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Dufferin County councillors take a moment to remember Mike Giles

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Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Dufferin County councillors took the time during their regular council meeting last Thursday (April 8) to pay their respects to former chief building inspector, Mike Giles.

?Many of us on this call today and in fact probably most of us if not all, knew Mike in some capacity or another,? said Darren White, Dufferin County Warden, at the top of the meeting. ?He was an integral part of our staff and really a generally great guy.?

Giles, passed away on March 21 at the age of 62. He began his career with Dufferin County in April of 1987, as a building inspector, and later assumed the role of chief building inspector in November of that year. After working three decades in Dufferin County's building department, Giles retired in December of 2017.

In his time with Dufferin County, Giles over saw many multi-million-dollar projects such as the construction of two ambulance stations, including the Dufferin EMS Station in Orangeville, the expansion to the Orangeville courthouse and the $21 million Dufferin Oaks building in Shelburne. He attended some 350 council meetings and issued more than 16,000 building permits.

White, in his condolence speech, spoke of working with Giles in the development of the Edelbrock Centre in Orangeville, which at the time was heralded as a ?one-of-a-kind? community hub.

Giles, also saw the aftermath of three major tornadoes in the county; Grand Valley in 1985, Primrose in 1992, and Violet Hill in 1999. One project of his before retiring was a hurricane clip rebate program, which consisted of a small piece of metal costing $1 used to reduce and prevent structural damage as well as injuries during severe storms.

?If you look at most of our infrastructure, most of our big buildings, you will see Mike's stamp all over it. Whether it be the engineer stamp from the office for approving of the plan, or to be hands-on, sleeves rolled up, down and dirty in the trenches, making things happen,? said White. ?Mike was so very good at working for the County, seeing the bigger picture and building something better for our residents.?

While councillors recalled their experiences working with Giles over the years in term, others spoke of knowing him from his time at the local high school.

?I actually went to high school with him and he was the same in grade nine as he was then, he didn't change,? said Orangeville Deputy Mayor Andy MacIntosh.

?Mike had a twinkle in his eye when he was 14 years old, and he had a twinkle in his eye right up until the end, he was always just a pleasure to be with as a person,? said Guy Gardhouse, East-Garafraxa Mayor.

Steve Soloman, the Mayor of Grand Valley, recounted his time playing junior hockey in Orangeville with him and joked of when Giles formed a county hockey team and dressed the players in Montreal Canadiens uniforms.

?He was the same as he was in the office as he was on the ice, he gave you what he had,? said Soloman.

A tree will be planted in memory of Giles at the Island Lake Conservation Area, the next annual dedication service will be held on Sept. 12.