEE GOLF COURSE

Although not finalized in terms of design and location, Council approved funding in the 2022 capital budget for the design and construction of a frisbee golf course in Stouffville.

The course may not be built in Memorial Park, as some neighbourhood parks and parkettes may be of suitable size, including Byer's Pond. Further details may become available throughout 2022.



Richard Bartley

COUNCILLOR, WARD FIVE

Another year has passed although it certainly doesn't feel that way. I want to thank all the Ward 5 residents and everyone in Town for their continued support throughout these trying times. While we are starting to see this pandemic in our rear-view mirror, it is still important that we all remain vigilant and observe public health protocols and recommendations. Over the course of the last 20 months or so, the Town's services and program offerings, just like the rest of the world's, have had to pivot to stay in operation in the face of changing public health advisories. As a proud Board member for the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library, I have been so impressed by their ability to navigate these new waters.

Throughout the COVID Pandemic, the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library has strived to meet the needs of our residents. When the province closed its doors, Library staff quickly adapted by offering curbside pick-up, which became a very popular option for people. Eye-catching window displays were created at the entrance

of 2 Park Drive that featured new books and make-and-take crafts. A new "Fast Reads" collection was launched that made the most popular books available to us without a wait. Programs were moved to virtual environment so that our kids could still "attend" much needed story-time sessions.

I also was particularly excited when the library partnered with Muskoka Woods to make snowshoes available on loan to all of us to encouraging the outdoors last winter. There is always something new and exciting to discover at our library, and I thank them constantly for finding new ways to support our great Town.

This past April, the Latcham Art Centre merged under the Library's umbrella. Our Latcham Art Centre has a strong 40-year history in Stouffville, supporting our creative arts community and inspiring new generations of artists. This merger is an exciting step forward for Latcham that I am sure will create expanded art education programs for our residents and will increase our discovery

of contemporary artists through stimulating new exhibitions.

2022 is just around the corner and I am sure we can all agree that things are looking up! Thank you to all of you for your patience with our various facilities and programs throughout the pandemic. Our priority has always been to keep our staff and residents safe but still allow everyone the access to programs and information that's always been available to them.

From my home to yours, may the very best of the holiday season keep your spirits bright and cheery. I wish you a safe, happy, and healthy New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2022 – maybe even at the Library!

God bless you and yours this Christmas!

Richard Bartley
Councillor, Ward 5



Sue Sherban

COUNCILLOR, WARD SIX

Well, as we round the corner of 2021 coming out of over 20 months of COVID there's lots to do. Memorial Park has been waiting for development of new facilities from our approved 2020 park master plan, and it is time to get to work! Memorial Park will see a new safer toboggan hill for the kids this winter, and this spring excavation for the pickle ball and tennis courts along with the skating trail will get started.

I know a number of residents in Ward 6 are waiting for whistle cessation as the GO Train has increased its frequency of trains to 16 a day, inclusive of weekends, and with trains now coming in after lam in the morning. I want to assure you that I have been keeping the process moving forward. Last month a report was brought forward to Council to support the cost for the safety design work and it was approved. Next steps will be Council's capital budget approval to build the safety requirements, and then lastly to get Metrolinx and Council's approval to pass a bylaw to support the whistle cessation.

It has been great to witness the downtown come alive once again with outdoor patios, which have brought a new vibe to the Main Street in the heritage core, and I believe you will see this as a lasting development for the local restaurants. If you haven't noticed, we have seen the change of new management in the downtown to the WS Chamber leading the town's downtown working group. They have changed the identification of the area to the 'Stouffville Village' which is a more suitable marketing identification. There is also a new website delivering everything Whitchurch-Stouffville with a dedicated events calendar where you can go in and post events for free. Check it out at: DiscoverStouffville.ca

Road safety is paramount for this community and I receive a number of emails and calls with concerns of speeding, distracted driving, and overall road safety in our subdivisions. As part of the Road Watch group, I am proud to say that in working with the Public Works Director, we were able to have a report sent to Council to

adopt *Vision Zero*. This will of course not end all our road issues, but it will create a template for the Town's public works and development departments to follow to build safer neighborhood streets.

