



WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY STUDY

Minutes of Working Group Meeting #1

Thursday, January 22, 2015

4:30 – 6:00 PM

Abraham Erb Public School, Library

The first Working Group meeting of the West Waterloo Elementary Schools Boundary Study, involving Abraham Erb, Cedarbrae, Centennial, Edna Staebler, Laurelwood, and Mary Johnston Public Schools and the new West Waterloo (Vista Hills) elementary school, was held at Abraham Erb PS on Thursday, January 22, 2015.

Attendees:

T. Stroud, Principal, Abraham Erb PS, Mark McMath, Principal, Cedarbrae PS, Betti Adams, Principal, Centennial PS, Jeff Parliament, Principal, Edna Staebler PS, H. Tinnis, Principal, Mary Johnston PS, Shelly Reed, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, Marny St. Pierre, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, Tracey Nairn, Parent Representative, Centennial PS, Vivian F., Parent Representative, Centennial PS, Ryan Barnett-Cowan, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, C. Lovegrove, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, Mairaj Naveed, Alternating Parent Representative, Cedarbrae PS, G. Sikiladha, Alternating Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Deb Bergey, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Elaine Ranney, Superintendent of Education, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary and Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner.

Regrets:

Lauren Agar, Senior Planner, Liz Arbuckle, Principal, Laurelwood PS, Don Oberle, Principal, New West Waterloo School, Brad Hughes, Vice Principal, Abraham Erb PS and Centennial PS, E. VanAllen, Parent Representative, Cedarbrae PS.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner, welcomed members of the Working Group and Board staff at 4:40 PM and advised that he would be filling in as Chair this evening as Mrs. Agar was unable to attend.

The Working Group members did a round of introductions and Mr. Hercanuck advised that boundary studies are a public process and as such, the presentations and minutes of the meetings will be posted online and asked the working group members to indicate on the sign-in sheet how they would like their names to appear in the minutes.

Mr. Hercanuck led the group through the presentation (available online at <http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/west-waterloo-elementary-schools-boundary-study/>)

2. Update on new school construction (new West Waterloo – Vista Hills)

Referring to Slides 3 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck noted the following:

- **April 25, 2014:**
WRDSB received Ministry approval and funding to construct a 646 pupil place, JK-8 elementary school to be located at 314 Sweet Gale Street, Waterloo.
- **November 12, 2014**
WRDSB held public engagement event to update public on new school construction.
- **(Date TBD)**
Further public engagement session.
- **September 2016**
School scheduled to open.

Mr. Hercanuck advised that he is confident in the targeted opening date of September 2016 and noted that he does not foresee any obstacle with the site that would delay the opening. The site is owned by the Board and is zoned, serviced and ready for construction; funding for the school has been received from the Ministry, an architect has been selected and the project is currently in the design stage.

Mr. Hercanuck noted that slide 4 of the online presentation illustrates the preliminary site plan for the new school and its position within the Vista Hills Subdivision.

The school will be located on a 6-acre site (approximately) abutting a municipal park. The new school will be built into a hill resulting in it being two-storeys in the front and three-storeys on the back. Parking will be located along Sweet Gale Street and will have a bus lay-by. The sports field will extend into the municipal park.

Mr. Hercanuck advised that a City of Waterloo representative will be attending the next Working Group meeting to bring information on development plans and provide timing on future subdivisions. The City of Waterloo Planning representative will not attend every meeting but will be circulated on the minutes of the Working Group.

Mr. Hercanuck also noted that other Board staff (including Facility Services and Learning Services) are also available as resources if Working Group would like to discuss facility or program issues (i.e., school condition or the Partial French Immersion Program) .

