

CITY

Editor: Peter Robb, 613-596-3664 • city@thecitizen.canwest.com

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2009

NEWS TIPS: 613-596-6397 OR OTTAWACITIZEN.COM

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, SECTION D

Flood response more talk than answers

Raises worrying questions of competence



RANDALL DENLEY
COMMENTARY

Councillors and bureaucrats spent hours this week discussing this summer's floods in Kanata, but the whole meeting can be quickly summarized. No one at City Hall is at fault and they don't know how to fix the problem. The first contention is ridiculous, the second unacceptable, but councillors did a poor job of holding staff to account.

The flooding revealed two things. Some neighbourhoods do not have properly designed drainage and city staff are not always terribly adept at reacting to the unexpected. Councillors explored both themes at length without reaching any useful conclusion. Instead, they engaged in a long argument over who should have called whom once the flood waters started to rise.

City councillors did a lot of fussing about staff's failure to keep them in the loop, but not one of them had the wit to call deputy city manager Steve Kanellakos, the guy ultimately in charge of responding to emergencies like this. Don't they have his cellphone number?

There was chapter and verse about how senior city managers didn't know what was going on because their underlings didn't notify them. As Kanellakos said, "I cannot tell you why multiple people did not do what, rationally, you would have thought they would do."

That's a perpetual mystery at City Hall, but the better question is why no one in charge was paying enough attention to the world around them to know what was going on. The story was extensively reported by the media at the time, but the brass at City Hall remained unaware.

There isn't a whole lot that city staff could have done about the flooding, once it started, but the fact that senior people were in the dark and junior people didn't think to pass the information up the line raises worrying questions about competence.

See DENLEY on PAGE D9

City will help repair, solve flood problems, Hume says, D9

SEE photos of this past July's flooding online at OTTAWACITIZEN.COM



At any one time, Ottawa has about 20,000 cancer patients in various stages of treatment and it is expected that about 5,000 to 8,000 of them, from across the city and the Champlain region, will be accommodated through various services at the centre, shown above in an artist's depiction.

Ottawa cancer centre fundraising under way

\$2.5M support centre would complement existing resources

BY JENNIFER CAMPBELL

Ottawa is lagging behind other parts of the province when it comes to cancer survivor support, says Linda Eagen, CEO of the Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation.

However, a group of 33 individuals, each representing a related group in Ottawa, has been working for two years on a project that will see the city catch up to other municipalities. The group is raising money to build a \$2.5-million centre to support cancer patients and caregivers after diagnosis and particularly after treatment. Called Wellspring Ottawa — Cancer Survivorship Centre, it will be part of a national organization that has successfully introduced similar programs in several locations in Toronto as well as Brampton, Niagara and Stratford (which has a population of just 33,000). There are also programs in Halifax, Edmonton and Calgary, to name a few.

"In Ottawa, there is such a critical need; we have nothing like that," Eagen said.



ROD MACIVOR, THE OTTAWA CITIZEN

"Cancer survivors will go to the Cancer Centre, but there's a capacity issue there. We're partnering with them to make sure Wellspring is complementary to what's already going on in our community."

In June 2008, Eagen's foundation surveyed 600 people, mostly patients but also care providers, about the need for supportive care. Eighty per cent of patients identified several areas of concern, ranging from worry and stress for patients and loved ones, to dealing with the side

'There's a whole slew of rehabilitation programs available. When it comes to cancer, it's almost non-existent in our community.'

LINDA EAGEN, at left
Chief executive officer
Ottawa Regional Cancer Foundation

effects of treatment.

"But one of the huge challenges (identified) is finding post-treatment care," Eagen said.

She says the situation compares unfavourably to people living with heart conditions. "There's a whole slew of rehabilitation programs available. When it comes to cancer, it's almost non-existent in our community."

The post-treatment support that Eagen envisions will include everything from help for physical complications to assistance returning to work.

Wellspring will also provide a one-stop "patient navigation" service where newly

diagnosed patients can find out everything that's available to them in the community.

There will also be group support, individual counselling, peer counselling, and educational programs that will include nutrition, fitness and even financial planning, to help deal with loss of employment income during treatment.

"This can truly be a very significant part of a person's cancer journey," Eagen said.

At any one time, Ottawa has about 20,000 cancer patients in various stages of treatment. Eagen expects 5,000 to 8,000 of them — from across the city and the Champlain region — will have a need for the centre's services and those are the numbers it aims to accommodate.

The foundation has signed on to fund and run Wellspring's services, which will be free of charge and won't require a referral.

Programming will also include satellite services offered offsite at community centres and hospitals.

The foundation's proposal is a \$2.5-million building (that price doesn't include furnishings, equipment or program money) to be built near Alta Vista and Riverside drives, backing onto Cancer Survivors Park.

The group has applied for \$850,000 from both the provincial and federal governments, making the foundation responsible for the balance of \$800,000. So far, it has raised \$635,000 from donors. That money was used to purchase the land and start program development. Organizers expect they can easily raise the balance of \$200,000 through the foundation's Courage Campaign.

Eagen says because of "quiet rumours" about the centre, her phone rings at least once a day with people asking when and what can they do to make it move faster.

One such person, Wendy E. O'Keefe, whose husband died of colorectal cancer six and one-half years after his diagnosis, wrote a letter of support for infrastructure funding. She wrote: "I believe firmly that a one-stop place, a building that is obvious and well advertised to the patients and their caregivers on an ongoing basis, can only be a good thing ... I would go so far as to suggest that a visit to such a place should be something that all cancer patients and their caregivers are required to do. A place that will lift some of the burden of having to think your way through a maze you never wanted to enter."

Health agency wants you for H1N1 swine flu study

More men, seniors needed for landmark research

BY SHELLEY PAGE

Remember those sniffles you had a while back? Was it a cold or swine flu?

The Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Pro-

motion wants to find out.

About 150 Eastern Ontario residents have already signed up to take part in a landmark, provincewide study on the prevalence of the H1N1 virus. The agency needs about 150

volunteers from this area, mostly young men and women, and seniors.

Dr. Natasha Crowcroft, director of surveillance and epidemiology for the agency and the study's principal investigator, wants to determine how widespread the H1N1 flu virus has been, especially leading into the fall flu season. "I think the chances are

there are an awful lot of people who have had this infection without knowing about it. It would be good to know," Crowcroft said.

"There have been lots of statements that this has been a mild pandemic. In truth, until we know how many people are infected in the population, you don't have a very good handle."

She said the information drawn from this study will help predict how vulnerable Ontarians will be to H1N1 over the coming months.

See STUDY on PAGE D4

INSIDE



Destroyer's bell finds home port

A prominent Ottawa family returns a piece of Canadian naval history from the HMS Patrician, D5