

King George Elementary Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Education Centre Board Room

October 20, 2011

Minutes (Working Meeting # 3)

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Pat Rocco

Voting Members –Agnes Clarke, Jennifer Drahusz, Felicia Guarascia, Anna Macky, Brenda Reid, Brian Seamans

Non-Voting Members – Karen Bikinas, John Bradley, Lori Helt, Susan Neville, Tim Simmons, Janet VanDuzen, Irma Belanger, Michelle Pickett, Linda Wilson

Not Present:

Voting Members – Regrets:

Lisa Cameron, Crystal Provo, Dianna Gillespie

Non-Voting Members – Bernie Morelli, Michelle Pickett, Laura Helt, Susan Neville

Resource Staff

Ms. Ellen Warling, Daniel Del Bianco

Recording Secretary

Claire Vander Beek

1. Welcome and Introductions – Superintendent Pat Rocco
Chair Rocco welcomed everyone to the third King George working meeting.
2. Agenda
 - 2.1 Additions/ deletions - None
 - 2.2 Approval of agenda - **Consensus**
3. Minutes of Working Group Meeting #2 (June 1, 2011)
 - 3.1 Errors and omissions - None
 - 3.2 Approval of minutes - **Consensus**
 - 3.3 Business arising from minutes - None noted
4. Minutes of Public Meeting #3 (September 21, 2011)
 - 4.1 Errors and omissions - None
 - 4.2 Approval of minutes - **Consensus**

4.3 Business arising from minutes – None noted.

4.3.1 Debriefing on Public Meeting #3 -

Thanks were extended to Felicia Guarascia for volunteering and for her comments at the September 21, 2011 public meeting.

There was a brief discussion about how to encourage community parents to attend the meetings, and it was agreed that the approach taken was the best and there were no further suggestions. The intent is to continue with the same format for the last public meeting – flyer, pizza, day care, bus tickets, etc.

5. Review of Alternate Accommodation Options

There will be a review of the ARC mandate and the options

5.1 Overview of options

Ms. Warling's reviewed the objectives of the meeting as: a review of the mandate, to finalize an accommodation option, prepare for Public Meeting #4 and a review of ARC timelines. The mandate of this committee, acting in accordance with the Board's Pupil Accommodation Review Policy, is to produce a report to the Board that encompasses eight areas: Accommodation, Facility, Program, Transportation, Funding, Implementation, Scope and Timelines. The final ARC Report is due Friday, November 11, 2011.

All Options are based on the closure of King George, Phase 2 of each option would entail a Queen Mary boundary review. Ms. Warling then reviewed the options before the committee outlining the current enrolment/utilization situation at each of the three schools in the ARC.

Option A, Phase 1 – original staff recommendation with the students split between Prince of Wales and Memorial (City) Schools.

Option A, Phase 2 – same as Phase 1, with more linear boundaries for Prince of Wales and Memorial (City) Schools.

Option B, Phase 1 – Boundaries of Balsam Avenue North and Barton St. East.

Option B, Phase 2 – Prince of Wales boundary along Balsam, Barton and Ottawa North would lower utilization of Prince of Wales School and result increase the walking distance for some students to Memorial School.

Option C, Phase 1 – Boundary along Gage Avenue North and Barton Street East. Attempts to balance enrolments by splitting students north of Barton differently. This would result in utilization rates of 74% for Prince of Wales and 95% at Memorial (City). There is concern that Prince of Wales School would be underutilized and Memorial (City) nearly at 100%.

Option C, Phase 2 – Incorporates a proposal for a Queen Mary boundary review that would use Ottawa Street as a north/south boundary between Queen Mary and Memorial (City) School.

5.2 Group discussion (focus on eliminating options)

It was agreed that the options be reviewed one by one.

Mr. Del Bianco indicated that the process for this evening would be to continue to reach decisions through consensus.

Discussion initiated with Option C. The boundary between Memorial (City) and Prince of Wales moves to Gage from Balsam. It was noted that the enrolment is unbalanced and underutilizes Prince of Wales.

