

Mavrinac Park to open May 22

By Brock Weir

What was once the centre of a battle between east side residents, developers and the Town of Aurora is now a six acre 'green oasis' of park space, tennis courts and other leisure facilities.

Mavrinac Park, as the six-acre greenspace has come to be known for its location on Mavrinac Boulevard, is set for its official opening under a new name on Tuesday, May 22 at 5.30 p.m.

There, its new name, Thomas Coates Park, which is set to be approved at Council this week, will be formally unveiled.

Thomas Coates originally owned the land from 1854 to 1892. It was then sold to his daughter Sarah, and from Sarah to Mrs. Charles C. Richardson. She subsequently passed it to her son, Charles E. Richardson in 1913, who owned the lands until 1949.

'Hopefully Council will approve the name [this week] and Thomas Coates Park will be unveiled,' says Al Downey, Director of Operations for the Town of Aurora. 'We will be putting up the sign and having that so people will recognize. Activate Aurora will be a part of [the opening ceremony] and Council has been very happy with what is taking place. Now that spring has finally arrived, I am sure we're going to have more people coming in to use the park but so far there has been a really positive reaction.'

'It is a bit of a green oasis within that community. One of the things we did, which worked quite well with the development of this park, is we worked strongly with the community on the development of the elements that are in the park and certainly worked with Council on delivering that. I think the playground elements are a huge addition. In some of the conversations I had, one of the things they really wanted to be able to see was something for the younger kids.'

Basketball and tennis courts are also prominent features of the park, the latter of which garnered a great deal of interest in the planning process.

The local seniors community, for instance, said they wanted to see some additional space for pickleball around Aurora and the new tennis courts on site can accommodate that particular combination of tennis and badminton that is soaring in popularity within seniors' circles.

'One of the real highlights of this park is there is something for all, and it certainly addresses the needs of the community,' says Mr. Downey, noting the facilities are open to all and they 'hope' it will not become a programmable space for sports and recreation. 'It is really there for the enjoyment of the community. Unless we get a special request with regards to permitting or whatever, we don't generally program within those parks. We are definitely going to be communicating that those pickleball courts are available and so our seniors association will be aware of that. That way, if they wish, they can go to the park and play pickle ball. We aren't proposing to permit them out at this point.'

'It is a new park in your area, it is a new opportunity to get the community together. It is a great opportunity to meet your neighbours and get active. Now that spring has spring, we can get out and get people active after what has been a very long winter.'