Q: How does the Board come up with a school size of 646 pupil places?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the 646 pupil place is based on the loading of student to classrooms. The Board uses Policy 3002: Elementary School Size and Configuration, which outlines the preferred size of JK-6 and JK-8 facilities and notes that there should be at least 2 classes per grade in JK-6 and more than 2 classes per grade in grades 7 and 8 for optimal programming. With Grades 1-8 classroom loaded at 23 students per classroom and Full Day Kindergarten classrooms loaded at 26, Special Education rooms loaded at 9 and Resource rooms loaded at 12. The total of which adds up to 646 pupil places.

Q: Will the new school have the *Partial French Immersion Program* (FI)?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board does not typically open a new school with FI as that program is based on interest within the home school boundary with registration starting in January prior to the student entering Grade 1. If there is enough interest the program may be installed starting at Grade 1 and grown from there.

3. Explanation of Boundary Study Process

a) Study Purpose

Referring to slide 5 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck explained the reasons why the Board undertakes a Boundary Study when considering a change to one or more school attendance areas and noted that this boundary study will explore options related all of the points listed:

- *Changing the grade structure of an elementary school (from a JK-6 format to a composite JK-8);*
- *Balancing enrolment and facilities;*
- *Assigning new municipally approved residential development to a school with existing capacity;*
and
- *Opening a new school, establishing the new boundary, and adjusting boundaries of existing schools.*

Possible outcomes from the boundary study process include:

- *Boundary changes*
- *New construction (renovations, additions) at existing schools*
- *Grade organization changes (add or remove grades, programs)*

Mr. Hercanuck advised that we will not be looking at school closures as school closures cannot be considered under a Boundary Study.

b) Working Group

i) Role

Mr. Hercanuck noted that a boundary study is conducted by the Board's Planning Dept. in conjunction with a Boundary Study Working Group and with input from the Broader Public.

Together **the Working Group will:**

- *Identify and discuss issues and opportunities of the individual school communities and the broader community;*
- *Set study objectives;*
- *Develop boundary options;*
- *Evaluate boundary options against study objectives;*
- *Parent Representatives will act as a liaison between the Working Group and the school communities.*

The ultimate goal is to craft a Report to the Board of Trustees that recommends a course of action that can include boundary changes, school grade organization changes, and new construction in the form of additions/renovations and new facilities.

ii) Membership

- *Up to 2 parents from each school*
- *The principal from each school*
- *Planning Staff*
- *The school area superintendent (Elaine Ranney)*
- *Local Municipal representation (City of Waterloo Planning/Growth Management Staff)*
- *Other WRDSB staff as appropriate (i.e., Learning Services staff to discuss French Immersion)*

c) Public Meetings

There will be at least 2 public meetings (dates to be determined by Working Group), to inform the community and gather feedback.

Boundary Study Process

Referring to the diagram of the boundary study process on slide 8 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck advised that the Working Group will begin by identifying the issues in the study area and using those issues to develop study objectives which will be used to evaluate scenarios (different boundary situations that might work) which the group will also develop. He noted that this study is not just about the new school but also about the existing schools in the study area and advised **the Working Group to bring forward any issues and concerns their individual schools may have** (*i.e., site, facility, capacity issues*) and advised that this process is a good way to bring those issues to the attention of School Board Trustees.

The members of the Working Group will act as a liaison between the Working Group and their school communities. The process will involve a number of working group meetings (represented by the green diamonds) and no less than two public meetings (red diamonds) to share information and ask for

public feedback after which a report will be developed that recommends a course of action that can include any or all of the following:

- Boundary changes,
- School grade organization changes, and (i.e., *will the new school open JK-8 or JK-6 and progress from there*)
- New construction in the form of additions/renovations and new facilities.
- Transitions for students (*grandfathering options to reduce transitions*)

Mr. Hercanuck noted that any changes to school boundaries require Trustee approval and advised that a report will be presented to the Board of Trustees at a Board Meeting, and the Trustees will make the final decision.

Timeline for Study Completion

To accommodate the staffing process, which takes place between January and February 2016, for September 2016 start up; a decision on the boundary study is needed by December 2015.

