



**East Hamilton City 2 Accommodation Review
Working Group Meeting #4
March 03, 2016 - 6:00 pm
Glen Brae Elementary School, 50 Secord Drive, Hamilton, ON (Library)**

Minutes

Attendance

Committee Members - Tamara Cummings, Jeff Gillies (Chair), Drazena Hidalgo, Laura Neubrand, Suzie Spelic, Meagan Walker

Committee Member Regrets - Lisa Corsini, Cherie Evans, Lisa Hardie, Sasha Kajganic, Judy Kloosterman, Terri Trimble, Marissa Turner

HWDSB Resource Staff - John Bradley, Sue Dunn, Robert Faulkner, Bob Fex, Sherry Halla, Susan Jackson Boshier, Pam Reinholdt, Curtis Tye, Ellen Warling

Trustees - Todd White

Public - 1 public attendee - Stoney Creek News (1)

Recording Secretary - Kathy Forde

1. Welcome

Jeff Gillies welcomed everyone, provided opening remarks and reviewed the agenda.

2. Review and Approve Minutes

Working Group Meeting #3 - Minutes accepted without any changes. Members concurred.

3. WG Meeting #3 Debriefing of Homework

Following the last meeting, an undefined planning map was distributed to assist members in visualizing student distribution and boundaries that would best represent neighbourhoods in the study area. Members shared their thoughts and suggested options. Comments at the meeting and received by email are noted below.

Consideration to have Elizabeth Bagshaw remain open but as a middle school

- This would take the pressure off of a super school size and concern at Sir Wilfrid Laurier - given the two communities identify as one, logistics would be clear and clean - financial picture would need to be reviewed to weigh in on feasibility considering Sir Wilfrid Laurier would not need as large a budget as they would not be accommodating more students as well as what other decisions were made around the new Glen or not new Glen, Isaac Brock and/or Lake
- If Elizabeth Bagshaw stays open, renewal costs will be needed to maintain the school as best possible - high and urgent items are addressed as priorities among all schools and renewal funds are limited given the current state of renewal system wide
- It is a mature community but some revitalization is occurring where young families are moving in
- A section of approximately 290 new homes near the recreation centre is not expected to have any significant impact on student numbers
- The Board's preferred model is a JK-8 school. A middle school model can be 'quirky' as the percentage of JK-8 becomes the norm, however the trustees are open to community input – this is the purpose of the community consultation.



Close Elizabeth Bagshaw and addition to Sir Wilfrid Laurier

- Good idea to accommodate numbers
- Larger schools provide more benefits and opportunities including more competitive athletics

Close Elizabeth Bagshaw, update Sir Wilfrid Laurier as a new school, Glen Brae and Glen Echo merged with Sir Isaac Brock, Kenora neighbourhood goes to Lake Avenue

- Renewal costs considered too high at Elizabeth Bagshaw - high costs do not seem feasible - renewal dollars saved at Elizabeth Bagshaw can be better spent among other schools
- Numbers will be a concern - boundaries at Sir Wilfrid Laurier can be expanded to take in more students
- Parents concerned about end result and do not understand how the process unfolds - kids and families will have to adjust going to a new school - everyone should be considered as one big happy East Hamilton family
- At Elizabeth Bagshaw extra-curricular activities are not well attended for a variety of reasons - although some families are open to going to Sir Wilfrid Laurier, moving to another school does not mean these kids will participate in extra-curricular activities
- All kids at Elizabeth Bagshaw currently have an opportunity to play on sports teams but when these kids move to a larger school some will not make the team
- If building on the Sir Isaac Brock site, some parents say they will move their kids to the Catholic Board - although principals hear this commentary occasionally, rarely are students withdrawn
- Sir Wilfrid Laurier would gladly welcome Elizabeth Bagshaw students
- Shifting kids from the Kenora neighbourhood to Lake Avenue is a concern

Initial Report Recommended Option

- Considered by one member as the best option - numbers at Sir Wilfrid Laurier are high but students adjust to portables - a school size of 900 is really not much different than 600 because a larger school provides more classrooms, teachers and opportunities - kids who play together should be able to go to school together and attend extra-curricular activities together
- Two members dislike the idea of a new build on the Glen site due to proximity to the high school - high school kids can impact younger students in a negative way (language, etc.)
- Glen Brae was identified in this option as the site for a new build rather than Sir Isaac Brock due to various factors such as proximity to the high school, more building options, maximizing land usage, less students would be affected as most of them are in the Glen Brea area, and transportation costs

4. Key Questions

Discussion continued around various concerns and comments as noted below.

