



**West Hamilton Accommodation City Review  
Working Group Meeting #5  
Wednesday March 1, 2017  
6:00 pm**

**Earl Kitchener  
300 Dundurn Street South,  
Hamilton, Ontario**

**Agenda**

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|---|---------|
| 1. Housekeeping Items   | 20 mins |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Minutes from WG#4</li><li>• Correspondence</li></ul>  |         |
| 2. Option Requests/Analysis   | 60 mins |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hess/Strathcona consolidation (JK-5 and JK-8)</li><li>• Boundary readjustments</li><li>• Initial Option with FI at Dr Davey</li></ul> |         |
| 3. Public Meeting #2 preparation  | 60 mins |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do we want to communicate?</li><li>• How do we communicate?</li><li>• Capturing feedback</li></ul>                                |         |
| 4. Next Steps   | 10 mins |

# Working Group #3 Minutes



**West Hamilton-City Accommodation Review  
Working Group Meeting #4  
February 23 2017- 6:00 pm  
Cathy Wever School  
Minutes**

### **Attendance**

**Committee Members:** John Efthimiadis, Rob Fiedler, Tracy Upham, Barbara Stares, Matt Allen, Tanya Ritchie, Allison Savage, David Heska, Jennifer Walsom, Janine Durajlija, Melissa Crawford, Nadine Bernacki, Shelly Turk, Teri Lantagne, Khantavy Sayavon, Sue Caven, Nicole Poyton, Chantelle Pealey,

**Committee Member Regrets:** Sarah Sirkett, Jo Anne Cheyne-Miller, Eleni Jalbout

**HWDSB Resource Staff:** – Superintendent/Chair Sue Dunlop, Mary Finstad, Ellen Warling, Estella Jones, Steve Johnstone, Sean Malcolmson, Tannis Hamill, Karen Koop, Bob Fex, Gerry Smith, Richelle Bratuz, Dan Ivankovic

**Trustees:** Jeff Beattie, Christine Bingham, Todd White, Larry Pattison

**Public:** Hess St. (4), Strathcona (1), Dr. Davey (1)

**Recording Secretary:** Sue Phillips

### **Housekeeping Items**

Working Group 3 minutes – approved

Tentative Working Group meeting – March 2<sup>nd</sup> - meeting will be held at Queen Victoria if we decide we want it.

### **Correspondence**

Sue Dunlop reviewed the correspondence with the committee. Questions arose – examples:

Q. Can you confirm that we don't have to have alternate options for next public meeting

A. That is confirmed. We will be presenting our work at the public meeting. Last working group meeting will have the report info.

Q. For clarification– who determines what is in the final report – the advisory committee or staff.

A. Staff. The committee will not be wordsmithing or voting on the final report to trustees.

Q. Does the report contain one option or all options?

A. It will summarize all the work the committee has done, however, staff will not present an option that isn't feasible.

### **French Immersion with Initial Option**

Bob Fex reviewed the French Immersion Analysis. See powerpoint presentation from meeting for details.

Sue Dunlop reviewed the initial option feedback / key emerging themes.

### **Group Activity – Small groups formed and tasked with exploring new options.**

Sue Dunlop reviewed the group activity feedback.

Three options were chosen:

- 1) Closure of Hess and Strathcona and new build on site TBD - both JK to 5 and JK to 8 implications
- 2) All schools open but readjustment of boundaries to even them out
- 3) Could we also look at implications of French Immersion going to Dr. Davey?

**Public meeting #2 preparation** – deferred to next meeting

Adjourned: 8:40.

# Correspondence

**From:** Nadine B

**Sent:** February 27, 2017 9:00 PM

**To:** Accommodation Reviews

**Subject:** 'business case' analysis vs. community vision for our schools

Dear Committee members,

I am concerned about some of the problems raised at our last working group meeting.

On the one hand we have been told that it is not up to us (the committee) to come up with an Option. On the other hand, we were asked to choose, after our first brief 30 minute discussion of the matter, what options we are interested in having staff examine for all nine schools.

I have put a great deal of thought and consideration and work (probably on the order of 50 hours) into the model I created and shared as an expression of a possible vision for our schools, and I was very much hoping that staff would be willing to work up what that set of ideas would look like in terms of dollars and pupil populations. It doesn't seem like an unreasonable request. As this accommodation review involves nine schools over a large portion of the city, it seems to me that a more complete scenario which addresses issues at each of the schools is warranted.

My "Option" included building two additional schools, one in the Keith neighbourhood and one in the Stinson area, to improve walk-ability and to increase community connection; but this is not even going to be looked at for 'business case' reasons. We have heard from our communities that walk-ability is the number one theme, and that is not something we are even discussing at the level of an Option.

