

West Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Education Centre Board Room

May 10, 2011

Working Meeting #5

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Superintendent Sharon Stephanian

Voting Members – Christopher Austin, Deborah Beedie, Rosemary Bellefeuille, Phyllis Chasty, Lawrie Cook, Bea Howell, Lori King, Deborah Knoll, Heather MacDonald, Sharon Ricci, Judy Shen, Boris Williams,

Non-Voting Members – Gudrun Anderson, Paul Barwinski, Judith Bishop, Jessica Brennan, Krys Croxall, Em Del Sordo, Michelle DesRochers, Rick Hart, Judy Langsner, John Laverty, Brian Lenart, Maria Rikic-McCarthy, Laurie Swackhammer, Dan Thomson, Anne Waldie

Regrets

Voting Members - Allyssa Horning,

Non-Voting Members –Lloyd Ferguson, Alex Johnstone, Brian McHattie, Russ Powers

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Don Hall, Jim Wibberley, Ellen Warling

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1.0 Call to Order

Superintendent Stephanian welcomed everyone to the fifth working group meeting. She spoke of the follow-up information from the previous meetings that had been included in the handouts and reminded the Committee that microphones were available for their use so that everyone could be clearly heard. The Chair spoke to the Committee of the upcoming Public Meeting at Ancaster High School. She shared that one of the most important tasks for the evening is to agree on the content of the meeting. There are two main purposes of the Public Meeting. One is to get feedback. This means hearing the ideas or concerns of the community. The second purpose is to present the work of the

Committee to the community. The goal by the end of the meeting is to be clear and agree on what will be presented to the community.

2.0 Agenda

2.1 Additions and Deletions – There were no additions or deletions.

2.2 Approval or the Agenda – The agenda was approved by consensus.

3.0 Presentations

3.1 Demographic and Enrolment Projection Methodology

For the full presentation please click on the following link:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/WestARC_Enrol_Demo_Final_Revised_April14_2011.pdf

Daniel Del Bianco made the Demographic and Enrolment Projection Methodology presentation to the Committee. The following points were made:

- The data is derived from historical data.
- After peaking in 2002, elementary enrolment declined by approximately 5%.
- Between 2007 and 2018, Province-wide elementary enrolment is projected to decline by an additional 14%
- Between 1998 and 2007 secondary enrolment increased by 3%
- Province-wide secondary enrolment is projected to decline by 17% by 2018
- Two charts were given which showed the historical and projected Elementary and Secondary Enrolment.
- There were components of enrolment projections given.

- A slide showing Demographic and Housing Trends was shown.
 - Maturing communities – it takes a long time to mature and the turn over is slower. The elderly people stay in their homes longer.
 - New homes have a different yield than mature homes and town homes also have a different yield.
- A map showing Development Plans was included. Development Plans are on the City web site.
- JK Enrolment Trends
 - If JK enrolment declines then everything declines as the years go on. A lot of the information comes from the Census statistics.
 - People are not having as many children.
 - Live births have decreased so there are fewer children and women are having children later in life so the turn over is stretched even further.
 - There are more grade 8's leaving the system then JK s coming into the system.
- Apportionment Rates
 - At the Secondary level there is more fluctuation in enrolment because the students can choose between attending the Elementary Schools or the Secondary Schools – it can be a simple as who has the newer school or the better programs available.

- West ARC Cluster of Schools was a map showing the location of the Secondary Schools.

Questions:

Question (Q) Answer (A) Comments (C)

Q. In the newspaper it says that Hamilton is the number one place for future growth. Is that something that has been taken into consideration when calculating the enrolment projections?

A. It is difficult to determine because things change however we need to look at the trends. It can fluctuate over time however we look at the overall trend.

Q. A question was asked about the chart – the total number of students has increased amongst the pre-school age. The bulk of the growth was between 1996 and 2001. It appears that the enrolment is staying the same.

A. the growth was between 1996 and 2001 so it has been steady over the past few years however the growth is slowly declining and not all of the elementary students go on to the public secondary schools.

Q. Looking at the enrolment projections for each school it appears that the decrease for Ancaster and West Hamilton is maybe 10% and Dundas is 30%. Why is there such a vast decrease in Dundas?

