



Ward 6 South Pupil Accommodation Review Committee

Public Meeting #1 Notes

Monday, January 30, 2017

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 PM

Rockcliffe Middle School, 400 Rockcliffe Blvd, Toronto, ON

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| Presenters | Vicky Branco, Superintendent of Education, Verna Lister, Facilitator, Nechama Hirschberg, Planning Department |
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| <i>Item / Presenter</i> | <i>Discussion</i> | <i>Attachments / Actions / Results</i> |
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| Welcome – Vicky Branco and Chris Tonks | <p>Superintendent Vicky Branco opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. She indicated that there are Spanish, Portuguese and Somali interpreters present in case anybody needs such support for this meeting. She then introduced members of the Pupil Accommodation Review Committee (“PARC”) present in the room.</p> <p>She introduced Trustee Chris Tonks, Ward 6. Trustee Tonks acknowledged the presence of the Chair of the TDSB Robin Pilkey and Councillor Frances Nunziata in the audience. He thanked the PARC members for their many hours of work on this very emotional and difficult project. He indicated that in addition to tonight, everybody will get an opportunity to voice his or her opinion at the upcoming meetings with School Councils that will be attended by him and the Superintendent Branco. He also indicated that TDSB staff is here to listen and answer all questions that may arise. He has already heard a number of concerns and comments from community members. He also indicated that the members of the PARC are here and they will serve as a source of information for the school community.</p> <p>Councillor Francis Nunziata thanked the TDSB for organizing this public meeting and that she understands that there will be an opportunity for further consultation through school councils as well as more public meetings. She encouraged people to get involved in the process.</p> <p>Superintendent Branco explained how the meeting will be conducted and how the participants can give their feedback. In the presentation, planning staff will present recommendations that were developed over time and in consultation with other central staff and the school principals and then meeting attendees will have time to ask questions and provide feedback.</p> | |

Why are we here? – Verna Lister, Facilitator

Verna Lister thanked people for coming out and even bringing children to the meeting. She also introduced the two student representatives serving on the PARC.

Verna introduced the purpose of today’s meeting. We are here to provide parents and community with an opportunity to:

- Review the background data on the schools involved in the review process and the activity to date;
- Learn more about the Pupil Accommodation Review process;
- Review the staff recommendation for the group of schools involved in the process;
- Learn about the next steps in this review; and,
- Have an opportunity to ask questions and to provide feedback.

She indicated that there are info boards that can help the participants to follow the staff presentation. She also indicated that all information that we will be reviewing today is posted on the TDSB site at www.tdsb.on.ca and that people can also submit their questions and comments to accommodationreviews@tdsb.on.ca (write Ward 6 South PARC in the subject line).

Verna indicated that the area under review is bordered by Eglinton Ave W to the North, Weston Rd to the East, and generally St. Clair Ave W to the South and the Humber River to the West. In this review, no changes are being proposed to the area secondary schools, secondary boundaries, or secondary pathways.

Verna explained that a Pupil Accommodation Review is a Ministry of Education mandated process to make important decisions about the future of a school or group of schools. This process is applied in the areas with declining enrolment and where schools are underutilized and where changes under consideration include a school closure or relocation of grade, grades or programs and where that change would affect more than 50% of the enrolment of a school.

Verna indicated that we are here today because this area experienced the following:

- Low utilization rates (school’s enrolment divided by the number of students it can accommodate according to the Ministry benchmarks)
- Shared and split attendance areas
- Facilities with high 5-year facility needs
- Grade distributions that create a number of transitions.

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC_helpful_info_docs/P20170130-Ward6South-PublicMeeting1-Boards.pdf

http://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC_helpful_info_docs/P20170130-Ward6South-PublicMeeting1-Presentation-v4FINAL.pdf

