



**Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools  
Pupil Accommodation Review  
Minutes of Accommodation Review Committee Meeting # 1  
September 22, 2011, 6:30 – 8:00 PM  
St. Jacobs Public School Library**

The first meeting of the Woolwich & Wellesley Townships Elementary Schools Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) was held at St. Jacobs P.S. on Thursday, September 22nd, 2011.

**Committee Members Present:**

Paul Milne, Principal St. Jacobs PS, Vlad Kovac, Principal Floradale PS, Geoff Suderman-Gladwell, Principal Linwood PS, Wayne Dunham, Principal Three Bridges PS, Diane DeCoene, Superintendent of Education, Susan Marchiori, Vice Principal Linwood PS, Christine Shantz, Parent Representative Floradale PS, Krista Edwards, Parent Representative Linwood PS, Sheila Bauman, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, John Krupicz, Parent Representative St. Jacobs PS, Elmer Horst, Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Steven Snyder, Parent Representative Three Bridges PS, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Lauren Manske, Senior Planner for the Waterloo Region District School Board.

**Additional WRDSB staff present:**

Abigail Dancey, Manager of Communications

**Regrets:**

Ron Dallan, Facility Services, Sarah Peck, Planner, Township of Wellesley and John Scarfone, Manager of Planning, Township of Woolwich.

**1. Welcome/Introductions**

- Mr. Hercanuck, Senior Planner, opened the meeting at 6:30 pm and welcomed members of the committee followed by introduction of members. Thanks were extended to the ARC members for volunteering their time and commitment to this process. The committee members were presented with ARC binders containing accommodation review process material such as Board Reports and Policies, as well as reference criteria and the Terms of Reference. The binders are provided to the ARC to keep all of the information regarding the accommodation review together. Additional information, policies and guidelines can be found on our website at: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/about-us/board-policies>

## 2. Explanation of Accommodation Review Process/Background.

### What is a Pupil Accommodation Review?

- Formal Process that ensures a decision taken by a school board regarding the potential future of a school (closure or consolidation) has the full involvement of an informed local community.
- Process based on a broad range of criteria regarding the quality of the learning experience for students.

Mr. Hercanuck pointed out that a Pupil Accommodation Review does not have to end with the closure/consolidation of a facility but it is a possibility. We have been involved in Accommodation Reviews that did not result in a closure. The only one recently he could recall where we did close a school was in South East Galt.

Mr. Hercanuck went on to explain that the Ministry of Education has specific guidelines regarding the closing of a school and you can not do it outside this process. Consolidation of schools can be a useful tool to address some of the issues affecting a review area, so in order for the Board to have all the necessary tools to deal with the identified issues we must undertake an accommodation review process.

Q: What other outcomes could result from the review?

R: Could result in the building of a new school, boundary changes or even status quo.

Mr. Hercanuck went on to explain the reason why the Board undertakes an Accommodation Review:

### Why an Accommodation Review?

- Potential exists with areas under the Board's jurisdiction to accommodate existing and future students in fewer educational facilities.
- Due to declining enrolment, a school or group of schools is unable, or is projected to be unable to:
  - Provide suitable and equitable range of learning opportunities for students;
  - Under normal staffing allocations, organize with combined classes of no more than two grades;
- Reorganization involving the school or group of schools could enhance program and learning opportunities for students;
- Teaching and learning spaces and the site are not suitable to provide the programs and accessibility needed to serve the community and retrofitting and/or enlarging the facility may be cost prohibitive;
- One or more of the schools is experiencing higher building maintenance expenses than average for the system and/or is in need of major capital improvements;
- The Board has received a formal request from a school community or communities requesting a review of their pupil accommodation facilities.

### **Why an Accommodation Review in Woolwich & Wellesley Townships?**

- Declining enrolment
- Small school organizations
- Facility challenges (accessibility and amenities)

Mr. Hercanuck noted that Elmira is not included in this review but because it has its own more urban issues that will be scheduled for review at some point in the future.

Over the past twelve years this Woolwich & Wellesley area has seen an overall decline in enrolment of 18 percent from 1270 students in 2000 to 1041 in 2011. This is contrasted with a Board wide increase in elementary enrolment of 2.7 percent over the same time period. There has been a decline in rural enrolment and an increase in city enrolment under the Board's jurisdiction.

