

SIGN UP

Introducing 5 FP Newsletters: Energy, Economy, Investor, Work and Finance Financial Post: Introducing 5 Newsletters [Sign Up Now](#)

Manage Print Subscription

Sections  Search

WINDSOR STAR

Subscribe

 My Account 

Election 2021 News Sports Opinion Arts Business Life Driving Healthing The GrowthOp Videos
Newsletters ePaper Refer a Friend

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

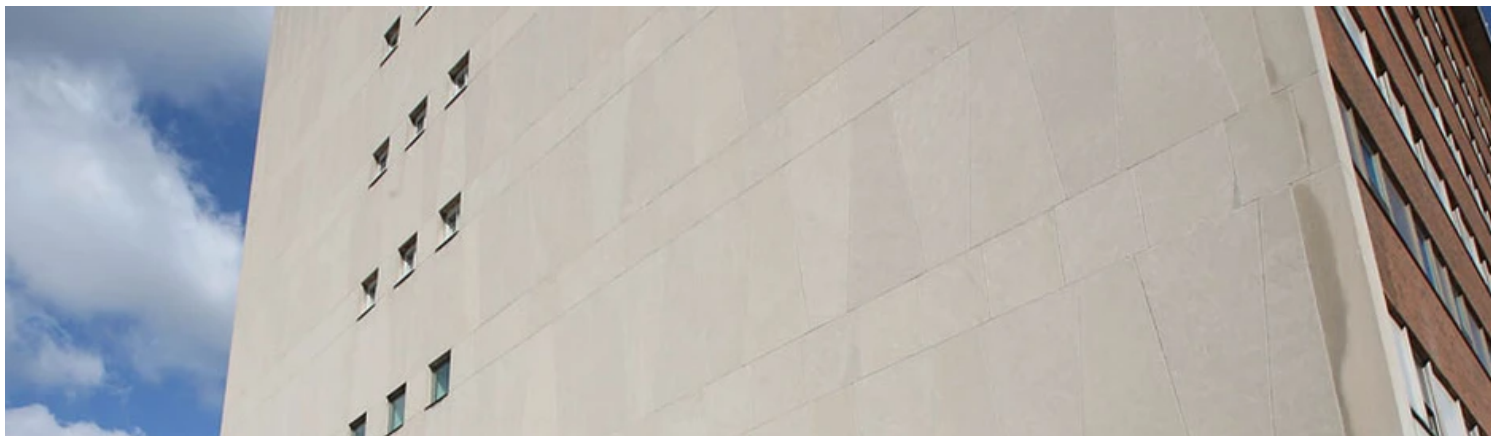


Opinion

Anne Jarvis: 'It's about the community'

Five devout - and very tough - women came to Windsor from Montreal in 1888 with little more than the clothes they were wearing.

Anne Jarvis • Windsor Star
Jul 19, 2015 • July 19, 2015 • 4 minute read





Hotel-Dieu Grace Hospital. (Windsor Star files)

Five devout — and very tough — women came to Windsor from Montreal in 1888 with little more than the clothes they were wearing.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Begging for donations, they scraped together enough money to buy a tract of land on Ouellette Avenue at Erie Street, built a grand hospital to house 100 beds and worked 24 hours a day to run it.



They were sisters of the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, and this was the city's first hospital, the original Hotel-Dieu. Before that, if you needed to go to a hospital, you had to take the ferry to Detroit.

It's a remarkable story, recounted in a book on Hotel-Dieu's history by former Windsor Star columnist Marty Gervais.

This is what Janice Kaffer, CEO of Hotel-Dieu Grace Healthcare, as it's called now, was referring to last week when she addressed dignitaries and the curious at the announcement of a new acute care hospital.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but
your article continues below.

“One hundred twenty-seven years ago, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph began their work ... to serve the marginalized, the disenfranchised and the most vulnerable populations in our community,” she said. “This site has such rich history to the city and specifically to us at Hotel-Dieu Grace.”

Then she cited the “incredibly brave” decision by the hospital’s board of governors two years ago to “walk away from 127 years of history to be able to ready us for this announcement today.”

There wouldn’t be a proposed new hospital if Windsor’s two existing hospitals hadn’t realigned their services two years ago.

“We owe them a debt of gratitude,” Kaffer said.

But it was Hotel-Dieu that really sacrificed. It was the designated trauma hospital, yet it gave up acute care to focus on chronic care, rehabilitation and mental health. Its budget and staff plummeted. Some employees felt as if they’d been thrown under the bus.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but
your article continues below.

But former CEO Ken Deane knew better.

“It’s not about the hospital,” he told me at the time. “It’s about the community. What matters is that the investment comes to Windsor, not who gets it in Windsor.”

The politicians, Sunshine List bureaucrats, boards and committees involved in planning the new hospital deserve credit for doing a lot of things right, starting with Deane.

In a lot of municipalities, a handful of people decide where a new hospital will be built. Then they simply announce it.

That's not what Windsor did.

Four members of the site-selection committee were from the public, chosen from among more than 80 people who volunteered for a huge job with no pay. Anyone who owned land that they thought would be suitable for the hospital could submit a proposal. More than 20 did, including the owner of the site eventually chosen. More than 600 people answered a survey on the criteria for the site, helping to shape the determinants. There were presentations to local councils and other groups, public meetings, call-in radio shows, a website, email and blog for the public. People stopped Windsor Regional Hospital CEO David Musyj on the street and in the grocery store to tell him what they thought. The committee even hired a "fairness adviser" to watch it.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but
your article continues below.

"Along with community engagement, you have to listen," said Musyj.

They did. They even made changes.

"We've been told by the government no one else has done that," Musyj said, referring to the sheer amount of public engagement.

Other hospitals have called Musyj to ask him what the committee did.

Windsor Regional will also consult the neighbourhood when it designs the proposed satellite medical centre on the former Grace Hospital site, Musyj promised. Where on the property should the centre be built? What should the look and feel be?

Kaffer promised Hotel-Dieu will consult the community on what should be offered in the proposed “wellness hub” at the hospital’s Ouellette Campus.

The site of the new hospital was a subject that could have become hung up in bitter discord between the city and county. But they actually agree. Essex town Coun. Randy Voakes wanted the hospital in his municipality, saying Essex needs it to stimulate the town’s economy. But even Warden Tom Bain recognized that wouldn’t be appropriate.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but
your article continues below.

“To be out in the county wouldn’t serve everybody,” he said. “You have to find balance.”

Some people seemed perplexed by the fact that Windsor Regional is trading its 14-acre, \$4-million Metropolitan campus for the city’s 6.5-acre, \$2-million former Grace Hospital site. Wasn’t the hospital getting the short end?

“We did this in partnership,” said Musyj. “We’re not in it to make money off the Met site.”

Said Mayor Drew Dilkens, “We’re all public institutions.”

I remember when Windsor had four hospitals. They were four fiefdoms.

“We’ve created a new framework for how communities can work together for the common good,” said Gary Switzer, CEO of the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network, which plans health care for the

region.

We've come a long way. Other public bodies should pay attention.

ajjarvis@windsorstar.com

twitter.com/winstarjarvis

[pn_facebook_like /]



Windsor Star Headline News

Sign up to receive daily headline news from the Windsor Star, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.

Email Address

Sign Up

By clicking on the sign up button you consent to receive the above newsletter from Postmedia Network Inc. You may unsubscribe any time by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of our emails. Postmedia Network Inc. | 365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4 | 416-383-2300

TRENDING

1 Ontario pauses further reopening, will start offering COVID-19 booster shots to vulnerable

2 Matthew McConaughey doesn't wear deodorant and neither should you