

Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB)

West Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Highland Secondary School

January 17, 2011

Public Meeting #4

Minutes

ATTENDANCE:

Committee Members

Chair – Superintendent Sharon Stephanian

Voting Members – Christopher Austin, Deborah Beedie, Rosemary Bellefeuille, Phyllis Chasty, Em Del Sordo, Allyssa Horning, Lori King, Deborah Knoll, Heather MacDonald, Judy Shen, Boris Williams

Non-Voting Members – Gudrun Anderson, Paul Barwinski, Judith Bishop, Jessica Brennan, Michelle DesRochers, Lloyd Ferguson, Rick Hart, Alex Johnstone, Judy Langsner, John Laverty, Virginia McCulloch, Maria Rikic-McCarthy, Laurie Swackhammer, Anne Waldie

Regrets

Voting Members – Bea Howell, Sharon Ricci,

Non-Voting Members – Krys Croxall, Brian Lenart, Brian McHattie, Russ Powers, Dan Thomson

Resource Staff

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

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Sharon Stephanian introduced herself and welcomed everyone to the fourth West ARC Public meeting. She thanked everyone for their interest in the process and the contribution they will make to this accommodation review. There was thanks extended to Highland Principal Rick Hart for hosting this event and the Chair introduced each of the ARC members.

2.0 Opening Remarks

Superintendent Stephanian 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 West 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 West 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

3.1 Brief Overview of the Accommodation Review Process

To view the presentation please click on the following link: http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/WestARC_Public_Meeting4_Presentation-Jan17_2012-Final.pdf

Mr. Del Bianco reviewed "Why we are here tonight" as well as the ARC process. Mr. Del Bianco explained the Terms of Reference

<http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wpcontent/uploads/2010/11/Secondary-West-TOR.pdf>

as well as the difference between the working group meetings and the public meetings. He shared that the ARC works hard to achieve a recommendation and upon completion this report will go to the Board of Trustees (BOT) where they have a minimum of 60 days to make a final decision. Mr. Del Bianco shared the ACR timelines and stated that all of this information is on the Board web site

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/?page_id=20

Why we are here tonight?

- Provide an overview of the Accommodation Review Process
- Review the work completed by the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)
- Review of "Concept Options" created by the ARC
- Next Steps of the ARC
- Receive input from the community on the ARC process and concept options

The Accommodation Review Process

- The process follows Ministry of Education guidelines, Board Policy and the Terms of Reference
- There are Committee working meetings and public meetings
- All meetings are open to the public
- The Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is tasked with developing an accommodation solution that will address the long-term requirements of the community

ARC Recommendations

- The ARC will prepare a report that will be presented to the Board of Trustees
- This report will include the ARC's recommendations
- The Trustees will also receive a report from Senior Administration with their recommendations to the Board of Trustees
- The Board of Trustees will make the final decisions

ARC Timelines:

- 13 Working Group Meetings
- 4 Public Meetings
- ARC work scheduled to conclude in February 2012
- After receipt of final report Trustees have to wait a minimum of 60 prior to voting on a final decision
- Final report due to the Director of Education by February 3, 2012

3.2 Work Completed by the West ARC – Heather MacDonald

Heather MacDonald shared the work completed by the West ARC.

Work Completed by the ARC:

- 12 Working Group Meetings
- 3 Public Meetings
- School Tours
- 2 Presentations
 - Facilities Management Overview
 - Summary of School Visits by Student Representatives
- Reviewed Community Input

Summary of Working Group Meetings:

- 12 working group meeting
- Review of community input
- Explored several different options including:
 - Staff recommendation
 - Closing only Highland/Parkside and constructing a new facility
- Construction of the new facility on the Parkside site
 - Closing all three schools and building one new facility
 - Collaboration with the South ARC
 - Alternate site locations in Dundas and Ancaster
- What we would like to see in the absence of funding from the Ministry of Education
- Recommended programs and proposed locations
- Additional considerations such as the construction of new theatres and the implementation timelines

Summary of Public Meetings:

- 3 Public Meetings
- Committee received delegations at Public Meeting #2
- Provide an overview of the ARC process
- Discuss the work that the West ARC has completed to date
- Address and questions and receive public input on accommodation process and proposed options

