

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

Dalewood Elementary Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Dalewood School

October 19, 2011

Public Meeting #4

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Krys Croxall

Voting Members – Suzanne Brown, Nadia Coakley, Pamela Irving, Anita McGowan, Kim Newcombe, Emily Reid, Michael Reid, Kristen West

Non-Voting Members –Judith Bishop, Joanne Hall, Heidi Harper, Margaret Jobson, Debra Lewis, Peter Martindale, Brian McHattie, Denise Minardi, Colleen Morgan, Michelle Rodney-Bartalos

Regrets

Voting Members - Maria Carbone,

Non-Voting Members –Silvana Galli Lamarche

Resource Staff

Ellen Warling, Daniel Del Bianco, Ron Gowland, Mark Taylor from Corporate Communications.

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1. Welcome and Introductions – Superintendent Krys Croxall, Chair

Superintendent Krys Croxall thanked everyone for joining the meeting and for their interest in the process. She shared that this is the last of our scheduled “town hall” style public meetings hosted by the Dalewood ARC. The first was held on April 6th to review the ARC Process and the second on May 19th to review the staff recommendation, and the third on October 5th to review the accommodation options created by the ARC. The Chair stated that the meeting tonight will focus on the ARC’s proposed option. Superintendent Croxall introduced the members of the Committee. The Board staff were then introduced which included Ellen Warling from the Accommodation and Planning Division, Ron Gowland from the Capital Projects Division, Daniel Del Bianco acting as Support Staff to the ARC and Tracy McKillop, the Recording Secretary.

2. Purpose of the Meeting

The Chair commenced the evening by providing a bit of background about the accommodation review process. In February of this year, the Board of Trustees approved the Terms of Reference for the Dalewood ARC. There are four key reasons behind any accommodation review and they include:

1. To ensure efficient use of available space to accommodate students appropriately as it relates to long-term enrolment demands and facility utilization
2. To ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of our school facilities
3. To continue the revitalization of our schools by reducing long-term capital renewal requirements
4. To continue the implementation of the Board's evolving program strategy

As an organization the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board must address these challenges so that funding can be directed to students and programming. As part of this evening's presentation, you will hear more about these challenges.

Tonight's meeting will do four things:

1. The first is to provide an overview of the accommodation review process.
2. Review the work that the Committee has completed to date.
3. Review accommodation options created by the ARC
4. And, finally to provide members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments about the process and accommodation options.

Superintendent Croxall shared that along with the Agenda was a copy of the norms for the meeting. She stated that it is important to have a robust dialogue about the matters before the Committee and these norms help to achieve that.

She also stated that included as part of the agenda is an information package containing the maps, enrolment figures and the financial data that will be reviewed this evening.

3.0 Presentations - Ellen Warling, Kristen West and Nadia Coakley.

To view the presentation please click on the following link:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arcelementary/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/DalewoodARC_PublicMeeting_4_Presentation_Oct_19_2011.pdf

Ms. Warling reviewed "Why we are here tonight" as well as the ARC process.

Why we are here tonight?

- Provide an overview of the *Accommodation Review Process*
- Review the work completed by the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
- Presentation of ARC final recommendations
- Review the next steps of the ARC
- Address any questions/ comments pertaining to the ARC process or recommended accommodation

3.1 Brief Overview of the Accommodation Process

The Accommodation Review Process

- The process follows Ministry of Education guidelines, Board Policy and the Terms of Reference
- There are committee working meetings and public meetings.
- All meetings are open to the public
- The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is tasked with developing an accommodation solution that will address the long-term requirements of the community

ARC Recommendations

- The ARC will prepare a report that will be presented to the Board of Trustees
 - This report will include the ARC's recommendations
 - The Trustees will also receive a report from Senior Administration with their recommendations to the Board of Trustees
 - The Board of Trustees will make the final decisions
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- 4 Public Meetings
 - Originally 4 Working Group Meetings
 - ARC has added 4 more Working Group Meetings
 - June 22, 2011
 - September 7, 2011
 - October 5, 2011
 - October 12, 2011
 - *ARC has proposed extending the report deadline until December 2, 2011– Requires approval from the Board of Trustees
 - After receipt of final report Trustees have to wait a minimum of 60 prior to voting on a final decision

Mandate of ARC Accommodation:

Develop recommendations to maximize the utilization of Board facilities in the review area with a target of 100% utilization

Facility Condition: Develop recommendations for capital improvements (i.e. Repairs, renovations or major capital projects such as new construction) into existing facilities and sites along with a funding strategy to pay for those improvements

