

## Activist surprised by Diamond Jubilee Park reaction

I was very surprised by some of the comments made by some of the residents at Wednesday's public meeting for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park regarding making it fully accessible.

I was, quite frankly, shocked by some of the reasons why they did not want the park to be built. Such reasons included too much noise made by the kids; there are not enough kids or people in the nearby condominium.

One gentleman even questioned if my parents would have driven me to an accessible parks park if one was available when I was younger.

What the residents at the meeting failed to understand is there are many benefits to an accessible park. It is not just for children or little kids with physical disabilities. You could have playground equipment that is adaptable, you could also have sensory items such as wind chimes, a labyrinth for relaxation and meditation, a small waterpark water area to either sit or run or stand underneath, as well as adaptable, picnic tables for picnics and group outings.

I think individuals mistakenly think persons with disabilities can all be put into one group and that they think we are all the same. This is not the case. There are persons with physical and developmental disabilities, persons that are blind, deaf, even persons with severe learning disabilities like severe anxiety.

Aurora has over 35 designated parks and only one is accessible. I believe this would be a great step to make Aurora more inclusive for everyone, especially service groups like Community Living Newmarket Aurora, Kerry's Place Autism Services, the Able Network, and it would give the individuals a place where they could experience independence, relaxation and just overall joy.

I would like to know why three Counsellors voted against this idea. There are some concerns about not enough soccer fields in town.

I have been told that Aurora is building six new soccer fields in the future. This park is only half a soccer pitch, so, in conclusion, I think this would be the perfect place to put an accessible park.

I think this is a great idea for the community to come together and promote inclusion for all.

Tyler Barker

Vice Chair, Accessibility Advisory Committee

Aurora