Mr. Hercanuck went on to further explain the declining enrolment issues of the townships. The Board has identified the ideal number of classes and facility sizes based on enrolment and optimal curriculum delivery.

Total enrolment refers to the number of students registered at the school, and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) counts Kindergarten students as .5.

With the implementation of the Full Day Kindergarten Program (FDK) we will only work with the total number of students going forward. The FDK Program started last year and will be phased in over 5 years with full implementation at all schools by September 2014.

### **3. Role of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)/Terms of Reference.**

#### **Role of the ARC – What is the ARC?**

- The purpose of the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) is to conduct an accommodation review of a particular school or schools within a given planning area of the Board in order to advise and provide recommendations that will inform the final decision made by the Board of Trustees on whether a school or schools should be either closed or consolidated.

Ultimately the ARC is responsible for developing a report to the Board of Trustees on accommodation options for the study area. The Trustees will make the decision based on your recommendations which could include new school, additions or boundary changes etc.

**Terms of Reference – ARC Membership**

|                                                |                      |                      |                   |                                               |                           |
|------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>The ARC Consists of:</b>                    |                      |                      |                   |                                               |                           |
| <b>• 2 Parents From Each School Community:</b> |                      |                      |                   | <b>• Study Area Municipal Representation:</b> |                           |
| <b>Floradale</b>                               | <b>Linwood</b>       | <b>Three Bridges</b> | <b>St. Jacobs</b> | <b>Woolwich Township</b>                      | <b>Wellesley Township</b> |
| C. Shantz                                      | K. Edwards           | E. Horst             | S. Bauman         | J. Scarfone                                   | S. Peck                   |
| <b>Vacant -TBD</b>                             | <b>Vacant - TBD</b>  | S. Snyder            | J. Krupicz        |                                               |                           |
| <b>• The Principal From Each School:</b>       |                      |                      |                   | <b>• Up to 2 Community Representatives:</b>   |                           |
| <b>Floradale</b>                               | <b>Linwood</b>       | <b>Three Bridges</b> | <b>St. Jacobs</b> | <b>Community Rep 1</b>                        | <b>Community Rep 2</b>    |
| V. Kovac                                       | G. Suderman-Gladwell | W. Dunham            | P. Milne          | <b>Vacant - TBD</b>                           | <b>Vacant - TBD</b>       |
| <b>• The School Area Superintendent:</b>       |                      |                      |                   | <b>• WRDSB Planning/Facilities Staff:</b>     |                           |
| Diane DeCoene                                  |                      |                      |                   | <b>Planning Dept.</b>                         | <b>Facility Services</b>  |
|                                                |                      |                      |                   | Manager - TBD                                 | R. Dallon                 |
|                                                |                      |                      |                   | N. Hercanuck                                  |                           |
|                                                |                      |                      |                   | L. Manske                                     |                           |
|                                                |                      |                      |                   | A. Kean                                       |                           |

In addition we have a number of resources we can draw from at the Board on an as-needed basis, such as staff from learning services to speak about curriculum delivery, special education etc.

It was noted that the ARC can have up to 2 community representatives and can vote to add more if the ARC feels there is a need.

The ARC had discussion around who should be asked to participate as community representatives.

Q: How late can the community representatives be added to the ARC?

R: No rules on how late. It’s best for the representatives to join at the beginning as momentum may be lost if we have to get the new member up to speed.

C: It is important to note that we have voting and non-voting members on the ARC.

**Terms of Reference – Voting/Non-Voting Members**

|                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Voting Members:</b>                                                                                                                                    | <b>Non-Voting Members:</b>                                                                                                                                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent Representatives</li> <li>• Community Representative(s)</li> <li>• Municipal Representatives(s)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Staff</li> <li>• Superintendents</li> <li>• Principal(s)</li> <li>• Other Board Representative(s)</li> </ul> |

Decisions will be determined by consensus whenever possible; however, when a consensus cannot be reached, a majority vote will consist of 50 percent plus 1 of the voting members present at the meeting the day the vote is held. A vote cannot be held without a quorum. A quorum consists of 50 percent of the voting members of the committee.

