



WEST WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS BOUNDARY STUDY

Minutes of Working Group Meeting #7

Tuesday, September 22, 2015

4:45 – 6:15 PM

Edna Staebler Public School, Library

The seventh Working Group meeting of the West Waterloo Elementary Schools Boundary Study, involving Abraham Erb, Cedarbrae, Centennial, Edna Staebler, Laurelwood, Mary Johnston and Vista Hills (new 2016) Public Schools was held at Laurelwood Public School on Tuesday, September 22, 2015.

Attendees:

Paul Fracas, Principal, Edna Staebler PS, Don Oberle, Principal, Vista Hills PS, Heather Schumann, Principal, Abraham Erb PS, Jan Hansen, Vice Principal Edna Staebler PS, Holly Corman, Vice Principal, Laurelwood PS, Deb Bergery, Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Marny St. Pierre, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, Vivian F., Parent Representative, Centennial PS, Shelly Reed, Parent Representative, Edna Staebler PS, G. Sikiladha, Alternating Parent Representative, Abraham Erb PS, Elaine Ranney, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being, Dennis Cuomo, Manager of Planning, Andrea Kean, Recording Secretary and Lauren Agar, Senior Planner.

Regrets:

Liz Arbuckle, Principal, Laurelwood PS, H. Tinnes, Principal, Mary Johnston PS, Mark McMath, Principal, Cedarbrae PS, Betti Adams, Principal, Centennial PS, Brian Weigel, Vice Principal, Centennial PS, Ryan Barnett-Cowan, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, Tracey Nairn, Parent Representative, Centennial PS, C. Lovegrove, Parent Representative, Laurelwood PS, Mairaj Naveed, Alternating Parent Representative, Cedarbrae PS, Peter Rubenschuh, Superintendent of Student Achievement & Well-Being, and Nathan Hercanuck, Senior Planner.

1. Welcome/Introductions

Lauren Agar, Senior Planner, welcomed members of the Working Group at 4:50 PM.

Mrs. Agar led the group through the presentation, available online at

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

2. Draft Minutes Review/Approval

Mrs. Agar noted that the **Minutes from Working Group Meeting #6** (June 4, 2015) were approved via email. No errors or omissions were noted. The minutes were approved without change and posted on the website on June 24, 2015.

Action Items from Minutes: (slide 3 of the online presentation)

Mrs. Agar advised that as requested at the last meeting, she has put together:

- Scenario 14
- Draft Report and Recommendations with Scenarios 11 and 14

3. Scenario Discussion

Mrs. Agar did a recap of Scenario 11 as follows:

a. Scenario 11

(slides 3-7 of the online presentation)

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 11 includes the request to keep all of area F together at Vista Hills PS.

Scenario 11 – Phase 1 (slide 3)

- September 2016 – 2019 (approximately)
 - Abraham Erb PS: (remaining JK-6) feeds to Vista Hills PS for 7-8
 - Edna Staebler PS: (remaining JK-8) projection areas M and N2 (regular track students) assigned to Vista Hill PS
 - Laurelwood PS: (remaining JK-8) without the Abraham Erb PS feed for Grades 7-8
 - Mary Johnston PS: Status Quo
 - Vista Hills PS: JK-8 in 2017; JK-7 in 2016
- Vista Hills PS JK-8 boundary includes the West Waterloo Development Area (temporarily assigned to Cedarbrae and Centennial Public Schools), and a portion of the Edna Staebler PS boundary).
- Abraham Erb PS feeds to Vista Hill PS for Grades 7-8 instead of Laurelwood PS.
- New Development Area boundary established (Beaver Creek Meadows District Plan Area – projection area B) where the school attendance area (temporarily and/or long-term) will be determined at a future date.

Q: Are there any students in area B?

R: Mrs. Agar advised that this area is undeveloped and development plans have not been registered yet.

Scenario 11 – Phase 2 (slide 4)

- September 2020+ (approximately)
 - Same JK-6 boundaries as Phase 1
 - Abraham Erb PS feeds Laurelwood PS for Grades 7-8 starting in approx. 2020 (change from Vista Hills PS in Phase 1)

Scenario 11 – Grandfathering (slide 5)

Enrolment projections include the following grandfathering provisions:

- 2016-2019 (estimated)
 - *All Grade 8 students stay at 2015-16 school and finish there (Vista Hills PS JK-7 in 2016, JK-8 in 2017)*
 - *All FI students Grades 2-8 stay at 2015-16 school (assumes a Gr 1 FI class at Vista Hills PS in 2016) and finish there*
 - *All Grade 7 & 8 FI students in areas A, C, D attend Laurelwood PS*
- 2020+ (estimated)
 - *All Grade 8 students stay at 2019-20 school and finish there*

