

WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY BOUNDARY STUDY PHASE 2



The fourth Working Group meeting of the West Waterloo Boundary Study, involving Abraham Erb, Laurelwood and Vista Hills Public Schools was held at Laurelwood Public School on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

ATTENDEES:

Heather Schumann, Principal, Abraham Erb PS; Peter Berndt, Principal, Laurelwood PS; Don Oberle, Principal, Vista Hills PS; Jennifer Kennedy, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS; Ryan Barnett-Cowan, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS; Bhaleka Persaud, Parent Representative, Vista Hills PS; Greg James, Parent Representative, Vista Hills PS; Elaine Ranney, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being; Nathan Hercanuck, Manager of Planning; Sarah Galliher, Senior Planner; Emily Bumbaco, Senior Planner, Carrie Hamilton, Recording Secretary; Nicole Shaughnessy, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS

Regrets:

Matthew Gerard, Superintendent of Business Services & Treasurer of the Board; Shemira Sheriff, Vice-Principal, Deb Bergey, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS

Ms. Bumbaco, Senior Planner, welcomed the Working Group at 5:13 pm and introduced Carrie Hamilton as the new Recording Secretary. Ms. Bumbaco led the group through the presentation (available online at <https://www.wrdsb.ca/planning/westwaterloophase2/>)

1. WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Ms. Bumbaco reviewed the agenda (page 2 of the online presentation). The agenda is short which will leave lots of time for discussion. Ms. Bumbaco asked if there were any errors or omissions in the minutes from the Public Meeting. None were identified.

2. PUBLIC MEETING RECAP

The meeting was rescheduled from February 12th to February 13th which was short notice for some people. The rationale for this date was to keep the process moving while accommodating a number of schedules. Planning received three emails expressing concerns over the date selected. There were no emails received after the public meeting.

It was felt that the turnout for the meeting was good. Approximately 70 people attended the meeting (sign-ins included: 45 – Vista Hills, 4 Laurelwood, and 1 Abraham Erb). The recent Southwest Kitchener Public Meeting which included 3 secondary schools with 27 feeder schools had 65 people in attendance.

Three scenarios were reviewed at the meeting. There was a 45 minutes question and answer period with a majority of the comments in favour of Scenario #5.

Q: Why do the minutes say “the objectives will be finalized”?

R: Ms. Bumbaco indicated that nothing different was heard at the meeting that would cause a change in the objectives. During the reviews, the objectives are kept draft until the public consultation process is complete.

Mr. Hercanuck added that in boundary studies that are larger in scope, we often have 2 or 3 public meeting where the objectives would be finalized at a later meeting. We are not proposing an additional meeting in this case.

C: The wording implies that there was feedback at the meeting about the objectives.

Ms. Galliher noted that this was from the presentation and the wording was meant to indicate that the committee is open to a revision of the objectives.

C: Although not able to attend, positive feedback was received about the meeting and the attendance indicates that the meeting was a successful public meeting with a sufficient amount of public input.

Q: Was there any indication or feedback from the trustees?

R: Ms. Bumbaco noted that Carol Millar - Waterloo Trustee sent in her regrets. Scott Piatkowski - Waterloo Trustee, and Kathleen Woodcock – Waterloo Trustee, were in attendance along with Joanne Weston, Vice-Chair.

Mr. Hercanuck added that they certainly did not express anything to us about their opinions. During this process the trustees are good at not influencing or appearing to influence the process. Trustees typically respect the work of the boundary study working group.

C: Nathan made a good case that we are looking at a long term solution -so that this process would not have to be repeated.

Mr. Hercanuck added that he believes with what we know now, there should not be occasion for us to come back in the next ten years.

3. FEEDBACK REVIEW

Ms. Bumbaco reviewed slides 4 and 5 about the Feedback Summary and asked if there was any other feedback that the group would like to share.

C: There was a concern brought forward regarding the apartment buildings beside the fire hall and the impact that this would have on the population at Laurelwood.

C: Vista Hills has a meeting this Thursday and would like to have today's presentation for it.

Q: One parent was particularly detailed about schools and changes of boundaries in their e-mail. Is there an answer to that question? Is the information in the feedback accurate?

