

Petition delivered; project list expected soon

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and getting a patient in urgently was no problem. Things have really changed.”

According to Kolbasnik, it's not just the population spike that has placed mounting pressure on MDH; the infrastructure at the hospital is showing signs of deterioration.

He pointed to a leaky roof last summer that led to the evacuation of the medical surgical ward for almost a week. MDH recently received a “state of the art” surgical sterilization machine, which Kolbasnik said took a week to install because the hospital's infrastructure was too old to support the new technology.

“During that week we had to ration surgical equipment...that's not the sort of thing that should be happening in a growing community like ours.”

He continued, “As much as there's a gradual deterioration, we're worried we're going to reach a breaking point when things just start to fall apart.”

Organizer and Ward 6 Councillor Mike Cluett took some time to dispel common rumors circulating about the MDH expansion.

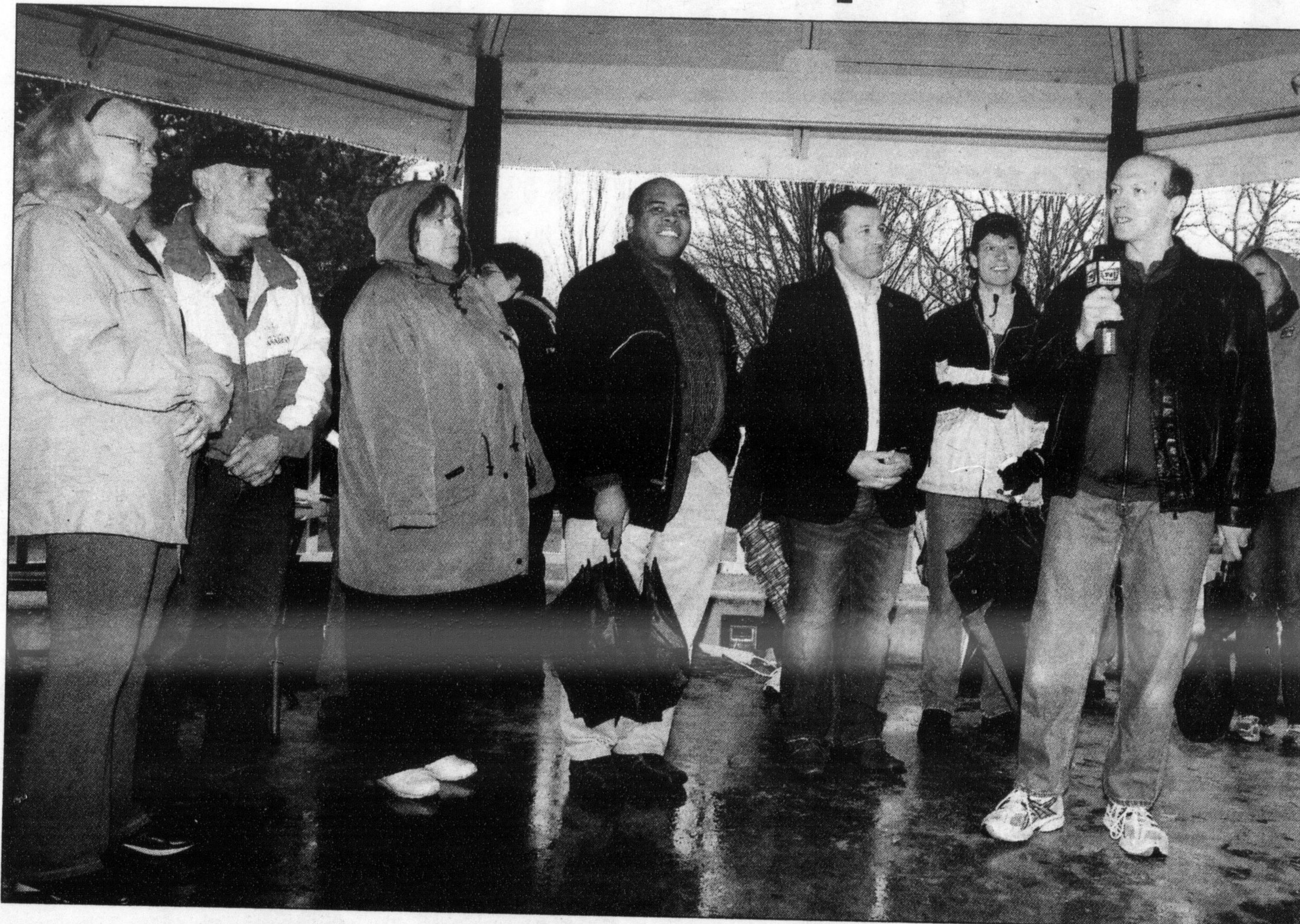
Pointing to the new north Oakville hospital, Cluett said: “The Oakville hospital is designed for Oakville's growth, not for other communities. We need a made-in-Milton hospital expansion for Milton's needs now.”

