

Council will decide May 24 on whether to help fund hospital expansion project

By **CYNTHIA GAMBLE**
Staff Writer

Under a time pressure to set the 2011 tax rate by the end of May, Halton Hills council will make a decision on whether to contribute to the Georgetown Hospital renovation and expansion project at the Tuesday, May 24 council meeting.

Mayor Rick Bonnette said at Tuesday's council meeting, a third letter has gone out to the Ministry of Health, asking for financial assistance. To date, while the Ministry is listening to the Town, it has not been forthcoming with a response.

"Hopefully we will hear something from the minister before that time, but one way or another, we will be making a decision on May 24," said the mayor.

Earlier this year, Halton Healthcare Services requested the Town contribute \$4.546 million for the George-

town Hospital renovation and expansion. The \$12.1 million capital project would include a CT scanner, a new diagnostics imaging department and an expanded, improved Emergency Department.

The Town's contribution, if approved, would come from a dedicated levy on property owners— about \$24/year for 10 years.

The hospital's decision to proceed with their project is dependent on a contribution from the Town. HHS CEO John Oliver said this project is one of HHS's top priorities and cannot wait another seven to eight years, with no guarantee, for provincial

funding approval. The Province usually pays about 90 per cent of the cost for these types of projects.

The Town had delayed a vote earlier this year on the hope that the mayor could convince the Ministry of Health to kick in at least a portion of that 90 per cent.



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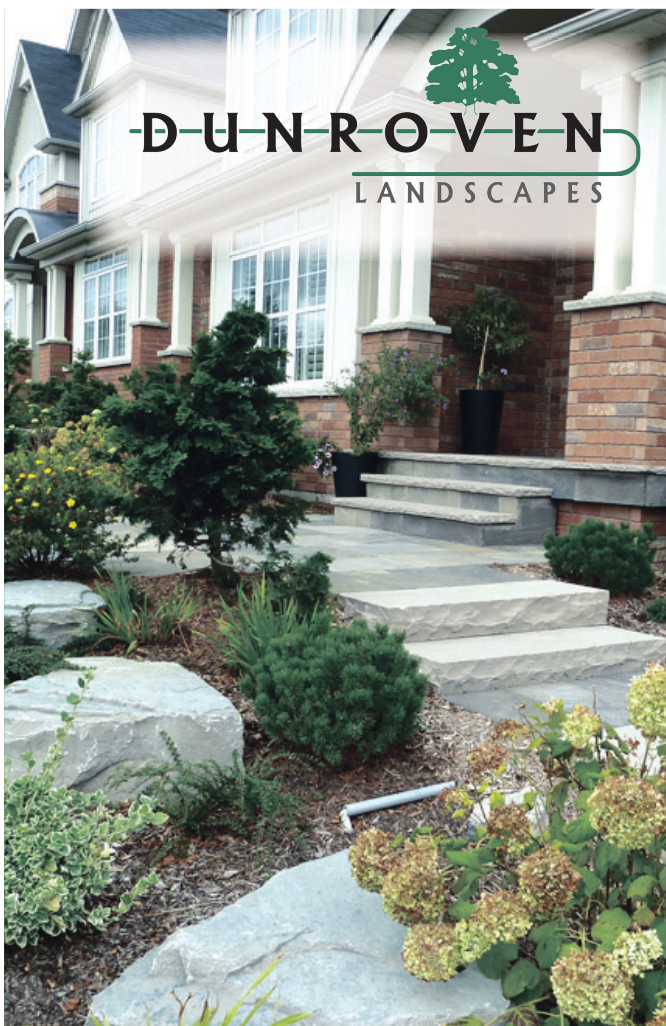
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