



**Southeast Galt Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation
Review
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 6
December 9, 2008 - 4:30 pm**

The sixth meeting of the Southeast Galt Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at Stewart Avenue Public School, on December 9, 2008.

Committee Members Present:

Sue Thorne-McCaffrey, Principal of Alison Park P.S., Allan MacKay, Principal of Manchester P.S., Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal of Central P.S., Leslie Tinning, Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Cindy Benedetti, Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Wendy Daley, Vice Principal of Stewart Ave. P.S., Heather Forman, Vice Principal of Chalmers Street P.S., Brian Beney, Vice Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Colin and Jennifer Kevan, parents – Manchester P.S., Janis Doran, parent – Central P.S., Koula Malatches, parent – Avenue Rd. P.S., Margaret Montague, parent – Alison Park P.S., Colleen Cade, parent – Chalmers Street 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, Brian Ward, Principal of Avenue Road P.S., Jim Kirchin, Director of Planning Operations – City of Cambridge, Jim Berry, Assistant Superintendent – Special Education, Linda Rogers, Principal of Lincoln Avenue P.S., Amneh Hamdan, Immigrant Services, Cambridge YMCA, 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 opened the meeting at 4:30 p.m.
- Mr. Smith asked for comments from the three parents that attended the school tour on December 5, 2008.
 - All three parents felt that the tour was very helpful, they had no idea what the other facilities looked like or what challenges they face.
 - Mr. Smith thanked the parents that could make it and the principals for their tour hospitality.

2. Meetings # 5 – draft minutes approval

- Mr. Smith asked if there were any comments or corrections on the draft minutes from our November 25, 2008 meeting. None were raised.

- Minutes from November 25, 2008 were approved, mover: Linda Roechner, seconded: Brian Beney

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

- Mr. Smith asked if there were any additions to the draft objectives.
 - None were raised.
- Nathan Hercanuck advised that not all of the information has been collected yet for the valuation templates. We have had difficulty in obtaining information regarding section: 2.3 Cost to operate the school. The finance department cannot split the two sections. Planning staff proposes a change to the template to combine the 2 sections into one, reading “total cost to operate the facility”. ARC consent is needed to make the change.
 - The ARC group agreed to this change.
- Chris Smith provided an update regarding the St. Anne partnering scenario with the Waterloo Catholic District School Board.
 - We understood that informal discussion was to take place December 8, however we do not yet know the outcome of that meeting, and we have not talked with the Catholic Board staff yet, so no clear idea of where they are at this point.
- Mr. Smith noted that we have 3 scenario proposals so far:
 1. Replace Alison Park
 2. Partner with WCDSB
 3. Look at realigning the 7/8 program, by having 3 JK-8 schools in the review area: Stewart Avenue, the New School and converting Avenue Road to JK-8.
- Mr. Smith advised that we should have scenarios to bring to the next Public Meeting, which has been scheduled for Wednesday January 28, 2009 at Lincoln Avenue P.S.

4. Continue Scenario Development

- Lauren Manske brought 3 new scenarios to the group, taking into account the feeds to the 7/8 program, the feeds to the high schools, as well as a mixture of school closings and conversions. The key theme to these scenarios are reduced bussing and increased walk ins for 7/8's.
- **Scenario 6** Close Alison Park and Lincoln Avenue, build a new JK-8 school in SE corner, and convert Avenue Road to JK-8.
- **Scenario 7** Close Alison Park and Lincoln Avenue, build a new JK-8 school in SE corner, and convert Avenue Road to JK-8, joint site at St. Anne Catholic School.
- **Scenario 8** Close Alison Park and Manchester, build a new JK-8 school in SE corner, convert Avenue Road to JK-8, and convert Lincoln Avenue to JK-6.
- A list of pros and cons were created by Lauren and displayed during the presentation.
- During discussion of scenario 6, a question was asked; what are area N's numbers, and why not send them to the new school instead of Chalmers Street?
 - Area N has 22 JK-6 students, and 4 7/8 students, and we can look at changing the boundary.
- Chalmers Street has a portapak, would it be made permanent?
 - If the enrolment warrants the space, we could recommend replacing it. We would look into it in more detail if it becomes part of a final scenario.