Scenario 11 – Grade Breakdown (slide 6)

Mrs. Agar noted the following:

- Vista Hills PS in the first year is projected to have 75 students in Grade 7 (no Grade 8s in 2016)
- Laurelwood PS would maintain approximately 185 Grade 7-8 students in 2016.
- Edna Staebler PS numbers take a while to decrease in the initial phase (because of grandfathering).
- Laurelwood PS maintains a healthy number at just over 600; however, still over the school's capacity.
- Vista Hills PS would open in its first year JK-7 with approximately 340 students.
- As development increases in the Vista Hills subdivision, enrolment at Vista Hills PS is projected to increase.
- Abraham Erb PS feeds to Laurelwood PS for Grades 7-8.

Scenario 11 versus the Objectives (slide 7)

Scenario 11 - Phase 1

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 11 Phase 1 meets 6 of the 8 objectives as outlined on slide 7 of the online presentation.

Scenario 11 - Phase 2

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 11 Phase 2 meets 7 of the 8 objectives as outlined on slide 7 of the online presentation.

b. Scenario 14 (new)

Scenario 14 – Phase 1 (slide 8)

- September 2016 – 2019 (approximately)
 - Abraham Erb PS: (remaining JK-6) feeds to Vista Hills PS for 7-8.
 - Edna Staebler PS: (remaining JK-8) projection area T assigned to Mary Johnston PS for JK-6 and Centennial PS for Grades 7-8.
 - Laurelwood PS: (remaining JK-8)
 - Mary Johnston PS: receives projection area T from Edna Staebler PS (130 Students JK-6).
 - Vista Hills PS: JK-8 in 2017; JK-7 in 2016.
- Mary Johnston PS boundary includes a portion of Edna Staebler PS boundary (projection area T “Erbsville Triangle”).
- Centennial PS boundary includes a portion of the Edna Staebler PS boundary (projection area T “Erbsville Triangle”).
- New Development Area boundary established (Beaver Creek Meadows District Plan Area – projection area B) where the school attendance area (temporary and/or long-term) will be determined at a future date.

Scenario 14 – Phase 2 (slide 9)

- September 2016 – 2019 (approximately)
 - Same JK-6 boundaries as Phase 1.
 - Abraham Erb PS returns as a feeder school to Laurelwood PS for Grades 7-8 starting in approximately 2020 (change from Vista Hills PS in Phase 1).

Scenario 14 with Grandfathering (slide 10)

Enrolment projections include the following grandfathering provisions:

- 2016-2019 (estimated)
 - *All Grade 8 students stay at 2015/16 school and finish there (Vista Hills PS JK-7 in 2016, JK-8 in 2017).*
 - *All FI students Grades 2-8 stay at 2015/16 school (assumes a Gr 1 FI class at Vista Hills PS in 2016) and finish there (if program is not offered at receiving school).*
 - *All Grade 7 & 8 FI students in Vista Hills PS boundary attend Vista Hills PS (until 2020).*
- 2020+ (estimated)
 - *All Grade 8 students stay at 2019/20 school and finish there.*
 - *All Grade 7 & 8 FI students in Vista Hills PS/Laurelwood PS boundary attend Laurelwood PS.*
- Note: projection area T students attend Centennial PS for Grades 7-8; therefore total enrolments for Scenario 14 will not align with other scenarios.

Scenario 14 – Grade Breakdown (slide 11)

Mrs. Agar noted the following:

- Vista Hills PS in the first year is projected to have only 280 students in a school built for 646 (210 students JK-6 and 65 students in Grade 7 (no Grade 8s in 2016).

- Laurelwood PS would maintain approximately 185 Grade 7-8 students in 2016.
- Edna Staebler PS numbers take a while to decrease.
- Laurelwood PS maintains a healthy number at approximately 625; however, still over the school's capacity.
- Vista Hills PS would open in its first year JK-7 with approximately 275 students.
- As development increases in the Vista Hills subdivision, enrolment at Vista Hills PS is projected to increase.
- Abraham Erb PS feeds to Vista Hills PS for Grades 7-8.

Scenario 14 versus the Objectives (slide 12)

Scenario 14 - Phase 1

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 14 Phase 1 meets 6 of the 8 objectives as outlined on slide 12 of the online presentation.

Scenario 11 - Phase 2

Mrs. Agar noted that Scenario 14 Phase 2 meets 6 of the 8 objectives as outlined on slide 12 of the online presentation.

Areas of Concern:

Mrs. Agar noted that adding area T (an addition of 130 students) to Mary Johnston PS is of concern as the facility is not designed to accommodate over 500 students and are currently struggling with classroom space, gym and library scheduling with its current enrolment.

