



Regional and Town Councillor – Ward 5

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WARD 5 SPEAKS UP IN FAVOUR OF NEW HOSPITAL

It has stirred debate and polarized public opinion, but the issue of whether the town should contribute money to Halton Healthcare Services' (HHS) local share plan for funding the new Oakville hospital has also highlighted how much we all care about the future of our town. When we made a motion at Council in December 2009 to defer the matter for further public consultation, we had no idea how exhaustive the investigation would be — and we're certainly glad that we took the issue in hand when we did.

Public opinion surveys showed that 65 per cent of residents were in favour of a new hospital, but 44 per cent were undecided about how it should be funded. Town Council's April 20 decision to allocate \$170 million to help fund the hospital was a historic decision with long-term implications.

For the record, here are five reasons why your Ward 5 Councillors supported it:

1. The old hospital opened in 1950 to accommodate a much smaller population. Over the years, it has grown to keep pace with both the growth of our community and changes in health care, but it can no longer expand on its southeast Oakville site. The reality is that the population will continue to grow and age and we're going to need many more health care services. Wait times are already a problem in Oakville and many of our residents are forced to seek care in other neighbouring communities and even in the United States. Unless we build a new hospital, the situation is only going to get worse.
2. The plan to designate 80 per cent of the new hospital's 457 beds as "private care" beds has been highly problematic for many. Both of us were skeptical when we first heard that news. However, further investigation confirmed that no one will be turned away from the new hospital if they lack the funds to pay for a private room when that's the only accommodation available.

In fact, over the course of the public consultations, we determined that Canadian legislation guarantees universal access to hospital care: the *Canada Health Act* prohibits barring people from treatment if they cannot pay for it and the *Public Hospitals Act* requires a hospital to admit a patient at the request of a staff physician notwithstanding the accommodations available.

These are expressly clinical rather than administrative decisions, but to provide extra peace of mind to anyone who is worried about the issue, we asked John Oliver, president and CEO of HHS, to request that the hospital's Board of Directors write a declaration affirming these principles. At the board's May 13 meeting, the following resolution was passed:

WHEREAS Halton Healthcare Services operates in compliance with the requirements of the *Canada Health Act* and the *Public Hospitals Act* of Ontario and;

WHEREAS Halton Healthcare Services is committed to providing equitable access to services at its community hospitals in Oakville, Milton, and Halton Hills;

BE IT RESOLVED that HHS confirms its practice that no individual whose physician is credentialed at HHS and has written an order for admission to hospital will be refused admission, including access to single patient rooms when clinically required, based on their ability to pay. An individual who has requested ward accommodation will not be obligated to pay a preferred accommodation surcharge should the hospital place them in a room other than a ward room.

We found this 80 per cent plan puzzling at first, but we learned that there is ample justification for it: infectious diseases are becoming an increasing problem in our society and since quarantine is the only appropriate medical response, private rooms will keep all patients safer. In addition, the aging population suggests an increasing incidence of heart attacks and

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recovery from this (and other ailments) requires that patients be kept in quiet, peaceful surroundings — something that is not possible in a ward setting. There are other medically sound reasons why private rooms are preferable and, taken together, they show that our understanding of health care is evolving.

3. The financing of the new hospital is being planned in an orderly, responsible manner. We still have serious concerns about the complexity of the funding arrangements for the new hospital: the 90/10 per cent split between the province and local community, respectively, on the construction costs gave us some concerns, as did the fact that 100 per cent of all equipment costs will be locally funded.

However, we've worked through all of the available financial information and grilled the relevant experts on how it all works. We're satisfied that notwithstanding the outrageous financing scheme that has been imposed upon us by the province, taxpayer money will be responsibly handled. Just to be sure, Jeff suggested that a Town of Oakville representative should be appointed to fully participate in the board's Capital Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC). This person should assist with project execution, including all of the financial discussions, in order to guarantee transparency, accountability, and ongoing oversight of the town's investment. This recommendation was accepted by the hospital's board. Commissioner of Corporate Services and town Treasurer Gord Lalonde will now be attending CPAC meetings.