Many of us have been working from home due to COVID this past year and have gotten to know our community more intimately as a result. Whether it has been shopping more locally, ordering food in more often and supporting local businesses or discovering our trails, we are getting to know our neighbours better. As a local representative I am proud to see how this community has stepped up as always in supporting and helping one another and it is clear to see we are a caring community and I thank you!

I look forward to what 2022 will bring our community.

Best Wishes for the Holidays and Merry Christmas!

Councillor Sue Sherban



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Through the summer and fall months of 2021, the Office of the Mayor engaged with the *Shared Path Consultation Initiative* to examine and edit our working land acknowledgement for accuracy and authenticity. This non-profit group was founded by Dr. Ron Williamson, with whom the Office of the Mayor and the *Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum & Community Centre* was already connected with from previous collaborative efforts with the People of the Huron-Wendat, including the *Jean Baptiste Lainé* archaeological site (see opposite page). The group seeks to provide opportunities and resources that enhance, inform, and facilitate Indigenous-non-Indigenous bridge building, particularly within the realm of land planning practice. The Town's now-official Land Acknowledgement is read at the commencement of all Council and Committee meetings and will be installed on a plaque at the Municipal Offices.

“The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville acknowledges this land is the treaty territory of the Williams Nations. It is also the traditional territory of other Anishinaabeg peoples, the Huron-Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee. We also recognize the contributions of all Indigenous peoples to this place and commit to a continued dialogue and greater respect for the land we have come to share. This recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities.”

Stouffville's shared path to Reconciliation

2021 brought on a national awakening to Indigenous issues, sparked by the discoveries of thousands of unmarked children's graves on sites of former residential schools.

The Town is taking steps toward answering the Calls to Action as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report. The need for Reconciliation efforts in Town were more prominent this year than ever before, from the resident-led memorial on Main Street, families sketching feathers on sidewalks, and the orange flags & t-shirts seen in support of "Every Child Matters".



COMMITTED TO RECONCILIATION

In response to the Calls to Action outlined in the *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is taking action by procuring a consultancy to assist in the creation of ongoing strategies intended to foster reconciliation and engagement within the community. Through better understanding, ongoing meaningful dialogue, and measurable actions, the goal is that Stouffville has a strong plan in place to engage, recognize and support reconciliation and Indigenous populations in the municipality and in York Region. More information on these efforts will be released as the plan is developed through 2022 and beyond.

COLLABORATIVE MUSEUM EXHIBITION

The Award-winning, collaborative exhibit, *Archaeology Alive! The Jean-Baptiste Lainé site* in Whitchurch-Stouffville, opened at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Museum in July, 2019. The in-person exhibit became more accessible to residents in 2021 with the creation of free Culture Passes,

made available to members of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library.

This year, the interactive exhibit continued to be a valuable resource for residents, having pivoted to an online format in 2020. Although the physical exhibit closed in August 2021, this virtual format allows visitors to explore the history of the Huron-Wendat, including a virtual 3D longhouse. Users can investigate the artifacts, learn about the Huron-Wendat, and listen to experiences shared by Wendat Elders. In collaboration with Huron-Wendat Nation Researchers, the Museum is working to provide a French translation, a step toward making this exhibit more accessible to community members in Wendake.

INDIGENOUS ART EXPERIENCES

Indigenous art has become a key focus of Latcham Art Centre, which is currently exhibiting nationally recognized Urban-Iroquois photo-based artist, storyteller, writer, and curator, Jeff Thomas until January 2, 2022. The *Indigenous Map Maker's Room* examines historical and contemporary views of Indigeneity and addresses the

TOP: *The Indigenous Map Maker's Room*, a photo-exhibit by artist and storyteller Jeff Thomas, is on display at the Latcham Art Centre until January 2, 2022. The exhibit examines historical and contemporary views of Indigeneity and addresses the impact of issues such as urbanization, land ownership and historical ways of representation.

impact of issues such as urbanization, land ownership and historical ways of representation. The collection on display presents work from his larger photo series, *Indians on Tour*, which artfully weaves themes of historical map making, storytelling, and the invisibility of Indigenous history, all while challenging preconceptions of Indigenous peoples in modern times. In this exhibition, viewers can track and follow each image through QR codes provided, allowing each person to have more tangible connections to the works. The Latcham Art Centre has committed to featuring Indigenous artists at the gallery each year moving forward as part of their regular programming and strategic plan.