Program: Develop recommendations around the strategic locations of elementary school programs

Implementation: Develop recommendations for implementation timeframes for any of the above recommended changes

Other areas include: Transportation, Funding, Scope and Timelines

Ms. Warling spoke of historical and projected enrolment, the information that has been shared with the ARC to date, which can be found on the web site, as well as what the ARC considered when developing their options which included:

Reference Criteria (as outlined in the Board policy):

- a) Facility Utilization
- b) Permanent and Non-Permanent Accommodation
- c) Program Offerings

- d) Quality of Teaching and Learning Environments
- e) Transportation
- f) Partnerships
- g) Equity

3.2 Work Completed by the Dalewood ARC – Kristen West and Nadia Coakley

Nadia Coakley spoke on behalf of the Committee detailing the work that the ARC has completed since the last public meeting. This includes:

Since Our Last Public Meeting:

- 1 Working Group Meeting
- Reviewed feedback from Public Meeting #3
- Eliminated the K-8 option
- Reviewed the Mandate of the ARC
- Reviewed and discussed the board staff option and the status quo option
- Selected the ARC Committee final accommodation option to present tonight

Data and Information used in the selection of final recommendation:

- HWDSB transportation policy/walking distance maps
- Enrolment projections by program
- Grade structures for new HWDSB facilities
- Student plots by-school, by-program
- Enrolment projections by program
- Financial Impact of proposed options

Development of Alternative Accommodation Options:

- The ARC initially proposed 9 new options in addition to the original staff recommendation
- Through group discussions this total grew to 13 options
- Options included: Closing all schools and building a new “super school”
- Consolidating the three schools into two of the existing schools considering all sites, and program offerings and grade models
- Consolidating with local partners to optimize building utilization

Summary of Additional Considerations when Developing Options:

- Some of the initial options were dismissed early on due to concerns regarding grade structure, the possibility of split-grades due to low enrolments, etc.
- Review of the financial impact further informed the decision of the ARC
- All of the options we have reviewed can be found on the Board’s website

There was a review of the **Staff recommendation** which was the closure of Prince Philip and Dalewood would be English 6-8 and French Immersion 6-8. GR Allan would house the English JK-5, French Immersion SK-5 and the Mandarin JK-3. The renovations to the remaining schools would include:

GR Allan

- 4 additional Kindergarten spaces
- 3 additional classrooms

- 2nd General Purpose Room
- Larger Staff and Work Room
- Book Room
- Accessible washroom
- 2nd floor washrooms

Dalewood

- Larger Staff and Work Room
- Book Room
- Accessible washroom

Total cost of proposed upgrades = \$5,289,591

Mr. Gowland spoke of the Capital Allocation Protocol and the legacy costs.

Capital Allocation Protocol

At present, five priorities govern the allocation of renewal funds:

- Health and Safety Issues
- Regulatory Compliance Issues
- The risk that the failure of one or more components might cause a program or the building itself to close, or cause secondary damage
- High and Urgent ReCAPP Events
- New Program Initiative Requirements

Legacy Costs include such items as:

- Electrical Services, primary switch gear, secondary distribution systems
- Roof
- Structures
- Plumbing and Piping Systems
- Underground Services
- Painting
- Flooring
- Millwork
- Ceilings

3.3 Presentation of the ARC Recommendation – Kristen West

Kristen West presented the ARC option indicating that all three schools will be kept open with two parts to it. One of the parts will be to have no improvements and the other one will be have some updates similar to the Board option.

Ms. West indicated that as of next year the Dundas French Immersion (FI) students will no longer be in GR Allan; however, they will be in Dalewood for a few more years. She shared that the Board's proposal could require some portables or the movement of the Grade 5 students to Dalewood. There was concern regarding the space that would be available for play at GR Allan once the upgrades have been completed. Ms. West shared some of the considerations that were given to their "status quo" option.

Status Quo Considerations:

- Community Interrelationship
- Walk Ability/Transportation Issues
- Facility Utilization
- Facility Renewal Opportunity
- Program Balance [English/FI]
- HWDSB Small School Trends

Ms. West shared that the Ministry of Education mandate would be 100% utilization. We, the Committee, are trusting that the enrolment will increase over the next few years. Under the Board option there will be 4 kindergarten rooms added funded by the Ministry of Education. If the Board of Trustees (BOT) adopts our option then we will get two kindergarten rooms. Perhaps in the future if we require more kindergarten rooms there is a chance that we may not get the funding from the Ministry of Education for the additional kindergarten rooms.

