

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

South Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Barton Secondary School

January 19, 2012

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair -Scott Sincerbox

Voting Members - Bill Barrett, Beverly Bressette, Jackie Brown, Alexandra Butty, Ken Durkacz, Margaret Eagle, Kim General, Al Pierce, Anne Pollard, Cheryl Poot, Susan Pretula, John Whitwell

Non-Voting Members - Wanda Bielak, Gary Deveau, Angela Ferguson, Randy Gallant, Mag Gardner, Brian Greig, Wes Hicks, Peter Joshua, Deb Jukes, Renee Majic, Joanna Maull, John Miholics, Lillian Orban, Laura Peddle,

Regrets

Voting Members - Alexandra Ewing, Derek Hambly,

Non-Voting Members - Donna Clappison, Scott Duvall, Patrick Elliott, Manny Figueiredo, Tom Jackson, Kevin Robinson, Paul Vukosa, Terry Whitehead

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Jim Wibberley, Ian Hopkins

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Scott Sincerbox introduced himself and welcomed everyone to the fourth South ARC Public meeting. He thanked everyone for their interest in the process and the contribution they will make to this accommodation review. There was thanks extended to Barton Principal Deb Jukes for hosting this event and the Chair introduced each of the ARC members.

2.0 Opening Remarks

Superintendent Sincerbox shared that at tonight's meeting we will do four things:

The first is to provide a very brief overview of the accommodation review process.

The second is to offer a look at the work completed by the South ARC at its meetings. If you are interested, all the information the committee has received and approved minutes are available to the public on the Board's website.

Thirdly we will share the South ARC's final recommendations that will be submitted to the Board of Trustees along the next steps in the process.

And the fourth piece is to provide members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

3.0 Presentations – Daniel Del Bianco, Al Pierce, Jackie Brown

To view the presentation please click on the following link: http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/SouthARC_Public_Meeting4_Presentation-Jan19_2012-Final.pdf

3.1 Brief Overview of the Accommodation Review Process – Daniel Del Bianco

Mr. Del Bianco spoke of the surplus space in schools and the decline in the enrolment. Funding is based on a per pupil basis so there are increased costs and fewer dollars available to maintain schools.

The ARC is tasked with coming up with a recommendation.

There are four recommendations that the Committee has put together and these will be submitted to the Director on Friday, February 3rd in a report. The Trustees make the ultimate decisions.

3.2 Work Completed by the South ARC – Al Pierce

Al Pierce spoke about the process that the Committee has undergone to date. He spoke about Westmount and the fact that it was not included in the ARC. They did receive information showing that 87% of the students came from other South ARC schools and the Committee felt that there would not be declining enrolment if these students were in their home school. The Committee proceeded with their work to come up with four options and these options are not prioritized. The Committee have four options because they felt it was better to have more than one option for the following reasons:

1. The unique influence that Westmount plays out on the Mountain.
2. The Committee do not have a known site for a new school.
3. They wanted to deal with Mountain Secondary School separately.

Susan Pretula thanked everyone for coming to the meeting this evening. She introduced Jackie Brown.

3.3 Recommendations of the South ARC – Jackie Brown

Jackie Brown spoke about the options not being prioritized. Options B, C, D all have Sir Allan MacNab closing and the only way that these options work is with the movement of the Westmount program.

To view the options chart please click on the attached link and see page 16.

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/SouthARC_Public_Meeting4_Presentation-Jan19_2012-Final.pdf

The latest option is to keep Sherwood open and switches the closure of Barton and Sherman. The Committee's concern was that it took a lot of work and a year to come up with these options. The Committee was told from day one that they could have more than one option. Jackie Brown spoke about the maps for each of the options.

She shared that the switching the program of Hill Park and Westmount is due to location. Hill Park is central across the Mountain and can draw from the entire city.

Mr. Del Bianco shared the area of the land sites that the Board currently owns but the Committee preferred a larger site and located in the South East area.

Option D was brought back for a second time at last week's working group meeting and voted as an option to go before the Trustees.

Jackie Brown shared that the Committee are confident in the four options that have been recommended by the Committee.

Mr. Del Bianco shared the estimated costs of the four options with the Community and the funding that would be required from the Ministry of Education. Mr. Del Bianco spoke to the Legacy costs chart. Legacy costs are the upgrades that are required to keep a school up and running e.g. new floors, new windows, new heating system, etc.

Jackie Brown spoke to the additional recommendations and the Mountain Schools. The committee spent many hours discussing the Mountain students and program.

The program options were only discussed at the last working group meeting. The Westmount school program came up for discussion and the Committee felt that since it is a system school it could be moved. This will happen after the conclusion of the ARC and some feel that it is outside of our Terms of Reference so this would happen post ARC.

