



DOON SOUTH BOUNDARY STUDY
Minutes of Working Group Meeting #8
January 14, 2014
4:30 PM – 6:00 PM
Doon Public School

The eighth meeting of the Doon South Boundary Study Working Group, involving Brigadoon, Doon, J.W. Gerth and Pioneer Park Public Schools, was held at Doon Public School on Tuesday, January 14, 2014.

Attendees:

Laura Hodgins, Area Superintendent of Education, Glenn Kitamura, Principal, Pioneer Park PS, S. Schaffner, Principal, J.W. Gerth PS, Don Oberle, Principal, Doon PS, L. Hagey-Nichols, Principal, Brigadoon PS, Sarah K., Parent Representative, Brigadoon PS, J. Weston, Alternate Parent Representative, Doon PS, N. Waddell, Parent Representative, J.W. Gerth PS, C. Deacon, Alternating Parent Representative, Pioneer Park PS, K. Bingeman, Vice Principal Doon PS, Jillian Anger, Alternating Parent Representative, Pioneer Park PS, Sandra Pisters, Parent Representative, Doon PS, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary and Lauren Manske, Senior Planner.

Regrets:

S. Hett, Parent Representative, Doon PS, K. Johnstone, Parent Representative, Doon PS, Dijana D-G, Parent Representative, Brigadoon PS, D. Bal, Parent Representative, J.W. Gerth PS, Mike Duynhoven, Parent Representative, Pioneer Park PS, S. Davidson, Vice Principal, J.W. Gerth PS, Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner and Ron Dallan, Manager of Capital Projects.

1. Welcome

Lauren Manske, Senior Planner, welcomed members of the Working Group, and Board staff at 4:30 PM.

Ms. Manske led the Working Group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/boundary-studiesdoon-South-boundary-study/>)

2. Draft Minutes Review/Approval

Ms. Manske asked if there were any errors or omissions in the minutes from Working Group Meeting #6 (Dec. 10, 2013); No errors or omission were reported. The Minutes were approved without change.

Ms. Manske advised that the minutes will be posted on the Board's website at:
<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/boundary-studiesdoon-South-boundary-study/>

3. Public Meeting #3:

a. Feedback

The Working Group members had received redacted copies of all feedback received from the Public Meeting as well as those received through the boundaryfeedback email, in advance of today's meeting.

Ms. Manske noted that from Planning's point of view, the feedback received at the Public Meeting did not provide any different feedback comments than had been received through boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca email in advance of the meeting.

Ms. Manske asked the Working Group members if they had received any feedback from their school communities and the following feedback was noted:

- C: There seemed to be a 50/50 split in terms of support for Options F and J.
- C: Option F seems to be the better transition option as it has fewer transitions for students and families.
- C: If our primary goal is to make the least disruptions for students than Option F is the better option.
- Q: Some want to limit kindergarten registrations to allow only siblings of current J.W. Gerth PS students – There would not be room available elsewhere to accommodate these students, correct?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that is why under Option J we did not include the JK/SKs to Pioneer Park PS. She noted that limiting all new registrations at J.W. Gerth PS had come up at the public meeting and noted that:
- The Board would not be able to determine how that would affect enrolment as we don't have any survey of who will have a sibling register in the next two years.
 - Similar to reasons we've been hearing about why Option F is not good, you could potentially end up with someone who may live next door to the school asking "why can't my JK go here".
 - By carving out the development areas, the growth potential has been reduced at J.W. Gerth PS.
- Q: Principal Kitamura noted that a lot of the comments seemed to be a split between the two options; and talk about if the true boundaries for J.W. Gerth PS were considered than Option J should be the recommended option. That being said, taking into consideration the transitions for students, Option F is the logical choice. Another comment suggested that Option J would be less cost to the Board for portables – is that correct?
- R: Ms. Manske responded that it does appear that Option J would be the least expensive of the two options in regards to portables, because in Option F we have the Development Areas (DA) attending Pioneer Park PS, increasing the portable count versus Option J which does not include the DA students being housed at area schools so the portable count for these students are not included in Option J. However, these

students would still need to be accommodated and would likely require the same number of portables at another school in our system. Ms. Manske advised that she did a costing for both Options F and J and not including the cost to house DA students outside the study area – the difference in cost of both options is only \$5K. This total includes the addition (\$25K to place) and removal (\$10K to remove) of portables; therefore not a significant difference in cost to the Board.

Q: Would Option J necessitate additional staff cost for the hiring of a Vice Principal (VP) for Pioneer Park PS?

R: Ms. Manske responded that in terms of VP allocation, the Board only has a certain number of VPs that are allocated across the system. In a lot of cases the number of students at a school can be a factor involved in the decision to allocate a VP to a school; that being said, Brigadoon PS, in terms of numbers could warrant a VP this year – but does not have one.