Community Input:

- Integral part of the process
- Provided alternate accommodation options for Committee to consider
- Excellent turnout at public meetings and we have some members that attend working group meeting

The mandate of this committee, acting in accordance with the Board’s Pupil Accommodation Review Policy, is to produce a report to the Board that encompasses the following:

- a) Accommodation:** Develop recommendations to maximize the utilization of Board facilities in the review area with a target of 100% utilization for a future ten-year period
- b) Facility Condition:** Develop recommendations for capital improvements (i.e. repairs, renovations or major capital projects such as new construction) into existing facilities and sites along with a funding strategy to pay for those improvements.
- c) Program:** Develop recommendations around the strategic locations of Secondary School programs.
- d) Transportation:** Develop recommendations that address the implications of other recommendations on pupil transportation.
- e) Funding:** Develop a funding strategy to address any capital works that are contemplated in the recommendations above.
- f) Implementation:** Timelines for school closures
- g) Scope:** Ancaster High – Highland – Parkside - Westdale
- h) Timeline:** Final ARC Report Due on **February 3, 2012**

West ARC Accommodation Recommendations:

1. The closure of Highland and Parkside and the construction of a new school on the Highland site (~1,000 pupil places)
2. The closure of Ancaster and the construction of a replacement school on the existing site (~1,000 pupil places)
3. The existing schools that have been identified for closure will remain open until new schools have been built

Heather shared the utilization rate with the building of a new school on the Highland site versus leaving everything status quo. She also shared the estimated cost of the West ARC Options.

Legacy Cost of the West ARC Recommendation:

- With the closure of Ancaster, Highland and Parkside the West ARC recommendation would eliminate approximately \$32 million in deferred capital maintenance (i.e., replacement of windows, boilers, roofs, etc.)
- From approximately \$54 million under the current situation to \$22 million for the ARC recommendation

Parkside Secondary School

- Closure of facility in June 2015
- The catchment area will become part of the new school to be constructed on the Highland site

Highland Secondary School

- Closure of facility in June 2015
- Proposed construction of a new 1,000 pupil place secondary school on the Highland site
- Boundary to include all of the existing Highland and Parkside catchment areas
- Target Opening Date: September 2015

Ancaster High School

- Closure of facility in June 2015
- Proposed construction of a new 1,000 pupil place secondary school on the Ancaster site
- Boundary to include all of the existing Ancaster catchment area
- Target Opening Date: September 2015

Westdale Secondary School

- No change to existing boundary

Additional Recommendations:

- That the new schools will have no less than 1,000 pupil places
- That the existing programs and the appropriate space in the current schools be retained if moved to any new or modified school subject to consultation with the community and schools
- That any new school will include space for community partnerships where interest and support is evident
- To include a theatre style auditorium on each school site and if necessary shared spaces with a music and or theatre focus
- That the Facilities Management Department will consult with the principals and specialists to ensure that the remaining facilities are upgraded to meet the program strategy and address the renewal needs as outlined by the West ARC

3.4 Next Steps

Next Steps of the West ARC:

- **Working Group Meeting #13 (January 25, 2012)**
 - Review input from the community
 - Finalize ARC report

Key Dates:

- **February 3, 2012:** West ARC report submitted to the Director of Education
- **February 16, 2012:** ARC and Staff reports presented at Committee of the Whole meeting
- **April 2, 2012:** Public meeting held by Trustees to receive input on the recommendations

4.0 Questions/Comments from the public – Deborah Knoll

C. A woman thanked the ARC for their hard work and wanted to speak to the comment of short term pain. She made the point that a number of students whole high school term will happen during that short term pain period of time. She attended the November public meeting and felt that there were some significant changes since then. She asked Heather MacDonald to comment on how those changes came about?