Proposed Upgrades with ARC Recommendation: (Subject to Board and Ministry of Education approvals)

GR Allan

- 2 additional Kindergarten spaces
- Larger Staff and Work Room
- Book Room
- Allowance to remove 2 rooms from basement
- Accessible washroom
- 2nd floor washrooms

Dalewood

- Book Room
- Larger Staff and Work Room
- Accessible washroom

Total cost of proposed upgrades = \$2,320,208

Ms. Warling reviewed the financial costs and the Capital Allocation Protocol. She shared that the protocol remains the same; however, the renewal dollars are shared over three schools.

Ms. West and the Committee feel that the schools are currently balanced and the buildings are in good condition and that all three schools should remain open. Ms. West announced that the October 26th meeting date would be changed due to a religious holiday.

4.0 Next Steps

The next steps were shared with the community. There is a minimum of a 60 day waiting period from the date the BOT receives the report and when they make their final decision.

After the report is submitted:

January 16, 2012 - ARC Report and Staff Report are presented to Committee of the Whole

January 17, 2012 - ARC Report and Staff Report posted on the board website

January 30, 2012 – Both reports submitted to the board

Late February/early March – special board meeting to receive public input on the ARC/Staff Recommendations

April 16, 2012 – Committee of the Whole meeting to make final decision on accommodation review

April 30, 2012 – Recommendation from Committee of the Whole taken to Board

4.0 Questions/Comments from the Public

Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) would be constructed in time for September 2013.

FDK construction costs are the costs for 2 new rooms to be constructed.

Q. Have transportation costs been built into the financials because when looking at the costs of the two options it is an important consideration.

A. Michael Reid spoke of the GR Allan numbers. He did not talk about adding kindergarten rooms because he understood that they would be done through Ministry funding for the program. Mr. Reid also spoke of taking the classrooms out of the basement and changing two classrooms into other rooms (staff room) as well as the Legacy costs.

A. Full Day Kindergarten has purpose built kindergarten rooms that are approximately 1200 sq. ft. They would be taking out more than three classrooms if the additional K spaces required to implement the program were an internal renovation rather than an addition to GR Allan as recommended.

Q. How much of the 2.4 million would be for classrooms?

A. It would be for three additional classrooms and a gymnasium.

Q. Are you still using the Ministry of Education software to determine the legacy costs or On the Ground (OTG) basis?

A. Renewal costs across the Board are those costs based on Ministry of Education software or On the Ground (OTG) assessment of the facility.

C. I believe that the costs need to be more reality based.

A. The Chair shared that this is based on the Ministry of Education software. Yes these items could last a few years longer. It gives you a comparison of long term needs. The assessment of OTG is reviewed regularly. Again for every \$18 of need we have \$1 to put against the costs. When schools are in an ARC we can not spend renewal dollars on these schools.

C. The Staff may present a revised final recommendation.

Q. When will we know the final staff recommendation?

A. You will not know that until the date it is presented to the Board, currently scheduled for January 16th.

Q. You are building JK classrooms at GR Allan and these will replace existing classrooms so has that number been calculated and taken into consideration.

A. The building project means building new instead of converting classrooms due to the current enrolment in G R. Allan.

C. Thanks to the Committee for all of its hard work. Being involved at the school has helped us to see the amazing potential that our special needs students have. The school has been amazing in supporting our son in bringing out his potential. Keeping our school in the Community has huge moral value.

Q. Why were the elevators not highlighted on this presentation?

A. They are not required and don't have to be tied to the ARC and so we have put them in the long term renewal legacy costs.

There was discussion on the elevator and Ms. Warling shared that the elevator was added to the renewal legacy costs or it could be addressed sooner if required by a student. The schools would be made accessible when required under the "regulatory Compliance Issues".

Councillor McHattie thanked the Committee and the Board Staff. He stated that he is keen on the ARC Options and liked what he heard about the data. He spoke of the Ainslie Wood neighbourhood and having a school in that neighbourhood is integral to the health of that neighbourhood. He would like to see status quo with upgrades. He shared that McMaster is great for Hamilton; however, it causes challenges in the Ainslie Wood area due to the number of student homes in the area. On October 20, 2011 the President's Advisory Committee will meet with the McMaster Committee members to speak about family retention and an attraction program for the Ainslie Wood and Westdale neighbourhoods. We will be discussing licensing rental housing, creating new residence on campus, purpose filled student housing and incentives for McMaster staff to move into the area. I am enthused by the ARC Committee's recommendation.

