

## Five parks shortlisted for Diamond Jubilee tribute

**By Brock Weir**

Five Aurora parks have been shortlisted for rebranding to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The move comes after Council initially rejected plans in February to name a parkette near St. John's Sideroad and Bathurst Street in honour of the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's Accession to the Throne as the small scale of the park did not coincide with the significance of the occasion.

Council then tasked municipal staff to come up with further suggestions on how the milestone anniversary, which has only been celebrated once before in the history of the Commonwealth, could be celebrated in a more visible and prominent way.

The five parks that will be up for re-naming consideration vary significantly in size and features. Going in alphabetical order, the first option is the .10 hectare Ballymore Parkette, which was the originally recommended park, featuring a playground, picnic shelter, and seating area.

Next is the prominent downtown Town Park, clocking in at 1.7 hectares, and featuring a baseball diamond, band shell, playground, and washroom facilities. Summit Park, near Orchard Heights Drive, is 3.2 acres and features a softball diamond, tennis courts, a soccer field and playground. Rounding out the list are Tamarac Green Park, a .4 hectare park featuring a playground and basketball hoop, and Civic Square Park on John West Way, a .52 hectare park featuring a soccer field.

When this item last came up for Council consideration, renaming Civic Square Park, a suggestion first floated by Councillor John Gallo, appeared to be Council's preferred option, but they asked for a full inventory of options.

Staff conducted a review of all available parks in our inventory that may be considered appropriate for renaming, said Al Downey, Aurora's Director of Parks and Recreation, in a report to Council. Only the Parks that were not associated with a given or family name have been identified for possible renaming.

Confederation Park has also been excluded given its connection with the Centennial of Confederation in 1967 when the park was initially constructed and a commemorative plaque installed at the Park.

Although the final location of where Aurora's new Diamond Jubilee Park will be located, a few things are certain. Wherever Council decides to commemorate the Jubilee, previous Council direction will commemorate all Aurora residents who have been awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on a plaque within the park, a plaque which will also be emblazoned with both the Canadian Jubilee Emblem, and the emblem used in the United Kingdom, hand-drawn by 11-year-old Katherine Dewar.

Queen Elizabeth II succeeded to the thrones of Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and other realms on February 6, 1952 upon the death of her father, George V. Her Diamond Jubilee was marked in many ways throughout the Commonwealth last year, including a visit by the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall to Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan, and the institution of the Diamond Jubilee Medal, celebrating 60,000 Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast, who have given back to their communities and beyond.