Mr. Del Bianco shared the Next Steps:

The Chair reviewed the meeting norms:

4.0 Questions/Comments from the public – Susan Pretula

Robert Whitelaw has been to many of the meetings. He commented on the difficult process and the dedication of Committee members and staff. He spoke about the new Board of Education and the

closing of schools. Changes will be happening to the programs and this will affect the most vulnerable students – Tier 1 and Tier 2. The transition from grade 8 to 9 is difficult for all students but magnified for the Mountain Students. Theatres are not covered in this cost of a new school. Pools are not covered in the costs of a new school. He feels the Board is trying to bite off too much to close schools and build new schools, move students and build a new Ed Centre. He would like to have an outside source cost the upgrades that Sherwood would require as he does not believe that 32 million is correct. What about transportation costs? Many people have asked this question and this has not been answered. Transportation will be a 40 year cost.

Mr. Del Bianco shared that transportation funding is separate from capital funding and they come from two different pots. When looking at the end result there is only a 3-4% difference for the bussing costs. The students who are currently bussed are now within walking distance.

ReCAPP data is the software that determined the number of 32 million. In 2003 the Ministry of Education sent out engineers to assess 5000 schools. These were independent engineers and based on their analysis at this particular school the engineers determined the life cycle of the components of the school. This is a Ministry of Education software program that all schools across the Province are mandated to use. Each of the components are assessed equally and given a life cycle and this is what we need to use to determine the capital funding that is required. If the software says that the roof needs to be replaced this year it may in fact not happen as it may last another five years. 32 millions is not a definitive answer it is a rough estimate – this is simply a tool. The costs could be higher or lower. Theatres and pools are not funded by the Ministry of Education. We are dealing with this in the North and West ARC as well. The other ARCs are looking for community partners, like Theatre Ancaster, and the reality is the funding is not the same as it was years ago. Funding is based on the number of students enrolled and this is what they use to fund long term needs in the 117 schools. 10 million dollars is used to maintain 117 schools therefore they need to cut costs and eliminate and amalgamate some of the schools with decreased enrolment.

A gentleman spoke about enrolment numbers and transportation. He feels that no decisions should be made on the closure of schools until the new school site has been determined because this will impact transportation costs, enrolment numbers, etc. He feels that this is crucial and asked the Committee to please consider this and asked the audience members to please honour the Committee members and if you have a problem with the Ministry of Education or the Board please don't take it out on the ARC members.

Jackie Brown shared that the Committee had a presentation from the City of Hamilton and no new site was spoken about.

Can you give us a cost of Staff's recommendation?

The Staff recommendation is also proposing a new school. The Staff recommendation included the closure of Barton, Sherwood and Mountain. Mr. Del Bianco felt that the costs would not be that different from the ARCs recommendations. He shared the costs of a 1000 pupil place school. These are estimates only at this point in time.

Susan Pretula shared that money was never what the ARC was concerned about. The Committee was more concerned with what is good for students.

Q. If you move the Westmount program to Hill Park – it will not have the facilities to run the Westmount programs. The Westmount school has provided his children with wonderful programs and they have excelled at this school. He shared that if these students aren't looked after then they will be going to Sir Thomas Moore.

A Sherwood parent is concerned that there are four recommendations going to the Board and this may cause the Trustees to look at the Staff recommendation. He would like the Trustees and Staff to look at the data that is from 2003.

Mr. Del Bianco shared that when the Board does work at the schools those costs are removed from the RECAPP Data so it is a fluid number and is not stationary.

Q. Are these numbers from a year ago?

A. Yes they are but if the members requested updated data they would have received it.

Q. Has the ARC asked for updated data?

A. No we have not.

Q. We are talking about closing Sherwood that has air conditioning, an auditorium with a large screen. What would the costs be to put air conditioning in Barton? He felt that the closure of Delta could support the option of keeping Sherwood open.

A. Barton has air conditioning already.

There was a question regarding the enrolment under the four options.

Mr. Del Bianco shared the enrolment of each option.

A gentleman said that he was disgusted that the closure of Sherwood was even being considered.

Steve Stirling shared the legacy costs that were estimated through the RECAPP data to be 32 million dollars.

Q. A gentleman shared a statement that Associate Director Ken Bain made in the Mountain news back in November 2011. He shared the dollar amounts that each school received over the past 10 years. Was it intentional that Sherwood received fewer dollars?

A. No it was not intentional. The Facilities Management (FM) team made a presentation to the Trustees on the needs of the schools. The needs are based on high and urgent needs and for every \$18 dollars of need we have \$1.00 to apply to it.