In addition, your Ward 5 Councillors also strongly encouraged the development of innovative funding options to minimize as much as possible the impact on Oakville taxpayers. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of revenue streams or the proceeds of the recent sale of Blink Communications, an Oakville Hydro subsidiary. In fact, Jeff and Marc will not support any effort to increase taxes to pay for this commitment — they are working on the principle that this contribution must be funded from within the town's existing resources.

4. According to Oakville Chamber of Commerce statistics, the new hospital will bring an estimated \$1.1 billion into the Oakville community, a financial benefit that will be a tremendous boost to local businesses. The spinoff benefits for Oakville's economic development are substantial and will benefit the entire community for many generations to come.

5. If Town Council had turned down the new hospital project, the province advised us that the project would not be able to proceed and that funding would have gone to build a hospital in another community. Oakville would have lost an enormously important medical resource. This would have negatively impacted health care in the community for generations to come.

We spent almost five months reviewing the information available and consulting with Oakville residents to make sure that we had all of the information that we could possibly track down with which to make an informed, reasoned, and ultimately prudent decision. It's been challenging to say the least and we've been aware of how serious and important this decision is. There was a substantial amount of collaboration evident as we worked through the issues involved and we appreciate the comments from everyone who took the time to make their voices heard.

Going forward, Council will get a report from town staff in 2011 at the conclusion of the request for proposals process; an exact proposed donation will be included in that report. Payments will begin in 2015, once the hospital is built and operational.

We're heading into new territory and that's always intimidating. But if we can draw upon the focused dedication of Oakville residents that brought us through the public consultation phase of the project, we are bound to build towards the hospital's 2015 opening with a highly efficient program to deliver outstanding health care services to a town that is determined to become the most livable in Canada.



Halton Regional Police Service

NEW OAKVILLE HEADQUARTERS FOR HALTON REGIONAL POLICE SERVICE

The Oakville Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) station on White Oaks Boulevard next to Town Hall opened in 1967 during the great excitement of Canada's centennial year. Over time, the limited wiring and lack of fitness facilities and air conditioning limited its efficiency. When the new station on Dundas Street and Oak Park Drive was completed earlier this year, HRPS staff — many of whom were forced to share offices with as many as four people — could hardly wait for their first day of work in the new building.

"There's been an increased sense of pride among officers and other HRPS employees since we moved in," said Martin Power, superintendent of Oakville. "The new station is more spacious and there have been many improvements implemented that have had a positive effect on morale."

The station houses the HRPS's operations and administration services and provides space for uniformed patrol, criminal, and regional investigation services, the homicide department, and child abuse, sexual assault, and domestic violence teams. The department's training bureau and regional fraud unit are also housed in the building.

Aside from providing more room for almost 300 staff, the 70,000-square-foot building includes improved security and prisoner monitoring systems, interview rooms, and fitness and locker room facilities for officers. Technical capabilities are now on a par with today's standards and a 1,200-square-foot community room now gives the public a chance to book events at their local station.

"It's been very rewarding for me to see the building go from design to finished product," Superintendent Power said. "It gives us space to expand over the next 30 years so that we can grow with the local community."

While a careful eye was kept on expenses, the \$14.1 million building, funded by Halton Region, incorporates modern efficiencies like low-energy window glass, energy-efficient lights, and motion sensors in the hallways, parking lot, and other exterior areas.

"We also recycle everything that can be safely and appropriately recycled," Superintendent Power said.

Superintendent Power notes that while a number of locations were initially pinpointed as potential sites for the station, this location was chosen because future development will push municipal boundaries north and policing needs to follow.

Input from the Town of Oakville, the Region of Halton, and local citizens was incorporated into the plan. Ward 5 Councillors Marc Grant and Jeff Knoll were attentive supporters of the new station.

"This addition to the Uptown Core will bring much-needed institutional use to the area that will help the town achieve its long-term planning goals for the area," said Councillor Knoll.

"The policing benefits of the new facility are obvious, but the spinoff benefits will be considerable as well," Councillor Grant added. "This is a terrific addition to the Ward 5 community."

The building's official opening took place on May 20 in a ceremony that saw the community room dedicated to Ward 2 Regional and Town Councillor Fred Oliver, who was police chief when the old station was built and is the longest serving police chief in Ontario, with 26 years of service.

