

North Accommodation Review Committee Meeting

Glendale Secondary School

May 24, 2011

Public Meeting #2

Minutes

Committee Members

Chair –Vicki Corcoran

Voting Members –Sandra Binns, Anna Busse, Michele Cameron, Michael Chalupka, Lisa Deys, Annie Fu, Laura Gill, Jane Henry, Prema Rao, Joyce Schneider, Dawn Spencer, Grant Thomas, Barb Wachner, Jane Withers

Non-Voting Members –Scott Barr, Marco Barzetti, Danielle Bawden, Paul Beattie, Judith Bishop, Marilyn Bratkovich, Glenn Cooke, Geoff Coombs, Mark Currie, Jim Holubeshen, Peter Joshua, Nancy Leach, Ray Mulholland, Jamie Nunn, Maria Pearson, Don Pente, Bob Pratt, Pam Reinholdt, Pat Rocco, Michael Root, Tim Simmons, Todd White

Regrets

Voting Members – Susan Corrigan, Marie Jackson, Rick Kunc

Non-Voting Members – Robert Barlow, Chad Collins, Jason Farr, Bernie Morelli, Sam Merulla

Resource Staff

Daniel Del Bianco, Jim Wibberley, Kevin Morton, Superintendent Joshua

Recording Secretary

Tracy McKillop

1. Welcome and Introductions

Superintendent Vicki Corcoran welcomed everyone to the second public meeting. She thanked everyone for their interest in the process and the contribution that they will make to the accommodation review. Superintendent Corcoran introduced her Co-Chair for the evening, Prema Rao, a member of the North ARC and a parent representative from Sir John A. Macdonald Secondary School. The Chair introduced each member of the Committee, Jim Wibberley and Daniel Del Bianco the resource staff along with Kevin Morton, from the Facilities Department.

2. Opening Remarks

Superintendent Corcoran shared that the goal of the meeting will do four things:

- Provide an overview of the Accommodation Review Process and the work of the Committee.
- Offer a look at the information the Committee has received and discussed at its meetings. All of the information the Committee has received as well as the approved minutes are available on the Board's web site.
- Provide a brief overview of the work of the Committee including the concept options developed by the Committee and what the next steps will be.
- Provide members of the community the opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

3. Presentations

3.1 Brief Overview of the Accommodation Review Process - For the full presentation please click on the following link:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wpcontent/uploads/2011/01/NorthARC_Public_Meeting2_Presentation.pdf

Daniel Del Bianco gave a brief overview of the Accommodation Review Process:

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

- 10 Working Group Meetings
- 4 Public Meetings
- ARC work scheduled to conclude in January 2012
- After receipt of final report, Trustees have to wait a minimum of 60 days prior to voting on a final decision

Information Presented to the North ARC

- School Information Profiles (SIP)
- Accommodation recommendation prepared by senior administration
 - Close Delta and Parkview (June 2013)
 - Relocate students to existing facilities (September 2013)
- Correspondence from the community

3.2 Work Completed by the North ARC

Geoff Coombs was the first member of the ARC to share with the Community. He stated that the options are simply concepts at this point in time. These can be changed numerous times and the students are the ARC's main focus. He stated that at working group meeting #3 – March 22, 2011 it was the initial discussion of the accommodation options. Nine options were generated from those discussions and the Committee has narrowed it down to four options that will be presented to the public and the other five will be posted on the web site. Mr. Coombs shared that the Committee has agreed to hear presentations at the working group meetings and they have heard one to date. One is scheduled for June and a third presentation will be heard in September. At the fourth working group meeting the Committee heard a presentation on the program plan. Every school cluster will offer all of the programming (schools with specialization, apprenticeship programs as well as tiered programming). For the full presentation please visit the web site at:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/ProgramStrategy_spreads_web-3.pdf

The Committee has had a presentation on enrolment trends. Please click on the following link to view the presentation:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Item9-NorthARC_Enrol_Demo_Presentation.pdf

The Committee has also spent a day viewing all of the schools within the North ARC. This was led by the Principals along with the Custodial Staff. They looked at the programs that were being offered in each school, the conditions of the schools, the gymnasiums, libraries, etc. The Committee found this to be a very interesting and informative event.

