



**Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation
Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 11
April 7, 2009 - 4:30 pm**

The eleventh meeting of the Southeast Galt Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Stewart Avenue Public School, on April 7, 2009.

Committee Members Present:

Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, Principal of Alison Park P.S., Cindy Benedetti, Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Allan MacKay, Principal of Manchester P.S., Leslie Tinning, Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Wendy Daley, Vice Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Jim Kirchin, Director of Planning Operations – City of Cambridge, Colin Kevan, parent – Manchester P.S., Janis Doran, parent – Central P.S., Colleen Cade, parent – Chalmers Street P.S., Muhammad Arif, parent – Alison Park P.S., Linda Roechner, parent – Chalmers Street P.S., Jennifer Kevan, parent – Manchester P.S., Tracy Wegener, parent – Central P.S., Mary Hingley, recording secretary, Lauren Manske, Planner, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Diane DeCoene, Area Superintendent, Jim Berry, Assistant Superintendent – Special Education, Brian Ward, Principal of Avenue Road P.S., Brian Beney, Vice Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Heather Forman, Vice Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Linda Rogers, Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Jennifer Crits, Principal of Central P.S., Amneh Hamdan, Immigrant Services, Cambridge YMCA, Margaret Montague, parent – Alison Park P.S., Ann Quenneville, parent – Central P.S., Terri Nikolasevic, parent – Stewart Ave. P.S., Michele List, parent – Stewart Avenue P.S., Koula Malatches, parent – Avenue Road P.S.

1. Welcome

- Chris Smith, Manager of Planning welcomed the ARC and opened the meeting at 4:35 pm. Mr. Smith introduced and welcomed Darv Easton, acting Principal of Lincoln Avenue to the meeting. Mr. Easton attended the meeting on behalf of Brian Beney.
- The principals in attendance were asked if they received the notices for Public Meeting #3. Some had been received, some had not as of the meeting time.
- Ms. Thorne-McCaffrey asked if the Public Meeting Sign will be updated and hung at the Alison Park school site to advise the neighbourhood of the meeting.
 - Mr. Smith advised that yes, a sign will be displayed at the school site before the meeting.

2. Meeting # 10 – draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith noted that Planning Staff found an error on the draft minutes from the February 24, 2009 meeting. On page 4 of the minutes, under Scenario B, the first sentence read; this is the 7/8 model, it should have read; this is the JK-8 model. Correction will be made to the minutes to reflect this.
- Mr. Smith asked the ARC if there were any other corrections to the draft minutes from the February 24, 2009 meeting that they had noticed.
 - None were raised.
- Minutes from February 24, 2009 were approved, mover: Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, seconded: Colleen Cade

3. Ongoing: Questions or Comments, Draft Objectives, Valuation Templates

- Ms. Thorne-McCaffrey asked about the ARC process, what follows the next public meeting?
- Mr. Smith advised that a transition plan will have to be determined once a recommendation has been adopted. There are however commonalities in both Scenarios B & F that are being brought to the public meeting.
- Mr. Smith asked Mr. Easton his thoughts on the ARC's draft objectives.
 - Mr. Easton noted that he was very impressed with the ARC's work through the process so far. He did express that anxiety levels are high at Lincoln Avenue with the potential closure, and the staff is relying on the ARC's details and information to keep them up to date.
- Mr. Smith advised that this is part of the transition, it affects staff and students. There will be no job losses with the closing, but it is unsettling when you don't know where you might be going, if one of these scenarios is implemented.
- Mr. Smith asked the ARC if there were any additional questions/comments regarding the draft objectives.
 - None were raised.
- Mr. Smith reminded everyone that the Valuation Templates are available online.

4. Costing of Scenarios B & F

- Mr. Smith noted that at the last ARC meeting the group chose 2 favoured scenarios: B and F. Planning Staff has come back with costing details in preparation for Public Meeting #3. We need you to make sure we have covered everything.
- Both Scenarios B & F with the costing details will be available online, as well as tonight's meeting presentation.
- Under the Potential Revenue notes in the presentation, Mr. Smith gave the estimated market value of the properties if the Board were to sell them.
- Scenario B: Market Value of the Alison Park site: approximately \$900,000.00.
- Scenario B: Market Value of the Lincoln Avenue site: approximately \$600,000.00 plus or minus after demolition costs.
- Scenario F: Market Value of the Manchester site: approximately \$400,000.00 plus or minus after demolition costs.
- Scenario F: Market Value of Lincoln Avenue, same as above, about \$600,000.00.

- A question was asked to explain what the Proceeds of Disposition are. Mr. Smith advised that when the Board sells a capital asset, it goes into a reserve fund called Proceeds of Disposition. This money stays with the Board for capital project use only, e.g. addition to a school, not for staff salaries or supplies.

