TOPIC FOR TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019:

Last week I saw what-seemed-to-be a news story a day about the new regional medical center. What’s the latest on necessary regulatory approvals and the construction schedule? Is there an updated estimate for the cost of the medical center?

A number of positive actions were taken toward the building of the new MVHS Regional Medical Center last week. Nearly all approvals to begin construction have been received.

- The Site Plan was approved by the City of Utica Planning Board. The approval was **only for the actual medical center building – not the helistop or parking garage.** There will be a **helistop** (that is, a landing pad/helipad for helicopters to drop off or pick up patients for life-saving treatments) and a **parking garage.** The plans for the helistop will be brought before the Utica Planning Board as a separate item.

- The Utica Common Council approved the closure of a portion of Cornelia Street and Sayres Alley to accommodate the medical center building. Initially, this Council tabled the decision until additional questions could be answered. On Friday, MVHS met with the Council at a special meeting and answered the Council members’ questions, and they voted to approve the street closures.

- The New York State Department of Health granted approval for early construction. This means that construction can begin imminently, once abatement and the removal of the buildings have taken place.

What’s next?

As you may have seen, heavy equipment is now being brought into the downtown location of the medical center, and construction fencing is going up. Abatement of the buildings will begin within the next two weeks. Our construction experts have been in the buildings to assess the potential hazardous materials (e.g., asbestos) that require removal and abatement, and they will be implementing a Remedial Action Plan based on this evaluation.

Buildings will start to be removed within the next four to six weeks once the Construction Health and Safety Plan (CHASP) has been approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

The ground breaking for the new regional medical center is scheduled for early December.

**There is now an updated budget for the new medical center – it’s $548 million.**

The initial budget estimate was done four years ago in 2015 and was just that, an estimate. Now that we are four years into the project and know what the design and layout of the new medical center will be, we can more accurately estimate the actual cost of the project, **which will be approximately $548 million.** Several factors added to the increased cost of the project and include: increased dollars spent on property acquisitions and relocation assistance; increased construction cost due to increases in factors such as labor, tariff, etc.; and additional new medical equipment costs. The parking garage is a city/county project and its costs are not included in the medical center budget.