3.3 Concept Options Created by the North ARC

Michael Root spoke about the concept options created by the ARC. He shared that they were new ideas and open to criticism and how the students are serviced is of most importance to the ARC. He asked for feedback from the public. Items that the ARC must take into consideration include:

- Implementation timeframe
- Program
- Funding
- Boundaries
- Location/ availability of school sites

The Options were as follows: each option has benefits and limitations and these can be seen beginning on page 17 of the following presentation:

http://www.hwdsb.on.ca/arc/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/NorthARC_Public_Meeting2_Presentation.pdf

- A) Closure of Sir Winston Churchill and Delta and build a new school between the two schools.
To view the benefits and Limitations of this option please click on the following link:

F) Closure of Delta and Sir John A Macdonald and build a new school on a site between the two schools (site location yet to be determined).

G) Closure of Delta, Parkview and Sir John A Macdonald and construct a new school on one of these sites and have a wing dedicated to the Parkview program.

H) Closure of Delta, Parkview and Sir Winston Churchill and construct a new school on one of these sites and have a wing dedicated to the Parkview program.

3.4 Next Steps

Scott Barr indicated that this is the halfway point for the Committee. He shared that these options will need to be refined and adjusted as they see fit or possibly they may develop a new plan. He stated that the Committee is here to hear the voice of the Community and the students. The committee heard the community's voice at the first public meeting and will continue to listen to their voice. Mr. Barr indicated that the program piece is a huge part of the process as well. When the Committee is comfortable with these models then they will look at the program strategy and refine them as well. There are two more community presentations to come as well as two more public meetings. He asked the community to please look at the web site and familiarize themselves with the information. The goal is to have equal access to learning for all students.

Superintendent Corcoran thanked the Committee for all of their hard work and turned it over to the Co-Chair, Prema Rao, at this point.

4.0 Questions

Question (Q), Answer (A) Comment (C)

Q. I would like to know why there is no program option for Delta. Is this a done deal?

A. These are only recommendations at this time and when the final decision is made the programming will be adjusted.

C. Sister Teresa became involved in Parkview School a few years ago. She shared that she had a brother with learning disabilities and when he went to a regular school he had a difficult time. She felt that it was important to let the kids from the community know that the community cares about them.

C. Sally Palmer liked two of the profiles that had plans to keep the Parkview separate. She felt that it would be confusing if the kids were integrated. She stated that Parkview is a great school and would like to see it kept separate.

C. David Derbyshire feels that it is a privilege to work in the lower City. It is important to build on the strengths and assets in these neighbourhoods. He shared that he was shaken when he first heard Senior Administration's recommendation however tonight he feels that his belief in Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) has been renewed. The Committee has come up with creative solutions and liked that HWDSB has invested in these communities. He was happy to hear about the accommodation options for the Parkview students. He felt that the strategies that the Committee was suggesting were good. No one likes to see a school closed however the community feels stronger when HWDSB wants to invest in them. Mr. Derbyshire shared that information that he received that day showed that the further that students have to travel to a school the higher the drop out rate.

C. This lady felt that the decision is pre-determined and that Delta will close. She stated that it is a historic building and opposes the closure and the sale of this school. She shared that the community has

put \$20,000 dollars into this school through fundraising. It is the oldest school in Hamilton and asked that the money for a new school be put into Delta.

A. Mr. Del Bianco shared that three of the nine options suggested keeping Delta open. All nine options were discussed and the Committee has chosen four to present tonight however the other options are on the web site.

C. Murray Kilby a retired principal want the Committee to look at other School Boards to see what they have done. Why is grade 7 & 8 not in the high schools because the schools now have full day Kindergarten. Burlington Central and Aldershot Secondary Schools were slated for closure and they have put grades 7 & 8 into the secondary schools. This is something that should be considered. If you lose the elementary students then this will affect the high schools. He asked the Committee to consider this option.

C. Schools that are far away will challenge the kids in terms of making the effort to attend school. There are people in the neighbourhood talking about moving or attending the catholic school.

