

Jim Tovey ? Mississauga councillor mourned

By Bill Rea

An emotional Mayor Allan Thompson opened Tuesday's committee of Town Council meeting with the sad news of the death of Mississauga Councillor Jim Tovey.

Mr. Tovey, who was in his second term as councillor for both the City and Peel Region, was 68.

"I'm lost for words," Thompson said as he made the announcement at the start of Tuesday's meeting. "It's like a punch in the gut." "Mississauga lost a champion," he added, as he asked a moment of silence be observed in Mr. Tovey's memory. "Caledon lost a friend."

"It's hard to put into words what Jim meant to me, to Peel Region and to everyone who knew him," Thompson said in a statement issued by his office that day. "He showed his deep love for his family, his friends and his community through actions, words and sometimes music."

Born in Mississauga, Mr. Tovey had a 15-year career as a vocalist before returning to school to train in carpentry and architectural technology, according to a biography on the City of Mississauga's website. He was also credited with being the mastermind behind the Lakeview waterfront redevelopment.

"In tough times, he encouraged and supported me, he made me laugh," Thompson added. "He was someone I completely trusted." Thompson also praised Mr. Tovey as being a "big thinker and a visionary."

"He was never afraid to go up against someone to do what he thought was right," Thompson said. "He valued and respected staff at the City and the Region. He loved collaboration and being a part of something bigger than himself and yet he was a larger-than-life guy."

"Today is a sad day for Mississauga," Mississauga Mayor Bonnie Crombie said. "It was an honour to work with and learn from Jim for the past six years."

"He was always there in your time of need, ready to lend a hand and never afraid to roll up his sleeves to get the job done," she added. "Jim had a great sense of humour and always looked for the positive in every issue or challenge. He did not accept that something could not be done, but always looked for innovative ways to make the world a better place."

Mr. Tovey sat on the Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) board, and CVC expressed condolences on his passing.

"In my 30 years of service, no other politician has in just six short years made such a tremendous impact on constituency, community, city and region," CVC Chair and fellow Mississauga Councillor Nando Iannicca said. "Jim was a true environmentalist, visionary, and city-builder. The transformation of his beloved waterfront will be his enduring Legacy."

"I had the privilege of working with Jim to realize our collective objectives for the environment. It was hard to keep up at times with his enthusiasm and energy," CVC Chief Administrative Officer Deborah Martin-Downs said. "He envisioned an environmental gem on the shores of Lake Ontario, and has been working tirelessly with us, the Region of Peel and Toronto and Regional Conservation Authority to enhance the Mississauga waterfront."

Funeral arrangements for Mr. Tovey had not been announced by press time.

A book of condolences is available at Mississauga Civic Centre.