

Wellspring one step closer to calling Pelham home

Some things are just meant to be.

Of all the conversations that occurred over a glass of wine in 2013 — living in wine country certainly offers its fair share of opportunity — Town of Pelham Councillor Peter Papp and Wellspring Niagara Executive Director Ann Mantini-Celima may have shared one of the year's most important, especially for those who rely on the cancer support centre.

Mantini-Celima mentioned that Wellspring's current site — a 2,000 square foot unit in Thorold — was rapidly being outgrown, and when it became clear that a new location was essential, Papp's thoughts turned to land in East Fonthill.

From there, both sides went to work.

In April 2014, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Town and Wellspring. It included a renewable 20-year term at an annual rate of one dollar (the actual fair market value of the land was agreed to be a donation by the Town to the building campaign), and provided the necessary land to realize Wellspring's expansion.

"There's no words," said Mantini-Celima at the May 15, 2017, Town Council meeting. "We're so appreciative of your support and what this facility will do for so many residents, not just in the Town of Pelham but in the Niagara Region — we're proud to make Pelham our home."

Wellspring's presentation highlighted the benefits the new facility would provide, punctuated by the 640 new individuals and over 7,000 program attendances that were registered last year alone.



As Wellspring members spoke to Council on Monday evening, the precipice of the marquee moment — signing the site plan, lease agreement, and land purchase documents — offered soft tremors of jubilation throughout those in attendance.

"Wellspring embodies a spirit of generosity and sacrifice at a critical time in people's lives," said Mayor Dave Augustyn. "We know you'll do marvelous things with this facility and we're so pleased you're coming to Pelham and continuing the wonderful embodiment of giving."

Architect Emilio Raimondo navigated the various views of the building, touching upon key features, short- and long-term visions, and the incorporation of the look and feel of the building in its new East Fonthill location.

The originally-designated land for Wellspring did not meet the identified needs of their clients, including a lack of sufficient privacy. As a result, in coordination with the Town, Wellspring, and the Allen Group, land adjacent to the original site was identified as a more suitable location and purchased by the Town.

The new facility will be located at 50 Wellspring Way, an address that Mantini-Celima says holds a serendipitous symbolism.

"This year my brother would have been 50, and so that means a lot," she said. "It just ties everything together and I know Aldo would be very proud of what we're doing in the community and he would have been just overjoyed by the gift you've given."

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Pelham Town Council

Next meeting: Monday, June 5, 2017

6:30 p.m. Council Chambers

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