Ideally, would like to have a decision by the end of the current school year (June 2015 or early September 2015) to give ample notice to families affected by any boundary changes.

d) Approvals

- Any changes to the existing school boundaries and grade configurations require the approval of the Board of Trustees. This includes the new Vista Hills area school.
- A recommended Scenario (boundary option) will be presented to Trustees, at a Board meeting, where Trustees will vote on the recommendations
- Boundary changes need to be approved in December of the previous year the changes are to take place (December 2015).

4. Issues Identification

The purpose of the West Waterloo Elementary Schools Boundary Study is to support the long-term elementary school accommodation needs of the West Waterloo community. Mr. Hercanuck advised that the Issues presented this evening are draft and open to changes.

Some of the issues to be examined in this area include:

- *Boundary required for new Vista Hills area public elementary school.*
- *Enrolment/Capacity concerns at other area schools.*
- *Elementary program model considerations (JK-6, 7-8, JK-8).*
- *Existing functional deficiencies (i.e., Parent pick-up/drop-off, parking, lack of internal spaces, etc.)*

Mr. Hercanuck asked the Working Group members to bring forward any other issues that their schools are facing, which can then be included into the draft objectives to be achieved under the study. He noted that initially everything is on the table including existing issues at study area schools. Once the issues are identified, they can be turned into objectives (i.e., *an issue to address the number of portables at study area schools, could become an objective to increase the number of students housed in permanent capacity within the study area*).

5. Draft Goals/Objectives

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the objectives will typically include appropriate Board Policies that are important to address under the boundary study, such as:

- **Board Policy 3002 – Elementary School Size and Configuration**, which outlines the school size based on the number of students per grade. He noted that this Policy is currently *under review* with changes recommended to sizes because of the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten that

effectively doubles the number of Kindergarten students in a school. The revised policy is expected to be approved at the January 26, 2015 Board Meeting.

- **Board Policy 4009 – Student Transportation** (to be reviewed at the February 9, 2015, Committee of the Whole meeting) to ensure we are mindful of walking distances when setting boundaries to develop walkable boundaries, reducing the need for transportation.
- **Administrative Procedure 1000 – Partial French Immersion.**
- **Student Transitions** (to reduce the number of transitions for students – i.e., grandfathering option to allow affected Grade 7 students to remain at their current school for Grade 8 – Board typically opens new schools JK-7 in its first year).

Mr. Hercanuck advised that Mrs. Agar will likely have additional Draft Objectives to be considered.

6. Initial Scenario Development

Study Area

Referring to the map on slide 12 of the online presentation, Mr. Hercanuck noted that the West Waterloo Boundary Study Area is comprised of the school catchments noted below:

<i>Map of Study Area</i>		
School	Model	Colour
Study Area	NA	
Abraham Erb P.S.	JK-6	
Cedarbrae P.S.	JK-6	
Edna Staebler P.S.	JK-8	
Laurelwood P.S.	JK-8	
Mary Johnston P.S.	JK-6	
Centennial P.S.*	7-8	

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the study area is outlined in gray and advised that both Cedarbrae P.S. and Centennial P.S. catchments are not included in their entirety as they extend beyond the map depicted and **Centennial's boundary includes other schools outside the study area that are not included in this boundary study.* The portion of Cedarbrae PS's boundary located at the bottom of the map (pink area) encompasses the Vista Hills Subdivision with the * representing the location of the new West Waterloo school.

Mr. Hercanuck also advised that Cedarbrae and Centennial Public Schools are included in this boundary study only because they are the holding schools for the Vista Hills community and will be affected only in that they will see some reduction in enrolment with the setting of the boundary for the new school as they will no longer be the holding schools for that community which could impact staffing at those schools.

Q: How many students are living in the Vista Hills subdivision and attending Cedarbrae and Centennial PS's?

R: Principal McMath responded that two new students had just registered from Vista Hills today; bringing the total number attending Cedarbrae PS from the subdivision to 23.

