



## "What we've got here is a failure to communicate."

One of my all time favourite movies is Cool Hand Luke. In it a young Paul Newman in a brilliant performance, portrays a rascal of a character who was sent to a work-gang prison in the US south for cutting the heads off parking meters - destroying municipal property. But that is not the reason for this article, although it may spark another one in the future.

Luke just doesn't like either responsibility or authority. He doesn't want to be a leader, but because of his personality, can't avoid the role. The prison warden or Captain, played by Strother Martin, in another brilliant portrayal, sees Luke's growing influence amongst the prisoners and decides that he will break him no matter what. Martin sums up the problem he is having with Luke when he gives the most iconic line from the movie: "What we've got here is failure to communicate."



Hmm, a long story - rent the video!! - but the point is that: **"what we've got here, in the City of Vaughan (and perhaps in other municipalities) is a failure to communicate!"**

A case in point is the Greening Vaughan "double-up days" that the city instituted to dispose of accumulated garbage by allowing residents to place six bags at the curb for collection, WITHOUT tags, on a number of occasions during the year. The first "double-up day" took place in Ward 5 this week. The City has been advertising this service in every conceivable way for the last month or so, including newspaper ads and notices and mobile signs placed around the city. As I drove around the neighbourhood this morning (Thursday) I couldn't help noticing that there were quite a few homes that had more than three garbage bags out, and they all had the tags on the extra bags!

So here we are trying to be responsive to the requests of our residents, trying to provide a high quality service, trying to save our residents a few dollars (for the tags) and virtually no one is getting the message that

### Web Links

[City of Vaughan](#)

[RoadWatch](#)

[York Region Police](#)

[YRT](#)

[Greening Vaughan](#)

[Gallanough Resource Centre](#)

### CONTACT MY OFFICE

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### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**Committee of the Whole-**  
January 21- 1:00 pm

**Council -January 28- 1 pm**

**All meetings are at City Hall unless indicated**

we are trying to communicate.

**Don't get me wrong. I am NOT blaming either the residents or the City for this problem. This "failure to communicate" between governments and their constituents is a long-time problem, but it seems to be getting worse.**

In its efforts to communicate with its residents the City initiated two consultation programs recently. One was related to the budget (i.e. your taxes!) and the other was to get input on the proposed ban of pesticides on private property. Five sessions for the two issues were held across the city. They were well advertised and dealt with very topical issues. At the budget consultation at Garnet, only seven or eight people came out and at the pesticide session at Rosemount Community Centre, the same number attended. The other sessions had similar attendance.

I personally believe in and am committed to vastly improving the communication and consultation between the municipality and the citizens of the City of Vaughan. This newsletter is part of my effort to communicate. But I want to hear from you about the services we provide and the initiatives we are taking. As I tell anyone who calls or writes my office to complain about something: "Thank you for letting us know about an issue taking place in our community."

My office is always open to hear from you about your problems or concerns, but I would really like to move beyond that. **The question is, how do we move from a complaint driven dialogue to a more creative and added-value one?**

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## **A Record Year for Building in the City of Vaughan!**

While 2006 was an extraordinary year for building in the city, 2007 was even better.

The value of the construction from all sources last year was a new record of \$1.6 billion! While residential construction actually declined slightly from \$976 million to \$967 million in the year, the other sectors, commercial, residential and institutional all were booming. In fact institutional development went from \$27 million to \$135 million from 2006 to 2007.

## **Hospice Thornhill**

Are you aware that Thornhill has its own hospice?

In fact Hospice Thornhill celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007. Over that period the organization has helped 2500 clients, families and caregivers and worked with over 1500 volunteers. The mission of the Hospice is to provide community-based palliative care to ensure that all

residents and their families, affected by a life threatening illness, have access to timely, compassionate, caring and quality end of life support.

If you are interested in volunteering, a volunteer education night is coming up on February 4. Please contact Hospice Thornhill at 905-764-0656 or [hospice-thornhill@bellnet.ca](mailto:hospice-thornhill@bellnet.ca) if you would like to find out more about what it does.

## Gallanough has Re-Opened!

Our very own community library and information centre has re-opened after some major renovations. Not only has the building been repainted, the carpet in the library has also been replaced.

Gallanough is a community-run, membership based centre. It is opened five days a week. A number of years ago, when the Vaughan Public Library decided that the Gallanough building was not suitable for its needs a group of people from the community decided to establish the resource centre. After much hard work, Gallanough is well-established and an important part of the community.

Drop by to enjoy the books, videos and the many other resources available from Gallanough in its much improved space. Gallanough is located at 1 Brooke Street. You can call the centre at (905) 881-2828. The Annual General meeting is scheduled for January 30 at 8:15. [Gallanough Resource Centre](#)

## Working Together Works!

In late January I received a call from a teacher at St. Elizabeth's Catholic High School. St. Elizabeth's is that very large school located just to the southwest of the Promenade at the corner of Clarke and New Westminster. The teacher told me that they wanted to expand their recycling program in the school but couldn't because they didn't have the funds to purchase blue boxes. She asked me if I could help.

I jumped at the opportunity - I am always eager to help expand our environmental initiatives in Vaughan.

I made one call to Andy Traynor, the General Manager of the Promenade. As I expected from working with Andy on a number of other community issues, I wasn't surprised by his response that it would be a pleasure for the shopping centre to help its neighbour by providing the 100 needed blue boxes.



On December 19, 2007, Mayor Linda Jackson and members of Council gathered in the school library with Principal Catherine Rosenberger, Lynn Withers (the teacher who made the original call), members of the school Environment Club and Andy Traynor to officially

hand over the newly arrived blue bins and to celebrate how neighbours from different sectors of the economy can come together to improve our community.

## **Do you own a business?**

Would you like to get involved with your community? Would you like to be associated with a great community organization or activity? There are many wonderful community-based organizations in Vaughan who could use some help. One of the best parts of being a municipal Councillor is that I get take part in many of these organization's activities. In fact I write about two of them in articles in this newsletter. Please contact my office if you would like to get connected.

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**I write about improving communications in the first article in this edition of W5 Update. Well, here's your chance to be part of improving our dialogue.**

**How about forwarding your copy of W5 Update to everyone you know who lives in Ward 5?**

Or, if you prefer, send us their email addresses and we will send them a copy for their consideration.

Missed an edition of W5Update? View current and past editions and sign up for W5Update on the [Vaughan website](#)