Susan Pretula shared that the FM team make recommendations; however, the final decision is made by the Board of Trustees for the allocation of funds.

Q. What does it cost to have portables when there are open classrooms here?

A. Portables are \$100,000 brand new and they are used as a last resort.

Superintendent Mag Gardiner stated that a portable was added to Westmount due to a flood this year. There are a total of 7 portables currently on site.

A mother of Sherwood spoke about the legacy costs and requested that the Board prioritize the costs and remove the wish list and look at the must haves.

Judy Davies, Head of Westmount School Council stated that moving a significant school population (50%) would require an ARC so how could you move the program under an ARC? If you move the Westmount program you are moving 1400 people and this is a vivacious and thriving program. We have not had representation at the table.

Susan Pretula shared that a system program could be portable. Under the Terms of Reference we could not move it; however, we can make a recommendation for the movement of the program post ARC.

Mr. Wibberley and Mr. Del Bianco, as resource staff, have shared that in their opinion the Westmount program is outside of the Terms of Reference. It can not be a primary recommendation; however, the Committee can put it under additional recommendations. We have discussed Westmount but we have not had representation of Westmount in the process.

Jackie Brown spoke about Sherwood moving 1300 students and we as an ARC asked that Westmount be included and every school should have been included in the process. Perhaps they should be asking their Trustees why they weren't included. Your students and boundaries will be affected.

Q. There seems to be two objectives to this Committee. Is it to secure a new super school or is it having the school at 100% capacity.

Susan Pretula stated that the growth area is South of the Linc not East/West. We have looked at increasing utilization in our cluster.

Q. Which is the Committee's priority? Where do you get the support that a super school would be advantageous?

Susan Pretula was unsure as to why there was a perception of a super school. It is no larger than the current school and we are looking at having new programs.

The new school would be 1000 pupil places which is smaller than Barton. The reason for the new school and move en masse was that students would not have to move three times during their school career.

Q. To close two schools right next to each other seems like a bad idea. I am happy if a school is built up near Rymal I believe that would be a good idea. Why not build on the Sherwood site if there is no change in the bussing costs? This would leave a school in the Sherwood area where people who bought a home in the area can maintain a school in their neighbourhood. Has the school Board considered the movement of the Westmount program or considered the ARC's recommendations?

A. Westmount is a system wide school so you need consultation with the Community in order to move the program and they have not been consulted during this process.

Q. What tool was used to predict the school enrolment? There are new people moving into the Sherwood area as the elderly people are moving away.

Mr. Del Bianco stated that there are 1500 surplus pupil places in the South ARC which equivalent to one very large secondary school being empty but still needing to be heated and maintained. The plateau is when you see the regeneration of neighbourhoods. You get an influx of students over a two year period but it does not affect enrolment greatly. New neighbourhoods are different because you have houses built over a four year period. The Board has software that it uses as well as live birth data, JK enrolment, Stats Canada and new developments are all taken into consideration for enrolment projections. It will regenerate; however, it won't fill up 1500 pupil places.

Q. Is this reliable?

Mr. Del Bianco shared that the number will not be exact; however, they will be close. There is 40 year enrolment data on the Board web site.

Mark Harrington spoke about option E which keeps Sherwood open. He does not think that Westmount will be moved so he would like to see an option to keep Sherwood open that does not include moving the Westmount program.

Joanna Maull shared that the Committee can put these forward and the Trustees can take some of the recommendations, all of the recommendations or none of the recommendations.

Susan Pretula shared that we cannot change these recommendations at this point in time.

Al Pierce stated that if we make changes to the recommendations then we have to have another public meeting. We can make small adjustments but not a major change.

Mr. Harrington said that he was not happy with the recommendations because the Board of Trustees can do anything that they want.

Lyla Miklos shared that theatre Ancaster is something unique and it cannot be replaced so she did not hear that Theatre Ancaster would be happy with the loss of the Ancaster auditorium. The day-to-day operations of the FM team are not in need of approval by the Board of Trustees. She noticed that the wording of the Mountain and Parkview students is the same in the additional recommendations.

Anne Pollard stated that many members of the ARC fought long and hard for the Mountain students. We did not get everything that we wanted but we did get a lot. The Mountain students will stay together and we are thrilled that in one of the options the Mountain School will remain open and open up to additional programs as well.

Lyn Hicks spoke about some of the unique programs that are available for Sherwood students and that these programs could be moved. Westmount is a program, a self paced program and she feels that it could be moved as well. She spoke about the ARCs and their recommendation for new schools when the Province is saying that they have no money. What happens if the Province says that only one new school is designated for HWDSB? What happens to the other ARCs?

Mr. Del Bianco shared that the West ARC has asked that the ARC be notified if they do not get the funding.