R: Principal Adams responded that there is one student attending Centennial PS from the subdivision.

C: Principal Parliament responded that there are approximately 6 students from that area enrolled in the Partial French Immersion program at Edna Staebler PS.

R: Mr. Hercanuck advised that Mrs. Agar would provide an update on those numbers at a future meeting.

Projected Enrolment

Mr. Hercanuck noted that the current enrolment slide is missing from the presentation and advised that it would be included in the presentation to be posted online.

Enrolment – Grade Profiles

The Working Group discussed the following chart that Mrs. Agar had handed out to the study area Principals at the administrator’s meeting, which include *unofficial Oct 2014 enrolment* numbers:

School	Grades	JK	SK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Congregated Spec Ed	Unofficial Total October, 2014	Change from Mar. 31, 2014	OTG Capacity 2014-15	Capacity including portapaks	Classrooms in portapaks	Individual Portables in Use	Site Size (acres)	Year Built (original)
Abraham Erb PS	JK-6	43	45	67	61	54	57	47	50				424	↓	487	487		0	5.99	2005
Cedarbrae PS	JK-6	26	31	18	31	18	27	26	30			8	207	↑	409	409		0	12.9	1968
Centennial PS (W)	07-8									246	221	35	467	↑	322	506	8	1	9.31	1968
Edna Staebler PS	JK-8	87	96	87	104	87	100	116	84	55	60	7	876	↑	706	706		9	5.86	2008
Laurelwood PS	JK-8	46	45	63	46	54	80	64	65	126	125	8	714	↑	375	513	6	9	8.04	1998
Mary Johnston PS	JK-6	42	54	49	62	47	66	65	51			7	436	↑	447	447		2	8.177	1987

The Working Group discussed the information on the chart, and the following changes were noted:

- Centennial PS – Individual Portables in Use = 0
- Laurelwood PS - Individual Portables in Use = 10

Mr. Hercanuck noted that in addition to needing a boundary for the new school, we also have some enrolment and capacity issues with Laurelwood PS having 10 portables and a six-classroom portapak. A portapak is non-permanent construction, usually consisting of a block of six portables under a shared roof. While the portapak is connected to the main building, it is not considered permanent construction. Centennial PS also has enrolment and capacity issues with an eight-classroom portapak. Mr. Hercanuck advised that this boundary study is an opportunity to look at resolutions to those issues.

Q: Why does the Board not consider a portapak to be permanent construction even though they have been in use for the long-term?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board’s Facility Services Department considers a portapak as non-permanent capacity, and when they were installed, were intended to be a short-term accommodation solution. It has been several years since the Board installed a portapak.

Q: Can the use of portapaks be addressed under the boundary study?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that it could be included; we could have an objective to eliminate the use of portapaks should a revised boundary reduce the enrolment to where it would no longer be required. He noted that it might be important to keep in mind that the use of a portapak would be preferable to the use of portables. He advised that a recommendation could also be included for internal renovations to address functional deficiencies such as inefficient library spaces etc., as well as additions to existing schools, if we come up with a boundary situation that would warrant such recommendations.

Q: What happens to a porta pack once it is removed?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that porta packs are demolished if they are no longer needed; they have likely been in use for a long time and it would not be cost-effective to dismantle, move, rebuild and renovate to be able to use them again.

Q: Does the Board ever remove a porta pack and construct a permanent addition?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board has removed and replace with a permanent addition; but has also demolished and not replaced as well, when it is a matter of right sizing a facility.

Referring to the differences in school site sizes on the chart, Mr. Hercanuck advised that newer school sites are usually smaller, due to the rising price of land. He noted that newer schools are built with a smaller footprint and are usually two or three storeys to maximize the green space available for students.

Q: What is the site size for the new school?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the new school's site is approximately 6 acres and abutting a municipal park.