Why has the Board asked the committee and communities for our long-term vision for our schools when that input is being immediately constrained even prior to full examination by comparison to a 'business case'? When creating a long-term vision you must not begin from the starting position of current financial constraints. That is a sure-fire way to fail to serve the community or to make any kind of progressive changes. The vision must be held first, and the vision is what has been requested from us as Community and Committee members.

If community hubs are required for the 'business case' of downsizing of over-sized schools created by previous 'supervision' or Boards of Trustees; then why is the HWDSB not making that problem a priority by assigning resources/time to the task?

A general mass mailing to all possible partners without any specific details is unlikely to generate much response from overworked and overwhelmed employees and volunteers at non-profit groups.

If the purpose of this review is only to see if/when we can close another school to make another larger school, then why have the committee members been assured repeatedly that no school has to close, or that a long-term vision for the schools and communities is being sought? Is there no value to the Board in maintaining smaller, more walk-able, community schools simply because it doesn't make a compelling 'business case' in terms of provincial funding? Could we not use some 'creativity, curiosity, and possibility' to explore our options more fully and shape our shared future more carefully?

And if we do close smaller community schools to build larger ones, what happens when populations change again? How over-crowded must those larger schools have to become before there is a 'business case' to build another one? How empty would the larger schools have to become before they in turn are also consolidated in larger, even less walk-able schools?

We, as a committee need to consider the long-term consequences of the path we are taking, and take care not to disconnect ourselves from the vision expressed by the community in return for short-term funding which is currently being offered by the province to consolidate schools.

I formally request that the committee ask staff to work out the numbers and thoughtfully consider the vision that I have submitted as a long-term vision; and to keep open the possibilities of community hubs and/or right-sizing of the over-sized elementary schools in our area in service of community cohesion and walk-ability no matter what the outcome of this review process.

Additionally, I would like to point out to the HWDSB that Adelaide Hoodless has been completely left out of the Accommodation Review Process timeline altogether and could not find any information on the HWDSB website about when such a review might occur. I understand it has a population of approximately 548 students who are not being included in any review process. As Adelaide Hoodless shares a boundary with both Cathy Wever and Queen Victoria schools, this information is relevant for our review.

Sincerely,  
Nadine B  
Strathcona Elementary School Parent Representative

RECEIVED  
Feb. 28. 17.

February 7, 2017

To: Todd White

From: Mr. Stevenson

Regarding concern for the well-being  
of students at Hess Street School

My 22 years of teaching in Hamilton inner city schools began in the mid 1960's at the time of the E.N.O.C. program (Educational Needs for the Older City).

I was the first Reading Assistant to work out of the English Department in these schools beginning in the old Hess St. School and Robert Land.

I identified students in grade two needing assistance, withdrew them in small groups twice weekly, trained adult volunteers and student buddies to provide additional help and mentored teachers. At times I was asked by other Boards of Education to conduct workshops.

The needs were great then, but now in addition to poverty we have the overwhelming needs of immigrant

and refugee students. These young<sup>2.</sup> children desperately need stability and the feeling of belonging to a caring community. They need to be in a smaller school setting with more human connections, more teachers that know them and show that they care, and teachers who want to be working in this unique environment.

Central school has a similar environment where I have maintained volunteer connections. This is a school that was threatened with closure because of low enrollment and now with the influx of immigrant and refugee students it is bursting at its seams. We all understand why newcomers are moving into these areas and know that it will continue.

Vulnerable children need a community playground. Living in cramped spaces with adults who don't drive and have no money for extra curricular



activities they need opportunities after school and on weekends for physical exercise. Playgrounds are social places benefitting both children and adults. Parents can get to know their children's friends.

I absolutely cringe at the thought of busing these children away from their own neighbourhood. We welcome them to Hamilton and then show them they don't deserve their own school which also serves as a community centre and they're not worth a financial investment in their well being. If a bus is missed, a whole day of learning opportunities are lost. Bussing is very stressful for families. How would parents pick up a child if they become ill at school? How would adults get to interviews open houses etc? How would teachers get to know parents? Where would the students be picked up?

Children often do not behave well on buses. Would some students be bullied? It would be a very challenging position for the bus drivers dealing with multi languages and emotional problems. Would the displaced students be welcomed by other students at a different school? Friendships would be more difficult. Would teachers want to teach in a larger school setting with students who have suffered instability, trauma, frustrations and likely low self esteem? How would the one school deal with increasing enrollment? I am saddened again to think some of these children would be as young as 3 and 4 years old.

Please make the right decision demonstrating that Hamilton cares to provide the most vulnerable students the support, educational opportunities and confidence they need now and in their future. We can set the best example for other cities.