



Ward 20 Council Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 24, 2015 | Stephen Leacock C.I.

In Attendance

The **Meeting started at 7.05 p.m.** and in attendance were: TDSB Ward 20 School Trustee Manna Wong, Tina Balduini (Educator, Vradenburg), Shirley Chan (Superintendent, ER 19), Ellen Chang (Teacher, Stephen Leacock), Rhonda Cohen-Pierobon (Principal, Kennedy), Holly Cunningham (Co-chair, Sir John A. MacDonald), Neil Dyal (Vice-Principal, Dr. Norman Bethune), Anna Epitropou (Principal, Timberbank), George Fang (Co-chair, Beverley Glen), Lisa Ferguson (Chair, Timberbank), Peter Holleley (Parent, Sir John A MacDonald), Stephen Hu (Chair, Kennedy), Charmaine Hung-Lashley (Vice-Principal, David Lewis), S. Katpaganathan (Parent), Janice Kent (Principal, Pauline Johnson), Morag Killackey (Principal, Beverley Glen), Terry Koo (Co-chair, Dr. Norman Bethune), Kingsley Kwok (Chair, Lynnwood Heights), Catherine Leong (Co-chair, Dr. Norman Bethune), Gaynor Lim (Principal, Lynnwood Heights), Grant McPherson (Principal, Brookmill), Meharun Nazeer (Co-chair, John Buchan & Stephen Leacock), Valerie Nelson (Principal, L'Amoreaux), Bola Otaraki (Parent, Beverley Glen), Karen Peach (Principal, David Lewis), Jacquie Pepler (Chair, Stephen Leacock), Ishmael Qoraishi (Chair, Sir Ernest MacMillan), F. Radin (Parent, Terraview-Willowfield), Felicia Samuel (E.O., ETT), Ganesharatnam Sithamparanathan (Secretary of School Council & Parent, Stephen Leacock), Jayanthi Sithamparanathan (Parent, Stephen Leacock), Meariam Tadros (Parent/Teacher), Steve Travers (Principal, Bridlewood), Marilyn Trenbeth (Community Rep), Beth Veale (Superintendent, ER 18), Anita Wong (Principal, Stephen Leacock), Natalie Wright (Co-chair, Chester Le), Wendy Yang (Parent, Lynnwood Heights), Margaret Yung (Parent, Beverley Glen)

Presentation by Host School - Students and Principal, Stephen Leacock Collegiate Institute

The Principal and students of Stephen Leacock Collegiate gave a touching presentation of their school, and how it has been a family setting for parents, students, and staff of the school. They had a PowerPoint showing the students' successes in math, science and athletics, and the ample opportunities in building student leadership in their APEX Camp, Leadership/Newcomer Camp and Grade 9 Camp.

Introductions

The Ward 20 TDSB new School Trustee, Manna Wong introduced herself and provided a brief background about herself. Everyone present also introduced themselves and the School/Community they represented.

Expectations

Manna asked all present to provide feedback on what would be the expectations for a TDSB School Trustee and opened the floor for suggestion on how to run ward council meetings.

Some of the comments provided include:

- Why is Tam O'Shanter over populated, but other schools are under capacity
- Parents expect the Trustee to carry out the function of advocacy on behalf of parents/guardians and their school communities
- The Sex-Ed Curriculum was concluded without adequate parent involvement or consultation. There's no credibility to the survey.
- Parents requested the roll-out of this new curriculum must be postponed until the parents are adequately consulted. Manna said the curriculum is set by the Education Minister and is scheduled to be implemented by September 2015. She agreed that one parent from every school participating in the survey was totally inadequate.
- Manna would like us to address different issues and concerns at the meeting. She also asked how we want the meetings to be held and asked audience for ideas on how to work together – Such as : in different schools, with the school chairs presenting the issues facing them, then they can present their various individual issues
- Another option is for the meetings to evolve based on the direction of future meetings. Example: PIAC member could report any updates
- A parent would like to see transparency with regards to the massive renovations that are needed in many of the schools
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Trustee Updates