Q: Will it be similar to Edna Staebler PS's site? Does Edna Staebler PS have use of their abutting municipal park as well? Will the new school's abutting park be ready when the new school opens?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that there is an issue with the use of the municipal park at Edna Staebler PS; and asked Mr. Cuomo to respond to discussions with the City on the park development for the new school site.

R: Mr. Cuomo responded that the City is trying to accelerate their development of the park to try and line up with the development of the new school's field, which is partially on the municipal park, to be completed at the same time as the school site. He noted that the rest of the municipal park might not be ready at that time. They are working together to avoid (with the new site) the staggered situation that we have with Edna Staebler PS, where we are waiting on getting permission to use the park.

Next Steps

- Issues Discussion
 - *from the perspectives of the individual school communities and the Board*
- Draft Objectives
 - *crafting objectives to meet address those issues*
- Scenario Development/Evaluation
 - *develop boundary option scenarios to meet those objectives*

Q: Are the current study area schools the only schools being considered, or will other schools be included as well?

R: The study area includes only the six schools identified along with the new school. We will not be adding in other schools to the study area.

Q: Why were these schools included? Why are Northlake Wood PS and NA MacEachern PS not included, as they are comparable to Cedarbrae PS?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded study area schools were included because of their adjacency to the new Vista Hills school site. The only reason that Cedarbrae PS and Centennial PS are included is because they are the holding schools for the Vista Hills community, because they had the space to do so; therefore, they have to be involved because their boundaries include the Vista Hills community.

Q: The new school will be opened as a three-storey school - will it have elevators?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the new school will open with three-storeys on one side because of the grade of the land. It will have an elevator and be fully accessible as required under Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2001/building Code.

Q: When we start looking at Scenarios and boundary options - how many years in the future will we be looking at?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that in an elementary boundary study, we typically look at one generation through a JK-8 school (a ten-year period); therefore, our Scenarios will be based on enrolment projections for a ten-year period. He also noted that we do not like to look beyond ten years as a lot can change in that amount of time. The Ministry of Education have been known to add new initiatives that can affect the number of students our schools can accommodate and noted that the recent Full Day Kindergarten had effectively doubled the number of Kindergarten students in our schools and the Primary Class Size Initiative (Grades 1-3 class capped at 20 students) had also reduced the number of students allowed in a classroom; both of those initiatives reduced school capacities.

Q: In terms of walkability - why was the Sweet Gale /Lady Slipper location chosen for the new school site? Why wasn't a location closer to Columbia Street chosen?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Board works with the City and the developers to locate schools where we figure they will be needed; and take into account walkability with respect to pedestrian pathways and sidewalks. He noted that one reason this location was chosen may have been because the Board requests to have school sites in the first phases of development so not to be left with a large community of students that have to be bussed to a school outside of the community. He noted that there will be seven or eight phases in this development.

He advised that, why that particular site was chosen is a question that the Board's Principal Planner would be able to answer because he works very closely with the municipalities in locating our new schools and advised that he would get that answer for our next meeting.

- Public/Community meetings
 - *take Issues, Objectives, and Scenarios to the broader public for consultation*

Mr. Hercanuck advised the Working Group that the Planning Department is extending an open offer to attend a school council meeting at any of the study area schools to discuss the boundary study, to help inform the broader community and address any questions or concerns that any of the individual school communities may have.

Q: How does the Board advertise the Public Meetings?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that a flyer is sent home with every student at study area schools. We ask the study area schools that have signage out front – to put a message there, and on their website. We post it on the Board's website calendar of events and on Twitter. In the past, we have taken ads out in the local newspaper, but we are shifting away from that as it can be quite expensive and not the most effective way to reach the target audience. Working Group members can announce on social media sites.

Q: Is there the opportunity for online feedback for people who cannot make it out to a public meeting?

R: Mr. Hercanuck noted the following email addresses for questions/comments on the boundary study: boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca and advised that emails sent to this address are accessible to all Planning staff and to the Board of Trustees. You can expect to receive a response within a day or two to any questions submitted to this address. Planning staff are also accessible by phone and are happy to answer any questions.

