Vol. 4, Issue 32 Free of Charge Thursday, August 10, 2017

## Old hospital coming down

SARNIA PARTNERS WITH DEVELOPERS TO DEMOLISH, REDEVELOP SARNIA GENERAL LANDS

> GEORGE MATHEWSON THE JOURNAL

Sarnia has agreed to give five local developers \$5.4 million to raze, remediate and rebuild the derelict Sarnia General Hospital site.

In 9-0 vote last week, council cleared the way for GFIVE Inc. to demolish the crime-ridden building in the heart of Sarnia that has bedeviled neighbours and police

the past six years.

The deal, subject to provincial approval, will see the company's five principals — Charles Dally, Alex Jongsma, Mark Lumley, Kenn Poore and Marty Raaymakers – buy the land from the city for \$1,000.

The city will then pay the developers \$5.4 million, in stages, as the old hospital is removed and the site redeveloped into a mix of new housing and low-rise commercial buildings.

The community can expect to see construction fencing go up once the deal closes and all the approvals are in place, said Poore, a commercial real estate specialist.

"We're happy to be doing the project," he said. "Now it's time to roll up our sleeves and get to work."

The developers will be responsible for any unforeseen problems arising from the site remediation, which according to one estimate could top \$8.8 million.

To finance the city's investment, council voted 7-2 to take on new debt rather than raise property taxes and raid limited reserves.

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## Getting boulder



IT PROBABLY WASN'T the architect's intent, but the large decorative rocks around the MacPerson Fountain provide an ideal climbing ground for children each summer. Here, Jason Beauvais, 6, leaps barefoot to a stone occupied by his sister Kaylin, 4. With them are Cordell Shipman, 8, and his sister Jennaka, 5. The kids were exploring the fountain under the watchful eye of Debra Beauvais and Theresa Shipman.

GLENN OGILVIE, The Journal

## Virtual reality arcade coming to town

TROY SHANTZ THE JOURNAL

If you've always wanted to hike among the craters of Mars, you're in luck. And you don't need a spaceship.

A virtual reality arcade is coming to Sarnia and it promises to give participants roller coaster rides, mythical adventures and a trip to the red planet — all without leaving town.

The owners of District Beta say they plan to open Labour Day weekend in a space above Valley Axe on London Line.

"There's lot's of fighting games, first person shooters, there's artistic games where you can draw and make stuff, said co-owner Travis Kelly

"They have what they call 'experiences,' so you're not actually fighting anything like in a game. What you're doing is you're sitting there, taking in an experience."

Customers can gear up with the provided headset and controllers (one for each hand), and choose from among 200 different games and experiences, at a cost of \$30 an hour.

The space currently under renovation will feature four eight-foot by eight-foot gaming booths for each of the consoles.

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