A. Mr. Del Bianco will have to go back and look at the data.

Q. We rely on these numbers. How accurate are these numbers? Can we find out historically how accurate we are with these numbers? Is it +/- 2% for example?

Q. What is the difference between a new house and resale? A yield of .6 or .7 out of 10 less how many go to a catholic school, home school or French school? Waterdown has a large new residential area how can that school support that many kids even with the new extension has been added. It is a school outside of the ARC however it is not something that we should ignore.

A. Superintendent Lavery shared that Waterdown currently has 1250 students and it is designed for 980 which explains why there are portables. With the extension the school can accommodate 1750 students so there is room for growth. If it still proves to not be large enough then it will have to be addressed again.

Q. Do we have any focus to get the kids back from the Catholic Board at the Secondary level? She feels that we should be focusing on getting our students back from the Catholic Board.

A. Enrolment is not everything. It is the programs as well and that is why the Board is looking at changing the program strategy.

C. We are making decisions based on projections. If they are wrong then we can lose students or they could end up in portables. When looking at the data from JK to grade 8 it seems that the data does not mean anything. One cohort that is in common is that JK started at 3100 and had 3500 graduating students. We need to look at the cohorts. Have we had kids moving in through immigration? Have we lost some to the Catholic Board? I am not certain about the reality of the numbers and making decision on things that are changing.

A. Even if you take a snapshot in time we are still faced with vacancy in the schools and that needs to be addressed. Projections are not exact however they are a starting point. We do pick up kids along the way however if you look at the graduating grade 8's you will see the decline. We need to do what is the best for the students in the cluster and we need to take a snapshot in time today and work with what we have available to us. There is still growth in Hamilton however it is not with the schools involved in this area.

Q. There is no doubt about surplus space. Would a new school bring in new students assuming that the new school is located in the proper area as well as good programming is provided?

Q. When we look at enrolment projections there is quite a decrease in the Dundas area. Should we be looking at building a new school and creating a business case or adding an addition and creating a business case for that?

A. Enrolment alone would not be a good driving force for a business case because as funds become scarcer the Government wants strong business case scenarios.

Q. Do we have any idea of how many of our Dundas students attend the catholic (St. Mary's) secondary after grade 8? The catholic schools are drawing a lot of students because of programming and athletics. If we fix Highland up I feel that we will lose more. Does the Catholic Board have a plan to build a secondary school in Waterdown? Why are we not bussing kids down hwy 5 to Dundas instead of building a mega school in Waterdown?

A. Superintendent Laverty stated that a number of years ago they did consider bussing the students to Dundas however it was not well received by the community.

A. Trustee Bishop stated that Waterdown does not see itself as part of the HWDSB but sees itself more as Halton. The community there has come together to form a group known as "WE" where they had a large number of community meetings to discuss this. Waterdown is in a growth area however Dundas and Ancaster were once a growth area however their growth has slowed down.

Q. Trustee Brennan commented on the declining enrolment and wanted to know if students are going to another school board.

A. Programming is an important piece. We are not promoting it as much in the community. The principals are but not the community. Enrolment numbers in Dundas have been challenged in the past however those numbers were shown to be correct.

Q. The population is growing so the true problem is not the base number of people. So is the problem the declining number of students or getting those students back from other schools? If we continue to adapt to the declining enrolment then it will continue to decline.

A. This goes back to the point that you as a Committee are tasked with that is looking at the proper programs in the proper schools then we can look at drawing the students back not just maintaining the enrolment. School location and where students' friends go is a big draw.

C. We are embarking on a project that will provide us with that opportunity to look at programming in the schools. Is it going to affect things if we are off the mark just a little bit with our numbers? Being

more current, having good programs and working toward having accurate numbers this is what we need to build our enrolment.

Q. Do we have the numbers to show how many students moved over to the Catholic Board?

A. If the students leave us we may not be able to say where they are going. The principals sometimes get that information. With regard to the Waterdown comment – every community views themselves as their own unique community and don't necessarily feel that they are part of Hamilton. Not just Waterdown.

C. Part of the issue is Hwy 6 and part is the community facility. A lot of the people in their community want to go to Waterdown because of the facilities that they have.