Should there be a vote on a particular subject we will try to make it known before the meeting so that members interested in voting on the issue can make sure they are present, or submit a vote beforehand if they cannot make it.

### **Terms of Reference – ARC Meeting Procedures**

- The ARC shall meet at an agreed upon schedule and location.
- ARC meetings are not public meetings. Non-members may attend meeting provided they are invited by the ARC.
- Minutes and secretarial support for the ARC will be provided by the Board’s Planning Department.
- An agenda for ARC meetings will be prepared by the Board’s Planning Department and sent to the ARC members prior to each meeting. Minutes from the previous meeting will accompany the agenda for ARC approval.
- Once approved the agendas, minutes and presentations from each ARC meeting will be made available in hardcopy in the main offices of each of the schools in the review area and posted on the Board’s website at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/woolwich-and-wellesley-townships-elementary-schools>

It should be noted that anyone that attends the meeting as an invited guest will not be considered a voting member.

### **Terms of Reference – Role of the ARC**

The ARC is responsible for:

- Review Objectives
- School Information Profiles
- Accommodation Options (Scenarios)
- Accommodation Report and Recommendations
- Public Information and Access
- Community Consultation and Public Meetings

Development of the review objectives, which are generic statements that can be applied to any school and reflect the desired outcomes of the ARC, from the issues brought up by the local school communities, larger public body and the Board Reference Criteria

The ARC is also responsible for the completion of the School Information Profiles which is a template that contains categorical information about the schools in the review area. They exist so that everyone has all the same information about each school in the review, so that ARC can craft a sound recommendation.

The Planning Department will be responsible for running the public meetings and ensuring the information is available to the general public on our website and in the Accommodation Review Binders that will be available in the main office of each school.

The ARC will use the objectives and the information from the School Information Profiles to develop accommodation options (referred to as scenarios) to meet those objectives and address the issues.

Using the objectives as a screen the ARC will narrow down the scenarios, to a recommendation(s) (sometimes we have two) that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in a report.

#### 4. Discussion of Issues/Setting of Review Objectives:

##### Accommodation Review Objectives

- Generic statements describing the desired goals of the Accommodation Review.
- Derived from the issues brought up by members of the ARC and general public and the Accommodation Review Reference Criteria.

##### Examples of Objective in Previous Accommodation Reviews:

- Review current elementary schools organization.
- Address community schools/transportation that is within reasonable travel time, distance and cost.
- Establish mid to long-term boundaries and viability of all schools involved in the study areas.
- Support optimal use of facilities, capital and operating resources.

Q: Do we have access to reviews done in the past.

R: Yes, past Accommodation Review information is available online and if needed can be obtained by hard copy. Information available on the Board's website at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews>

##### Reference: Criteria

The Board has provided the following criteria to be considered when developing the objectives and accommodation options:

- **Transportation**
  - Maximize the number of students within school boundary who are within walking distance, minimizing the need for transportation and annual operating costs.
  - Refer to Board Policy 4009.
- **New Facilities/Site Selection**
  - Where new construction is proposed, refer to the Board's site selection criteria (revised draft May 1, 2008) for elementary school site size, frontages shape location, topography and services, and other preferences.
- **Safe and Secure Learning Environments**
  - Ensure all facilities provide a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff (refer to Board Policy 6000).
- **Grade Configuration**
  - When the opportunity arises, JK-8 is preferred over JK-6 and congregated 7/8 program; however, the Board currently operates schools JK-5, JK-6, JK-8, 6-8, and 7-8
  - Consider the Good Schools Standing Committee Report Elementary School Size and Configuration, May 14, 2007.
- **Equity and Accessibility**
  - Maximize the number of facilities that adequately meet student and community needs for accessibility.

