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Mayor John Taylor's Inaugural Address: 2018-2022

Let me begin by taking a few minutes to talk about the past before I talk about the future. As I prepare to take on this role, and as this Council I am sitting with prepare for a new term, I think we need to remember that much has been accomplished by many people before us. Mayor Van Bynen, Mayor Taylor, Mayors Cole, Twinney and Forhan, CAO Bob Shelton as well as others before them, have all contributed a great deal to this town and they have done that with dedicated Council members beside them all who worked countless hours over many years. We will accomplish more as we go forward but we will do it by building on the hard work, creativity and bold decisions of others and I think we must recognize that at the outset.

Now let's talk about the future - the future that will be built or we will begin to build - over the next four years. Before I talk about what we might do as a Council, I would like to talk about how I hope we will do it. Many of you have heard me say this before but it bears repeating: outstanding communities are not built *for* people they are built *with* people. I will not do great things by myself as Mayor, and Council will not - and has not - achieved great things alone either. Many of you sitting in this room, and many people who are not here, have contributed to each and every achievement in this community

whether it is as a staff member or through Town committees like the BIA, NEDAC or the Heritage Committee; or whether it is through the Chamber of Commerce or the faith community or the not for profit community. We will build the town we believe in together through collaboration and cooperation with a shared vision of what we want to be. That is how great communities are built.

Also we have made bold decisions in the past and we have taken risks which have helped us move forward with projects like the Riverwalk Commons, ENVI Broadband and the purchase of the Mulock Farm. I believe we will continue to make bold decisions and we will continue to not be afraid to take chances and to step forward with confidence.

So, as we move forward let's continue to embrace collaboration as a principle and let's also embrace bold decision making and step into the future together without fear of moving forward and without fear of change.

With a willingness to be collaborative and to embrace change - the question becomes what specific work are we going to try to do over the next four years? Some of that is yet to be seen as Council embarks on a 'strategic priority setting' exercise where we develop a shared vision for the term based upon the extensive public feedback we received during the election – and trust me it was extensive.

Having said that I would like to outline some of what I personally see taking place over the next four years and where I believe some of our efforts must be placed. I want to start with what I believe is our largest and most clear responsibility - the Mulock Farm Property. We have made a significant investment on behalf of the residents of this town

and we must make it our number one priority for the term. This park will serve the residents of this town for generations and we must deliver something creative, something exceptional and something that everyone can use and enjoy. By purchasing this Farm we have committed ourselves to this fully - we need to follow through and we need to commit the resources both human and capital and make it a priority. That may mean that we may not be able to fully pursue other ideas or projects for a while well we digest the enormity of this commitment. We must move this to completion in this term so that the public can enjoy this space that we purchased on their behalf and see the results of their tax dollars at work. I know that just like the Riverwalk Commons we can and we will build something exceptional for the residents of Newmarket.

We also need to complete other outdoor recreational amenities that are in the planning stages such as the outdoor arena - which the sports groups and the residents have supported. We must also move forward on an outdoor skatepark and give the kids of this town another reason to leave their screens, and get outside, and get some exercise.

Exceptional outdoor opportunities have always been a hallmark of this town and we will see great advancements in the next term of Council in this area. I would also like to see us move forward with an off road, multi-use path along Mulock Drive from Bathurst to Harry Walker Parkway – this may take time but I know it will be well used and embraced by the community as our other trails have been for years. Trails are always a sound investment.

I would like to see us continue to embrace trends in governance that add greater transparency and access. That is why I believe we should strive to have less “In

Camera” meetings and we should allow greater access to information. To further advance access and transparency I intend to start a Mayor’s Newsletter and initiate Mayor’s Town Hall meetings.

I want us to continue to develop our understanding of the needs of our always changing community. I plan to introduce a Mayor’s Roundtable on Diversity and Inclusivity to welcome and engage the many new Canadians who call Newmarket home but also to engage people with disabilities, the LGBTQ2 community, seniors, and others.

For example, today I am joined by Bayan Al Hammadi a Syrian Refugee and father of four. He is starting a new life here in our community and working at NewRoads Automotive Group. His children are flourishing at school and making many friends including my children. His family represents the change that Newmarket is seeing – and we need to embrace that change.

Housing must always be a priority. Whether it is young people beginning their careers, new Canadians, or seniors - our community needs more housing options and more affordable housing options. Government at all levels need to play a greater role in ensuring that more rental housing is built, more condominiums become available for first time buyers and downsizing seniors, and we need to continue to build townhomes and single family homes as well. Let’s get creative in what housing can be and how it can be developed. This is one of the greatest challenges that we face and we must take action to ensure that there are housing options for everyone.

Creating jobs and building a strong local economy is always a key role for Council and the Town of Newmarket. We need to build on our success with Celestica and bring more new employment to Newmarket. We need to broaden our partnership based approach to Economic Development and realize that job attraction is both a municipal, regional, and a provincial endeavour and that we have many partners in success. Also, we need to build a technology advanced community that will have the underlying infrastructure to solve critical challenges that attract workers and employers alike. I intend to play a very active role in job attraction, job retention and economic development.

Finally let's remember that the heart of our community is, and always will be, the downtown - and while we have had some significant advancements and we are being recognized for our success - we still have more to do. I predict that people will be shocked again and again as Downtown Newmarket becomes more exciting, more vibrant and even more successful. We need to continue to add public art and attractions. We must continue to provide more festivals and performances and events at the Riverwalk Commons, The Old Town Hall and The Community Centre so that the downtown flourishes as the entertainment centre of Newmarket. And yes we must add more parking. The downtown's success has placed a strain on parking and we can and must do more. And now it is time to start a conversation with the downtown merchants about closing Main Street on weekends in the summer and attracting people from far and wide to enjoy this special place. Downtown Newmarket will be known across Ontario and Canada as the example of what an outstanding historic Main Street can be!

Wow- that is a lot to do! - but this is not a Town and this is not a Council that ever sat back and hoped for the best. This is a Town and a Council that is willing to be ambitious, willing to work hard and willing to dream big. I look around this Council table and I see a group of talented, ambitious, passionate community leaders who will settle for nothing less than excellence. I look around the table and I see our staff leadership team who represents a municipal staff that is second to none. I look around this audience and I see people who have a track record of participating in community building and helping others in need. I have no doubt that together we will dream big, work hard and accomplish amazing things. And the reward will be that we have an inclusive, prosperous community to live in, to work in, and to raise families in. I am confident that we will, that we must, leave future generations a healthy, sustainable and progressive community to call their own.

Thank you for being here on this important evening and embracing our passion, our optimism and our hope for an *even better* Newmarket.

Thank you.