

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

West Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Education Centre Board Room

September 20, 2011

Working Meeting #7

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair –Superintendent Sharon Stephanian

Voting Members –Deborah Beedie, Rosemary Bellefeuille, Allyssa Horning, Lori King, Deborah Knoll, Heather MacDonald, Judy Shen, Boris Williams

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

Regrets

Voting Members - Christopher Austin, Phyllis Chasty, Lawrie Cook, Bea Howell, Sharon Ricci,

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

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Don Hall, Jim Wibberley, Robert Fex

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1.0 Call to Order

Superintendent Stephanian welcomed everyone to the seventh 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.

2.0 Agenda <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/West-ARC-Agenda-September-20th1.pdf>

2.1 Additions and Deletions – There were no additions to the Agenda.

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

3.0 Data and Option Updates – Dan Del Bianco

Mr. Del Bianco went over the updates with the Committee. Facilities and Planning did a great deal of work over the summer. Mr. Del Bianco introduced Bob Fex, the Senior Planner of Accommodation & Planning and Don Hall our Senior Facilities Manager.

4.0 Accommodations Options

Mr. Fex explained each of the Committee's options. He shared what the existing boundaries were and what the proposed changes would be. The Staff recommendation was included in this explanation. To view the options please click on the following link: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/West-Secondary-Accommodation-Review-Options-Sept20-2011.pdf>

The boundaries were the same for Options 1, 2 and 3 because essentially it is the same option and the change would be where a new school would be placed. An implementation date of 2014/2015 was used due to the time required to create and implement the changes.

Questions:

Q. I am confused with the utilization rate – why does utilization change in staff option?

A. It is the reassignment of the students. Ancaster would be taking in the rural students. In the ARC proposals the boundaries have not changed.

Q. Is this the first time that the rural students will be going to Ancaster?

A. What the planning department tried to do was maximize the school space in order to have three vibrant schools. The Chair shared that staff recommendations can change over time and so this is what their thinking was at the time the recommendation was made.

Q. Do people know where Freulton is? Those parents will not accept this.

C. A Committee member shared that she feels that this is dangerous and it will cause more students to switch to the Catholic School. This would have students on the bus for 45-50 minutes.

The Staff Recommendation was the closure of Parkside and the relocation of students in the remaining schools and in the ARC options is the closure of two schools and the allocation of students to a new 1250 pupil place school.

Mr. Del Bianco reviewed the financial component. He reminded the Committee that this is simply a tool to support the Committee in making their decision. To view the Financial Summary please click on the following link: <http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/ARC-Financial-Summary-WEST-Sept-20-2011.pdf>

Planning commissioned site appraisals and the average price per acre is \$400,000.

The subtotal represents the bare minimum to get these options up and running. It does not account for any renovations to existing classrooms or the building.

Q. In option 3 is the land just a wash with the sale of two properties and the purchase of a 15 acre site?

A. The financials show this further down the page. The Chair shared this information with the Committee.

C. A Committee member stated that she finds it scary that the Board is putting students in Highland without any renovations.

C. This is a snapshot at the time of implementation but it doesn't consider that down the road the Board will be spending millions of dollars to keep the existing schools up and running.

Q. Have we looked at land options?

A. We have not been able to find a 15 acre piece of land to date. We may have to look at industrial land. Mr. Del Bianco shared the steps the North ARC has taken and that they are looking at a piece of land which will be centrally located.

C. A Committee member shared that everyone should read the correspondence that they received today beginning with "Hi Jessica".

Q. In the estimated renewal costs what proportion pertains to Westdale and to Ancaster?

A. 47% pertains to Ancaster and 53% pertains to Westdale.

Q. if we go with the Staff Recommendation there would be upgrades to Highland necessary. Are these included in this spreadsheet?

A. In the Staff recommendation with the closure of one school HWDSB would reinvest the money from the disposition into the existing schools.

C. With 2015 being the implementation date have the costs to keep the two schools running been factored into this?

A. These costs would be handled in the year to year operation costs so it is not reflected in the chart.

Mr. Del Bianco spoke of the timelines and the 3rd public meeting which is currently scheduled for Oct 3rd. He asked the Committee if they would like to include all of these options and if they wanted to include the Staff Recommendation.

4.1 Full Committee Discussion of the Accommodation Options

Q. Are we able to add options? I liked Laurie Swackhammer's option which is to close Parkside and build a new school on the Highland site. Ancaster would have enrolment challenges so we could look at a boundary change and bring the MacNab students back as well as the rural Highland students. When the students have been shifted then it makes a case to have two new schools. We would have one large

school in Ancaster and one in Dundas. Enrolment in Ancaster is boosted and it addresses the Highland and Parkside issue. We could move the Westmount students into a larger facility like MacNab. This keeps the program in a larger school. This would boost the Ancaster enrolment and address the dysfunction of the existing building which affects the programming.

C. I see Ancaster as a renovation not a new build.

A. We can make a MacNab boundary change recommendation however we have no control over that process because it was outside of the Terms of Reference.