A. Even small changes in enrolment compound over time. 25 less students in a school each year become 100 in four years because small classes stay small. In grade 12 there is a blip due to victory lap.

4.0 Accommodation Options and Program Plan

The Chair shared that the Committee had received two packages of summary notes from the previous two working group meetings. The first had a focus on accommodation options and the second had a program focus.

4.1 Concepts, Ideas and Issue Discussed – Mr. Del Bianco stated to the Committee that the meeting objectives for the night would include:

- An overview of the concept options.
- Review the concept options in working groups.
- Develop a “pros” and “cons” list for each option.
- Determine how many options the Committee would like to present at the public meeting.
- Consider how to incorporate the program strategy.
- Nominate one ARC member from each working group to present at the public meeting.
- Reconvene as a large group to discuss the results.

Maps were distributed to illustrate some of the options that came out of the group work. The concept options were as follows:

- A. Close Parkside and Highland and build a new school in Dundas – site still to be determined.
- B. Close Parkside and Highland and build 2 new schools - site still to be determined.
- C. Close Parkside and Highland and build a new school on the Highland site.
- D. Close Parkside and Highland and build a new school on the Parkside site.

4.2 Questions and Comments

Q. Is there any land available at this time?

A. We have not looked into that yet however we may need to if the Committee is heading in that direction.

Q. Can we purchase land that is adjacent to Parkside where the big fields are located?

A. Those are the type of things that you as a Committee can consider.

Q. Is building two new schools not counter productive to what we are here to do if we are considering the enrolment challenges?

A. Option B should actually be one school with two different wings.

C. Mr. Del Bianco had some difficulty reading the notes so he apologized for the oversight.

Q. Are these options going to the public?

A. Yes, some will be presented at the public meeting and all will be on the website.

4.3 Accommodation Options – Discussions in Small Groups

Everyone broke out into small groups to discuss the pros and the cons of the above listed options and to elect one person from each group to present at the public meeting.

There was consensus to extend the meeting to 9:30 p.m.

4.4 Reports from Small Groups

Group One

Spokesperson is heather MacDonald

- There is only one option that they would not present and that is option B.
- There was consensus in the group that they want to meet the needs in the Dundas area with a new facility.
- They were not interested in renovating because they felt that it would send the wrong message to the students and trigger them to go to the Catholic Board.
- They did not have all of the information, for example where they could build so they considered building on a neutral site however they don't know if this is feasible.
- Considered building on an existing site however they don't know how difficult that would be with students on site.
- Is there an option to buy the City owned land and build on there while the students remain in the existing school?
- There was a clarification of Option B and the group thought that it was a brilliant idea and they could have the grade 9 & 10 students at Parkside and the grade 11 & 12 students at Highland while the new school was being built.

Group 2

The spokesperson was Judy Shen

The pros of Options A, C & D

- More effective transportation services

- More community and repatriate

Cons

- They are not presenting option A because there is no solid site.
- Option C – building at the Highland site – the 18 acres is a positive however the traffic could be a challenge and the road would need to be adjusted. Option C can be presented.
- Option D – the site size is problematic and not presentable.
- Option B has 2 campuses and more specialized programming – this supports the solution to the challenge and is a good transition plan.

Group 3

The spokesperson was Boris Williams

- Option A – the site is to be determined so this was not a good option to present.
- Option C – rebuild on the existing Highland site which is the largest site and does not require additional land purchases.
- Wanted to create two additional options “E” and this would include a self paced programming and bring self paced students into the Board. This would be at Parkside so both of the schools would remain open. The Committee were concerned that this would cause other schools to lose enrolment due to the students leaving their catchment area.
- Option “F” – the closure of Parkside, Highland and Ancaster and build a new school on Highland and on the Ancaster site. A new Ancaster site would draw students because the staff and community are concerned with the state of the current Ancaster site.

There was discussion about which options to present. It was recommended that the Committee present options A, the revised version of option B and option C. The Committee were not comfortable presenting options E and F because not all of the groups had the opportunity to discuss these. There was further discussion around this idea.

There was no consensus to extend the meeting until 10 p.m. however the Committee agreed to extend for an additional five minutes.

A motion was put forth to include Option E however that motion did not pass. The motion passed to present Options A, B and C.

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.