

# Council okays \$2.6M grant for hospital expansion

Continued from pg. 1

"It is about the first significant expansion of our hospital since it was built in 1961 when it served a much, much smaller community than it is today," said Mayor Rick Bonnette. "It's about dignity to our citizens going in for mammograms without everyone knowing about it. It's about providing a proven health care tool (CT scanner) that everyone in our community can use."

Oliver agreed it is an urgently needed expansion and "we really, really need that CT scanner", explaining about 1,500 patients a year must be transported to other hospitals to receive a CT scan.

The project includes a 14,000 sq. ft. addition for a new emergency department and to house a new CT scanner and a 4,000 sq. ft. renovation to the existing building to consolidate diagnostic services. The cost also includes the purchase of the CT scanner (already Ministry approved), an emergency generator, furniture, furnishings and equipment. HHS has been waiting years for provincial funding for the project, but was told to expect to wait at least another seven to eight years.

Acknowledging the critical need for the CT scanner and hospital improvements that could no longer wait, earlier this year HHS decided to go it alone with \$2.4 million of its own money and \$5.250 million in community fundraising but it would be dependent on \$4.546 million from the Town— without which the project could

not go forward.

However, Mayor Rick Bonnette recommended his council approve a grant of \$2.682 million— only a portion of the requested amount. The decision means the Town grant will go onto 2011 municipal property tax bills as a dedicated one-time tax levy of 1.1 per cent to pay for a 10-year loan. This levy would be built into the property tax base over the 10-year term. For the average Halton Hills home assessed at \$350,000 that works out to about \$13.63 per year.

Bonnette said the Town, enlisting the support of the Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott, will continue to pursue the Ministry of Health for the remaining \$1.89 million.

"Perhaps if Council 'does put its money where its mouth is' then that may further encourage the Minister to 'make up the difference' and provide a grant of \$1.864 million," wrote Bonnette in his report to council. The mayor has been pursuing funding from the Province since January through letters, phone calls and face-to-face meetings, but while the Ministry has been listening, he said, to date there has been no response.

Faced with legal requirements to issue 2011 tax bills soon, the Town could no longer wait on a Provincial answer, and was forced to make a decision Tuesday.

"I feel with this resolution the Minister can come to the table," said the mayor, "and make a contribution that would be much less significant than some of the other capital projects for hospitals going on in Ontario."

Bonnette noted that traditionally hospital projects are 90 per cent funded by the Province, but in this case the Town is only asking the Province to kick in 16 per cent.

When asked by *The Independent & Free Press* what happens if the Provincial government still fails to ante up, Bonnette replied,

"We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. The ball is now in the Minister's court."

Bonnette said the Town has been reasonable in its request for Ministry funding, and says the hospital should get recognition for serving the overflow of emergency patients from Erin and Brampton areas.

Oliver said the \$1.8 million is still required, and would have to come from somewhere, but not likely by upping the current fundraising goal of \$5.250 mil-

lion—the largest capital campaign in the history of the community.

Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott, who attended Tuesday's council meeting, brought the issue to the Minister of Health Deb Matthews' attention in Question Period at Queen's Park last week.

"People are sick and tired of the Liberals' repeated delays and excuses as to why the government couldn't make an immediate announcement," Arnott said in a press release. "They certainly could move forward, but they're choosing not to."

Meanwhile HHS will begin moving forward on the project, said Oliver, including making an application to the Ministry of Health to commence with the project. He said while there is a \$1.8 million shortfall, there is some time still for the Ministry to make a funding decision.

"I think we're very hopeful yet that the Ministry of Health will find that \$1.8 million and see the project come together fully financed," said Oliver, adding that a construction start of spring 2012 is doable.

Councillor Jane Fogal said the Town decision does not set a precedent; this council has supported its hospital throughout the years providing money and support for such things as saving the obstetrics unit, recruiting physicians, funding a nurse practitioner in Acton, and contributing to the new Acton medical clinic.

At least residents will know their tax dollars for the hospital will be spent in their community, she said.

*'The ball is now in the Minister's court.'*

—Mayor Rick Bonnette



## VOLKSFEST

Now it's easy to get what you want.

**0%** APR up to 36 months\*  
on our most popular models



2011 Golf

2011 Jetta  
Starting from just \$17,515\*

2011 Tiguan  
\$500 no-charge Volkswagen Original  
Accessories\*\*

 Up to \$750 Rebate<sup>^</sup>  
for qualified college  
& university grads.

No-charge Roadside Assistance<sup>†</sup>  
4-year, unlimited mileage  
24 hours, 365 days a year

4-year/80,000 km<sup>†</sup>  
new vehicle limited warranty

Georgetown  
Volkswagen  
Service

**TDI**<sup>®</sup>  
Clean Diesel

# Georgetown Volkswagen

203 Guelph St.  
905.877.5285



US models shown. Some options and accessories may vary or may not be available in Canada. \*Limited time finance offer available through Volkswagen Finance on approved credit. MSRP of \$17,515/\$22,215/\$29,830 for a new and unregistered 2011 Jetta 2.0L / 2011 Golf 3-door 2.5L / 2011 Tiguan 2.0T base model with 5-spd man. trans. / 5-spd man. trans. / 6-spd man. trans. including \$1,365/\$1,365/\$1,580 freight and PDI, \$29 EHF (tires), \$100 air conditioning levy, \$5 ONMVIC fee, \$46 PPSA and \$195 dealer administrative fee. Financed at 0% APR for 36 months equals \$486.53/\$617.08/\$828.61 per month. Down payment or equivalent trade-in, due at signing, may be required. Cost of borrowing is \$0 for a total obligation of \$17,515/\$22,215/\$29,830. License, insurance, registration, options and other applicable taxes are extra. Offer excludes TDI Clean Diesel models. \*\*Receive up to \$500 towards Volkswagen Original Accessories, with the lease or purchase of any new 2011 Tiguan model. Certain conditions apply. No cash value. Excludes labour and tires. Offers end May 31, 2011, and are subject to change or cancellation without notice. †Whichever occurs first. ^Up to \$750 rebate for recent college or university graduates. ‡Roadside Assistance is provided by Professional Dispatch Group. Certain conditions apply. Visit Georgetown Volkswagen for details.