Q. A woman spoke of the need for an elevator on GR Allan and she is on a sub committee regarding this. Given that there will be renovations happening at GR Allan is that not the time to build the elevator.

Mr. Gowland shared that when the legacy costs go to the Trustees it is like a shopping list. It becomes a decision of the Board of Trustees. The \$550,000 covers two elevators and accessible doors.

Judith Bishop spoke to the elevator discussion and the need for an elevator at GR Allan.

Ms. Warling reiterated that if the public would like to have an elevator as part of the upgrades. This will need to be added to the costs of the ARC recommendation upgrades.

A gentleman shared that he feels that this is a good recommendation. I do not like the idea of another ARC in five years.

Judith says that it is highly unlikely that this group will have another ARC in five years. We will have 6000 empty spaces in the future and we have to look at.

C. I do not understand why we even had to have this ARC. Let's put money back into the school with what we have available to us.

C. I understand Judith Bishop's frustration but to close Prince Philip would kill the Community. The walkability issue is a huge issue and it has huge benefits to the students. It is ludicrous that we do not have transportation costs. These are costs that are going to keep climbing. I understand that this is a small school; however, it provides a wonderful environment for the kids with special needs.

A woman from the audience read the following statement:

"Dalewood should become a hub for diversity, language, the arts and perhaps even a home for the Sage Quest Community. French Immersion is exploding in Ontario and we should be proud to live in a multi-cultural bi-lingual society. To create a middle school focussing on languages and the arts is a unique opportunity. Dalewood needs updating and renovating. Unfortunately if it is imperative to close a school for the funds the Board's initial proposal sadly makes the most sense."

"Prince Philip's parents talk of walkability but for most of us French Immersion parents that is a mute subject as many of us have literally gone to great lengths (from Carlisle and Lynden) to have our children participate in the language programs."

"Dalewood should stay open and become the nucleus of arts, language and diversity with French Immersion, Mandarin, music and art taught to an exceptional level. What could be better? "

"What will the future of Prince Philip be in five years when another ARC comes along? Although it is an emotionally bound issue it makes no financial sense for three schools to struggle financially."

Another woman spoke that we need to keep all three schools open and that we need to come together as a community and make this area a family area again.

A man shared that he enjoys the walkability of the area. He shared his concern that the ARC recommendation will result in dealing with this again down the road.

The Chair stated that this has been a difficult decision for the Committee because it is difficult to determine what will happen five to seven years down the road.

Anita asked Councillor McHattie is he can give some feedback on the Dalewood Recreation Centre.

A. Councillor McHattie stated that there was a Dalewood feasibility study that went through Council last September. There were also a couple of public meetings held where this was discussed. The report came forth indicating that the Dalewood Recreation Centre be rebuilt. It was determined that it was not necessary to have a school present. It goes into the Capital budget funding and they are looking at

having it built in 2015. The gym is currently owned by the Dalewood School and he stated that perhaps the City should be paying for the Gym.

Michael Reid shared the following comment: In this report tonight the Board has increased the capacity of G.R. Allan to 550, due to the need to build full day kindergarten spaces. This is only necessary; however, if you are planning to import Prince Phillip into the school. If we do not do that, the enrolment is projected to drop sufficiently to make room for these classrooms within the school. If necessary, some of the higher grades might need to be in a portable for a year or two.

This would eliminate the need for construction at GR Allan.

Furthermore, both the Board proposal and the ARC recommendation include eliminating the basement classrooms from GR Allan, and also adding two washrooms and an expanded staff room or book room. This would eliminate two more classrooms. While we cannot do that right now, since the school is full, if the Board projections are correct, this could be done as the space becomes available.

If we are planning to do this, it doesn't make sense to project the occupancy for G.R. Allan as 550 or 498. It should be the current capacity, minus 4 classrooms. At 23 spaces per classroom, that would eliminate 92 spaces, resulting in an occupancy of 406.

Based on the Board projections, if G.R. Allan has 356 students in 2015, that would mean G.R. Allan was operating at 88% capacity, not 65%. Similarly, in 2020 it would be at 85%.

We are skeptical that occupancy will drop that low, and so we believe it is necessary to reassess this situation in 5 to 10 years, as it may well be that Prince Phillip and G.R. Allan are both running with high occupancy levels.

Q. If we adjust the numbers do we have to have another public meeting?

A. No we are allowed to make small adjustments within the mandate of the ARC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Note: The next meeting date has been changed to November 10, 2011.