- Ward 20 rep, Sude Singh, at the Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC) was elected PIAC co-chair in November, Cathy Noble is the alternate rep
- Manna will find out if we need to do a new election and will give an update
- Municipal election was held on Oct 27, swearing in was on Dec 1st.
- On Nov 25, Minister Sandals commissioned a report on TDSB operational and governance issues from consultant Margaret Wilson. The report came out on Jan 15 on same afternoon Director asked for 13 directives to be implemented by Feb 13.
- Manna expressed her appreciation to the staff for working day and night to make sure the recommendations to meet the directives came out on time
- Some of the directives include:
 - Curtailing role of trustees by removing them from the day-to-day operations of schools
 - Removal of the offices the Trustees used to have - no more offices, cutting trustee budget by two-thirds
 - Accelerated capital plan (school closures) for next three years
- Board accepted the directives to show they are willing to work with the Director and Minister
- In terms of adequacy, a few Trustees felt there was strife between the Trustees and staff, even though opinions may differ
- Taking away offices will have no effect on resolving issues at board
- After 4 weeks on Feb 10 a set of recommendations to meet the demands of the directives were approved and put forward

- Minister Sandals said she's not happy that the Board (TDSB) is not aggressive enough - they should come up with better plans of which schools are going to go on the chopping board
- Manna welcomed any thought/discussion about/around the funding formula which has been problematic since its introduction under the Harris government.
- Many trustees have expressed concerns to the ministry. Unless this is changed, there will not be adequate resources to meet the changing needs of our students.
- In past 3 months, she and her colleagues have been trying to work on what's in front of them and getting an appropriate funding/budget for programs is tough when there're various suggestions for cutting programs.

General Discussions

- It was mentioned that since the alternative schools are not being funded - if we cut the alternative schools, there will be adequate money for other schools
- Manna believes school should be a level playing field and we must decide if we are able to cater to students that cannot fit into other schools - it's a philosophical question "Who should be able access the services they deserve? Manna said she's here to listen and present it to the Board
- A comment was that "you should not spend money that we don't have"
- One of the attendees recommended that Manna should bring us information on what are Alternative schools; we should know how much is the budget, how much we can spend, and what are the priorities? Saying that we don't have money is not accurate and does not allow us to see the full picture and make proper conclusions/recommendations
- Manna recommended that we need to set priorities, what's important, but we should also look at ways of expanding what we have to have the most mileage - it's also up to Provincial government to say what's most important
- If the Government wants to manage their budget by cutting education, we as parents should provide input
- It was asked that "regarding issues like the new Sex-ed curriculum, we are now giving input, why are our opinions not considered?"

Follow-up Steps, Action Points

- Clarify status of ward representative on Parent Involvement Advisory Committee (PIAC)
- Follow-up on issues on Alternative schools
- Update on Under-utilized schools on a list and the Area Review process... Parents were very concerned Manna explained that seeing a school on the list does not mean it's going to be cut; 65% is utilization rate set by Ministry, does not recognize ESL, Daycare, Adult Day programs - so despite a school having every room full, it's way the definition of utilization is set; Mayor John Tory also said they want parents to be a part of the process
There is a process now for reviewing the use of schools and consolidating or closing schools. It will go through 4 area review process but the ministry is looking at cutting it into 3 or less.
- *** Please make sure you give consent if you are interested in getting information from Manna

- Given the cut in trustee resources, Manna asked for volunteers: Jacquie offered to walk door-to-door to provide newsletters/information within her community. And Meharun offered to share in her neighbourhood
- It was recommended that Manna should kindly send us proposed Agenda by e-mail and we can reply and include whatever we would like to add to the next meeting

Next Meeting

The meeting ended at about 8.40 p.m. and the proposed next meeting date is April 9, 2015.