R: Superintendent Hodgins responded that the Board has a fixed number of VPs that are allocated across the system; therefore Option J would not require the need to hire an additional VP. VPs are allocated to a school based on a formula which includes several factors, including enrolments and a student equity index.

Q: I have been approached by a lot of parents with questions around the efficiency of use of J.W. Gerth PS, specifically questions around the congregated Special Education program and Special Education class being housed in the portable.

R: Principal Schaffner responded that the congregated Special Education program is housed in a classroom that is built for the Special Education program, it has a behaviour class housed there right now, but it was constructed to house the Life Skills program when J.W. Gerth PS was built, and even if they were moved out of that classroom, it would not be conducive for use as a regular classroom as it has a Kitchen, washer and dryer. The Board allowed us to keep the portable as a Special Education withdrawal space as well as to allow space for teachers and their resources for which we do not have space inside the school. Schools have to provide space for Special Education. Even after implementation of a transition option; we will still be short on space.

C: Ms. Manske commented that a school is more than just standard classrooms, and there are other uses of space that are required to operate a school efficiently; based on the enrolment size of J.W. Gerth PS and spaces available for staff to use, the school is being utilized as efficiently as possible.

C: A request was made at the Public Meeting to revise Option F to move only the Grade 6 class to Doon PS for September 2014 and postpone moving the Grade 5s until September 2015 – could that be considered to keep those 75 students in an junior elementary school longer?

C: Principal Hagey-Nichols commented that the one issue that is constantly being overlooked is, even if those rooms were available, it would still mean that 800 students would be at J.W. Gerth PS next year and for an elementary school that would seem to be far too many students. We had discussed moving only the Grade 6s

students initially, but decided that it was not enough to make an impact at J.W. Gerth PS.

R: Principal Schaffner responded that if we are looking at a JK-4 school and a 5-8 school – both administrators have to figure out how to make that work; but staggering the move over two years would require administrators and staff to go through this process again, causing a lot of disruption for the sake of the interim.

Q: What would be the benefit of delaying the moving of Grade 5s for 1 year?

R: The parent representative responded that it would be of benefit to the individual 2014-15 Grade 5 students that could remain at J.W. Gerth PS for an additional year.

C: Ms. Manske commented that moving both Grade 5 and 6 classes, may provide a better flexibility for grade organization if numbers warrant a combined grade (i.e., Grade 5-6 combined).

C: From my school community, I'm hearing a preference for Option F because:

- the French Immersion program is elitist and it is not fair that they would get to stay at J.W. Gerth PS under Option J;
- Option F makes more sense because students would be moving to a school that they would be attending anyway;
- if siblings are going to be split up, it would be better to split up the older siblings, rather than younger siblings especially with the 5 minutes difference in bell times between J.W. Gerth PS and Pioneer Park PS which could cause problems for parents with a JK at J.W. Gerth PS and a Grade 1 attending Pioneer Park PS under Option J.
- Development Areas will attend Pioneer Park PS under Option F and can be part of the community; whereas under Option J, their children will have to be bussed to a school outside the Doon South community.

Q: Could students from the Development Areas end up at a school in Cambridge?

R: Ms. Manske responded that it could be a possibility if that is where there's space available at the time.

Q: Would the holding school for the Development Areas change from year-to-year?

R: Ms. Manske advised that a phase of development would be assigned to a school that can accommodate those students; the next phase of development may be assigned to the same school if room exists or they may be assigned elsewhere; but houses within the same phase will attend the same school as their next door neighbour. She advised that each Development Area will be assigned a school, but cannot guarantee that it will be the same school for each of the separate development areas. It is very unlikely there would be year-to-year changes for an area.

C: I was disheartened by some comments at the Public Meeting and from reading through the boundaryfeedback. I love Doon PS and my children attend there and have wonderful friends from Pioneer Park PS and I was really saddened to hear some

of those comments. Regarding French Immersion (FI) under Option J, I was under the impression that parents could choose to register their SK student in the FI program for Grade 1 for September 2014 and they and their siblings would be allowed to stay at J.W. Gerth PS; at the Public Meeting I heard that if you were out-of-boundary (under Option J) they would not qualify – can you clarify?