- Why not take area M to the closest school, instead of bussing them to the new school?
 - For the time being, Area M will be bussed for safety reasons – there are not enough students in the area to meet the threshold of a school on that side of Dundas Street.
- Why is there no built capacity listed for the new school?
 - The numbers we are looking at are for today only, we have no projections yet. Once we project the enrolment out a few years, we can determine the necessary capacity.
- Regarding scenario 7, the partnership is still in question, so this scenario will stay “on hold” for now.
- It was noted that in scenario 8, Avenue Road’s numbers are too high once they have been converted, so this scenario will require some re-work.
- Some more detailed discussion of scenario 6 took place:
- Leslie Tinning noted that for Stewart Avenue, the scenario provides her school with a nice balanced population.
 - Mr. Smith commented that balance is what we are looking for in this process.
- In scenario 6, which high school would Area I attend?
 - The majority would go to Glenview Park S.S. with the current boundary.
- Can the boundary be changed, optioned or grandfathered?
 - The objective was to keep the community together, and this scenario does that, still congregating the 7/8’s into 3 schools.
- Brian Beney, made some comments regarding his senior school versus a JK-8 school and the program challenges it presents. He said that it is possible to provide a good, well balanced program to the 7/8’s in a composite school, giving them the transition training needed for high school. It takes hard work and commitment from the administration and staff. The perception is that the 7/8’s are in a world of their own, when it comes to Ministry scores (testing happens from grades 3 to 6, then not again until high school). It’s also helpful for the 7/8 staff to interact with the junior staff to identify needs, etc., that can then be addressed as the students move on through the school.
- In scenario 6, the Alison Park students are being bussed to Chalmers Street – an existing older school, why not bus them to the new school?
 - We will look at re-balancing Chalmers, and look at adjusting the scenario.
- Is French Immersion being talked about for the review area?
 - French Immersion is generated by parent interest, and there is not much interest in this area at this time. The Trustees want to see efforts to bolster the program. We can add this piece if there is interest. Currently the only high school offering French Immersion through grade 12 is KCI; however, GCI offers Extended French.
- When the students from this area want to attend the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, they have to travel to Cameron Heights in Kitchener, and it gets costly for the parents, some get fed up with the travel, and pull their students out of the programs.
 - We will get the current numbers for the students in these programs, as well as the enhanced program at Preston High, the Arts program at ECI, and the enrichment program at William G. Davis, to share with the group.
- The comment was made that if the new school could offer some of these programs, we would attract students instead of having to travel out of town.

- Are there specialty programs here? i.e.; learning disability classes? Currently, students requiring mental health support generally have to go to north Waterloo. Kidslink support is needed here.
 - This issue is limited and very specialized, and may not have supports at every site. Special Education will have to comment on this area. Once we narrow down the scenarios that can work, we will get Jim Berry in to talk about Special Education delivery.
- A question was raised regarding scenario 6: Listed as one of the “cons”; may take away threshold for at least one of the schools in area M. What does this mean?
 - If area M was fully built out, it could support 2 schools, but the Ministry does not fund schools on projections. Threshold refers to a school opening at a certain percentage capacity, usually 80%. This could also be a “pro”, because we would not have to wait for the development to happen in Area M.
 - Mr. Smith also commented that a new school in the Myers Road area (scenario 6) would be an enrolment draw. We are currently below proportionate balance with the Catholic Board in that area (Holy Spirit is the newest school with a walk-in location). Strategically, this is a good scenario for the Board.
- When it comes to pupil place funding from the Ministry, if we go to all day/alternate day JK/SK, Stewart Avenue would need 3 portables, does the Ministry take this into consideration?
 - Yes, the Ministry did on the primary class size initiative, but we have not yet gone to all day/alternate day JK/SK. In the future construction of the new Baden school for example, the Ministry has advised us to increase the capacity for all day JK/SK. There has been no direction from the Ministry to look at the total number of students, versus the FTE (which counts half day JK/SK students as .5), or how existing schools will handle the “added” students. In our projections, and loading of schools, we will look at the totals, not FTE #'s, to appreciate impact of this initiative.
- What would it take to get Avenue Road to JK-8?
 - Additions/modifications would have to be made, and once we go forward with the scenario we can consult with the appropriate departments to get their input on facility needs.

5. Roundtable

- Mr. Smith asked the group to do some homework. They were given a handout with the draft objectives, and were asked to take scenario 6, and note whether each objective was being met or not. We would like to take a somewhat polished potential scenario to the Public Meeting in January.
- The administrators were asked to fill out the template as best they could, even though they expressed a concern with how they approach the answers. They are community members, as well as employees of the Board, and want the best for their students.
- For the Public Meeting on January 28, 2009, we plan to have break-out rooms provided for some smaller group discussion, as well as one room for translation to Urdu. We will speak to committee member Amneh Hamdan to assist us with a translator.

6. Future Meeting Dates

- The next meeting will be after the Christmas Break, Thursday January 8, 2009 at Stewart Avenue.
- The second ARC Public Meeting will take place on Wednesday January 28, 2009 at Lincoln Avenue P.S.
- Chris Smith thanked all for coming; meeting ended at 6:00 pm.

Future Meeting Dates:

Thursday January 8, 2009 – 4:30 – 6:00 p.m. Stewart Avenue P.S.

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.