For information about the plans for the old station read the article on page 26.



(Left to right) Bradley Hamilton, Samantha Norvack, Shawn Wilson, Bradley Cook, Karina Scali, and Jenna Hagenow of the Futures program.



Jeff and Marc visit the Futures program.



Adrian Nandal and William Thomas of the Futures program.

A THOUSAND POUNDS OF CARING:

STUDENTS FROM WHITE OAKS' FUTURES PROGRAM COLLECT FOOD FOR THE KERR STREET MINISTRIES

Pride reigned when the 48 students attending the Futures program at White Oaks Secondary School collected 1,000 pounds of food (80 large bags) to donate to the Kerr Street Ministries (KSM) — an organization that provides economic, social, and spiritual support to Oakville residents. Christina Annis, a special education teacher in the Futures program, was not surprised.

“Our students will give and give and give,” she said. “People can learn from them — they work hard, they don’t complain, and they love life.”

Students in the Futures program have some form of mild intellectual and/or physical disability. Every day they face challenges that tend to distance them from other students. The Futures program is designed to provide these students with as much academic training as possible, but also to pass along valuable life skills that they will need down the road. These very special young people are offered individualized instruction in a variety of subjects, including math, English, culinary arts, computers, and physical education. In the later stages of their high school careers, the co-op experience becomes a priority because students can develop valuable employability skills through their community work placements.

“We try to give them opportunities for learning and growing in a safe and supportive environment,” said Annis.

She notes that Alex Sorgente, the head of special education for the Futures program, was instrumental in kickstarting the idea to collect food for the KSM. Annis feels that the project empowered her students.

“To do something for someone else teaches great skills,” she said. “The food drive was a way for our kids to connect with people in their school and neighbourhood and it opened doors for them that otherwise were not present in their daily lives.”

The students were so interested in helping the KSM that Annis invited Councillors Jeff Knoll and Marc Grant into the classroom to speak about poverty in Oakville.

“The Futures program students were extremely well prepared for our visit with plenty of questions. It was an honour to be part of their learning,” Councillor Grant said.

The visit, which took place this past March, capped off months of interested investigation into how people manage when the chips are down.

Councillor Knoll was also impressed with the students’ dedication.

“These kids worked hard to raise awareness in their own school of the fact that some people in Oakville need our help,” he said. “How many of us can say the same?”

TRAFFIC SAFETY — WE’RE ALL RESPONSIBLE!

Controlling speeding within our communities is an issue that strikes at the heart of every neighbourhood and requires input from dozens of Town of Oakville, Halton Region, and Halton Regional Police Service (HRPS) representatives. But traffic calming is more complex than it seems and harder to resolve, though four new speed cushions in Oakville — two of which will be located in Ward 5 — are bound to help out.

“It’s tough for people who live on a street where some of the neighbours disregard speed limits,” said Councillor Jeff Knoll. “We work with town staff and the HRPS to resolve the issue as best we can, but sometimes it comes down to common sense and common courtesy rather than legislation and we’re just as frustrated about that as everyone else.”

Sergeant Vince Williams, district response unit sergeant at the HRPS, notes that investigating complaints can be challenging since speeding on neighbourhood streets may happen only sporadically and the police cannot simply sit and wait for an infraction to occur unless there is good reason to believe that one is imminent.

“We work hand in hand with the town to get to where we want to be with traffic regulation,” he said. “The town gets a copy of every accident on a town road but, that being said, we won’t wait until there have been six accidents on one street before taking action.”

Sergeant Williams notes that reliable evidence of one individual consistently speeding can lead to the establishment of an observation post at a specific location. The HRPS might also recommend the use of Communities On Phone Patrol (COPP) volunteers, a civilian program that is supervised by the HRPS. These volunteers agree to be HRPS’s eyes and ears and are responsible for observing and reporting criminal and/or

traffic-related matters. COPP volunteers have no special authority to contravene any municipal, provincial, or federal laws and do not intervene directly in situations that they may encounter while on patrol. These volunteers are a great resource and may be able to determine how consistently traffic laws are being followed on specific streets in the town.