A. Heather MacDonald asked if this pertained to Ancaster. Upon finding that it did she shared that Ancaster was slow to happen. They were looking at right sizing the school by eliminating some of the additions. When Staff came back with the information there were a number of serious concerns. They would lose 49% of classrooms and this was not going to address the needs of the school – no labs, new windows – they would simply lose part of the school and sell off part of the land to fund that. The Committee considered other ways to right size Ancaster so they looked at the West wing which would have resulted in the loss of the gym, theatre/auditorium and that area also houses the pool's inner workings? Having considered this they asked for the cost of the new school on the existing site.

Tim Cameron would not like to see a whole sea of portables. 11% of Dundas is between 0-9 years old. He can not see this working and asked the Committee to look at their numbers before making a final decision. He feels that this is a disaster for the business community.

A. We have looked at the numbers and reviewed them carefully.

Bob James shared that he does not like the recommendations. 12 years ago Dundas was forced to amalgamate with the City of Hamilton and have been forced to pay higher property taxes. This is demolition by neglect and he feels the ARC process has not been a success. This started with the closure of Parkside and has ended with the closure of Parkside. One option is to look at Westdale where a large number of students come from the Dundas area. Has the Committee considered having French Immersion (FI) in our schools which would increase the enrolment? He commented on a letter from the Dundas Council opposing the closure of the Dundas School. Could the school have partnerships with the Town and especially with the seniors? He feels that staff set this up for failure.

Deborah Knoll asked Mr. James and the public to bring the information about partnerships back to the Trustees if they are aware of interested groups. Heather MacDonald stated that she would like to see a proposal with some of the arguments that Mr. James shared included in that proposal.

Diana Kenel read a statement directed to the Board. She referenced the Board option which is on the web site.

Don Hall spoke to the Staff recommendation. The staff final recommendation may not be exactly as was presented early in the process since they have also had the opportunity to hear the information that has been presented to the ARC.

Q. 2013 versus 2015 are you talking about a new school or the existing school?

A. 2015 was referenced as a new school.

A. Heather MacDonald shared that there have been many discussions about the recommendations. It is the ARCs recommendation to have no boundary changes. The staff recommendation had boundary changes in their original recommendation and the ARC has not supported the staff recommendation. We do not know the staff recommendation at this time. If it does not fit with what you want then you need to speak to your Trustees. Our ARC has said very clearly that we do not support the Staff recommendation and we have not recommended boundary changes.

Diana Kenel congratulated Deborah Knoll for her dedication and hard work.

A man stated that the ARC committee has done a great job. This gentleman does not think that home owners would want a new school squeezed onto the Highland property while continuing to operate the current Highland. He feels that the Board should go to Parkside. There was concern about construction taking place while Highland continues to be operated.

We would look at how we could accommodate the students during the construction.

A Staff member of Highland spoke to the presentation which will be posted on the web site. They feel that they need a new building not just a face lift. The heating system does not work. She spoke of 21st Century fluencies and the lack of space, inadequate rooms for technology, rooms for multi media and small group collaboration. Highland was built as an occupational school originally and students were only to be here for two years. They will need more labs and a larger learning resource space. She indicated the spaces that will be required to meet the programming needs. A number of the rooms are retrofitted and are very inadequate. They rent space at Redeemer College for music and performance shows. A lot of things are hosted in the gym which interferes with the gym programs. She appreciates the immense amount of hours the ARC has dedicated to the process.

Deborah Knoll shared that a number of the things that were mentioned the ARC has spoken about.

Gord Conroy a member of Theatre Ancaster (a Community Partner) spoke. He shared that it is wonderful to teach in a new school; however, Ancaster has a wonderful Community auditorium. It has value for students, the School and the Community. It provides income for HWDSB. It can not be duplicated in any new school. A 700 seat theatre auditorium can not be replaced by a multi use room. He was happy to hear that the Facilities Management Team will continue to work with the Community Partner. He felt very strongly that the theatre/auditorium can not be replaced and the Board can't afford to eliminate it because it can't be replaced.

Heather MacDonald shared the concerns around the pool as well as the auditorium. The Committee spoke about having the West wing as a stand alone facility so the pool and auditorium could continue to be used.

Nupi Gohkali, another member of Theatre Ancaster stated that it is important to have theatre/auditorium and asked the Committee if they have you looked at shared spaces? Have you looked at how they really work? She works at a facility where there are multi purpose rooms. She indicated that there are some good things; however, there are a number of problems with them as well and she felt that the current auditorium should be left as it is.