Q: Does Mary Johnston PS only have a single gym?

R: Yes. Mrs. Agar noted that adding further enrolment would cause additional constraints on the facility while doing nothing to support enrolment at Vista Hills PS. She further cautioned that Scenario 14 does not provide a good balance of enrolment over facilities and would be transferring Edna Staebler PS's enrolment issues onto Mary Johnston PS while leaving the new Vista Hills PS under-utilized.

C: A parent representative countered that moving area T from Edna Staebler PS to Mary Johnston PS would address safety concerns for students having to cross over Erbsville Road while providing better community cohesion for area T as well as for areas M and N2 who would be able to remain at Edna Staebler PS.

C: A parent representative noted that Mary Johnston PS site would be large enough to accommodate portable classrooms and allow for students to participate in outdoor gym classes.

Q: Mrs. Agar asked the administrators if they had ever been at a school with a single gym and over 500 students and how gym time was scheduled.

Administrators advised that gym time scheduling could be addressed in the following manner:

- Provide gym time in the classroom or outside.
- Have more than one class in the gym at the same time.
- Less gym time for students.

C: Mr. Cuomo cautioned that Scenario 14 would be problematic because of the low enrolment numbers for Vista Hills PS in 2016:

- 210 JK-6 students
- 65 Grade 7 students (no Grade 8 students in 2016 as they will finish out at their current)
- Total of only 275 students projected for 2016 at Vista Hills PS

C: A parent representative noted that concern had been expressed at an Abraham Erb PS school council meeting that low Grade 7 numbers at Vista Hills PS in 2016 could negatively affect the school's ability to offer sports teams.

It was noted that sport programs are dependent on many factors including, whether teachers volunteer to supervise them.

It was also noted that having a smaller number of students at the Grade 7-8 level could mean that students that would not otherwise be able to participate in sports might have a better chance of doing so; as there may likely not be as many “star players” competing for spots.

Q: There has been concern expressed around where the French Immersion Program (FI) will be offered; will the program be at Vista Hills PS when it opens?

R: Mrs. Agar advised that not every school will offer the program as the number of students continuing in FI decreases noticeably at the Grade 7-8 level and often warrant congregating the FI program with another facility. She advised that the projected enrolment numbers for Vista Hills PS does not include FI for Grades 2-8; but does assume a FI class at the Grade 1 level. Abraham Erb PS students enrolled in FI will attend the program at Edna Staebler PS for Grades 7 and 8.

Mrs. Agar advised that the Board opens new school JK-7 to reduce the number of transitions for students.

Mrs. Agar advised the Working Group that she cannot get behind Scenario 14 because:

- It does not provide a good balance of enrolment over facilities.
- Shifts Edna Staebler PS over enrolment problem onto Mary Johnston PS which does not have facilities to accommodate the additional 130 students.
- Leaves the new Vista Hills PS under-utilized.
- Will likely incur additional transportation costs to bus area T students to Centennial PS for Grades 7-8 and JK-SK students to Mary Johnston PS.

C: A parent representative commented that Scenario 14 is worth considering based on safety for students walking to school no longer having to cross Erbsville Road.

R: Mrs. Agar responded that while they no longer have to cross Erbsville Road to attend Edna Staebler PS – they would now be required to walk a further distance to attend Mary Johnston PS.

C: A parent representative commented that the area T families should be attending Mary Johnston PS so they don’t have to take their lives in their hands everyday crossing Erbsville Road.

Q: Have we received any feedback from area T residents on concerns with crossing Erbsville Road?

R: No.

C: A parent representative noted that area T residents may not want to leave Edna Staebler PS and prefer to remain there with their friends.

C: Mrs. Agar noted that the remaining scenarios would either remove the northern or the eastern portion of Edna Staebler PS’s boundary to reduce enrolment – she advised that a decision has to be made on which portion will stay and which will go.

Q: A parent representative asked if it would be possible to partner with other schools to increase the number of students in extracurricular sports.

R: Principal Fracas commented that schools would compete with other schools that have comparable teams/enrolment.

C: Mrs. Agar asked if it would be preferable to bus area T students to Vista Hills PS for JK-8 rather than having to bus the Grade 7-8s to Centennial PS or the JK-SK to Mary Johnston PS; and with the knowledge that this area could be moved out again when the Vista Hills community builds out. She noted that doing so could incur additional transportation costs for the Board.