C. I would like to see this as an option 4.

C. It would take some of the money to update Ancaster.

Q. Can we start bleeding ARCs because Waterdown will be in dire straights when all of the new builds end?

Q. Mr. Wibberley stated that the mandate of the ARC and the Terms of Reference recommend restricting conversations to schools within the ARC. Can we make a recommendation for boundary re-alignment?

A. It would be a recommendation for a boundary change only.

Q. I took the summer to pull all of this information together so how long would it take to look at the dollar and cents for Option #4?

Mr. Hall stated that Option #4 needs to be clarified and asked the following questions:

- Do we want to right size Ancaster?

- What exactly would we be doing for Ancaster – take off the east wing and add onto the west wing?

- The final on the ground capacity would be 1200 pupil place so are we reducing the numbers by 156 students? We would have to do it in the context of what we currently know because we can't base it on the MacNab students coming over to Ancaster Secondary.

C. If we get a new school in Waterdown and one in Dundas and have "the hood" in Ancaster the parents will send their children to Bishop Tonnos.

Q. It is going to be a hard sell to get one new school so to ask for two - is this not unreasonable?

Q. Can we just say "renovate" Ancaster?

A. It will depend on what the renovation includes because building a science lab versus building a new gym – the cost difference is huge.

C. The more specific we are the better and we don't want to wait long term because that is not good. I like the suggestion to think "big." We are talking about replacing the operational part of the school and we would save the pool, the auditorium and the gym. We could even keep the tech area. It would be a rebuild of the science labs, the class rooms and the administration offices.

C. If we renovate the school it will not look as good as a new school however we could have some great programs which would draw the students.

Q. Could we look at removing the wing and rebuild based on the classroom needs of this school and current enrolment?

Mr. Hall stated that Facilities Management actually looked at downsizing the schools this summer because of the challenge with the utilization rate. We could look at this but the challenge remains of where will the rural students go? We could possibly make boundary changes in those areas. We may have a 1000 pupil places in Ancaster, 1000 pupils places in Dundas and 1600 pupil places in Waterdown.

We want to create a long term vision with the right size school that is state of the art so that in 2020 we can attain this vision. We need a very strong business case to the Ministry to secure those funds so perhaps we would need to phase it in. The Ministry will look at long term renewal needs and utilization rates. Many Boards will put together a very compelling business case and get zero dollars.

Q. Have we looked at program strategy and have we moved the programming around?

A. At the moment the program strategy is based on the staff recommendation. Once the Committee has made some decisions then we will look at the Program Strategy.

There have been some suggestions for right sizing schools. There would be program implications when adjusting the school size. We don't want to go too far below 1000 pupil places. We could offer a good program if the school is at capacity with 1000 to 1250 school. Around the world classrooms are changing and students don't attend every day or at the same time.

C. We have heard that if schools have less than 1000 pupil places then often they do not have the types of programming that we would like to see. We need to know what effect this would have on programming if we are talking about a smaller school.

We are seeing that school is changing. It will not always be students sitting in classrooms. You have e-learning. You will need at least 1000 students.

Q. Can we clarify phasing in?

The Committee should look at the most desirable option and if that is not possible then have a second option prepared.

C. I feel that we need to find a new building site. What can we do to deal with the issues at hand currently while we are waiting for the implementation and what can we do with our programming in the meantime to draw students?

C. We need a very strong strategic proposal versus philosophy.

Building on the Parkside site (a four acre site) is not feasible. To put 1200 pupil place on a four acre site will be challenging. Highland is a 17 acre site. If we find a new site then you can build on the new site and move the students over with very little disruption.

Q. How realistic do you think it is that we are asking for a new school? If we have one shot at this should we be building one large school in Ancaster...I hate the thought of this however it may be a better option?

Mr. Del Bianco shared that the North ARC is looking to close three schools to get a new school centrally located and this is what the Ministry would love to see. You have to build a very strong business case.

You can increase utilization by downsizing some of the schools. It is a numbers game at the Ministry. That would also be a compelling case.

Q. Based on your expert opinion what is our best shot?

Mr. Del Bianco stated that he can't tell the Committee what to do and it has to be the Committee's decision. He did indicate that the more the Committee can take off of the renewal needs the more it will help. You must have a strong business case.

Q. Do we have a traffic pattern from the City if we move the students to Highland?

A. If the Committee wants to build new on Highland then the Board will make the necessary inquiries.

This still needs to go to the Board of Trustees; however, we need to make some decisions and have discussion around this.

C. The critical items and upgrades came right out of the SIPs. This has a life cycle of 20 years.

Q. In the absence of Ministry funding what do we do?

A. If the Ministry does not fund a new school then there would be no new school.

C. Currently there is no 15 acre site available or we could look in the industrial area.

Q. What would be the possibility of getting a parcel of land or locate a parcel of land prior to us making our final report?

A. It is challenging to get land in the Dundas area and it is perhaps not the best choice to build on the Parkside site.

Q. If the Ministry says no to the funding then does it default back to the Staff Recommendation?

C. I think that we need to have a back up plan if the new school is not feasible.

Option #4 was summarized. It is to demolish the east wing at Ancaster and renovate and right size the west wing and the closure of Parkside and Highland and rebuild a new school on Highland or a better site.

