

Jim Tree celebrated for 40 years? service to Aurora



By Brock Weir

He's been through 14 elections,
seen seven different mayors, 43 Council members, 10 CAOs and six directors, but
Jim Tree is still going strong at the Town of Aurora.

Mr. Tree, who now serves as
Roads Manager for the Town, was celebrated for his 40 years with the
municipality last week with a special presentation in Council Chambers marking
his service.

Saluted by Al Downey, the
Town's Director of Operations, Mr. Tree was hailed as someone who "always seems
to be in the background but his ideas are always in the forefront."

"Jim, to me, has always been a
very special person; he and I often agree and often disagree and it seems to
work good either way," said Mr. Downey. "Jim has always been, to me, Mr.
Aurora. Norm Weller originally brought Jim Tree to Aurora, hired Jim out of
Westview Golf Course. Jim has been instrumental in guiding the Town of Aurora
Parks Department [as Parks Manager] as well as now the Operational Division
through his tenure.

"No task seems too big for Jim.
He always goes there with an open mind and enthusiasm. I say he has the
curiosity of a kid. It is amazing to see a fellow who has been here that long
not satisfied with 'good enough.' We always have to do better, we always have
to do something different. I feel lucky to have Jim as part of our team and you
should, as being part of Aurora's team, in guiding us in the past and into the
future."

Jim Tree officially marked his
40th anniversary at the
Town of Aurora on April 19.

The anniversary itself was marked prior to his Council salute with a special breakfast in his honour.

At Council, his tenure was celebrated with a slide show presentation charting his history in both the Parks and Operations departments.

When you start thinking back about 40 years ago, it gives you a little bit of a better idea of all the things that have happened and all the accomplishments Jim has made," said Mr. Downey, highlighting the reconstruction of Petch House and work carried out at Sheppard's Bush among the CV. "We have a little saying over at the Joint Operations Centre about making a difference and Jim is one of those people who truly makes a difference in everyone's lives at the Town of Aurora. I am so happy to call him a friend, and I am so happy to be working with him all these years."

Mr. Tree was joined at Council by his wife, Deb, and the youngest of their three sons.

"It has been a privilege and an honour to be part of the Town of Aurora," said Mr. Tree. "I came to Aurora when I was two years old. I don't live in Aurora anymore, but my heart is still here, my family's heart is still here. We raised our children here and it is the best Town in the world. It has just been an honour and a pleasure to serve the community. All the different members of Council, the Mayors, directors and residents - it has just been fabulous. I never really considered it work. It has always been fun to come to work and a real pleasure."

"We have always had fabulous support of our initiatives and endeavours, and that has made it just fabulous. Words don't really describe it and it has just been a real pleasure."

These warm sentiments were returned by members of Council.

"You come to work every day like it's your first day on the job and you're so excited and everything you approach is an opportunity," said Councillor Sandra Humfries. "You honestly have a real refreshing way about you and I wish we could clone that so people can come to work really excited like you are. You make our Town such a great place to live. You've had a huge impact."

Councillor Wendy Gaertner, in turn, said she was sitting at the table when they celebrated his twenty-fifth anniversary with the Town and was happy to be there to celebrate his fortieth.

"We've benefited as a Town because of your expertise, your experience," added Mayor Mrakas. "Everyone always talks about how blessed we are in Aurora with our green parks, our

fantastic trails and, quite frankly, we owe it all to you. You have done a tremendous job making Aurora what it is when it comes to green space. You've moved on into Roads and starting off in the same way with Roads ? creating an incredible atmosphere in that department as well and Aurora, as a Town, is only going to benefit from that.?