Mr. Bradley – I have concern about the pressure this option would have for the Memorial (City) School building - the impact on infrastructure and on the quality of programming related to gym and specialty classes.

Ms. Guarascia - Why is the cluster of four streets - Cluny Avenue, Dalkeith, Dalhousie and Craig Miller Avenue - not included in the Memorial Boundary?

Ms. Wilson - If those students go to Prince of Wales School, they would be bused. She wasn't sure that the area would qualify for transportation to Memorial (City) School as from King George School the distance to that area is 1.4k. 1.6k is the distance required for transportation.

Ms. Guarascia – I recall an earlier map about transportation which showed half of Cluny Street being bused, and the other half not.

Ms. Wilson - As office administrator, she could not support the option based on her knowledge of the difficulty parents have getting their children to King George School. When Lloyd George School closed, and students came to King George School, transportation was a nightmare. The Centre Mall apartments are at a distance of 1.4k and only Kindergarten students were bused. Families sought courtesy transportation for students in other grades, however, there were not enough seats on the bus. I could only support this option if transportation was provided for that area.

Ms. Reid – Currently students coming to school on the bus come from that area.

Trustee Simmons - Busing distances changed when the policy was revised. I know students north of Centre Mall are bused to King George School, but was not sure about those four streets running west off of Ottawa Street.

Mr. Rocco - Would Ms. Guarascia receive transportation to Memorial School?

Ms. Guarascia - Based on the transportation map, only half of Cluney would be bused and I would not allow my children to walk to school.

Mr. Rocco - Is Cluny Avenue further to Prince of Wales School and then qualify for transportation?

Ms. Wilson – If we agreed to bus families west of Ottawa Street, I would support this option.

Mr. Rocco – This community would not get transportation to Memorial (City) School.

Mr. Bradley – Referring to the slide on the screen, those students on Cluney Avenue would come to Memorial (City) School. If they don't qualify for transportation to King George School, they would probably not qualify for transportation to Memorial (City) School. It would be likely this area would receive transportation to Prince of Wales, but not Memorial (City) School.

Mr. Rocco – Clarification?

Ms. Warling – Referred to the May 17, 2011 public meeting #2 wherein part of her presentation included a map with boundaries and proposed walking distances. These maps were prepared by Accommodation and Planning rather than Transportation department and we would need the Transportation department to actually confirm who would receive busing.

Mr. Del Bianco – Would students on one part of the street only being picked up and not all?

Trustee Simmons – I am aware of another trustee that has had the experience of one side of the street not being picked up.

Ms. Macky– I did not like the original board option. Transportation is a big deal. If we are on a bus, it is easier. First option is along Barton, with no one crossing Barton, and most of the students receiving busing. That seemed simplified. However, I do have problem with Memorial (City) School being at 98%, we should maximize use of the newer school.

Jennifer Drahusz - referenced the chart for Option C, phase 2 and the resulting percentage and capacities. She expressed concern about Prince of Wales going down to 73%. She preferred a higher utilization that would not impact on the needs of at risk students. We need fair and viable options to support students at these three schools.

Option B

Ms. Warling - This option has pros and cons. Barton Street is used for the boundary between Memorial (City) and Prince of Wales Schools. Queen Mary School boundary stays the same. Utilization at Memorial (City) School would be 90%, Prince of Wales would be just below 80%. The concern is the proximity of the boundary for students living near to Prince of Wales School yet walking to Memorial (City) School. A preferable boundary would be Gage Street and would result in a more balanced enrolment.

Trustee Simmons - From a student safety perspective, using major streets such as Gage and Cannon would be preferable.

Option A

Ms. Warling – This option uses Gage and Barton Street East as boundaries. Phase 2 results in utilization of 90% at Memorial (City), Prince of Wales at 80%, Queen Mary at 83% resulting in a more balanced enrolment.

Trustee Simmons – Referring back to the Cluny Ave discussion - in this option, those families would go to Prince of Wales School. Would it not be easier to go to Queen Mary School? How would it impact on numbers?

Ms. Warling - It would lower Prince of Wales' numbers to about 75% utilization whereas Queen Mary School would increase.

Ms. Macky - What concerns were raised about the staff option?