Q – Would we lose the insurance claim from the Alison Park fire if we don't rebuild the school on the same site?

R – No, our understanding is it could be used at a new school site. The money would go to the Board (approx. \$2.5 million, however this has not been finalized), and we don't necessarily have to rebuild, the money goes with the students, as it is to replace the Alison Park facility.

- Ms. Manske advised the group that Area S had been split, with a division along the proposed Franklin Blvd. extension. With a closer look, it was felt that the numbers were too high for the new school, which left Stewart Avenue low. A small portion of Area S was taken away from the new school boundary and given to Stewart Avenue. They are now designated as Area S1 and S2.
- Ms. Manske also noted that porta-packs have been left on at Stewart Avenue and Chalmers Street in the capacity column of the enrolment projections.
- A question was raised, would Area S2 be bused to Stewart Avenue?
 - The students in JK-3 would be bused, all other grades would be within walking distance.
- Mr. Kirchin advised that there are some gaps in municipal sidewalks in that area, so some of these students may need to be bused. Franklin Blvd. does extend down to Myers Rd, and eventually to new "South Boundary Road" being studied now.
- Ms. Manske noted that she consulted with Jim Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, and he has recommended that in Scenario B, ESL should be at Manchester, and in Scenario F, ESL should be at Alison Park.
- It was also recommended that the Life Skills program go to a JK-8 school, so that the students can stay at one school for their entire elementary grades.

Q – The costing information that has been detailed, can we say that all costs are in there, nothing else to be added?

R – Not every cost is in there, we have no figures for accessibility upgrades. Scenario F has one less accessibility project, so it would depend on which scenario ultimately gets chosen. Avenue Road would include an upgrade because of the addition, and with any new school construction accessibility features are automatically done.

Q – Optional accessibility upgrades, is this a separate budget?

R – The Board is supposed to get to these under its Accessibility Plan but very expensive and little funding, we would recommend it be done as part of the Southeast Galt implementation, but there is no guarantee.

Q – The transportation costs listed, are they firm?

R – The numbers are based on students that would be eligible in the scenarios today and what it would cost to transport them, because we cannot guarantee where students will live in the future.

Q – For a true comparison of transportation costs, we need to know what transportation costs today.

R – Agreed; we will get those numbers for you, so it will be easier to do a comparison.

- Mr. Smith noted that the costing details came from Facility Services, and their estimates are based on the Ministry per Pupil Place construction benchmark financing formula. This is the fairest way to estimate construction costs.

- We will get the costing details ready to go to Public Meeting #3, maybe have a side by side presentation showing both scenarios. We can show the current transportation situation, and detail the costs for comparison purposes.

Q – With Scenarios B & F being taken to the Public Meeting, it seems a narrow model for the public.

R – We present these 2, and all of the other scenarios are used as background. At our last ARC meeting, we went through each scenario and put aside those we did not want to pursue costing out.

Q – The public should have more information, for example, a scenario that does not close Lincoln Avenue.

R – If we put scenarios back in, we will need to cost them out for proper discussion. The feeling from the last Public Meeting was positive for moving to a JK-8 model. There are going to be concerns coming from the public like not rebuilding Alison Park, closing Lincoln, but we need to get to a recommendation. Scenario C has Lincoln Avenue being converted to a JK-6; do we want to bring this one back?

- Mr. Smith asked each of the ARC members for their feelings on this, and the following comments were made:
 - At the last Public Meeting we talked about moving to the JK-8 model; it did not seem to be an issue.
 - The first Public Meeting had a strong Alison Park showing, Lincoln Avenue was not as well represented, however it was felt they will have a presence at Public Meeting #3.
 - Mr. Easton added that he feels we will never get early input from a 7/8 school community, it's a transitional school; we may see feedback from the next public meeting however. He also noted that excluding scenarios can bring more work; some eliminate themselves on their own.
 - There will be concerns, there are pluses and minuses for everyone, if we go back and start revisiting, it won't stop there, we will end up opening all the others.
 - Mr. Smith noted that the whole idea was to work it down, we start with several scenarios and we fine tune them, eliminating ones we can't support. We are at a finer point now. We discussed Scenario C twice at the last meeting, and consensus was to not pursue costing it out.
 - The Public Meeting is to see if we have missed something, or if the Public want to revisit earlier scenarios, etc. We have more input at the community level. We are trying to get to a recommendation. It is a good process, a transparent process, and there will be issues, no doubt.
- Mr. Smith asked for more thoughts:
 - We will likely hear more from the Lincoln Avenue community at the upcoming Public Meeting on April 21, 2009 or after the decision has been made, we cannot make everyone happy unfortunately.
 - We worked hard to get to these 2 scenarios, and are comfortable with them; there will be questions about other options.