Consensus was given to have Staff cost this.

Option #5 was summarized. It is to close of all three schools and build a school centrally located. A motion was put forth to have staff cost this as well as transportation costs.

The costing of this is the easiest of all.

Consensus was not given; however the motion was carried by a vote of 6 to 2 in favour of having this costed.

Consensus was given to remove Option #2 - rebuilding on the Parkside site.

#6 Option - close Parkside and Highland and rebuild on a new site or Highland – consensus was given to keep this option.

Consensus was given to remove Option #3.

Some Committee members wanted to remove Parkside or Highland from option #6 and just have the motion say “to build new on new site or alternate site” however consensus was not reached and the motion failed by a vote of 6 to 2.

C. Traffic patterns are out of the scope of this committee.

Q. Mr. Del Bianco asked the Committee if they wanted to right size all of the options and say for example a new school would be 1000 and the same with Ancaster? This would reduce cost and utilization of the school. A “yes” answer was received.

C. Highland could have the new program implemented with little costs.

Q. A member of the Committee stated that the current bodies would be 1350 and if you attract students from St. Mary’s this number could be awkward. Will we end up with portables?

Q. Do we put this on the web site?

A. Yes everything that the Committee has goes on the web site?

Q. Does that include lockers and the science rooms?

A. The school has a certain capacity because they used to have 1000 lockers in there. The science rooms have been added in the cost however if the science rooms need updating then that will be part of the regular updates and not affect the ARC.

5.2 Focus on a Recommendation

Mr. Wibberley shared that the Committee has to go to the Final Public Meeting with a recommendation and can’t change their option after they present it to the public. He stated that at the next public meeting the Committee will need to work toward having their option set in order to receive feedback from the public.

Q. Will the parents have the opportunity to see what the options will be prior to the public meeting? Will they be advertised on a flyer or the web site?

A. This is something that can be put on the Agenda for the next meeting for the Committee to discuss.

Q. Can we get the cost for Highland to bring it up to capacity if we are moving students into the school? To move Parkside students to Highland we would need a new gym, science labs and an auditorium.

A. In the million plus dollars there in money included to build two new science labs. The gym that is there will suffice to handle the 943 students in that school. In order to offer the program those dollars equate to one million ... if you want a new gym that would have to be added. The school can handle the number of proposed students.

Trustee Brennan shared her concern that the community would be losing a gym. She stated that the Committee would like a newer gym at Highland and another one added. They would also like the cafeteria, science labs, washrooms and computer labs updated as well as an auditorium added. There is currently lots of parking.

A. We will cost out all of these items ... school a la carte.

C. It is unthinkable to have only one gym in Dundas.

Consensus was not given to extend to 9:15; however consensus was given to extend the time a bit longer.

There was concern expressed that the 300 students that will be sent to Ancaster won't want to go.

Q. Do the Councillors vote?

A. No they are non-voting members and have no decision powers.

There was concern expressed that they have not shown up.

The decision will be made by the Board of Trustees not the City Councillors.

5.0 Minutes of the meeting of June 16, 2011

5.1 Errors or Omissions – there were none.

5.2 Approval of the Minutes – The minutes were approved by consensus.

5.3. Business Arising from the Minutes

5.3.1 Facility Partnership Update - Mr. Del Bianco spoke of Facility Partnerships and shared that they had received a total of 18 expressions of interest for space within HWDSB. Of those 18, five could potentially meet the screening criteria according to the interim Facility Partnership policy which was passed by the Board in June. Some of the criteria include:

- The health and safety of students must be protected.
- Partnerships must be appropriate for a school setting.
- Partnerships must not compromise the student achievement strategy.
- No entities that provide competing education services such as private schools/colleges or credit offering entities are eligible.

Mr. Del Bianco shared that the Board reached out to the community through a number of mediums. There was an advertisement in the Hamilton Spectator. There was also outreach through social media channels such as Twitter and Facebook. The Board's website featured the application prominently on its homepage. There was an article in the Hamilton Community News as well as the Hamilton Spectator indicating that space was available. The Board also reached out to its current partners, not-for-profits and organizations outlined in the Regulation 444. This is the Regulation governing the disposition of property. In total, 440 letters were distributed to the community. The Facilities department is in the process of contacting those organizations that meet the screening criteria to get a better understanding

of the facility requirements. Mr. Del Bianco shared that Boards are not expected to take on additional costs to support Facility Partnerships. They must be cost neutral.

5.3.2 Other

Q. Can we look at programming planning on the Agenda for the next meeting?

Mr. Del Bianco stated that we can say “here are the programs that we are offering – where would you like to see them placed?” If there is not enough time then it will be presented at the last public meeting.

6.0 Other Business

6.1 ARC Timelines – There was discussion on flipping the next public meeting with the next working group meeting. Consensus was given to have the next public meeting on November 1, 2011 and the working group meeting on October 11, 2011.

6.2 Planning for the Public Meeting – this will be addressed at the next working group meeting.

7.0 Correspondence – There was correspondence included in the handouts.

8.0 Adjournment – The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.