- Consider the equity of facilities, site, size and program standards.
- Refer to Board Policy 1008 – Equity and Inclusion.
- **Permanent Accommodation**
  - Minimize the number of students in portables or temporary structures.
- **School Utilization**
  - Maximize the use of the existing facilities.
- **Program Offerings**
  - Consider the Board’s Procedures 1000 and 1040 regarding French Immersion
  - Maximize the equity of program offerings (i.e., Music, French Immersion, etc.)
  - Minimize the number of combined grades at a school (Consider the Good Schools Standing Committee Report: Elementary School Size and Configuration, May 14, 2007).
- **Program Changes/Considerations**
  - Maintain Ministry’s target for Primary Class Sizes (PCS)
  - Consideration for the impact implementation of the Early Learning Program (Full Day Kindergarten) will have on the facilities.

Mr. Hercanuck stated that there will be challenges meeting all requirements for rural schools and there are criteria that are not applicable in this review such as with the transportation criteria. It should also be noted that accessibility is a big issue and that all Board facilities are required by law to be fully accessible by 2025.

Board Policy 3002 states that, and while not always possible in smaller schools, the optimal number of classes per grade is a minimum of 2; it promotes opportunities for professional learning and optimal program delivery.

All schools will be running Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) come September 2014.

#### **Accommodation Review Scenarios:**

- Options created to address issues and objectives raised and developed by the ARC and the general public as well as the Accommodation Reference Criteria.
- The Accommodation Scenarios can include:
  - Boundary Changes
  - Program Changes
  - New Construction (renovations, additions, whole new facilities)
  - School Closure/Consolidation
  - Maintaining the Status Quo (doing nothing)
  - Any combination of the above

The ARC is responsible for developing the Accommodation Review Scenarios and may include public feedback obtained at the public meetings and from information submitted through the Boundary Feedback site.

**Accommodation Report and Recommendations:**

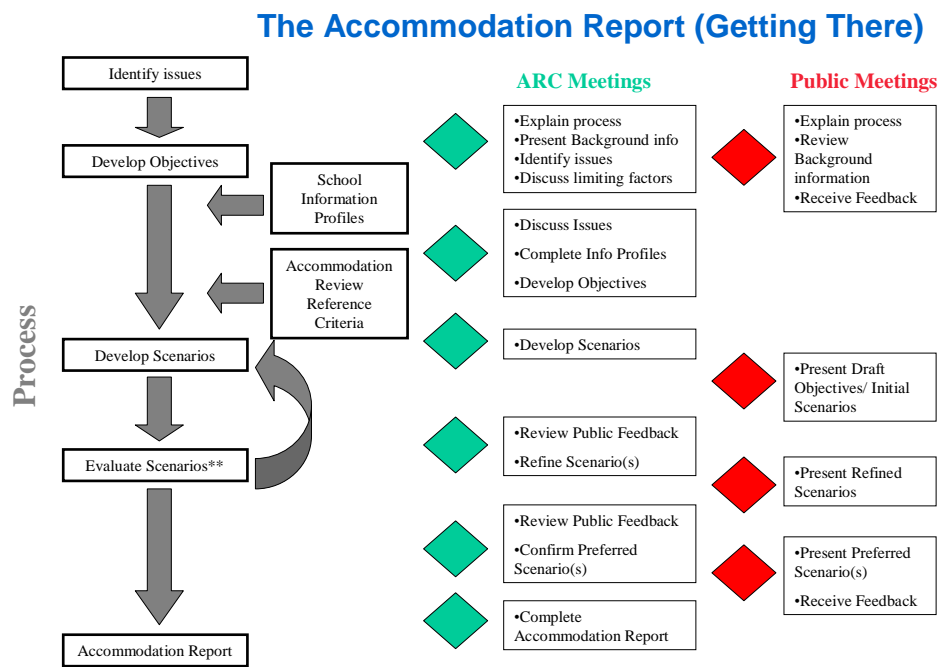
- ARC’s must complete an Accommodation Report for each school reviewed, using the customized School Information Profiles that will make recommendations regarding the future of the schools being considered and submit the report to school board administration.
- The needs of all students within the Woolwich/Wellesley review area are to be considered.
- ARCs must share the Accommodation Report, in plain language, with the community at a public meeting; usually Public Meeting Number 4.

The Planning Department will write the report which details the ARCs options/ recommendations and the Report will be approved by the ARC.

**Action Item:** Ms. Manske advised the ARC that she would bring a sample of a report done for another review to the next meeting, which might give an idea as to where we are going with this process.

