

2.30.13 Councilor Sleiman:

In front of us we have that Sandwich South area that going to be rezoned. I think one advantage of it is just to give the people choices if they want to have a wider lot or smaller lot. If we don't give choices, they'll end up going to LaSalle or Tecumseh, no question about it. Since that area is going to include the mega hospital land. I'd like to concentrate and just talk about the mega hospital. When this mega hospital issue started to float around, like a few years ago, we welcomed the idea of a new modern and state of the art hospital. Met and Hotel Dieu have been in our community for a long time. They served the community well. However, the community has grown; technology has changed the way patients are being treated in hospitals. State of the art equipment have been developed that can diagnose and treat patients more efficiently, could not fit in our hospital because of the limited space. Hallways are narrow, patient rooms are gloomy, hospital staff and doctors do not have adequate space to do their job efficiently. Technology grants that improve patient care go to modern hospitals in the province, not to our existing hospitals. Windsorites and Essex county residents often have to go to London or other hospitals for heart bypass or other serious operations.

We have been blessed to have been a satellite of the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry in our city. It is one of the best medical schools in the country. Mega hospital will be a teaching hospital for the medical students at the University of Windsor. It was proven time and again that medical students are likely to stay in the community where they attended their medical school and serve their internship in a teaching hospital. I heard during the presentation that the proposed hospital location near the airport is not an ideal location. It would be great to build the hospital in the Core where people can actually walk to the hospital, but the fact is the hospital is a regional hospital that must serve the city and the county. Here are the political realities that we face right now. We have a new provincial government in Ontario that is facing monumental debt and its growing. They have their own agenda to accomplish. We don't even have a sitting member of the new government here in Windsor. Voting not to grant the zoning changes will not only cause a long delay, it will send the wrong message to Queen Park. It will give the premier of Ontario a ready-made excuse to pull the plug and actually spending over 2 billion dollars somewhere else. More importantly, the zoning report justified the decision to proceed. A new modern facility, which we desperately need now, is far better than no facility at all for an indefinite period of time. For these above reasons, I'm going to vote in favor of the motion.