A. The ARC has not gone out to see them. The issue is the Ministry of Education will not fund an auditorium so the Board would have to fund it or have community support. Our hope would be that there would be community consultation with the design process.

A gentleman shared that he would like to see a new facility in Ancaster at the original site and would like the Trustees to support that plan.

A teacher/parent at Ancaster spoke about the recreation and leadership program that is run by students and staff and this would cease to exist if the site were to change. He shared that there is no other program like it in Ontario. He stated that they have 200 vouchers per year for the Aquatic centre and it is used everyday of the week. All of the classes use the pool and no transportation is required. The school also uses Cedar Springs across the road, and the students receive training and life long learning. Ancaster is in close proximity to cross country trails and the school uses them for phys Ed programs as well as geography classes. The students utilize the community centre across the street for a drop in centre and the fields are used for soccer tournaments.

An Ancaster Soccer Club member stated that he appreciated the work that the Committee and Trustees have dedicated to this process. He spoke of the 2 ½ thousand soccer players who use this land so please respect the green space. It is unique and the fields are highly utilized so scheduling is not easy. A "Centre of Excellence" comes into Ancaster to witness the students playing soccer and some of them have received scholarships. The Soccer Club run tournaments and they have 25,000 people coming into Ancaster to run and participate in these tournaments so please honour the green space.

Q. Has there been any thought given to what a 1000 population school will create on Governor's Rd in terms of traffic and transportation challenges? This gentleman has an issue with a school that will be so big that his kids will be lost. Have you given any thought to the Province saying no to the funding?

A. Heather MacDonald indicated that transportation has come up around the table and the school Board will have to discuss this with the City. Highland is currently a 1000 pupil place school so if it were at capacity the Community would be dealing with this already. Her personal view point is that it depends on the staff at the school because the Principal knows the name of the 1030 students at Ancaster High. If the Ministry of Education comes back and says that there will be no funding then it will likely fall back on the Staff options; however, we have a shopping list of “must haves.” Things like gyms, science labs, cafeteria, etc.

Michael Bell estimated future enrolment and shared that not all students will be coming to a Public Board because we have a Catholic Board as well. If we are granted funds for one new school do you have a preference of what that would be?

Heather MacDonald said that it is out of the Committees hands at that point. Both communities have equal needs so we have not prioritized it. It might be based on a number of things; however, we have chosen not to pit one community against the other.

Sheldon Macgregor felt that the number one thing is that none of the land at the Ancaster site gets sold. The previous speakers spoke very well about the list of things that happen at Ancaster high. We should not use that land to finance the school in any way. The school is not perfect but I think that we should live with what we have for the time being. Ancaster has a number of technological programs that are wonderful. I would want to ensure that any new school have the same facilities including the theatre/auditorium.

A man shared that his son was in FI in Westdale; however, if he left the FI program he could not remain at Westdale in the English program. He saw a big disparity in the schools between Dalewood, Westdale and Parkside so how are we going to deal with these disparities and how do we avoid the “have and have not” differences?

John Laverty spoke to this question. He indicated that the Board does spend a great deal of time working on providing the schools with the facilities that they require for programming.

Helen Bartley spoke about the fact that Waterdown is shown in the press as doubling in enrolment in the next five years. What happens if we are closing schools when we could need them because they are projecting new development across two boundaries? She spoke about the bussing of the students and the traffic challenges to access Highland. There are a lot of parents concerned about this. Parkside has a big vocal music program. Will it be under program of choice under Highland?

Mr. Del Bianco shared that Waterdown DHS is always an avenue for a boundary change. The 1000 pupil place may not actually be that fixed size since it will be based on the programs, new or moved, enrolment and all schools are designed with an addition already in place should it be required. We look at enrolment projections for the sustainable enrolment. It should not go too high or too low above capacity.

Q. There is an outstanding music program at Highland as well and it is not a program of choice at Parkside. The disposition of funds will not cover the all of the Highland changes so where will the money come from?

