

Hi Jessica,

You asked if I would summarize some of the information we discussed earlier today.

I had been thinking about possible sites for a new high school in Dundas that was close to transportation routes, close to the town core and close to assets such as the library, playing fields and even an arena. I did this since it appeared from the last public meeting that all the options so far that the west arc committee was considering involved building a new school. I thought of the 5.5 acre site at 201 King St. East, Dundas at the corner of Olympic Drive. The owner of the site is J. Douglas Hammond. He was the owner of the Canadian Tire in Dundas for 30 years and has been a strong advocate of Dundas over his lifetime. He had tried to get rezoning to allow for a self-storage facility on the site but that application failed due to strong opposition from an environmental contingent. I don't know him but gave him a call to discuss the possibility of using the site for a new high school with him. He was a very kind gentleman and said he was not opposed to the idea of a high school being built there. He mentioned that he has had many studies already done on the site and that he was willing to share those. The land is currently designated for commercial recreational use. He said if the political will was there that it was certainly a possibility that it could work as a site for a new high school.

Here is a link to the Urban Eco Park group that was involved in stopping Mr. Hammond's original development. It shows the location of the property and highlights some of the resources surrounding it. They talked of closing off the end of King St E which would allow for a quieter campus feel to the site.

<http://www.lets-doit.ca/articles/Dundas%20Eco%20Park.pdf>

Although they don't specifically mention a school, they do discuss the importance of education on the site (page 14) and a school would certainly be consistent with this vision. This report is also highlighted on Russ Powers' website.

<http://www.russpowers.com/Pages/projects.html>

There are a number of soccer fields and baseball diamonds adjacent to the site including Olympic Arena so the site itself does not need to have its own fields because it would be able to use the public spaces for those purposes much like Parkside currently uses the Driving Park for outdoor activities. As a result it doesn't need as much acreage.

Obviously there are also strong environmental educational opportunities at this site with its proximity to Cootes Paradise, the Desjardin Canal and Spencer Creek much the way McMaster University backs on to Cootes Paradise. There was talk at the last public meeting of an environmental based school. It is interesting to imagine a state of the art sustainable school with all the environmental things like a solar panel or living roof, wind turbines, rain water flush toilets and more importantly what kinds of funding might be available through different levels of government and environmental groups (such as David Suzuki foundation) for a school built using these ideas. With many of the site studies already done by Mr. Hammond, maybe this new school could be built "quicker" than normal. Then both the Highland and Parkside site could be closed and sold off to pay down the cost of the new school.

The teacher that spoke from Ancaster HS mentioned that one of the major drawbacks of where they are located is that they are far from public transportation routes and so they have a hard time attracting people from out of catchment. The Highland site which is on the outskirts of town is not much better in terms of being able to attract students from across the board or even the west arc for specialty programs if implemented because of the lack of public transit. The benefit of this new site at 201 King St East is that it is very close to the Main St. West transportation corridor at McMaster.

My goal here is that I am simply trying to put as many ideas out there for the sake of the town as a whole and that might make sense economically. My first preference is still to keep Parkside open and I strongly believe my last email highlighting the benefits of adding the grades 7 & 8 to Parkside makes the most sense because of the need to rebalance the grades with the addition of full time JK & SK at the local elementary schools (and find space for them) in the next couple of years (2012-2014) and with the previous elimination of grade 13. It results in 101% utilization of Parkside in 2013 with the grades 7 & 8, it has the least cost associated compared to other options and still results in proceeds of disposition from the closure of a school (Spencer Valley 8.34 acres). By the way, 98% of Spencer Valley students are already bussed. Parkside may actually be a shorter bus ride for most of them and would add transportation efficiencies being able to transport the grades 7 & 8 with the current high school students.

Please let me know if I can be of any further help.

Thank you so much for all of your efforts.

Diana Kenel