

## Securing the Future of Swan Lake Park

by Fred Peters

The current Markham Council has addressed many of the needs of Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park, but their commitment has fallen short of a sustainable restoration program for either the lake or the park.

The new council elected in October 2022 will make important long-term decisions over the next four years that will determine the future of Swan Lake Park.

The current council has addressed areas requiring repair and established a baseline for addressing the long-term water quality challenges facing Swan Lake. They have, however, stopped short of adopting a comprehensive water quality management program that addresses the low oxygen levels in Swan Lake and the perpetual issue of damage done by road salt allowed to enter the lake. There are solutions but they require additional funding.

Key to protecting the land-based elements will be for council to designate Swan Lake Park as a Natural Heritage Network Land under Markham's

Official Plan. This will provide the park with the same long-term environmental protection as Milne Park and Toogood Pond Park.

The greater challenge lies in adopting a water quality plan to address the unique issues facing Swan Lake. The current plan addresses only the excessive amount of phosphorus and nitrogen attributed to Canada geese. It is a solid start but does little to address low oxygen levels and nothing substantive to address the large volumes of road salt entering the lake and killing the plant and aquatic life. In June, Friends of Swan Lake Park submitted a report to council that outlined practical approaches to reducing Swan Lake's stormwater role. Additional investment is required to reroute stormwater flows and to remove the build-up of chloride in the lake that is undermining a healthy aquatic environment.

We will be asking all candidates for council to outline their views on the restoration of Swan Lake and Swan Lake Park. □

## Our Village in Bloom

Jean Graham



I enjoy and admire beautiful colours. My gardening experience is all done randomly and unplanned. I go to the nursery, find something I love, and just start digging and planting. I try to focus on the bones, like trees and shrubs, for structure and variety. I then fill in with colour, and texture. I try to design for all year, hence my reason for placing annuals in pots. I then sit back and enjoy.