

Joint Operations Centre gets Council green light



By Brock Weir

After countless hours of debate, Aurora Council formally gave the green light for the Town's new Joint Operations Centre last week.

The project, which will combine the Department of Public Works, currently on Scanlon Court, with the operations of Aurora's Parks Department on a new site at the top of Industrial Parkway North, was approved 5 ? 3 with Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, along with Councillors John Abel, Don Constable, Paul Pirri and Michael Thompson giving the thumbs up.

Voting against the project were Councillors Evelyn Buck, John Gallo, and Wendy Gaertner.

Although members of Council seemed to unanimously agree it was time for a new building, particularly to replace the increasingly dilapidated Scanlon Court yard, those ultimately voting against the project objected to what they saw as ?ballooning costs?, now standing at approximately \$26 million from the previously forecast \$14 million.

For Council members voting in favour of it, it was time to move forward, provide adequate work facilities for municipal employees, with a project funded from the sales of land and Development Charges slated to roll in from the development of 2C.

When complete, the Joint Operations Centre will be a three-storey complex, with the third floor reserved for future office use, that will also include a salt storage building, greenhouses, all meeting LEED Gold Certification, which hits targets for energy efficiency and sustainability.

?The Town of Aurora's Public Works and Operation Services have been operating out of 9 Scanlon Court and several scattered satellite properties,? said Ilmar Simanovskis, Aurora's Director of Infrastructure, in his report to Council outlining the project's benefits to the community. ?The Scanlon Court facility was constructed more than 40 years ago, servicing a community of 15,000 residents. It was designed to accommodate an increase in population to 30,000 residents.

?With an aging facility, growing population and even greater service requirements, the need for a modern, centralized facility has never been greater. Merging multiple locations will create a number of efficiencies, including eliminating duplication, improving emergency readiness [and adding] additional capacities. The new Joint Operations Centre will serve the needs of our community to estimated build-out in 2031.?