

Mayor hopes to have meeting with provincial health minister

Continued from pg. 1

Bonnette said in an interview Wednesday that to date he's had two meetings plus two conversations with key Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care staff members. While no date has yet been set to meet with the Minister Deb Matthews, he said, "I hope to do so before long."

In the meantime, he has been "doing his due diligence" in trying to get an understanding of the healthcare situation in Halton and the surrounding areas. "I want all my ducks in a row" before bringing Halton Hills's argument forward to the Minister, he said.

Bonnette believes the Georgetown Hospital has a "special case" argument that includes an exploding Brampton population with plans to place 100,000 people on Halton Hills border—less than 10 minutes from the local hospital—plus the Province's own Places to Grow plan that will force the Town's population to grow by 20,000.

"I know it is a long shot but it's worth a try on behalf of the community," said the mayor.

It's Bonnette's intention not to ask the Ministry for their usual 90 per cent share of the \$12.1 million construction cost, but only a portion.

"My position has not changed," said the Mayor. "I am not asking the Province to pay for the whole ball of wax ... if I did, then I think they would have ignored me."

In his conversations with the Province,

Bonnette said "they had been listening... they're not shutting the door."

The Mayor likened his actions to recent municipal decisions when local groups like the Acton Soccer Club and the Georgetown SloPitch brought \$150,000 each to the budget table to bring their capital projects forward.

"I think by showing some dollars too it shows we're serious," said Bonnette. He noted it's expected the government will announce its capital budget later in March and is hoping that some announcement could be made at that time.

HHS said its project could suffer a seven to eight year delay if they had to wait for Ministry approval of the project through

the normal channels. A project, funded through HHS, the Town, and community fundraising could be ready to proceed as early as the Spring of 2012. If the Town contributed the whole of \$4.564 million, it would mean approximately \$23.56 a year over 10 years on household tax bills.

The project includes construction of a 14,000 sq. ft. addition to the building for a new emergency department and to house the new CT scanner and 4,000 sq. ft. renovation to the existing building to ensure the diagnostic services are in all one place, rather than scattered throughout the hospital as they are now. Annually, about 1,500 hospital patients (including 500 emergency patients) must be transferred to other hospitals for a CT scan.

For more information on the hospital's plans go to www.haltonhills.ca or www.haltonhealthcare.com



RICK BONNETTE

Water alternatives to be unveiled Thursday

Halton Region will unveil its preliminary preferred alternatives for future water and wastewater servicing in Halton Hills at a public meeting on Thursday.

The drop-in meeting will be held 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Christ the King School (cafeteria).

Alternatives for Georgetown water

servicing include expansion of the current groundwater well system or connection to lake-based systems ('Big Pipe' option) in south Halton or Peel.

Alternatives for Acton water servicing also include expansion of the current groundwater well system or connection with the Georgetown or Wellington systems.



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