

Public Statements re. 72 Howard Avenue fire
Town of East Gwillimbury Committee of the Whole Council
April 8, 2013

Mayor Virginia Hackson

- Good morning Council Members, media and public. We will start this meeting with a moment of silence in honour of the Dunsmuir family.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

- The last week has been among the darkest times for this community. I want to once again express our condolences to the family, friends and all who knew the Dunsmuir family.
- Once again I would like to acknowledge the courageous effort of the East Gwillimbury Emergency Services who worked very hard at scene. In addition we would like to acknowledge the role the York Region Police, EMS and the Coroner also played an important role at the scene.
- There is a book of condolences in the lobby. It has been at the Sports Complex all week and we invite the public to express their sympathy to the family. We will give the book to the family within the next few days.

Tom Webster, CAO

- Thank you Mayor Hackson On Behalf of Town staff, I share Council's condolences regarding the Dunsmuir family.
- I also want to recognize our East Gwillimbury Emergency Services staff, led by Chief Ken Beckett, who has 52 years of firefighting experience, the last 16 years as the Town's Fire Chief. The team of full time and paid on-call, volunteer fire fighters did a heroic job on the scene.
- The senior officer on the scene was Deputy Chief Phil Dawson, a 25 year fire services veteran.
- I would like our Deputy Chief to introduce video of the Fire Marshal's statement for the official Town public record.

Phil Dawson, Deputy Fire Chief

- Deputy Dawson introduced the CP24 [video of the Fire Marshal's statement](#)
- I would only add to the CAO's comments by saying that critical incident stress management and de-briefing began immediately following the Howard Ave fire and our fire fighters and their emotional well being continue to be monitored. Our firefighters continue to stand ready to respond to emergencies and indeed have continued to respond to various types of emergencies since the Howard Ave fire. We want to ensure that they remain healthy in order to respond effectively to any emergency affecting the residents of East Gwillimbury.

Tom Webster, CAO

- We will not get into a discussion of the details of the fire as we are respecting the Fire Marshal's ongoing investigation. We have learned some valuable lessons from the initial findings of the investigation.
- The first among these is the importance of community education and ensuring every family has working smoke detectors and a fire escape plan. In this regard, our East Gwillimbury Emergency Services will be launching a community wide blitz, focused on these two things.
- I want to take this opportunity to outline for Council and the public some detailed information on East Gwillimbury Emergency Services.
- Our East Gwillimbury Emergency Services department is a composite force with six full-time firefighters and 81 part-time, on-call firefighters. Our full-time department includes a fire chief, a deputy chief, a training officer, an education officer and administrative support. Our part-time, on-call fire fighters, or volunteers, are trained to the highest standards, the same standards as full time firefighters across the province. The East Gwillimbury Emergency Services department provides services to our community 24/7, 365 days a year.
- In the last three years the East Gwillimbury Emergency Services has responded to approximately 2,700 calls, approximately 150 of which were fire calls.
- Since 2011, the town has made major investments in emergency services in the department in anticipation of growth. We've increased the number of full-time firefighters from two to six, and we hired our first Deputy Fire Chief.

- We've purchased three new pumper trucks. And we're preparing to undertake a major renovation of the Queensville Fire Station. In addition, we continue with ongoing training to prepare our firefighters to provide the highest level of service.
- For a municipality, fire and emergency services, are guided by a Fire Master Plan. Our Fire Master Plan was adopted in 2006 and it has guided the growth of East Gwillimbury Emergency Services.
- Typically Master Plans have a life span of approximately 10 years. In 2012 staff initiated a process to update our Fire Master Plan in light of the considerable growth anticipated to commence in mid 2015.
- The update is being carried out as part of the 2013 work plan and will require Council discussion and community input on many facets including service levels, staffing, resourcing and many other considerations.
- In conclusion, the Town remains focused on supporting the ongoing Ontario Fire Marshal's investigation; acting on the preliminary findings and prioritizing public education; and undertaking a planned, comprehensive update of our Fire Services Master Plan.