

East Hamilton City 1 Accommodation Review Committee
Public Consultation Meeting # 1
Thursday, October 10, 2013
6:00 p.m.

Hillcrest Elementary School
40 Eastwood Street, Hamilton, ON

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Chair - Peter Joshua

Voting Members - Abbie Boyko, Casey Eaton, Laurie Hazelton, Sandra Lindsay, Megan MacDonald, Brian McPhee, Barbara Mitchell, Brianna Okerstrom, Brandy Paul, Susan Pretula, Samantha Prosser, Norma Rookwood, Carla Shewell, Jennifer Voth, Chris Weston, Shannon Weston

Non-Voting Members - Lisa Barzetti, Sandra Constable, Joanna Crapsi-Cascioli, John Gris, Dan Ivankovic, Ray Mulholland, Tiz Penney, Peter Sovran, Elaine Pilgrim-Susi, Todd White

Regrets

Voting Members - Susan Fischer, Stephen Cooper, Tracie Wilson

Non-Voting Members - Nil

Resource Staff

Rob Faulkner, Bob Fex, Ellen Warling

Recording Secretary

Kathy Forde

Public 25 public attendees were present - Hillcrest (0), Parkdale (6), Rosedale (6), Roxborough Park (6), Viscount Montgomery (0), W.H. Ballard (1), Woodward (4), No School Affiliation Identified (2)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Peter Joshua welcomed everyone to the meeting and provided introductions. The meeting format was outlined.

2. What is an Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)?

Peter Joshua advised that an accommodation review occurs when a School Board is thinking about closing schools and looking at where students can be accommodated. An Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is then formed to develop a number of potential accommodation options. Committee members

include parents, staff and community members. Mandate and membership structure were reviewed. Public consultation provides an opportunity for people to share diverse ideas and concerns. Facilitators will assist in gathering comments during group discussions.

3. Where are we in the Accommodation Review Process?

Bob Fex outlined the accommodation review process. In February 2013, the Board approved the Long Term Facilities Master Plan (LTFMP), which is a five-year plan to address efficient use of space among elementary schools. In June 2013, the Board approved a preliminary school accommodation report. The report outlined: benefits and rationale intended to ensure efficient use of space, accommodate current and long-term enrolment demands, balance enrolment with capacity, address maintenance and capital improvements, ensure sustainability and provide equity of access to facilities and programs. The report is available on the HWDSB website. During June to September 2013, background material was prepared and committees formed. From October 2013 to January 2014, the committee will work on developing alternative options with input from the community. The goal is to have the final report reviewed by the Board of Trustees and presented to the Standing Committee in February 2014. By May 2014, it is expected that Trustees will make a final decision.

4. Why HWDSB are Conducting Accommodation Reviews

Bob Fex provided an overview. Declining enrolment is a significant concern. Approximately 5000 excess elementary pupil places exist across the system, which results in a surplus of approximately 20-25 elementary schools. Small and aging schools are a concern. Maintaining empty space is not cost efficient. Provincial funding is largely based on enrolment so a decrease in enrolment means less money is available to spread across HWDSB school facilities.

5. How Does the ARC Process Work?

Bob Fex described the Terms of Reference, which provides guidelines on how the ARC will operate. Key reference criteria were reviewed (facility utilization, accommodation, programs, quality teaching and learning environments, transportation, partnership opportunities, equity). Working meetings and public meetings will take place to develop options and gather feedback in preparing the ARC's final option. A minimum of 12 meetings have been scheduled to move through the process.

6. Why an Accommodation Review for East Hamilton City 1

Bob Fex indicated that East Hamilton is one of four ARCs are currently underway, which were organized primarily on schools that were associated to another (JK-5, 6-8) and to ensure the full scope of HWDSB schools was included. The elementary schools were also associated schools that feed into Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School. This grouping of schools had been approved by Trustees in 2010 for commencement of an accommodation review. A preferred JK-8 model school is based on the Guiding Principles of the LTFMP. All of the East Hamilton City 1 schools are underutilization. Optimally, smaller schools would be considered for consolidation, grades organized from JK to 8 and schools sized to accommodate 500-600 students as per the LTFMP Guiding Principles.

