

By Bob Renaud, Chair, Site Selection Subcommittee, on behalf of Site Selection Subcommittee

January 7, 2016

On July 16, 2015, we, as members of the Site Selection Subcommittee for the New, Single-Site Acute Care Hospital, stood with the community, feeling a sense of pride as the site was announced. We heard how the location at County Rd. 42 and the 9th Concession would become an integral part of a new regional system that would transform healthcare delivery in Windsor-Essex, and knew that we had accomplished our mandate.

Details about the individual sites submitted to Windsor Regional Hospital for consideration are now being released. We hope that after hearing the details, you will see what became clear to all of us; that this site selection process, based on fairness, integrity, expert guidance and community involvement, led to an outstanding site for the new regional hospital.

As a Subcommittee, we were a diverse group of volunteers; some from the city, some from the county, some who have spent time volunteering on the hospital board, others who spent time in the hospitals as patients or with loved ones. We had a Project Designer from the Henry Ford Health Team, some former automotive executives, a former university dean, a medical school student, a community advocate and more. Some of us had experience with site-selection projects, others with major redevelopment projects, all of us were passionate about our community and this project.

When we first met, we quickly realized that this would be an experience like none other. We may not have talked openly about it, but like almost everyone else in the community, most of us had thoughts as to where the new hospital could go. It was immediately made clear to us that none of that mattered.

Our mandate, based on instructions from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, was very specific; select a site for the new hospital that **“reflects the regional nature of the new facility.”** To do this, we would follow a process designed to be fair to all involved, based on a set of community-driven criteria. It was a responsibility that we took to heart.

With a list of 22 sites and 32 criteria to consider, we went to work. Each of us scored the sites individually and then we met as a team to determine consensus scores for each of the individual criterion, for each of the sites. If you do the math, that means more than 700 decisions as individuals, and another 700 decisions for consensus as a group.

We each spent about 150 hours working on this project. Sometimes that meant driving around the sites, trying to imagine how a hospital would work there, or at our desks pouring over documents or googling the surrounding areas to learn more about the associated neighbourhoods.

It's a responsibility none of us took lightly and along the way we were supported by an outstanding group of professionals:

- Drazen Bulat and William Pigott, from the firm Miller Thomson LLP – who have a combined total of 50 years' experience in procurement and construction law - took us step by step through the process. They guided us through a mock site selection exercise, our practice round, and made sure we were comfortable with our task, before setting us free to evaluate the 22 properties on our own.
- Planning Consultant Krista Walkey, who has over 20 years of planning experience as a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) and a Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP) employed by Stantec Consulting Ltd., helped with the technical details. She made sure we had the correct information about zoning, accessibility, etc. If she couldn't answer our questions, one of the many experts at her firm always could.
- Fairness Advisor Glenn Ackerley from WeirFoulds LLP – who has 25 years' experience in procurement and construction law - completed our group. He sat through hours of Committee discussion and through it all, made sure the process was followed and that fairness to all submitted sites remained a priority.

It wasn't always easy. As a passionate group of committed individuals, you can imagine there were some debates as we arrived at the consensus scores, but when the final decision was determined, there was a unanimous feeling of satisfaction and confidence. The process, as defined clearly in the project Request for Proposals, had worked. The criteria served as a roadmap that guided us to our final site.

It has been an honour and a privilege to have been given the opportunity to serve on the Site Selection Subcommittee and be part of a team working to better meet the healthcare needs of residents of this region for generations to come.