According to Adam Bell, the town’s traffic technologist, the town also studies traffic patterns and problems on town streets to determine if and where changes are needed.

“Speed cushions are being used in lieu of speed humps as they have proven to be very effective with less impact to our emergency and operations service vehicles,” he said.

Centre medians and modified line markings can reduce operating speeds, but they are less effective than speed cushions.

“All-way stops are not a speed control device,” Bell said. “They are used to regulate the operation of an intersection, much like a traffic signal and, if used inappropriately, they can raise the potential for accidents, as users tend to disobey the signs and roll through the intersection.”

The new speed cushion installations planned for Ward 5 are the result of studies that showed a substantial need for traffic calming. The cushions are scheduled for installation in front of St. Andrew Elementary School on Millbank Drive and River Oaks Public School on Munn’s Avenue. Outside of Ward 5, speed cushions will also be installed in front of Sheridan Public School on Lancaster Drive and École Sainte-Marie on Maurice Drive.

“It takes many studies to determine where speed cushions should be located,” said Councillor Marc Grant. “And it’s frustrating for people living on streets where drivers consistently disobey traffic laws.”



Scott Snowball

2009 Firefighter of the Year Jody Walker (with plaque) is congratulated by (left to right) Fire Chief Richard Boyes, Carmen Santoro, Oakville PFFA president, and Deputy Fire Chief Brian Durdin.

WAY TO GO, JODY!

It's no surprise that Jody Walker, the Oakville Fire department's 2009 Firefighter of the Year, signed up for a profession in the service of others — he just likes doing things for other people. The Oakville firefighter has been a member of the Oakville Professional Firefighters' Association's (PFFA) public relations committee for several years and has focused his energy on helping firefighters raise money for various charities.

"The Fire department is full of people who put service to their community first," said Town Councillor Marc Grant. "It's Jody's turn to be recognized for his contributions this year and we should all be proud of the terrific job that he and his fellow firefighters do every day on our behalf."

Walker and his team raised an impressive \$34,000 for the new Oakville hospital through last year's Candlelight Ball held at the Burlington Convention Centre. The secret to their success was a hotly-contested auction where winners won dinner for eight prepared and hosted by Oakville firefighters.

At the Sydney Clark fundraiser held at the RattleSnake Point Golf Club, Walker's team put together a "Do You Believe in Magic?" event that brought in \$10,400 for the SickKids Foundation, again through the auction of a dinner prepared and hosted by local firefighters.

"We have a great team environment in the department," Walker said. "This is a huge honour for me, but if it weren't for the participation of my colleagues who come out to help with all of

our events, we would have nothing to show for the ideas that we come up with."

Walker's and the Oakville PFFA's other contributions to the community include:

- Raising \$18,000 through a boot drive for the victims of the recent earthquake in Haiti
- Raising \$7,500 through a boot drive for Muscular Dystrophy Canada
- Raising \$3,800 to participate in the Mayor's Invitational Softball Tournament through a chicken wing eating contest ("Some guys still can't eat wings," Walker said)
- Raising thousands more for the Zonta Club of Oakville, Easter Seals, and Halton Women's Place

Regional and Town Councillor Jeff Knoll notes that Oakville firefighters have a long history of serving Oakville in many capacities.

"We don't tend to think of the great work that they do unless we're faced with a fire-related crisis in our homes or businesses," said Councillor Knoll. "We should all stop and thank these brave men and women who are willing to put their lives between ours and danger."

Walker takes his work in stride and is proud of the Oakville Fire department.

"It's really nice to see how you can affect so many people with your work," he said. "Nobody in the Fire department does anything by themselves, though — we're all backed up by a strong team."

A total of 208 firefighters, fire prevention officers, fire safety educators, training staff, and administrative support staff serve the Town of Oakville through seven fire stations. For more information call 905-845-7114 (non-emergencies), email fire@oakville.ca, or visit oakvillefire.ca for many helpful links, including pages for children and teachers.



UPCOMING WARD 5 EVENTS

AUGUST 6 – Movies in the Park with Jeff and Marc

SEPTEMBER 11 – Oak Park Fall Fair

SEPTEMBER 25 – Trafalgar Township Family Heritage Day