C. Canada is growing at a fast rate. This gentleman visited Parkview a few weeks ago and was profoundly moved by the relationship between the students and the staff. He feels that Parkview is a model for other schools to embrace. He feels that we have to look at things other than dollar and cents.

Q. What is the rationale to have the school tours scheduled on a Saturday if the physical structure of the building is not all there is to it? There were no students or teachers in the building.

A. Mr. Del Bianco shared that this is not part of the Terms of Reference and that the tours had to be scheduled outside of people's working hours. The enrolment decline is Province wide and this is not just happening at the Secondary level. It fluctuates from school to school.

C. The Committee have put in a lot of hard work however she feels great concern. Why would you want to change Parkview when it is working? She shared that you can't change history or the way that other students look at the Parkview students. She was disappointed that we are talking about building a new school on fictitious land when closing Sherwood or Delta makes no sense to her.

A. The Board is required by the Ministry to create a recommendation for the ARC. If it is introduced early on in the process the Board is accused that it is a done deal and it is presented closer to the end it is said that the Board is hiding something. There is no perfect time to share the Board option. When we put it out early it allows time for feedback. Looking for a new site will be a challenge. We will start looking at sites and give feedback to the Committee. This is a daunting task for the Committee and there is still a lot for the Committee to consider. This is just a starting point.

Superintendent Joshua shared that HWDSB is addressing the program opportunity for Parkview students. The challenge right now is providing these students with broader programming options like art and drama.

The Co-Chair stated that the school tours were a gruelling and exhausting day and the Committee did not want to disrupt the students. There were 40 people in the group and the tours were in depth. They looked at the programs and saw the classes that these programs took place in. They were very thorough tours. It changed her perspective on her job as a member of this Committee.

C. A grandmother shared her granddaughter's story. She was diagnosed with MID after being struck by a bus. She did not have an Educational Assistant and was informed that her granddaughter would never succeed in a regular classroom. She was accepted at Hillcrest where she flourished. She had apprehensions when she then needed to move to Parkview however she is doing wonderfully well there. She feels that there is a stigma attached to these students and does not want her to feel this

from other students. She also feels that it is important for these students to have a second language as well. She feels that kids need to be tested at an earlier age and the enrolment would be higher and there would be no need to close these schools.

C. Canada and the U.S. are the only place that grade 7 & 8 are not part of the high school. The money is not there to build new schools. He shared a great concern that if you keep going that way you are going to lose elementary students and hence Secondary schools.

C. David Derbyshire stated that this is a community and we are not here to pit one community against another. He invited everyone to focus on the lower city as a whole. He said it is about our children and our grandchildren and they need to attend a school that best fits their needs. Delta is an old school however the reality is that we can not keep all of the schools open. If there is a closure and a new school is being built then that would meet the educational needs of the students of the Hamilton community. He encouraged the Committee to listen to it all, integrate it all and come up with the best possible solution.

C. Steve Calverley has a daughter in Delta and she has had a very positive experience at Delta. He heard Cody speak at the last meeting and indicated that this shows the quality of student at Parkview. He shared that the feeling at Delta is "why bother" because when you look at the program strategy it says that Delta is closing. How would you feel if the province said that they would be closing HWDSB? Would you be making the same decision? He has concern for the youth in the neighbourhood and feels that is so important to have a school in that area. You can't leave us without a Secondary school.

Q. Cody would like Parkview to receive the money that it deserves.

A. There is no easy answer as the buildings age there is not enough money to take care of all of the schools equally. When one school needs more repairs than the other the money can't be split evenly. There simply is not enough money.

Q. What have we done to get some of the students back and can we adjust the class size?

A. Superintendent Joshua stated that they have been contacting the students who have not completed their high schools diplomas (Return to Learn) and we have adopted new programs.

Q. Why can't Parkview be part of the choice? What is the role of the Trustees? Are they impartial?

A. The Ministry mandates the loading size of the classroom. Trustees are non-voting members. The vote defaults to the voting members if there isn't consensus across the entire committee.

C. His daughter chose to go to Parkview to avoid a 45 minute bus ride. He has heard that there is a new Catholic Secondary School (on Rymal Rd) on the mountain. He felt that maybe the student would not want to travel and may choose to come to the public school.

