

## **Update Re Dalewood School Planned Construction**

Prepared for Cootes Paradise School Council Meeting Feb 4/2015  
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I know that many parents at Cootes Paradise are interested in an update on the planned construction at Dalewood Middle School. I am the co-chair of the Dalewood Parent/School Council and thought I would provide an update based on what we currently know.

On January 6th we had a meeting of the Dalewood School Council which was attended by Superintendent Sue Dunlop, our Trustee Christine Bingham, and the Project Manager for the renovations to Dalewood, Russell Burt. We also met on November 11th with Sue Dunlop and Dan Del Bianco, the Board's Facilities Manager.

There had been plans all year to do a severance of the mechanical systems of the school and the Dalewood Rec Centre, which share the building, over the last holiday break. That was not done, as communicated by letter immediately before the holiday. When asked, the reasons given were that the mechanical systems were much more complicated than was originally supposed, and that the City of Hamilton was not prepared to go along with the original plans. Both the City and the Board are now looking at severing *all* the systems, not just the boiler and mechanical, and that that will take place as part of Phase 1 Renovations, to occur this summer. The City and the Board are still in talks, we are told, about how to accomplish this severance. This is not planned yet, so there is as yet no guarantee that this can be accomplished before the summer, and the severance of systems is a must, we were told, for Phase 1 of the renovations (to the middle part of the school building with the main entrance) to begin.

One positive from the mechanical review was that certain shutoffs and controls were discovered in a hidden systems closet, and so some of the temperature control problems that had plagued the school for years have been improved, if not completely.

The Board are working with the City on the existing issues. The City are looking at three different plans for the Dalewood Rec Centre and those decisions are not yet made.

We heard during the meeting that, from an original timeline given as 18 months, the timeline for the renovations is now "3 to 4 years". When pressed, the Project Manager Mr. Burt said that the three year timeline would be only possible if there were no unexpected delays arising from unknowns during construction. When further pressed, he admitted that this was unlikely. There are always "unknown unknowns". Therefore

we are likely looking at a four year renovation cycle for Dalewood, beginning this summer and continuing through the next four summers. Mr. Burt fully expects that "something will come up" to further delay these renovations. We may be looking at an extremely long project.

It appears that the construction is to continue into the school year each time.

The plan is to sever systems as part of Phase 1, which involves the renovation of the middle part of the building. The remaining two phases are to the north wing and south wing of the school (which goes first, we have not been told). Abatement of asbestos in the building will occur as the first part of all three phases, and will be done in the summer months each time. That means a full stripping "down to the studs" of the walls in question, removal of flooring and ceilings, and the like. The gym will also be extensively renovated during this phase. It will be shut during the fall of 2015 in order to accomplish this. Scheduled renovations to the gym include a new floor, window replacement, and a drop-down curtain wall for the middle of the gym.

The other major Phase 1 work, aside from possibly moving the mechanical and electrical systems into the building penthouse, is the renovation of the foyer, offices, and the installation of accessible washrooms. The auditorium will remain unrenovated but it will remain (its roof will be replaced and it will be painted). It appears the installation of an elevator will occur at in Phase 1 as well, as it is to go into the center of the building. HVAC and electrical systems are to be replaced or upgraded in each phase as well.

The City of Hamilton have agreed with the Board to shut down Dalewood pool for the months of June, July and August in order to allow systems severance to take place. The Board have also been very adamant that all work that would create safety concerns will be completed by the time students return in September each year, but there will be some areas closed each time in order to do further work during the school year.

The renovation costs are now 10.5 million dollars and it appears they may climb. An entirely new school would have cost \$8 million and could be built on the current site with the current building used during construction. However, this is the plan that the Board have agreed to and any change would need to go through that political process.

I hope this will explain matters somewhat about what we know of the planned renovations. Questions can be sent to Superintendent Sue Dunlop.

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