

**West Flamborough - Accommodation Review Committee
Public Consultation Meeting # 2A
Wednesday, November 06, 2013
6:00-9:00 p.m.**

**Millgrove Elementary School
375 5th Concession West, Millgrove, ON**

Minutes

ATTENDANCE

Committee Members

Chair - Mag Gardner

Voting Members - Sara Ardiel, Karen Baillie, Pamela Beech, John Belanger, Tania Brittain, Jessica Dymont, Colleen Evans, Kristin Glasbergen, Candice Goodale, Cairine Grantham, Brett Humphrey, Anthony Hunter, Rachel Kott, Patti Lee, Shelley McGuire, Stephanie Munro, Marguerite Richer, Heather Ryan, Melissa Slote, Sue VanEgdom, David Wardell

Non- Voting Members - Stewart Cameron, Doug Dunford, Kate Fischer, Kim Short, Karen Turkstra

Regrets

Voting Members - Callie Matthews, Janine Vandenheuval

Non- Voting Members - Eddie Grattan

Resource Staff

Bob Fex, Ellen Warling, Jackie Penman

Recording Secretary

Kathy Forde

Public - 33 public attendees were present - Beverly Central (9), Dr. John Seaton (2), Greensville (11), Millgrove (7), Spencer Valley (2), Other (2)

1. Welcome and Introductions

Sara Ardiel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Committee members and facilitators introduced themselves. An outline of the meeting format was provided. Sara Ardiel, Kristin Glasbergen and Candice Goodale would facilitate the meeting.

2. Accommodation Review Summary

The meeting was intended to provide an overview of the work completed and an opportunity to gather further public feedback. Input will assist in developing a common recommendation. Meeting norms were reviewed. A positive and respectful environment is important for sharing ideas and moving forward.

3. Overview of Accommodation Review Process

The mandate of the Accommodation Review Committee is to study, report and provide recommendations. Structure of the committee membership was reviewed. As part of the Terms of Reference, Reference Criteria has been provided as guiding principles for developing recommendations (facility utilization, permanent and non-permanent accommodation, program offerings, quality teach and learning environments, transportation, partnership opportunities, equity). West Flamborough schools are involved in the review due to declining enrolment, underutilized schools, aging schools and limited provincial funding. In 2012, there were approximately 200 empty pupil places leaving schools underutilized.

4. Where the Committee is in the Process

From October 2013 to January 2014, the community review phase takes place through a series of Working Group and Public Meetings to develop recommendations. By February 2014, the final report will be formulated and presented to the Board. By May 2014, Trustees are expected to make a final decision. Since the last Public Meeting, committee members have reviewed and approved the SIPs, toured three of five schools and created guiding principles. Data gathered at the first Public Meeting has been examined. A fifth Public Meeting has been added to provide equity among the five schools under review.

5. Committee Guiding Principles

After reviewing feedback from the first Public Meeting, an additional four guiding principles were developed based on common themes.

- **Program Offerings** - programs to support high values and specialty rooms such as arts, music, computer rooms, science labs
- **Transportation** - efficient bus routes, organization of riding times, 60-minute guideline is being stretched and should perhaps be reviewed - inclement weather, buses on road, etc. to be considered
- **Resources** - current resources such as playground equipment, library books, Smartboards, computer equipment, science labs should travel with the kids who transfer to new schools especially where resources were acquired through fundraising - need to ensure teachers at new schools are adequately trained - need to ensure resources are available to cover costs for Smartboard installations
- **21st Century Learning** - Technology needs, learner needs, infrastructure, shared spaces - need to ensure power supply and internet system can accommodate extra students especially when class times overlap and high usage occurs

6. School Information Profiles (SIPs)

As required by the Ministry, profiles were assembled by HWDSB staff. The intent is to help committee members get a better understanding of each school and to provide a foundation for discussions. SIPs cover fourteen sections of data. Information is related to enrolment and available space, administrative and operational costs, condition of school, space to support student learning and child care, program offerings, extracurricular activities, school grounds and physical activity, accessibilities for students with disabilities, location regarding transportation and out-of-catchment students, EQAO, location of school within community, community use of schools, schools as a local employer and community partnerships. SIP details have been examined, amended and approved by the committee. Handouts were provided and notification was given that the SIPs will be available on the HWDSB website.

7. Group Discussions

The floor was open for comments. Two questions were also presented to gather feedback on the guiding principles and items of key importance for creating an ideal elementary learning facility. Input is noted below. Additional comments captured on flip charts by facilitators are attached.

Question 1: Do the presented guiding principles make sense to the group? What are the themes or main ideas that haven't yet been captured that are important for us to know?