C. A member shared that her daughter was diagnosed with MID and ADHD. She had to learn to love the child but not the disability. When she was put in an integrated public school she was subject to constant bullying and fear. She is graduating from Parkview in June. She feels that it is not about programming but where the students are personally. When she spoke to staff at Delta and Sir Winston Churchill they insisted that she go to Parkview. She has now progress and will be attending Mohawk in the fall. She is no longer MID. You can relocate the building but you can not relocate the program. These kids do not want to go to another school they want to go to Parkview.

C. A gentleman indicated that he was confused by the Board of Trustees. They vote for the Trustees and they are supposed to represent the people. He is also confused by the ARC process. He feels that we are protecting the mandate of the process and not the community.

A. Trustee Bishop shared that under the Terms of Reference the Committee has a mandate and a task and it is the Trustee's job not to interfere. Their role comes when the two reports are presented to them. They will be discussing the reports as well as all that they have heard from the communities. It is not the role of the Trustee to undermine the process of the Terms of Reference or to work in favour of one particular school. There has to be certain guidelines and once they are made then they must follow them.

C. This gentleman felt that the role of the Trustee is getting blurred. How do you defend the process and not get involved?

A. There is no way the Trustees can interfere with the Terms of Reference. They took many meetings to make the Terms of Reference and once the process has been put in place the Trustees must follow the process.

Q. If we attack the Terms of Reference are we attacking the Trustees?

A. Yes

C. Justin a student from Glendale stated that he has heard from all types of people...suits, non suits, and people from all ranks. Where are the students that want to be heard?

A. We have student representatives on the Committee.

Q. What if you don't want to be on the student council.

A. You don't have to be on student council – you can email, write a letter or publicly speak. All students are encouraged to voice their opinions and comments.

Scott Barr shared that programming is very important. Parkview has been very important to all of the Committee members. The Committee has been listening and applauds everyone for coming and sharing their concerns, questions and ideas. The Committee has a job to do and want the community to know that they are working hard to do a good job. Prema Rao encouraged the students to speak to the student representatives or parents on the school council.

Q. Why can't you put money into Parkview where they can have computer, drama and art classes? She heard that students have to have a low reading and math level to go to Parkview.

A. Geoff Coombs shared that one of the options was to make a newer version of Parkview as a system school. Parkview is doing an amazing job.

Q. Why aren't the students from other schools with similar challenges going to Parkview? If you put a wing on a school they are still segregated which would support them in feeling confident.

A. You can not force other students to go to Parkview.

Q. If there are so many vacant spots why are we spending money on these sites instead of putting it back into our properties? Ms. Cameron listed a number of graduates from Delta and commended the students for speaking up.

Q. Steve Calverley put forth a question to the School Board Staff. How would you feel if the government said that they were going to bring in someone else to run the HWDSB?

Prema Rao shared that she wondered what input she could bring to the table. It is a process put in place for a reason and it is a democratic process. She would like to think that all of the input from the Committee does matter. The Board is considering the ARC Committee's input. She learned a lot from

the school tours and the Principals were clear on the programs that are offered. They took a lot of time to learn what each of the schools is about. It is a discussion that is ongoing.

C. A spouse of a Committee member was offended by the attack on the ARC members and shared that they too have children in the system and that the Committee is working very hard to make proper decisions that will address everyone's needs.

C. David Derbyshire shared that every neighbourhood would like to have a school in the neighbourhood however the reality is that we can't have a secondary school in every neighbourhood. It is the Staff that makes it a welcoming environment where they will be challenged and rewarded. If the critical components are there then we can work with the school Board to make it work. It is the Staff that makes the school not the brick and mortar.

Q. Danielle Bawden asked "how would having grade 7 & 8 affect the programming in the high schools because it would fill the school however we still may not have enough students to run a grade 11 math class". The cost to renovate a building is much more than it is to build a new building and then things are just patched. Delta does have its challenges – it is freezing in the winter and boiling in the summer. The students don't want to be in there under those conditions. She stated that she loves Delta as well however we need to have a great school in the community to serve everyone.

A. Superintendent Joshua shared that having grade 7 and 8 in the Secondary school would not affect the programming of the high school students.

The Chair thanked everyone for coming.