



**Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation
Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 7
January 8, 2009 - 4:30 pm**

The seventh meeting of the Southeast Galt Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Stewart Avenue Public School, on January 8, 2009.

Committee Members Present:

Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, Principal of Alison Park P.S., Leslie Tinning, Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Cindy Benedetti, Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Brian Ward, Principal of Avenue Road P.S., Wendy Daley, Vice Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Brian Beney, Vice Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Jim Kirchin, Director of Planning Operations – City of Cambridge, Amneh Hamdan, Immigrant Services, Cambridge YMCA, Colin and Jennifer Kevan, parents – Manchester P.S., Koula Malatches, parent – Avenue Rd. P.S., Margaret Montague, parent – Alison Park P.S., Linda Roechner, parent – Chalmers Street P.S., Tracy Wegener, parent – Central P.S., Mary Hingley, recording secretary, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, Lauren Manske, Planner and Chris Smith, Manager of Planning, for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

Regrets:

Diane DeCoene, Area Superintendent, Allan MacKay, Principal of Manchester P.S., Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal of Central P.S., Heather Forman, Vice Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Jim Berry, Assistant Superintendent – Special Education, Linda Rogers, Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Janis Doran, parent – Central P.S., Colleen Cade, parent – Chalmers Street P.S., Ann Quenneville, parent – Central P.S., Terri Nikolasevic, parent – Stewart Ave. P.S., Michele List, parent – Stewart Avenue P.S., Muhammad Arif, parent – Alison Park P.S.

1. Welcome

- Chris Smith, Manager of Planning welcomed the ARC back after the Christmas Break and opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

2. Meeting # 6 – draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked if there were any comments or corrections on the draft minutes from our December 9, 2008 meeting. None were raised.
- Minutes from December 9, 2008 were approved, mover: Tracy Wegener, seconded: Linda Roechner.
- The Secondary Program Information (that was requested at the last meeting) was put up on the screen, for review, and is available in the presentation.

- The number of students attending the enhanced elementary program at William G. Davis is being calculated by the principal and will be available for our next meeting.
- Mr. Smith and Ms. Manske commented that the trustees want to see French Immersion as a full secondary diploma offering course in Cambridge. Currently, the only French Immersion program available for high school is at KCI in Kitchener, and there are only 2 students (siblings) from the Cambridge area attending the program; GCI currently offers extended French.
 - A comment was made that typically the French Immersion numbers decline when students transition to high school, but it would be nice to have a full FI program offered in the Cambridge area.
 - Of the 75 students attending the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program at Cameron Heights, approximately 25 of those were attending a Catholic Board or private board school prior to grade 9.
 - The time and transit costs to get students to the Kitchener high school programs are significant, and likely deter some families from choosing these programs.

3. Procedural Discussion

- Mr. Smith reviewed the Terms of Reference of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee, which was posted at the meeting and available in the meeting presentation online. The goal of the ARC process is to develop scenarios that meet the objectives set out, and to bring recommendations to the Board. He reiterated that this information was discussed in the first ARC meeting, and asked the group if they are comfortable with the process, and has it been clearly defined?
 - One member said that she was unsure of one piece – the cost to run a school.
- Mr. Smith advised that the valuation templates will explain this, with actual school operating costs. Once we have some scenarios to go forward with, we can start costing these out (i.e., cost of a new building, cost of an addition, transportation costs etc). The valuation templates need to be accessible to the public, so they were posted on the website on Tuesday, January 8, 2009, and placed in the binders at every school.
- If the recommendation brought forward from the ARC is not approved by the Board, what happens then?
 - The ARC's job is to report to the Board's Senior Administration and the Director; the Director then writes her own report, which is taken to the Board. The Board can approve the Director's report/recommendation in full, or in part. It is possible for the Board to send alternatives back to the ARC for review and additional public meetings. If the Board is presented with more than one scenario, they may piece together their own alternative. Implications are brought forth at this time (i.e., program changes, costing, and transportation).
 - Mr. Smith noted that staff had reviewed the reports by Dave Cooke, former Minister of Education, who had been asked to look at two appeals of two different board's accommodation review processes and decisions. Mr. Cooke placed particular emphasis on conformity to Board Accommodation Review policies, and consultative nature and availability of relevant information to the communities. Staff is confident that up to this point, our ARC process would satisfy Mr. Cooke's criteria.