- Timelines
- The ARC covers a big geographical area so may need two solutions
- Aging facilities - a new facility on Seaton site because you will never get what you need from renovations for future generations
- When filling schools need to consider equal distances for both north and south kids
- Must be mindful of special needs students who travel far distances to special classes
- Need to be mindful of the word "propose" and use it in the correct context
- Equity - as a rural parent just good enough is not acceptable - it is perceived that rural residents are getting second best - rural communities present different issues
- Boundaries - open up - Queen's Rangers is not included - some families trying to come to Beverly Central were not accepted so perhaps a boundary change should be considered to permit transfers
- Transitions - reduce the number of transitions for all students - concern with the number of transitions for kids and especially for families who have kids going to different schools - a grandfather clause should be considered - place students into Waterdown feeder schools for easier transition - amalgamate schools to reduce transitions

Question 2: In creating an ideal elementary learning facility, what consideration do you feel are most important?

- Add French Immersion to make a school more valuable and change the catchment areas
- Keep kids together
- Create a state-of-the-art facility so that people will want to come to this area when numbers are down

- Let's be more efficient - let's get the grants and put solar panels on the roof

Comments

School Information Profiles (SIPs)

Accuracy of SIP data is a concern. Information submitted twice to the Principal at Dr. J. Seaton since September seems to be missing. The final version will be reviewed for accuracy.

Enrolment

Millgrove enrolment numbers are negatively impacted by FDK. Seven families who live out of catchment were denied enrolment in September. Under the out-of-catchment policy, the Board is funded for a certain number of placements when implementing FDK so could not exceed the grant received. Denial for out-of-catchment is due to FDK this year.

Data

Facts and numbers have not been audited so the level of confidence for making a responsible decision is a concern. The idea of a third party audit for costs and enrolment was suggested. In response, it was noted that the work is an evolving process. The intent of the Public Meeting was to gather further input not to make an immediate decision. The SIPs are one-dimensional and needed further review and input.

There appears to be no verification of data projections. Public members wondered if algorithms were used as there seems to be significant differences between numbers. It was questioned if real estate and development data was included, and what would happen to the wells. Growth in Waterdown is a concern. In response, it was noted that historic enrolment from 2008 onward was used. Every October another dataset goes into the calculated projections. Development is reviewed at least twice a year. There is not a lot of development in this community. Development in Waterdown did not happen as quick as expected due to the economy slowing down in the mid to late 2000's.

Documentation that assesses the reliability and validity of ongoing projected enrolment was requested. Data used and assumptions behind the data will be provided.

Concerning projected enrolment and community populations, since this area is only three miles away from a community that has quadrupled, what is to say that this side will not grow too? Confidence around future enrolment and development is important. We do not want to be back here in 10 years. The impact of development around Clapison Corner must be considered. We could have an over abundance of kids. Because the Niagara Escarpment Commission starts at Hwy 6, people do not think development will happen but there is knowledge that we are not that far off.

FCI

Clarification of the FCI was requested. In response, the FCI was defined as a percentage of the estimated replacement value and deferred maintenance items listed for a school. The Capital Projects division of the

Facilities Management Department maintains a database that applies a dollar value on all items in all schools.

The septic system at Dr. J. Seaton is original and is a concern. A safe environment is needed. Toilets need to be flushed. All the schools are old. A history of the facilities and infrastructure was requested. Noted.

School Closure

Closure of Greenville is a concern. In response it was note that the staff recommendation is only a proposal - it is one dimensional. The Working Group has no schools on the chopping block. No decisions have been made. Process is important.

Renovations

Asbestos in all facilities is a concern.

Since all buildings are aging and enrolment is dropping, costs for renovations versus a new building must be carefully considered along with ongoing costs. Costing needs to be accurate. In comparison for example, when deciding between buying a new house versus building an addition, absolute numbers are needed. Whoever in the Board provides these numbers should be held accountable. In response it was noted that specific costs are not available until options are identified to base numbers upon.

New School

The idea of building a super school was raised. Although it was noted that obtaining a septic permit for 600 people may be difficult in a rural setting, it was also noted that getting a septic system is not that hard if you have the right property. A parent mentioned that since Director John Malloy noted HWDSB does not build "super schools" we should be mindful of language.

Having a new school would be great but the architect would need to be identified. Parents want a great environment for their children. Let's build something better and more efficient. Let's build a south facing building with better walls.

To get funding to build a new school, parents wondered if a certain size of acreage was needed. Approximately one acre of land is dedicated for 100 students based on Ministry guidelines but there is no set size specifically for building a new school.

An opportunity for a community centre was raised noting that the Beverly arena is at maximum use. Abutting farmland could perhaps be considered. Community partnerships should be considered. In response, it was noted that partnerships should be considered where facilities already exist. Playing fields could perhaps be shared.

Equipment

Computer labs and updated technology will be important. Perhaps businesses can donate money or computers or iPads to the schools.

Transition

Transition to high school must be considered. In response it was noted that pathways are part of the process to ensure smooth transition.

Boundaries

Boundary changes are a concern. Parents prefer to keep kids together in their communities.

Transportation

Boundaries as related to transportation are a concern.

Programming

It would be nice to introduce a French Immersion path to a nearby high school.