Childcare - The impact of amalgamation on the childcare program at Sir Wilfrid Laurier is an item of interest - it will be important not to lose any space due to transition - from past experience, childcare providers have moved from old to new facilities - childcare need and space must be carefully considered

Gym Size - The value of athletics and physical education is important - adequate gym size in a large school will be essential - minimum ministry standards must be met - when providing advice to trustees, the committee can indicate that an expanded gym or second gym should be considered - the committee can also suggest that if no money is received from consolidation funding then support funds should come from another source and the Board should find another solution



Community Concerns - Many community members do not want to deal with demolition or construction of schools - impact to property value is also a public concern

French Immersion - The Lower Stoney Creek Advisory Committee is curious about FI numbers in the East Hamilton City 2 boundary and might want to explore the possibility of offering FI within Lower Stoney Creek but only if numbers warrant - any new offering would be a few years in growing - FI numbers are not likely to impact any decisions - it was noted that Glen Echo is a very walkable area for the FI program

Funding - Availability and effective use of funding is a common concern among members

Old Buildings - Concerning old empty school buildings, property is declared surplus and there is a process to follow in terms of disposition - the timeframe for getting through this process can be lengthy

School Size - It is difficult to determine what is considered an ideal school size as everyone has a different experience and opinion - Hillcrest should perhaps be considered as a model in terms of going from a smaller school (428) to larger school (585)

Transition - Transition will be an important piece for the students - parents believe there are so many unknowns - it seems it is the parents who worry - the kids usually manage just fine - with respect to grandfathering, consideration is more common among grade 6-8 students starting with grade 8 if it is feasible if there is room in the new building - younger siblings however would have to go to their catchment school - this is another item for transition planning - to ease transition other transition committees have prompted various activities such as leadership camps, student shadowing, student mentoring, play days, cooperative school council meetings and school events - transitioning is a piece that will follow and will provide another opportunity for input

5. Another Accommodation Option - Discussion

The scenario below, generated from committee interest, was reviewed along with enrolment projections. Discussion points are noted below.

Scenario for Working Group Meeting #4

Close Elizabeth Bagshaw, Glen Echo, Glen Brae and Sir Isaac Brock

- New Build - 800 pupil place JK-8 school on Glen Brae site
- Renovation/Addition - Lake Avenue Site (516 + 184 = 700 OTG)
 - 8 classroom addition (184)
- Renovation/Addition - Sir Wilfrid Laurier Site (709 + 96 = 805 OTG)
 - 1 FDK room addition (26)
 - 2 classroom addition (46)
 - Resource spaces (24)
- System classes and special classes have been considered and are reflected in enrolment projections - the Board is cognizant of the demand for self-contained classes - the pathway is the focus - for example, the Board tries to keep students in the ASD class in the same school from beginning to grade 8 which allows these students to build familiarity and friends - numbers are not expected to increase for special needs classes
- In the past, Kenora families have not been interested in crossing busy streets and low attendance is experienced - the provision of busing may alleviate concerns and improve attendance if Kenora students shift to Lake Avenue



- the 1.6 km qualifier is impacted by the address so one of the buses in this neighbourhood is currently an automatic approval - a similar approved service could possibly apply to Lake Avenue - busing will be an important piece - it is important for the committee to advocate for the families - any concern around transportation should be expressed in advice that goes forward from the committee to trustees - the committee could indicate that better attendance is expected if busing is provided

- Numbers in this scenario seem more balanced and are not wasting space or money on unused space - better to have large schools that are fairly equal in size so that there is not a dramatic difference between schools
- With no major concerns expressed, it appears members are coming to agreement on this fourth scenario

6. Discussion on Narrowing Focus Regarding Existing Options

Jeff Gillies recapped discussion points that have captured significant interest throughout the meeting.

Members concurred with the following

- Closure of Elizabeth Bagshaw
- Addition to Sir Wilfrid Laurier
- Adjust boundaries for Sir Wilfrid Laurier for optimal numbers and to alleviate enrolment pressures
- Gym expansion at Sir Wilfrid Laurier to accommodate larger student population
- A new build to consolidate Glen Brae, Glen Echo and Sir Isaac Brock
- Addition to Lake Avenue
- Boundary adjustment for Lake Avenue to include Kenora neighbourhood
- Recommendation to provide busing for Kenora families travelling to Lake Avenue

Consensus still needed concerning

- Site location for a new build - pros and cons for a Glen site versus a Sir Isaac Brock site will need to be listed and considered - supporting data will be provided for review (Bob Fex)

Further consideration on

- The suggestion of a middle school - feasibility of a JK-5 and grade 6-8 structure to be considered - a scenario will be developed for review (Bob Fex)

Work will continue in order to move forward, prepare for the public meeting and build further consensus. Rationale will be needed to support any recommendation put forward through the consultative process. Trustees are interested in hearing committee voice. Ultimately, the final decision rests with trustees.

7. Joint East Hamilton-Lower Stoney Creek Meeting

The Lower Stoney Creek Advisory Committee has extended an open invitation for a joint meeting on March 23 at Gatestone Elementary School. The joint meeting provides an opportunity for a tour and for shared discussion. Principals are not required to attend. Notice to follow.

8. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Next Meetings

- Working Group Meeting #5 - Tuesday March 22, 2016 6:00 pm - Sir Isaac Brock
- Working Group Meeting #6 - Tuesday April 05, 2016 6:00 pm - Lake Avenue