Mr. Del Bianco shared that the disposition of funds will go toward the changes. The Board does receive an annual amount of money that needs to spread across the 117 schools and they may need to use that toward the high and urgent needs. Some of the funds would need to be allocated over a course of time.

The students who will be graduating during that time are going to be challenged to get their required 4 "U" credits so is there going to be any coaching for these students in order for them to get the required courses.

Highland Principal Rick Hart shared that they currently work as a team with the students to make this happen. There are circumstances where that is difficult; however we do work toward accommodating these students.

Heather Phillips asked someone from the ARC to explain why they are asking for two new schools? Are we really going to get two new schools? We don't have the same amenities that Ancaster has. We are weakening our position by asking for two new schools.

Heather MacDonald shared that if this school was at capacity it would have 1000 pupil places with its current amenities. I understand that the space is inadequate and acknowledge the challenges with this. We are aware that there are three Secondary ARCs in total. When this is presented to the Ministry of Education it is done Board wide. HWDSB would be closing 8 or 9 schools and building four new schools. We chose to say these are the needs across the Board.

Q. Was this decision made by a vote? Was there a motion for the Ancaster vote and the Dundas vote?

A. Yes the 5 to 4 vote with 3 abstentions would be the Ancaster vote and Dundas was a 9 to 3 vote and one member was absent. We understand that they both have needs and we did not want to pit one against the other so we dealt with them separately.

A gentleman was concerned about the money and that Parkside is going to close and the students will be moved into Highland.

The Board option is currently to close in June 2013. Due to the extent of the renovations required at Highland that could be moved to 2014. The Board may be changing their recommendation.

Q. Is it worthwhile keeping my daughter at Parkside? I feel that those children are getting ripped off.

A. Trustees will be making their decisions before the end of the school year and you will have the opportunity to decide at that time.

A woman spoke about her daughter who loved the teachers at Highland; however it was a challenge to get the programs that she needed...the "U" credits. People flock to St. Mary's because of the programs that are offered. Her daughter who was on the Student Senate called her school the ghetto and we need to offer these kids the programs that they require to go to University. The more students that you have the more program opportunities they will have. Governor's Rd is a concern due to the traffic issues. Can the community take part and fundraise to support the building?

Lloyd Ferguson on City Council thanked the ARC and Heather MacDonald for their great work. The feedback supports the recommendation of building on the existing site in Ancaster. Does the recommendation include the selling of land? I would like the Trustees to know that the City put a couple of million dollars into upgrading the pool. Please don't discount the renovating of the West Wing.

A. The selling of land is not included in our recommendation; however, that does not mean that will not happen.

Lawrence Campbell had a request to the Board – “will you please share with the people what the previous projections were and were you correct at that time.” Have you been correct in the past? Please be transparent. Parkside is a public school that has access to public land. It is important to note that students need outside space so Parkside is not just 4.2 acres it is 4.2 acres plus the Parkside driving park. Students who have gone to Dundas have done very well. Tell the people the outcomes of the school and show that you are going to have better outcomes by making these changes.

A woman admires the work of the ARC and agrees with the recommendations. She addressed the Board and the Trustees. She is disappointed that the children in Dundas have little value for this Board.

Lyla Miklos asked when the Staff Recommendation be coming out?

The date is on the Board web site February 10, 2012. Mr. Del Bianco shared the dates of the reports and delegations again.

Q. Will the Board be presenting their report the same night as the ARC presents their report?

A. Yes they will be presented to the Trustees; however, no decision will be made at that time.

Q. A Highland staff member indicated that Highland will require major renovations to address the program needs. Is it true that Ancaster won't be able to run proper programs as well without renovations?

A. Yes there are programs that won't be able to run.

Q. Is the West ARC running the same as the South ARC? I don't understand why they are shutting down Sherwood when it has an auditorium that everyone wants. Why is Parkside designated to shut down since they have been working on doing this since 2003?

A woman shared her concern around transportation. Her children spend 55 minutes on the bus and it is a 6 minute drive. Please consider this when looking at the catchment area. There is a challenge on Governors Rd and this is going to increase the bus times. The students are not supposed to be on the bus for more than an hour.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming out and sharing their questions and concerns.