Ms. Bumbaco indicated that the information in the email went back to 1999 and she was not able to quickly locate information prior to the establishment of Edna Staebler. She will look into it a bit further, but it is possible the boundaries have changed like that in the last 20 years.

Mr. Hercanuck added that we say that it is our goal is to not disrupt a community too many times, but things do change as there can be unforeseen changes in the population, ministry initiatives, etc.

4. RECOMMENDED SCENARIO

Ms. Bumbaco reviewed slide 6 – Recommended Scenario and asked if the group was comfortable moving forward with Scenario #5 as the recommended scenario.

Scenario #5

Abraham Erb PS transition to Laurelwood for grades 7-8

Create 2 new development areas.

Ms. Bumbaco reviewed slide 7 – Final Report Draft Recommendations

Q: Could you describe the process surrounding the Development Areas? Does that get established soon?

R: Mr. Hercanuck said that once we receive notice that the development plan is registered or are about to register and then we will make a determination regarding which schools we would like them to attend. Then we would have a conversation with Principals of those schools regarding projected enrolment, etc.

Q: On the second point on the slide, we are only revising the 7-8 boundary and not JK-6 boundaries

Ms Bumbaco responded that for Laurelwood, the point will be changed as it is just the Grade 7-8 boundary changing. For Vista Hills, the whole boundary is changing with the removal of the Development Areas. Ms. Bumbaco asked the group if they are comfortable with the final recommendation.

There was consensus from the Working Group to proceed with Scenario #5 as the final recommendation.

5. ROUND TABLE

Q: There are some families that have one child in grade 7 and one child in grade 8. Is there an option to keep these students together at the same school?

R: If the siblings want to stay at the same school, they would have to move toward the solution which would mean that both children would move to Laurelwood, instead of both staying at Vista Hills.

Q: What is done about people who submit incorrect addresses?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that if it is determined that the address is wrong, they would be reassigned to the correct school. Proof of address is required when registering for school. We do not have the mandate or the means to police addresses.

Ms. Bumbaco noted that the report will go to the Board likely in April. It still has to go through the Board agenda setting process. Mr. Hercanuck added that we will send out a message when the board meeting has been scheduled. The board meeting is a public meeting and you can attend the meeting or apply to be a delegate. The agenda for the meeting will be posted to the website the Friday prior to the meeting which will take place on a Monday.

Q: Will those people who have signed up for the boundary study receive the information for the trustee meeting?

R: Ms. Galliher said that Planning will post an announcement about the meeting and communicate it to the Working Group as well.

Q: How confident are we that the transition for the bussing changes will be fairly smooth?

Q: What is the timeline of the determination of bussing routes?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded that there is the possibility for the boundaries for bus eligibility to shift. STSWR makes the decisions regarding the bus routes and they communicate that well. Bussing information is communicated about 2 weeks before school starting.

Ms. Bumbaco added that once a decision is made regarding this study, the information will be forwarded to STSWR.

Q: Can we have a back-up plan if this scenario doesn't work in the near future?

R: Ms. Galliher responded that we probably don't need one and that we are not precluded from coming back if there were changes to enrollment. We will make the decision on the situation that we have now.

Mr. Hercanuck added that there was only one instance in which there was a secondary option which occurred when there was not consensus in the Working Group.

Q: The Working Group is recommending Scenario 5, but would staff recommend another option?

R: Staff will not be recommending a different option.

Q: Will there be a boundary study when Beaver Creek opens?

R: Mr. Hercanuck responded yes, but there is no timeline on when that would take place as there is a lot of work to be done on the development as of yet.

Q: In the public meeting minutes there is a question about the idea of integrating the grades 7 and 8's to the high school. Was the question meant as a 7 – 12 school or did it mean that the grades 7 and 8 could access the facilities at SJAM?

The Working Group concluded that the intent of the question was as a 7-12 school, however the parent did reference using the facilities in other conversations with staff that evening.

Ms. Bumbaco indicated that the minutes and presentation will be posted online. The minutes from today's meeting will be approved via email.

Ms. Bumbaco thanked the group for all their hard work throughout the boundary study process and expressed appreciation for the time they committed over the last few months.

Superintendent Rainey thanked the Planning team for their work leading the group through the process and thanked the parents and administrators for the time and work they put in to the meetings.

Meeting concludes: 18:02