- R: Ms. Manske responded that under Option J, students (and siblings) that are currently in FI (that are in the new school boundary) would be able to stay at J.W. Gerth PS; the difference would be for those students that are in SK this year, applying for FI for next year and do not have a sibling in the FI program. Only those that have a sibling enrolled in FI at J.W. Gerth PS would be eligible to attend. This year out-of-boundary enrolment for the FI program has been restricted for both J.W. Gerth and Brigadoon PSs because these schools are overenrolled.
- C: So families that have children in the FI program will be given preferential treatment - I don't agree with that.
- C: I don't like Option J because it has more transitions for kids (3 transitions versus the 1 under Option F). My concern with Option F is for student safety, especially for 9 and 10 year olds that will have to walk down Doon Village Road and cross over Doon South and that is a big concern for me.
- R: Ms. Manske responded that is a concern that can be addressed through the Board's Transportation Consortium, as they determine safe routes and right now it is designated as safe – we can ask them to do an assessment.
- Q: Because of the small number of Grade 5 and 6s that would be going to Doon PS – what will that mean for them in terms of extra-curricular activities, which while not mandatory is part of school life?
- R: Principal Hagey-Nichols commented that Brigadoon PS does not participate in inter-school sports but do have intramurals but don't compete against each other in basketball or volleyball, but participate in track and field. We do offer a variety of clubs.
- R: Principal Schaffner commented that it will depend on the teachers because they are volunteer activities and teachers are not required to provide extra-curricular activities.
- C: I feel that Option J has far too many transitions for younger kids.
- C: Superintendent Hodgins commented that she has reviewed the feedback as well and noted that preference for a transition option is split based on where kids are, where a family lives and what street they live on. She acknowledged that there is an impact on families that people feel very passionately about; and as we have said before, there isn't a perfect solution – we are very committed as a team to making sure that whatever the outcome, the staff are going to do their very best to make it a positive experience for our students.

4. Interim Option Discussion

a. Pros and Cons (slides 3 and 8)

Ms. Manske advised that staff that sit on the Working Group Committee got together before the holidays to prepare for Public Meeting #3 and in doing so got into a discussion of the Pros and Cons of the Transition Options (F and J) and evaluated them from a staff perspective; after this consultation with the area Superintendent and Principals, the Planning Department supports Option F as the preferred interim solution; although it has been indicated to us that the principals could support either option. Ms. Manske advised that when looking at the 2 options and the impact on students, from a planning point-of-view, Option F is preferred and the following three factors led to this preference:

- (1) The ability of Doon Public School as a facility and site to accommodate growth as compared to all other schools in proximity; (*e.g., gym and site's ability to handle portables*)
- (2) The minimization of student transitions and benefit of being in the same school for more than 2 years; and
- (3) The sufficient reduction in enrolment at J.W. Gerth Public School (by removing two full grades) which will address enrolment pressures at that facility and allows for flexibility in case of further delay in the opening of the new South Kitchener (Groh Drive) school

Ms. Manske advised that because of the timeline that had to be met, a decision had to be made and after considering all the feedback that has come in from the community - Option F is where we (Planning) have landed.

Ms. Manske advised the Working Group that she will be seeking their endorsement of Option F as a recommendation in the report and recommendations.

Ms. Manske noted that the Pros and Cons list for both Option F and J were presented at the public meeting and there were questions as to whether or not all the pros and cons were included for each.

Ms. Manske asked the Working Group if they wanted to add any others to the lists.

No other Pros or Cons were identified by the Working Group.

5. Report and Recommendations

Ms. Manske advised that Planning has put together a Report and Recommendations which include Scenario 16 (slides 14-32 of the online presentation) which was decided at our last Working Group meeting and was presented to the community at Public Meeting #3.

Ms. Manske noted that since Public Meeting #3 the following modifications have been made to Scenario 16:

Scenario 16 changes:

Ms. Manske advised that there are 2 minor changes to Scenario 16:

1) New Development Area

Since our last meeting we have received a new plan of subdivision which we have now included as a Development Area (see map on slide 31 of the online presentation); this subdivision is now being circulated and has a proposed 402 units, which have not been included in our enrolment projections because the unit count is still a draft proposal – and will be taken into consideration going forward)

2) Grandfathering

Grandfathering of new South Kitchener school students who started at Doon PS for Grade 5 in the year prior of the opening of the new school, to remain there, with transportation provided for 1 year only after which time families would have to find their own transportation, but those students would be given the option to continue to attend Doon PS for Grades 7 and 8. *Ms. Manske advised that this is being offered to minimize transitions, and will be a personal option, but the default would be for those students to attend the new South Kitchener school.*

Ms. Manske asked if the Working Group had any questions or concerns.

Q: Principal Schaffner asked if we should reconsider making Doon PS a JK-8 in light of this new development area.

R: Ms. Manske responded that doing so would require redoing the boundaries and advised that the Boundary Study Report addresses the need for further student accommodation in the Doon South area in the fairly near future; that might mean we look for another new school site which could be in one of the proposed plans of subdivision, or a site closer to Brigadoon PS, wherever we believe the accommodation is required; or look at converting Doon PS to a JK-8 – this would be assessed later, but would be included in the report as a consideration for going forward.