Cluett added that he's unfazed by naysayers.

“We've heard, ‘It's great you're doing this but it's not going to make a difference.’ Well we'd rather go down swinging than not do anything at all. We want to let the provincial government know that it starts with them. Give us the go ahead, and we'll figure the rest out.”

Playing MC for the event, Scott Fox of Z103.5 said when he moved to town seven years ago he would brag to his friends about the zero wait times at MDH.

“Now the tables have turned,” he said.



Surgeon Dr. Jeff Kolbasnik addresses a small group huddled in the Victoria Park gazebo during a Saturday morning rally before a hospital expansion petition was taken to Queen's Park.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

“All you have to do is look around at a town that's bursting at the seams and a hospital that was built decades ago. The fact that people are waiting, they're being sent to other communities for critical care, surgeries are being postponed because there's not enough beds — this screams expansion.”

Chudleigh said he hopes the message comes through loud and clear at Queen's Park. The petition was delivered mere weeks before the Province is expected to release its 10-year infrastructure list for high-priority projects.

Despite what transpires in the next few

weeks, Cluett said the momentum for the expansion won't slow down anytime soon.

“It doesn't end today. It's going to continue until the spade is in the ground and we have our hospital.”

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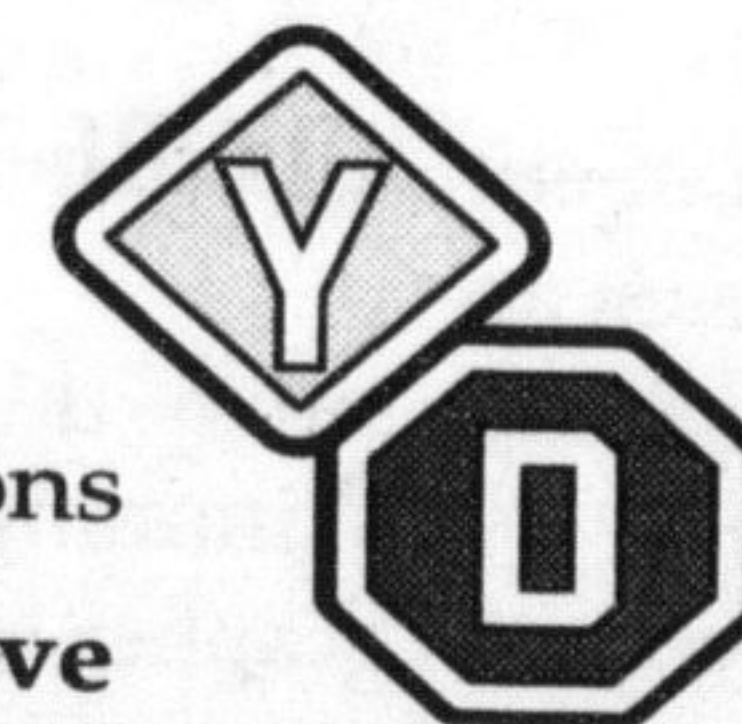
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