4. Questions/Comments, Draft Objectives, Valuation Templates

- Mr. Smith asked the ARC if they had any questions/comments, or changes to the draft objectives.
 - None were raised.
- Mr. Hercanuck reiterated that the valuation templates for each school are now on the website to view, and a hard copy was given to each principal for their school binder.

5. Continue Scenario Development

- A scenario progression slide was displayed in the presentation, detailing the scenarios created thus far, and how we would like to present them at the second public meeting on January 28, 2009. Mr. Smith asked the group if they would agree to grouping the scenarios and labeling them: A to D instead of 1 – 8, by compressing similar themes to one each.
 - The group agreed to this, taking more than 4 scenarios to the Public Meeting might be confusing.
- Mr. Smith made some comments on the Partnership Scenario (now Scenario D). He advised that there was no clear answer from the Catholic Board, there was possibly some interest, and it seemed they want their staff to check some existing partnerships at other boards, to see how they work. He suggested that unless we get a clear answer, this scenario may need to stay “on hold”.
- A question was asked, if Mr. Smith would go back to their Planning Staff.
 - Mr. Smith will reply to their planning staff indicating the ARC’s position on the partnership, and advise our Director and Executive Superintendent of Business and Financial Services, indicating clarification was needed.
- Why not ask the 100 or so parents of Alison Park students if they want to partner with St. Anne?
 - This is the purpose of the public meeting. If the community wants the ARC to look into this, we will, remembering that it’s not just Alison Park we are looking at; it will affect the whole review area.
- Mr. Kirchin, planner for the City of Cambridge wanted to say he felt partnering was a worthwhile idea, but cautioned we are unlikely to hear from the St. Anne community at the public meeting, the flyers would not be distributed to St. Anne students/families.
 - It was noted that the public meeting will be advertised in the Cambridge Times newspaper on Friday, January 23, 2009 and in the The Record on Saturday, January 24, 2009.
 - The Catholic Board would have to consult with their community, to raise awareness.
- Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, principal of Alison Park noted that she has a very good rapport with the principal at St. Anne, could she take a flyer to her for information?
 - It is a public meeting, so she should be aware of it as she may be getting inquiries.

- It was felt by the group that the Partnership Scenario should continue to move forward as an option.
- Lauren Manske introduced 2 new scenarios; these are detailed in the presentation.
- **Scenario 6B**, which takes the Alison Park students to the new school, instead of to Chalmers Street (as in scenario 6A), as requested by the ARC at the last meeting.
- It was asked of the Alison Park principal and parent rep, if they felt that this variation of scenario 6 would be embraced by the families.
 - The feeling was that yes, the families would like this, with the loss of their school to fire, going to a new school would be a welcomed plus.
- It was agreed that scenario 6B would be brought to the public meeting as Scenario B.
- **Scenario 9**, JK-8 at Chalmers Street; was created in the event the Board chooses not to build a new school in the review area. This scenario replicates the 7/8 program at Chalmers Street and Avenue Road, and converts Lincoln Avenue to JK-6. One of the concerns however, is that it projects Central P.S. enrolment numbers under 200. This is somewhat counter to what the Board has adopted as recommended school size.
- A concern was raised that this scenario has three JK-6 schools in the same area, it does not make sense.
 - It is a brand new scenario, and does need some work.
- How would scenario 9 affect bussing?
 - Bussing in area M and rural for JK-6, would remain the same, 7/8 would have reduced bussing.
- Mr. Smith noted that this scenario does not address the growth in the Myers Road area.
- He asked the group if they felt this scenario was worthwhile to take to the public meeting. It might seem attractive because there would be no need to purchase any property, but both Chalmers Street and Avenue Road would need a second gym to accommodate the 7/8 program.
 - The group felt that it could be worked into a good scenario; we will revisit it at the next ARC meeting on January 20, 2009, before deciding if it would be Scenario “E”, for the public meeting on January 28. One of the concerns was that Avenue Roads numbers are high.
- Mr. Smith commented that we want to bring a package to our next ARC meeting that will detail the scenarios we can bring to the public meeting; the package should include some initial costing implications.
- A question was asked if the Catholic Board was aware that we will be bringing a partnership scenario to the public.
 - Yes, that is why we asked their Planning Staff to determine if the WCDSB would even consider the idea. It was discussed at a WCDSB Board meeting; nothing definite has been decided however. As stated earlier, Mr. Smith will take this to senior WRDSB administration.