Q: Is there a Scenario that the Board has in mind as a solution for the area?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that as far as he is aware there is not – but noted that in past studies, Planning has developed a variety of different ideas (based on different issues) to bring to the Working Group to spark the discussion and serve as a jumping off point. He asked if the Working Group would like to follow the same method; or if they would prefer to start with a blank slate and come up with their own Scenarios.

The Working Group did not agree nor disagree.

Q: Will the Report that goes to the Board include our favourite Scenario or our top two?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that ideally, the Report will present a preferred Scenario with all the details of the Scenario explained and listing all the reasons why the Working Group chose the Scenario. The hope is to develop good objectives that are worthy to strive for and then explain that we chose this Scenario because it was the best at meeting these objectives and here is how they do it.

Mr. Hercanuck also noted that all information on the Boundary Study, including Presentations, Minutes and all the Scenarios that have been developed and discussed, will be available online at:

<http://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/boundary-studies/west-waterloo-elementary-schools-boundary-study/>

Mr. Hercanuck noted that while in the past Trustees have sometimes been given a choice of Scenarios, the preference is to provide them with the Working Group's preferred Scenario.

Q: Can you outline the communication strategy required by the schools to inform the school community about the Boundary Study?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that the Schools can post a link to the Boundary Study webpage on their school's website. All the information will be posted there as it becomes available.

7. Meeting Schedule and Locations

Mr. Hercanuck advised that the Working Group meeting scheduled for February 5, 2015 is now cancelled to allow for adequate time for Mrs. Agar to obtain the *Official December 31, 2014 Enrolment Numbers* (Ministry of Education Reported), for use in developing the most accurate enrolment projections for the boundary study.

Working Group Meetings

- ~~• Working Group #2: Thursday, February 5, 2015 from 4:30 – 6:00 PM at Edna Staebler PS~~
- Working Group #2: Thursday, February 19, 2015 from 4:30 – 6:00 PM at Mary Johnston PS

Future Working Group Meeting Dates to be Determined.

Public Meetings

Public Meetings (at least two Public Meetings are required) will be hosted in the evenings by the Board's Planning Department and while the Working Group members are welcome and encouraged to attend, they are not required to do so. If members cannot attend, it is important that they read the

minutes and comments received. Minutes and presentations from the Public Meetings will be posted online and comment sheets and feedback received (via boundaryfeedback@wrdsb.on.ca) from the community will be shared with the Working Group.

Mr. Hercanuck advised that we generally do not set a public meeting date until the Working Group is confident that we have something to present to the community.

Public Meetings

- **Public Meeting #1:** TBD
- **Public Meeting #2:** TBD

8. Roundtable

Mr. Hercanuck thanked the Working Group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 5:45 PM.

Action Items:

- **Working Group members to bring forward any other issues that their schools are facing, which can then be included into the draft Issues to be addressed**
- **Mrs. Agar to provide an update on numbers of Vista Hills subdivision students attending study area schools at a future meeting.**
- **Mr. Hercanuck to include the missing enrolment slide into the presentation to be posted on the website.**
- **Planning to bring Draft Issues, Objectives and Scenarios to the Working Group to spark the discussion and serve as a jumping off point.**
- **Mr. Hercanuck to find out why the new school site location was chosen, for our next meeting.**
- **Schools to advise Planning if they are requested to attend school council meeting to discuss boundary study.**
- **Principals to arrange to have a link to the Boundary Study Webpage on their School Website.**
- **City of Waterloo representative will be attending the next Working Group meeting to bring information on development plans and provide timing on future subdivisions.**

Future Meetings:

Working Group Meetings:

- **Working Group #2:** Thursday, February 19, 2015 from 4:30 – 6:00 PM at Mary Johnston PS
- **Working Group #3:** TBD

Public Meetings:

- **Public Meeting #1:** TBD
- **Public Meeting #2:** TBD