**The Accommodation Report (Getting There)**

The process is outlined as follows:



\*\*Scenario development and evaluation may go through multiple iterations as scenarios are evaluated , and new ideas result from the evaluation.

Referring to the chart above, Mr. Hercanuck explained that on the left we have the process progression and on the right shows where the ARC meetings and Public meetings fall along the process and what “historically” has happened at past meetings along the way.

Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that the typical ARC process includes a minimum of four public meetings, but if the ARC feels more are needed that is a possibility; and that they could expect somewhere in the area of 12-15 meetings of the ARC.



## 5. Explanation of School Information Profiles

Mr. Hercanuck advised that the ARC may customize the Board's generic School Information Profile to the schools under review.

- The School Information Profile includes four considerations:
  - Section 1: Value to the Student
  - Section 2: Value to the Board
  - Section 3: Value to the Community
  - Section 4: Value to the Local Economy
- The profiles are a tool to gather facility, program, transportation, security, community use, etc, information. We then collate the information. The ARC can customize the profile framework if needed.
- The profiles give us all the same information for each school so we are able to look at the schools equitably.
- The ARC as the ability to add or take away or modify the profiles categories as you sit fit. But the same information must be available for each of the schools in the review area.

Q: Who completes the School Information Profiles?

R: The school principals add some data; the Planning Department and Facility Services will complete some data, as well as the community.

### **School Tour Coordination:**

- Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that Planning can also set up a tour of the schools in the review area, to get perspective on each of the facilities; their challenges and opportunities.
- **Public Information and Access:**
  - ARC's are to ensure that all information relevant to the accommodation review is to be made public by posting it in a prominent location on the Board's website or making it available in print upon request.
  - All information that is used to determine the value of a school must be publicly available.
  - Where relevant information is technical in nature, it is to be explained in plain language.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that all minutes and agendas for the meetings will be available on-line and that the minutes are not posted until they are approved so they generally are a meeting behind.

Ms. Manske presented each Principal of the schools under review with a school binder to be kept up to date with information provided by the Planning Department and to be kept in the main office of each school and to be made available to the public including the school community. Principals will be asked to keep the binders up-to-date with new materials from the meetings, so that people who prefer to view the information in hard copy can do so.

C: It was commented that it can be a little tricky finding the information on the Board's website.

R: The Search function on the Board's site is helpful; if you enter Woolwich Wellesley in the search function or enter your school by name and that will generally bring up the review link for you to select.

- **Community Consultation and Public Meetings:**

- Consultations must be based on the customized School Information Profiles in order to elicit input from the various perspectives around the value of a school.
- The ARC must seek input and community feedback on options for accommodating students who would be affected by a school closure.
- A minimum of 4 Public Meetings are to be held to consult and present the Accommodation Report and Recommendations. (*Mr. Hercanuck noted that ARC members are not required to attend the public meetings; however, they may find it beneficial*).
- Minutes reflecting the full range of opinions expressed at the meetings are to be kept, and made publicly available.
- Website for this review: <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/accommodation-reviews/woolwich-and-wellesley-townships-elementary-schools>

Mr. Hercanuck noted that we try to provide two weeks notice for public meetings and asked the ARC members to let him know the best way to get the word out to the broader community. We will be sending out flyers to every student in the review area schools and publishing the flyer in the Elmira Independent, the Woolwich Observer and the Record and posting on the Board website.

- The school binders should be kept in a readily accessible location like the main office for public access.

- **Proposed Accommodation Review Timeline:**

- February 14, 2011 – October 18, 2011: 30 day minimum period between Board announcement of Accommodation Review and first public consultation (not including summer break).
- October 18, 2011 – February, 2012: Public consultation period, minimum 90 days (not including Winter break). Minimum of 4 public meetings.
- February 2012 – April 2012: Minimum 60 day period (not including Spring break) between ARC submission of Accommodation Report and Trustee vote on recommendation.

Mr. Hercanuck stated that these dates are a minimum timeline and fairly aggressive and the process may take longer.

- **Next Steps:**
  - ARC to discuss issues and develop review objectives
  - ARC to review and fill out the School Information Profile Templates, and modify if necessary and complete.
  - ARC to discuss existing conditions, accommodation options and recommendations
  - ARC to prepare Accommodation Report and Recommendation(s).