- C: It was noted that area T is physically closer to Mary Johnston PS than it is to Vista Hills PS and would split area T students enrolled in the FI program from the Regular Track students as Vista Hills PS will not offer the full FI program there.
- C: A parent representative commented that area T FI and Regular Track students could move together to Mary Johnston PS, maintaining community cohesiveness; whereas areas M and N2 would be split from Edna Staebler PS and then split again as FI would remain at Edna Staebler PS and Regular Track students would move to Vista Hills PS, further splitting the Columbia Forest Community.
- C: Mrs. Agar noted that moving area T not only affects Mary Johnston PS; but would also result in this area having to attend the already crowded Centennial PS for Grades 7-8; she advised that she would have to develop enrolment projections to see what additional enrolment would mean for Centennial PS as well.

Mrs. Agar asked the Working Group which of the two scenarios (11 or 14) they believe would make the best recommendation to address the boundary study objectives:

While the majority of the Working Group did not have a preferred scenario, seeing the benefits of both; three members voiced their support for Scenario 14.

- Q: The Abraham Erb PS parent representative asked if the Working Group can reach out to the area T families as to our knowledge we have not received any direct comments or complaints with crossing Erbsville Road to attend Edna Staebler PS; she asked if a letter could be sent home to advise them of what is being considered and ask for their input.
- C: Superintendent Ranney advised that in her time as Superintendent, she does not remember ever receiving a complaint from families in area T about crossing Erbsville Road.

The Working Group agreed that Planning Staff would hold a Community Meeting with projection Area T families to gain feedback on 3 main questions:

- 1) Are there concerns with crossing Erbsville Road?
- 2) If crossing Erbsville Road is a concern, would moving to Mary Johnston PS address this concern?
- 3) If crossing Erbsville Road is a concern, would being bussed to Vista Hills PS (with potential to be moved again once Vista Hills develops further) address this concern?

Planning will send out a flyer via Edna Staebler PS to affected families and the **Area T Community meeting** will be held on:

Wednesday, September 30, 2015
6:30 - 7:00 PM at Edna Staebler PS, Library
Working Group members are encouraged to attend.

Working Group Meeting #8 will follow directly after; from **7:00 - 7:30 PM on September 30th at Edna Staebler PS, Library**

4. Draft Report & Recommendations (slides 13- 18 of the online presentation)

The Draft Report was emailed out to the Working Group prior to this evening's meeting and due to time constraints was not discussed in full.

Mrs. Agar advised that because the Vista Hills community is still developing, the report will not set a boundary for phase 2 of the preferred scenario but would address phase 2 through the following recommendation:

That the Waterloo Region District School Board direct staff to present a report and recommendations to the Board of Trustees between December 2018 and December 2020 to reconfirm the second phase of Scenario 11 as described in this report, including additional public consultation on Phase 2.

She advised that Planning Staff would monitor the situation and evaluate the phase 2 boundaries to determine if they work or require changes to better address the future situation; we will come back to the community for consultation which will allow us to better address any issues at that time.

Mrs. Agar advised that based on the Working Groups discussion this evening that she may have to revise the Draft Report Recommendation to Scenario 14 instead of Scenario 11 should the Working Group decide to support Scenario 14.

5. Working Group Meetings:

Area T Community Meeting will be held on:

Wednesday, September 30, 2015; 6:30 - 7:00 PM at Edna Staebler PS, Library

Working Group members are encouraged to attend.

Working Group Meeting #8

Wednesday, September 30, 2015; 7:00 - 7:30 PM at Edna Staebler PS., Library

6. Public Meetings:

Public Meeting #2 October 6, 2015 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at Abraham Erb PS

It was noted that Abraham Erb PS community is disappointed that the 7-8 program is no longer being considered for their school and may ask for the rationale at the public meeting.

Public Meeting #2 (Oct 6, 2015) flyers were handed out to administrators to send home with students as soon as possible.

Next Steps

Staff Report to Committee of the Whole

Tentatively, Monday November 23, 2015

WRDSB Education Centre Boardroom - 51 Ardel Ave, Kitchener; 7:00 PM

7. Roundtable

Mrs. Agar thanked the Working Group for attending and adjourned the meeting at 6:15 PM.

Action Items:

- **Mrs. Agar to develop Meeting Notice and send out to area T families.**
- **Working Group to review background section of the Draft Report for errors/omissions**
- **Mrs. Agar to update Draft Report and Recommendations after Working Group Meeting #8**

Future Meetings:

Working Group Meetings:

- **Area T Community Meeting: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 from 6:30 – 7:00 PM at Edna Staebler PS**
- **Working Group #8: Wednesday, September 30, 2015 from 7:00 – 7:30 PM at Edna Staebler PS**

Public Meetings:

- **Public Meeting #2: Tuesday, October 6, 2015 from 7:00 – 8:30 PM at Abraham Erb PS**