7. Current Situation and Staff Option

Ellen Warling presented a map of current boundaries to illustrate the study area. Current enrolment was reviewed. Most schools involved are older buildings. The number of students by school ranges from 201 to 837. Overall utilization among the seven schools involved averaged 67 percent in 2012, drops to 60 percent in 2017 and to 55 percent in 2022. The gap between enrolment and capacity is significant. Almost 1000 vacancies currently exist within the East Hamilton City 1 planning area. Calculation of the Facility Condition Index was reviewed. Factors include deferred maintenance costs and estimated replacement costs. Every facility item (roofs, boilers, doors, windows, etc) calculated has a life cycle, which varies depending on the item. The staff option is only a starting point as work moves forward with the committee to develop their option. Public input will help to inform the ARC's and the staff's final option.

The staff option recommends consolidation of Roxborough Park, Hillcrest and Woodward into Hillcrest in 2014; consolidation of Rosedale and Viscount Montgomery into Viscount Montgomery in 2014; and, consolidation of Parkdale and W.H. Ballard into W.H. Ballard in 2014. The greatest challenge will be the number of full day kindergarten spaces. The recommendation would close the overall enrolment gap to 92 percent by 2017 which would drop to 85 percent by 2022. Minimal construction and renovation costs are expected. Again, the staff option is only a starting point for further development of recommendations.

8. Small Group Discussions

Peter Joshua indicated that public input is essential and would help to inform the recommendation developed through the committee. It will be important to focus on items of interest and listen carefully to insights to understand various perspectives. Facilitators would guide discussions and committee members would record all comments and input. Any silent ideas could also be captured on paper and submitted for consideration. Each table would report on the main three points of discussion. All input provided will be consolidated and provided to the committee for review at the next Working Group meeting. E-BEST staff will guide committee members in analyzing the data gathered. There will be many more opportunities for the public to voice comments and share concerns.

Facilitators reported on the top three priorities raised in group discussion as noted below.

In response to a question raised on how an increase of students would impact classes, it was noted that a formula exists for classroom size so changes to the number of students in a school would not increase the number of students per class but would simply create the need for more classrooms.

9. Next Steps

- Keeping the committee and community informed. All information will be posted on the HWDSB website at www.hwdsb.on.ca. If the public has no access to internet, information will also be available from school offices. All public meetings will be advertised. The public is welcome to attend all Working Group meetings for observation. All meeting dates are posted on the website.
- Next Public Meeting # 2 - November 07, 2013 at Parkdale Elementary School

10. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Facilitator Report Back - East Hamilton Public Meeting # 1 - October 10, 2013

Facilitators reported on the top three priorities raised in group discussion as noted below. Information will be provided to Committee Members for information and consideration as a recommendation is developed.

Group 1

- Disparity in ages is a concern when children 3 to 13 years old are mixed within a school - maturity levels differ considerably
- Transportation - will junior and senior students ride separate buses or will they be mixed - what will the guidelines be for walking - safety must be considered
- What are the hard numbers - what percentage of kids come from other schools out-of-catchment - are any updates available on numbers or enrolment - perhaps a survey should go out to Woodward and Roxborough Park parents to see if they are interested in having their kids go to Hillcrest or somewhere else rather than assuming they will attend Hillcrest

Group 2

- What happens in terms of development after the school is closed - vandalism is a concern
- What will the ratio of teachers to schools be when schools are closed
- Controls will be needed for younger children interacting with older children on the playground

Group 3

- Transition for special needs children to be considered
- Boundaries - if my child is designated to go to one school but my house is closer to another school can I send my child to the school that is closer to my home
- Timelines - is the closure date written in stone

Group 4

- Does the JK-8 model make sense and not just save money - is there evidence to support the model
- Can a larger school adequately support the needs of special needs learners
- How would the JK-8 schools support diversity

Group 5

- Does the JK-8 model fit with special needs students - maybe a JK-5 school is a better fit
- How will school closures affect the sense of community and property values - how will community groups currently offering programs be impacted - what will happen to community groups in the schools that close - the morale of students, staff and the community must be considered
- Transition time needs to be considered

Group 6

- There is not enough current data - enrolment data more current than 2012 is needed - transportation costs needed - actual costs for renovations versus new construction needed
- How will the impact to staff, students, parents and the community be considered
- Transition - what supports will be put into place to support special needs students and all students