Community Impact

It will be important to consider the potential impact on the local community and economy. Some families purposely bought a house near a school. Community impact is important and must be considered. The longevity of generations and the importance of community were recognized.

Information

It was recommended that a suggestion box be provided for comments. In response, a suggestion box will be provided at the next meeting. All correspondence is reviewed by the Working Group. Comments can be anonymous. Feedback is important.

Another outlet for getting information out is needed as everyone is not connected to school council nor has Internet. Many parents drive their kids to other schools for programming so information should be posted in those schools and libraries. In response it was noted that the public can working through their ARC committee member. Information is powerful. The ARC is an unusual process than does not occur often. It will be important to ensure that through this process there is trust. Committee members are the public representatives and need the feedback to develop a recommendation. Mag Gardner will commit to working with school leaders to get information out to the public in different ways. Committee members are doing their best with the information that is available.

Process

The timeline is an issue. To think that in June a school may close is too quick. More time is needed to absorb the information. In response it was noted that the timeline for the ARC is mandated. A number of ARCs are underway. The Ministry stipulates the minimum number of meetings required and provides time for the Trustees to deliberate. The process necessitates the need to develop a recommendation within the

timelines provided which is the norm throughout the province. A timeline can be included as part of the recommendation that is developed.

We are here is because there is an inefficiency but how do we ensure that the recommendation put forth is feasible and financially possible. We do not want spend all this time contemplating an option then end up with nothing. It was noted that the Master Plan looks at subdivisions in phases. There can be no proposed changes to the urban boundary until the infrastructure catches up. The bypass has implications. Waterdown is an anomaly. Development is defined as six to 20 homes. After 6 homes an environmental assessment is needed due to wells and septic. Looking for property to build a school is difficult. Careful thinking is essential. Let's not make a mistake. When the committee starts to formulate a recommendation, deferred maintenance cost savings will be considered. The Board only gets approximately \$8M per year for maintaining facilities so we are hard pressed. Money is allocated for school maintenance based on criteria. If schools are closed, more maintenance funds will be available. Costing for renovations must carefully be determined. New builds are requested through a different process based on a business case and are processed in stages.

How quickly can the Board actually design and build a significant addition? We do not want kids to go to a school that is not ready. Can timelines be extended to allow students to stay put until a facility or renovation is complete? In response it was noted that the FDK initiative has been a mass implementation so significant changes are manageable. The Working Group will need to consider dates and boundaries as the recommendation is developed. We need a solution that will best suit all students. We need to consider what is good for students as a whole. Trustees may not accept the staff recommendation or Working Group recommendation and could possibly blend the two.

8. Next Steps

Public input is essential for moving forward. Every voice is valued. Decisions will be determined collectively. All concerns and items of interest will be taken into advisement at the next Working Group meeting. The staff option does not impact the option that is being developed. The recommendation that is developed will be presented to Trustees along with the staff option so trustees may choose one or the other or merge the best of both. Mag Gardner expressed appreciation to the committee members who facilitated the session.

- At the next two Working Group Meetings the committee will formulate options
- At Public Meeting # 3 options will be shared
- Any further ideas can be shared with committee members or at arcinfo@hwdsb.on.ca
- **Next Working Group Meeting # 4 (6:00-7:30p) - Nov 13, 2013 - Beverly Central Elementary School**
- **Next Public Meeting # 2B - Nov 13, 2013 (7:30-9:00p) - Beverly Central Elementary School**

9. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Handouts

- Agenda
- Presentation
- School Information Profiles
- Guiding Principals

Feedback on Guiding Principals

Facility

- Age of structure - septic tanks, roof, etc.; wells, history of maintenance; HVAC, etc.; history of infrastructure
- Concerns regarding asbestos
- Important to have updated technology
- Catchment transition (pathways) ex. Keeping students together from elementary to secondary

New Facility

- Can old schools be repaired or added on to
- What are the costs of “mothballing” the unused properties
- Request to expand timelines to give longer time for looking at data and to consider new ideas such as “super schools”
- Cost of new facility versus cost of renovating
- Make numbers available to the public - know where numbers come from – absolute numbers
- Take into account possible growing neighbourhoods
- When does financing come into play
- If it takes five months to renovate a school why not wait longer to see how enrolment changes
- One large school is not possible in rural area due to septic systems

Data

- Third party audit
- Projected enrolment where do numbers come from
- Sharing of data with public
- Does data take into account the creation of the interchange at Clapison Corner and potential new development

Boundaries

- Idea to change catchment areas, specifically to make Millgrove JK-8 plus French Immersion
- Change catchment area
- Soften the boundaries
- Greenville “grandfather” in the catchment changed children
- Keep present boundaries

SIP

- Review Seaton SIP information

Timeline

- Concerned with timeline - a great deal needs to be considered before decision is made
- Make sure renovations are ready
- Completion date included in final recommendation to guarantee students will not enter unfinished school

General

- Consider pathways
- FCI
- French Immersion cap for high school
- Impact on community
- Economic impact
- Post information in the schools