Q: People keep asking about Huron Heights Secondary School – If enrolment is such a huge problem at the elementary level – what happens when all these students show up at the high school? Some parents are more worried about that than what is happening right now.

R: Ms. Manske responded that the Ministry's newly implemented 34 credit threshold (eliminates the "victory lap" – Grade 13) and once students have reached their 34 credits they will have to pay to take additional courses and take them at an adult education facility or through e-learning; this has reduced enrolments overall at the secondary level. She noted that while we don't have a full handle on it this year, as this is the first year, it has freed up some space and overall secondary school enrolment is in decline (this is not the case for Doon South).

C: There have been suggested ways around the 34 credit cap – it may not be safe to assume enrolment at Huron Heights Secondary School will not be a problem solely based on the 34 credit threshold.

R: Superintendent Hodgins responded that the Board did see a drop in enrolment this fall even after students were given special permission (due to short notice of implementation of the threshold) to return – a lot of those students didn't show up; students coming into

high school now will be better prepared to plan on completing high school in 4 - 4.5 years and organizing their courses accordingly.

Q: Does this mean that there will not be a need for another high school?

R: Ms. Manske responded that the Board is actively pursuing a site for a new high school for this area and that could possibly mean boundary changes at the secondary level; a similar process as we are doing right now.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that for the past two years a committee has been working on a new south west Kitchener secondary school site location; it is on our capital priorities list but not in our top eight which the Ministry requested this year.

Ms. Manske asked the Working Group if there are any concerns around recommending Option F; or questions about the recommendations generally.

C: Mr. Cuomo noted that the same night the Boundary Study Report goes to the Board (January 20, 2014), another report will be going to officially request an extension on the opening date (from September 2015 to September 2016) for the new South Kitchener (Groh Drive) school, because of all the issues with approvals.

Q: If the school ends up being ready earlier, would you go back and request to open it earlier?

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the window to open the school for 2015 has closed.

Q: Could the new school be opened mid-year (March 2016)?

R: Ms. Manske responded that both Millen Woods PS and Sir Adam Beck PS were opened mid-year and that was not a good process – and the Board is very reluctant to do so again.

C: Principal Schaffner commented that if looking at Option F versus Option J and basing a decision on the least amount of disruptions for students (not parents) – Option F comes out on top.

C: Option J could potentially be moving students every 2 years or less, does not seem right.

C: Principal Schaffner noted that once a decision is made by Trustees, schools can start to prepare for the transition.

C: Ms. Manske advised that she totally understands the point of view of the families living next to the school who did not expect to be sending their grades 5 and 6 students to Doon PS; but recognizing the situation that we are in, this is the best of a challenging situation.

C: For parents of a child who has to move to Pioneer Park PS and then move to Doon PS in 2 years and then to the new school – they will not be as concerned with the child living next store to the school having to make one move to a school they would have to attend regardless.

Option F Vote:

Ms. Manske asked if the Working Group supports Option F as the preferred option to be recommended in the Report and advised that the decision to support Option F does not have to be a unanimous decision.

Ms. Manske asked for a show of hands of all those in favour of recommending Option F as the preferred Transition Option to be implemented for September 2014:

- The Working Group Members in Favour: 10 (Parent Representatives and Principals)
- The Working Group Members opposed: 0

The Working Group unanimously supported Option F.

Ms. Manske thanked the Working Group members for their time and dedication to the process; and noted that there has been a lot of information to go through, a lot of feedback and a lot of emotion – she recognizes that for those members out in the community it could not have been easy and we apologize for any divide that has been created as obviously that was never our intention.

Key Dates:

- **Friday, January 17, 2014** – report and recommendations publicized on Board's website
Ms. Manske noted that this date is when Trustees will be provided with the Report as well and asked the Working Group members to remind the parent community that Trustees are receiving the Report at the same time and may want to allow them some time to read the report before contacting them.
- **Monday, January 20, 2014** – [Committee of the Whole Meeting at 7:00 PM](#)
Board Room, 51 Ardel Ave., Kitchener
Report and recommendations will be presented to Trustees at Committee of the Whole meeting (This is a Public Meeting and all are welcome to attend); There are 8 delegations registered to speak on the Doon South Boundary Study.
- **Monday, January 27, 2014** – Board Meeting - Minutes of Jan. 20/14 Committee of the Whole meeting will be approved (any decision made on Jan. 20/14 is finalized)
Ms. Manske advised there is also an opportunity to register to be a delegation at the January 27, 2014 Board Meeting.

6. Roundtable

C: Principal Hagey-Nichols, on behalf of the Working Group, thanked Ms. Manske for all the work she has done, recognizing that it hasn't been an easy process.

Ms. Manske thanked the Working Group for their time and dedication and adjourned the meeting at 5:25 PM.