Q – Have we closed a 7/8 school in the past?

R – We closed Wilmot Senior P.S. and before that C. Cornwell P.S., a 5-8 school.

Q – What happened in that situation?

R – C. Cornwell P.S. (and Dickie Settlement P.S.) closed when the new Cedar Creek (JK-8) school opened and the students all moved as a group for the next September.

- Mr. Smith noted that after canvassing the group, it was consensus that we go forward with 2 scenarios: B & F.
- Mr. Smith advised that we will not have break out sessions at Public Meeting #3; we have narrowed down now, and will present the 2 scenarios, and invite discussion. If there is strong support that we missed something, we come back to the ARC. We will take the feedback from the meeting. The last Public Meeting (#4) will be to share the ARC Recommendation going to the Board. It will be a drop in session, and likely held the third week of May. It was agreed in response to staff questions, that the Planning Staff will do a draft report with a recommendation and bring it to the ARC for input. The ARC then sends it to Senior Administration, who in turn will write a report and make a recommendation that will be taken to the Board sometime in June. The Board must allow 60 days from that date for consideration before making a decision.

Q – Senior Administration/ETFO process?

R – That will be addressed in the recommendation.

Q – At our last meeting, there was some question about the sewers being ready at the new school site; will they be ready?

R – Mr. Smith advised that Planning Staff are meeting with the property owners later this week. In summary terms, yes, it can be done. There might need to be interim servicing, i.e. a holding tank with a time release. The City is looking at a review of the sewer capacity, we are not getting a no – we may need a consultant to assess and make an application to the City.

The conversation to acquire the site so far has only been of a preliminary nature with the property owner. There is also a possibility of trading sites for development land, so there are options available.

5. Transitions?

- Mr. Smith noted that once we have a concrete scenario, the transition; how we get there and the timelines are very important to the process, equally important is the sensitivity to students/staff and parents, and the changes they will need to be making.
- The projected date for the new school to be built, the addition at Avenue Road, etc. is September 2011.
- Ms. Thorne-McCaffrey confirmed that Alison Park students will remain at Forward Baptist Church for the 2009-2010 school year. Placement for the 2010-2011 school year has not yet been decided. She did however note that the facilities at Forward Baptist Church are very good and that staff and students have been happy there.
- Mr. Smith noted that the transition will have the 7/8 program being phased in/phased out. The new JK-8 school would likely open with JK-7, and Lincoln Avenue could have grade 8's only for the 2011-2012 school year. Planning Staff are willing to come out to any school council meetings to discuss transition plans.
- A question was asked about an early boundary change option. Mr. Smith noted that if we agree they should stay, they won't have an option to change early. The reason being that the schools would be staffed according to the students staying.

Q – That suggestion would leave Lincoln as half of a school for 2011, with only the grade 8's, that does not sound good, wouldn't their programs suffer?

R – In the past, during similar transitions, extra support has been given for programs such as extra curricular activities; the Board does not want the students to miss out at all. We would sit down with Lincoln Avenue staff to discuss the best way to transition.

- Mr. Smith commented on the ARC process and what will happen next. We would like to get a report to the Board with our recommendation in June. The Ministry then puts a minimum of 60 days decision time (part of the ARC process). This would mean that the final Board decision and vote on the recommendation would not happen until possibly the last Board meeting in October.

Q – Would this change our projected 2011 date?

R – No, we think we can do it; it may however be tight.

Q – Would the ARC be meeting in October?

R – We might have a meeting in the fall regarding transition plans.

Q – Can we say that a final decision will not be made until October at least?

R – Yes, the Board can vote, defer the vote, send it back to senior administration, or send it back to the ARC for re-work. If the Board adopts the recommendation, the ARC's work is done. Both the ARC's recommendation and staffs recommendation are seen by the Board.

- Mr. Smith also noted that there is a staffing process for opening and closing schools, the transition stage can be as challenging as coming up with the recommendation itself.

6. Roundtable

- Mr. Smith noted that people will have concerns, the process won't be complete until the vote is made and confirmed, the trustees can, and sometimes do make changes. It was also noted by a committee member that Municipal Elections are to be held in one year in the Cambridge area.

7. Future Meeting Dates

- Public Meeting, Tuesday, April 21, 2009 at Stewart Avenue P.S.
- ARC Meeting #12, Thursday, April 30, 2009 at Stewart Avenue P.S.
- Mr. Smith thanked all for coming; meeting adjourned at 6:05 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:

**Public Meeting Tuesday, April 21, 7:00 pm at Stewart Avenue P.S.
Thursday, April 30, 4:30 – 6:00 pm at Stewart Avenue P.S.**