## 6. Roundtable:

- Mr. Hercanuck commented on the broad nature of the review area and how the ARC should discuss meeting locations and best methods of communicating out to the review area.

- **Recruitment of 2 Community Representatives for the ARC.**

Q: Are we okay with only 2 Community Reps?

The group decided not to make that decision at this time.

C: Some names have been brought forward for community representation, but at this time only one had expressed interest. The others had not yet been approached to see if they are interested.

Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC to be mindful that the community representatives should not be who one who best represents a single school but can have a broader view and represent all schools and the communities.

Mr. Hercanuck advised the ARC that the community representatives did not have to be decided tonight and that the schools should look for some names of individuals who are interested and we can have further discussion at the next meeting.

Q: What were the issues/reasons that the Board is undertaking this review in Woolwich and Wellesley Townships?

R: The Board Report outlines declining enrolment in the rural areas, small class sizes, program delivery problems, non-equity with other facilities in regards to gym, library and washrooms.

Example: St. Jacobs has a single gym while a standard JK-8 school has a double gym.

Mr. Hercanuck commented that with a boundary study the school consolidation option is not available whereas with an accommodation review all options are available but it does not dictate a closure must take place.

## 7. Future Meeting Dates:

### ARC Meetings:

- Mr. Hercanuck noted that St. Jacobs was chosen for the first meeting as it was central to the large review area but the ARC is not limited to meeting only a schools and that we can also meet at a community centre if that would be better suitable to the ARC members. It is also possible to rotate locations to make fair to all ARC members.
- Mr. Hercanuck asked the group if the 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. start and finish time for the ARC meetings works for everyone, understanding that conflicts, family commitments/personal issues arise, making it hard to attend every meeting.
  - The ARC agreed that the 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm time does work
- The next meeting of the ARC was set for Tuesday, October 11, 2011, 6:30-8:00 PM at Three Bridges P.S.

### Public Meetings:

- Mr. Hercanuck noted that we must set the date for the first public meeting as this meeting starts the clock for the Public Consultation Process and the Planning Dept would confirm the date with the ARC.
- It was agreed that the public meetings would have a start time of 7:30 pm
- The ARC agreed that the location for the first public meeting would be Elmira District Secondary School and Linwood P.S. would serve as the backup location.
- Mr. Hercanuck told the ARC members that they are not required to attend the public meetings but that they might find them beneficial as you get to hear what the community has to say.
- It was noted that language might be a barrier to getting the word out to the community as some community members speak Low German and do not read a written language.
- It was noted that community transportation to the Public Meetings might be an issue and the ARC agreed to the possibility of providing a charter bus to bring community members to and from the meeting if there are people who sign up ahead of time.
- **Action Item:** The Principals agreed to canvas for interest to busing from their community and to update the Planning Department with numbers interested.
- The ARC discussed the option of producing a handout for members who can not attend the public meeting.
- Mr. Hercanuck let the ARC know that he would be available to attend school council meetings to give a presentation and answer questions.
- The Public Meeting Flyers will be sent home with every student in the review area, through the schools and will be published in the Elmira Independent, Woolwich Observer and the Record.

Q: Mr. Hercanuck also asked if there are any other options for getting the word out to the community?

**School Tour:**

- The tour can take place during the week day or on a weekend. The ARC members can carpool.
- The ARC can look at setting a date perhaps at the next meeting.
- Superintendent of Education, Diane DeCoene requested that the trustees be invited to attend the school tour. The ARC agreed to send an invitation to the trustees once a date has been set.

**Homework for ARC Members:**

**Action Item:** Mr. Hercanuck asked the ARC members to consider any issues that may exist at their school and not to limited just to the facility but to included programs and curriculum. These issues can be used for objective development.

Mr. Hercanuck thanked everyone for coming out and the meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

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**Future Meeting Dates:**

**ARC MEETINGS:**

**Tuesday, October 11, 2011, from 6:30 – 8:00 pm @ Three Bridges P.S.**

**PUBLIC MEETINGS:**

**Tuesday, October 18, 2011, from 7:30 – 9:00 pm @ Elmira District Secondary School**