Ms. Warling - The committee sought to draw boundary lines differently taking into consideration balancing enrolment, major roads, and walking distances. That is why the various boundary options are north/south orientation or along major routes.

Ms. VanDuzen – You have to remember that while students would be bused they cannot participate in afterhours activities and families often do not have cars. You would be driving past three other schools to come to Prince of Wales School - which is a beautiful building - but does not have a playground. Currently if students become sick, we often have no way to get them home.

Ms. Macky - Would all students on the other side of Barton Street be bused regardless of the options?

Mr. Rocco - Not all, some could walk.

Trustee Simmons - Whether students were bused or not, they would be going to a school that is closer and hopefully promote more of a school community. We have students coming from east of Kenilworth and north of Barton who walk through Queen Mary's playground to attend King George School. Being closer would promote more sense of community.

Ms. Macky – Is that more important than building capacity numbers going up?

Mr. Rocco – Prince of Wales is new. Our boundaries in the lower city need to be reviewed.

Today the utilization of a new facility is important and it is important to be near a school. HWCDSB is building a new facility between Queen Mary and Memorial (City) Schools and we would want students to continue to attend our schools.

Ms. Macky – I am trying to understand. I can go either way - to fill schools or have families near schools.

Mr. Rocco - Community schools are what people are generally looking for. If we can't get consensus, we will move to a vote.

Ms. Reid - **Motion: That Option B, phase 1 and phase 2 be removed from ARC discussion, leaving Option A or C.**

There was no further discussion.

Consensus.

Options A or C

Mr. Del Bianco redirected the discussion briefly to Next Steps. He advised the next meeting is the final public meeting and according to the policy, the ARC needs to present their ultimate recommendation. He encouraged the committee to narrow the options down to one in order to avoid the need for a further public meeting if more than one option was presented.

Brian Seamans – I suggest the committee support Option A, phase 2 as the enrolment is balanced as well as clear lines for boundaries.

Ms. Warling spoke to the second phases within the options. As Queen Mary School is not part of this accommodation review, in reality, we cannot redirect any students into that school. We could recommend Option A, Phase 1 with a recommendation that a boundary review be implemented as outlined in Phase 2.

Mr. Watson – This leads to Ms. Guarescia's concern. If the ARC approves Option A, Phase 1, a boundary study would look at families north of Barton Street. I would suggest that you roll transportation for the Cluny Avenue area into the boundary review process. He acknowledged that due to its proximity, it would be nice to involve Queen Mary School but it is not part of the ARC's mandate. If the ARC goes with Mr. Seaman's recommendation for Option A, Phase 1, the ARC would ask trustees to initiate a boundary process to realign Queen Mary's boundary. Phase 2 of each option would be undertaken after the process is concluded.

Mr. Bradley - If we choose Option A or C as well as recommending a boundary review, can the trustees say no to the boundary review?

Trustee Simmons - It would come as part of the recommendation from the ARC.

Mr. Rocco - Confirmed. Staff in Accommodation & Planning department do the review report, explain the numbers and then present after public consultation.

Trustee Simmons – How long does a boundary review take?

Mr. Rocco – The review for Hess and Dr. Davey Schools took about six weeks.

Ms. Warling - The intent would be that a boundary review be done as outlined in Phase 2 and implemented for September 2012 so students only move once.

Mr. Rocco – With procedural items such as Kindergarten registration, it would be better to move quickly.

Trustee Simmons – I agree that if an option included phase 2 it would make sense to get it to the Board table a.s.a.p.

Mr. Del Bianco reviewed the timelines as follows: The completed report would be provided to Director by November 11, 2011 along with the staff option report. Then at the Committee of the Whole meeting, both reports would be presented to the trustees, received and then ratified at the November Board meeting. Once ratified by Board, there is a 60-day cooling off period (excluding Christmas), then the trustees have to hold one public meeting. Once the 60 days lapse, trustees can reconvene. The earliest timeframe for approval would be February 2012, at which point an ARC boundary review would be initiated for implementation September 2012.

Ms. Reid – Would it result in upheaval for the school?

