

Oct. 27, 09

Hello there and thank you for joining me again for a chat.

Have you decided to get the shot against the H1N1 'flu?

With immunization programs in HRM about to start, this is an important decision for each of us. Personally, I've never had a 'flu shot before and never been sick with the illness, to any great degree.

Probably like you, I plan to consult with my family and my physician, weigh all the pros and cons and then make up my mind.

And speaking of H1N1, I'm sure you'll be reassured to learn that HRM has a pandemic plan in place, just in case a number of our employees become sick. We've been working with local health authorities and the department of health for some time now and we're confident we'll be able to keep municipal services running.

These are exciting times for thousands of people like me who use HRM's public library system.

The big news, of course, was the recent commitment by all three levels of government to fund a new central library in downtown Halifax.

Not only will thousands of patrons enjoy a much larger book inventory once it's built, they'll also be able to interact with 21st-century computer technology.

This exciting new sophistication is already finding its way into our smaller libraries, like the new Woodlawn branch being built on Eisenor Drive.

When it's finished this winter, it will be four times bigger and offer expanded computer access to information services and interactive gaming technologies. It will also offer special services for patrons with auditory and visual impairments.

Our new libraries definitely aren't the staid ones of the past. They're an investment in our future and especially in the expectations of our youth.

Commuters in the Bedford-Hammonds Plains area will be interested to learn those two propositions for a water-borne service to downtown Halifax are still being actively reviewed by municipal staff.

One is a concept to expand the ferry service; the other is a proposal for a hovercraft operation. Either would, if approved by council, cut the commute time dramatically.

Cost-ratios are being studied, as is the potential impact on Bedford Highway traffic. Comparisons are being made with different bus-service scenarios and we've also invited input from relevant outside government agencies.

Personally, as a resident, if I could cut my trip downtown to six or eight minutes, I'd certainly use such a potential commuter service.

What an asset the new Canada Games Centre on the Mainland Common is going to be to our community.

This major project in Clayton Park will be completed in November next year, ready for HRM to host the Canada Winter Games three months later and attract major sporting events for years to come.

But more than that, these spectacular facilities will be around for all of us to enjoy for decades to come.

The centrepiece is going to be the aquatics centre housing an eight-lane, 25-metre competitive pool and a separate leisure pool with two water slides. There will even be a special hydraulic floor to convert the area into a large community room.

The adjoining field house will contain four NBA-size basketball courts which will be convertible into a dozen volleyball courts. There's also going to be a 200-metre, six-lane elevated track and that's where you're likely to find me when I have a spare moment or two, because I enjoy running.

Perhaps I'll see you there.

That's it for now. I hope we'll meet back here, next week.

Now it's your turn. You can reach me here at City Hall at kellyp@halifax.ca or by phoning me at 490-4010.