Q. Would the names of Westmount and Hill Park be switched as well?

A. Jackie Brown shared that she is not sure about that. Susan Pretula indicated that she believes there is a name policy in place at the Board.

Q. What is the reason for switching programs other than central location? Hill Park also has special programs like ART Smart and students come from all over the City and this is not a problem. Does Westmount have the facilities? A lot of money has been spent to update our auditorium to enhance this program. This would be a huge loss if Westmount does not have the facilities.

Q. How long after the April 10th meeting will a decision be made?

A. Mr. Del Bianco shared that on April 10, 2012 the Board of Trustees will hear delegations. The earliest a decision could be made would be in May 2012.

A woman who has a daughter in Sherwood spoke of Mr. Baker and the wonderful music department at Sherwood. She does not understand why a new school needs to be built instead of fixing Sherwood. The heart and soul of that school is second to none.

Q. A Woman purchased a home in the area specifically for Sherwood school. She stated that she couldn't get excited about a recommendation that would include the movement of Westmount when consultants have not recommended these options. She asked someone to explain to her why the 2015 date was used when land needs to be purchased; rezoning needs to happen, etc?

A. Steve Stirling stated that the construction could take 18 – 24 months. The first thing that we have to do is pick a site that both the ARC and the Board are satisfied with. 2015 would be an estimate.

She spoke to the Ministry of Education and 2015 could be attained if land had already been identified. If land is not identified then 2015 is not a possibility.

Steve shared that they don't have land.

Susan Pretula stated that the ARC has indicated that no students will be moved prior to the school being ready for occupancy.

Mr. Del Bianco shared that it could be 2016...there is no definitive date due to many outside factors.

Alyssa Horning asked why the Committee did not narrow down their options.

Jackie Brown shared that the ARC members each represented a particular school and were looking after their own schools. The Committee was charged to come up with options and we have fabulous schools and we could not make decisions to close two of these in order to have a new school.

A man felt that the ARC should come up with expanded options and the need to invest in our students.

Deborah Knoll asked the Committee if they have given any consideration to closing schools that have a pool site next to them and what provisions have been made for these pool sites?

Susan Pretula stated that the Committee have not had a full discussion of this; however, the recreation centres can potentially stand-alone.

C. I think that it would be important to have that answer before making a final decision and the impact that this would have on the Recreation centres and the community.

A woman asked, "When looking at the demographics do you consider all the students who would leave the Public Board and go to the Catholic Board? She shared that she will not be bussing her children and that is why she purchased a home in the area.

Mr. Del Bianco stated that there is no way to quantify this and give her an answer. That is ultimately the parent's decision but the Board is working toward offering better programs and better facilities for the students.

C. Facilities costs at Sherwood are unrealistic. A gentleman spoke about option "D" and "E" and was concerned about the numbers. He wondered if the numbers were correct.

Mr. Del Bianco offered to sit and go over it with him after the meeting.

The gentleman felt that the ARC needs to have another option that keeps Sherwood open and not move the Westmount program.

Q. A lady indicated that the public is more up to date than the Board. You do not have a location yet. If you are closing these schools and moving 2400 students into a new school of 1000 what will happen with the other 1400 students. Will that mean more transportation?

A. Mr. Del Bianco shared that the Board currently owns three sites; however, the ARC did not approve of these sites. The Board is not currently looking for sites because the cost will rise if developers know that the Board is looking for land and they need to know the final outcome from the Board of Trustees. The Board owns a 23-acre site in Ward 6; however the ARC did not approve of the site.

C. My suggestion would be to build a new school for students who need it in the area and leave the remaining schools open.

C. A gentleman wanted the Board to look at keeping Sherwood open. It has a full enrolment and students continue to come to this school despite the fact that this school has not had money invested in it for the last ten years.

Q. What recourse does the public have if the ARC has had their hands tied, and we don't like the outcome or the recommendations?

A. Jim Wibberley indicated that there is an appeal process. The community cannot appeal the decision if they are not happy with the outcome; however, they can appeal if there was some error in the process.

Mark Harrington stated that the Board has made a commitment to have a school in ward 6.

Mr. Del Bianco indicated that the ARC is looking at the South East corner so that will be in Ward 6.

Mr. Whitelaw stated the new apartment buildings will be built on Upper Gage and on Upper Ottawa that will have 500 apartments. Over the last 10 years how many students have left the public Board and gone to the Catholic Board? The Catholic Board is building new schools because they are getting all of the students from the Public Board. He asked if Sherwood did not get funding because it was in great repair or did it not receive money because it was slated for closure. He would like to see an independent body go out and assess the needs of repairing Sherwood school.

Susan thanked everybody for coming and the meeting was adjourned.