6. Roundtable

- A question was asked if we would partner with a private school, so that the Alison Park students would have a home for the 2009-2010 school year, for example the Temple Baptist School at the corner of Franklin and Jamieson.

- We have not looked at this possibility, it cannot be a scenario because it is outside of the study area, however it may be an interim measure to house the students temporarily. We can look into this, and make contact with the school.
- A comment was made regarding equity of facilities, and when the ARC would look at this, in particular accessibility at Manchester and Central.
 - This was one of our objectives and once we have decided which scenarios to take forward, we will detail costing, look at accessibility, and make a full range of recommendations to the Board. The ARC still has to address the needs of all the schools in the review area, not just determine new construction. Obviously, the affordability will be a factor; some items such as accessibility may be directed to a specific budget for priority position there.
- Ms. Thorne-McCaffrey asked about media awareness, future boundary issues; the public asking where their children will go, some neighbourhoods will be broken up, how does she prepare for this?
 - The public notice is advertised in the local newspapers, and notices go home with all the students in the review area. It is stated on the notice that recommendations may involve school consolidation, school closure, school construction, boundary changes and/or program changes. Some people will only look at their situation, and this is normal, the Planning Staff are prepared to answer those concerns.
- If a new school is to be built, when would it be ready?
 - Likely not until September 2011, which means 2 years of temporary housing for Alison Park, including the current school year.
- What happens to the staff when changes are made to school programs?
 - There is a process in place; staff is protected within the Board no matter where the students are moved. It was noted staff are determined by the number of students, not location.
- Mr. Kirchin asked how do we arrive at these solutions, it may be hard to get everyone on the same page, and is he part of the committee or a municipal rep?
 - Mr. Smith advised him that he is part of the ARC as well as Ms. Hamdan from the YMCA in Cambridge, and therefore part of the decision making. At the first ARC meeting Mr. Smith noted the Committee agreed to work by consensus, and if someone was not comfortable with that, we would put the item to a vote (a member can abstain from voting if they wish).
- Regarding the insurance money from the Alison Park fire, were there any requirements to spend it on re-building Alison Park?
 - No, Mr. Smith believes at this point it is a cash settlement. The building was deemed beyond repair, and we had permission from the Ministry to tear it down. The Board has not said that this money is Alison Parks' money, it belongs to the Board. At the same time, it is clear that the Board will have to spend money on an Alison Park solution.
- It was noted by Ms. Manske that for the next ARC meeting scheduled for Tuesday, January 20, 2009 we have extended an invitation to the principals of Glenview Park S.S., Galt Collegiate and Elgin Street P.S. We wanted to share with them the scenarios that we will bring to the public meeting, because they may have some impact on their school communities. It was asked of the group if they were okay with this.
 - The ARC agreed that they should attend the meeting if they can.

7. Future Meeting Dates

- The next ARC meeting will be held on Tuesday January 20, 2009 – 4:30 – 6:00 pm at Stewart Avenue.
- Public Meeting # 2 will be held on Wednesday January 28, 2009 – 7:00 pm at Lincoln Avenue P.S.
- Chris Smith thanked all for coming; meeting ended at 6:15 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:

Tuesday January 20, 2009 – 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Stewart Avenue P.S.
Public Meeting: Wednesday January 28, 2009, 7:00 p.m. Lincoln Avenue P.S.