Hospital debate needs deeper reporting

Re: Poilievre calls for rethink of Civic hospital location, March 30.

MP Pierre Poilievre calls for revisiting the decision to locate the new Civic hospital at the former site of the Sir John Carling building. While stating it is crucial that all costs be considered before construction starts, he asserts, without evidence, that site clean-up costs will be at least $11 million.

The site is said to be contaminated as a result of imploded demolition of the Carling building, but what is the nature of the chemical contaminants of such concern? The site, including the basement infill area of the former building, will have to be excavated and carted off for infill somewhere. Contaminated soil or building rubble has never been decontaminated in situ (e.g., the NCC and Le Breton Flats); rather it has been trans-located elsewhere at considerable cost for no net environmental benefit, simply perpetuating accumulatively land contamination as future problems.

Poilievre notes that the site is on two levels and a fault line. The Gloucester fault line did not deter Carleton University from building its geology building astride the same fault line. The Geological Survey and EMR buildings on the east side of Booth Street were built on two levels; moreover, those buildings were built extra strongly with hospital-sized elevators, hallways, doorways and rooms during the Cold War 1950s with the intent that they could be readily utilized for hospital purposes in the event of disaster.

Enough of these lamentations emitted from Poilievre, Civic hospital administrators and Citizen columnists; it’s long past time for intrepid investigative reporting and provision of irrefutable facts.

George Neville, Ottawa

Ottawa Citizen, Letter to the Editor, April 4, 2017