Mr. Rocco – The boundary review should be completed in March.

Mr. Bradley – My concern is that the staffing process starts February/March.

Mr. Rocco – I can respond to Mr. Bradley's concerns that a boundary review timeline would fall after the timeline for school staffing (Feb/March). In the Dr. Davey & Hess Schools boundary review situation, the assumption is the boundary review would go through and that's how we staffed. Out of catchment was also allowed. It is a case of determining the numbers and grades and staffing accordingly.

Trustee Simmons – I hope there is the ability for students to finish grade 8 in their present schools.

Mr. Rocco – There would be no new entries once boundaries are done. For one year, it could result in families having a student in grade 8 and another student in a different grade and school.

Ms. Drahusz – If trustees agree to a boundary study, will it look like Phase 2?

Mr. Rocco - We will present the maps to the community and take Phase 2 as part of our proposal. Parents will have opportunity for input as usual after the options and transportation implications have been reviewed.

Ms. Drahusz – Is it likely that it would look like phase 2?

Mr. Rocco – Yes, if the ARC is asking for consultation on Phase 2.

Motion to go with Option A, and therefore eliminate Option C.

Ms. Wilson – This option still has a transportation problem.

Mr. Rocco - Transportation could be addressed through the boundary review.

Mr. Del Bianco clarified that the transportation issue relates to the four streets north of Barton - Cluny Avenue, Dalkeith, Dalhousie and Craig Miller Avenue – and whether they qualify for transportation to Prince of Wales School.

Ms. Wilson – I am not sure these streets would qualify for transportation.

Ms. Warling - Referring to the May 17, 2011 package, it would appear that three of these streets and part of Cluny Avenue would qualify using a 1.6K distance. She couldn't answer absolutely until clarification by the Transportation Department.

Ms. Wilson – In that case, the other party of Cluny Avenue could be courtesy transportation.

Ms. Warling – I can't give you a concrete answer, but she thought they should be able to get on through courtesy.

Mr. Bradley - If the bus is full, the answer would be no to courtesy requests. Can this ARC recommend that students on those four streets receive transportation as part of the option?

Mr. Del Bianco – Yes, a recommendation to that effect would provide a guarantee that the issue would be addressed.

Mr. Rocco - As part of a boundary review, out of catchment is also built in.

The motion was put to a vote and consensus was received. It was confirmed that the option would include the boundary review and the recommendation for transportation as discussed.

Mr. Del Bianco – I will confirm 100% with Transportation department in order to determine if we have to keep transportation for this area in the final recommendation – hopefully I can circulate a response to the ARC members before going to the public meeting on the 2nd of November.

For minutes it was clarified that by going with Option A, the committee was eliminating Option C. **Agreed by consensus.**

5.3 Additional considerations
None noted.

6. Correspondence

6.1 SEAC Student Voice invitation (*distributed via email*)

The Committee was thanked for their flexibility in changing the date for tonight's meeting.

7. Other Business

7.1 Planning for Public Meeting #4 (November 2, 2011)

The public meeting will be held in the auditorium at Memorial (City) School.

Mr. Del Bianco asked for a volunteer to assist with presenting the ARC members' perspective of the options and to explain the deliberations that were undertaken, similar to the last public meeting wherein Ms. Guarascia spoke. The process will be to explain how the committee narrowed down the options, explaining the pros and cons, and to present the final option.

Karen Bikinas and Linda Wilson agreed to be co-volunteers. Mr. Del Bianco to be in touch to provide assistance.

Thanks were extended to Karen and Linda for volunteering.

7.2 ARC timelines

November 2, 2011 – public meeting at Memorial (City) School

November 9, 2011 – final working group meeting at the Education Centre

November 11, 2011 – ARC report and staff report submitted to the Director of Education

(Please also refer to Mr. Del Bianco's comments earlier in the meeting about the 60-day cooling off period and that the Board will conduct a further public consultation in 2012)

8. Adjournment

It was agreed that the same format would be followed for November 2, 2011 public meeting as the last – a flyer to the community, pizza, bus tickets and daycare.

Adjournment took place at 7:18 p.m.