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| | <p>The TDSB annually prepares a Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy that identifies studies to address the accommodation issues such as over- or under-utilization and redundant facilities. The studies look to balance enrolment across schools and make efficient use of the existing space while offering a variety of viable programs.</p> <p>Trustee Tonks introduced MPP Albanese as a good partner of the TDSB and mentioned that she is very supportive of the process we are undergoing here today. MPP Albanese is the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship. MPP Albanese thanked the participants for attending. Verna indicated that the community is very well represented by the presence of elected officials from all levels of the government.</p> <p>The Long-Term Program and Accommodation Strategy was approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2016. The Local Feasibility Team (LFT) met through May to September of 2016 in order to develop the recommendations for the Initial Staff Report. The LFT was made up of the local Superintendent of Education, Trustee, and principals from the affected schools and was supported by central staff. The Initial Staff Report was approved by the Board of Trustees prior to initiation of the public Pupil Accommodation Review. The report contains the LFT’s preferred accommodation proposal including the supporting rationale. The option addresses where students would be accommodated, any proposed changes to the existing facilities, and any proposed program changes. The Board of Trustees approved the start of the PARC for Ward 6 South on November 23, 2016. The PARC will meet throughout the winter and the final report will be submitted to the Board of Trustees in June 2017 for a final decision.</p> <p>If the Board of Trustees approves the final recommendations, the TDSB will request funding from the Ministry of Education to fund the rebuild of Dennis Ave CS and additions to George Syme CS . The implementation of the recommendations is contingent on approval and funding from the Ministry of Education.</p> | |
| <p>Initial Staff Report and Recommendations – Nechama Hirschberg, TDSB Planning Department</p> | <p>Nechama covered the staff recommendations that are contained on slides 20 to 37 of the presentation.</p> | <p>http://www.tdsb.on.ca/portals/default/ARC_helpful_info_docs/P20170130-Ward6South-PublicMeeting1-Presentation-v4_FINAL.pdf</p> |

Opportunities for Feedback and Next Steps – Verna Lister, Facilitator

Q1: A question has been asked regarding the new development in the area. How will new developments be accommodated?

Staff responded that all new developments affecting schools in Ward 6 South would be absorbed into their local schools or redirected to Lambton Park Community School.

Q2: Has the TDSB looked at this process from the perspective of a public health issue? Regarding the proposed changes, what would be the environmental impact assessment on this area?

Superintended Branco asked if the question refers to a social determinacy of health. She responded to the second part of the question first. No decisions yet have been made as to what will happen in the future to the building, but if the building were sold any new construction would have to follow all building and environmental codes. The TDSB is very conscious when it comes to the environmental impacts when building new schools.

Q3: The question was clarified to be from the communicable disease perspective due to the increased number of immigrants in this area as well as the number of new developments. How do you factor all this information in your projections?

Nechama indicated that the TDSB deals with all external factors in their projection. The number of potential students from development is hard to quantify at this time since no new applications for development have been filed so far in the immediate area that would be within the attendance boundaries. Also, looking at the increase in immigration numbers to Canada is quit unreliable since they settle in various areas of the City, GTA, and province and there is no specific pattern of settlement indicating that hundreds of new immigrants would be coming to this area. There are not any indications showing the area will be overwhelmed with new development or people moving in.

Trustee Tonks indicated that the Board of Trustees receives the enrolment projections every year because that drives the staffing allocation. The enrolment projections are extremely reliable. Trustee Tonks indicated that when it comes to the well-being of children, the staff proposal would not require busing and the Board encourages children and families to walk to school. In terms of building or the renovation of the existing buildings, the Board is aware that they have an impact on children attending the school. The Board ensures that all contractors hired show the utmost concern with student safety and health during the construction phase. The Board requires a lot of testing during the construction phase of each of its projects in order to have a safe environment

for children.

Q4: A question was raised by a parent that has two children attending two different schools in the TDSB. She would like to know how we will secure the funding for this huge project when she knows that at the present time the school cannot pay for locks on the washroom stalls or for soap so the kids can wash their hands?

Trustee Tonks explained that the TDSB has a maintenance budget that is separate from the repair or construction allocation from the Ministry. That funding is allocated on an annual basis by the Ministry and is used for facility maintenance. Currently, we have too much space and not enough students across the Board, so the Board has to prioritize the use of funds based on emergency needs. If the roof is leaking in the school that would be an emergency priority and that will be fixed right away. The Board has a large backlog of repairs that needs to be addressed, but the general upkeep of buildings is a separate funding source and funding allocation than building projects.

In terms of major renovations or new builds the TDSB needs to apply and make a case to the Province for funding. The Board uses all opportunities to apply for any available funding. The Province wants school boards to consolidate underutilized schools and have allotted \$750 Million to support that process across Ontario. If the final decision of this process is to build a new school, the TDSB will apply for funding but the tough decisions regarding school closings need to be made. TDSB has been very successful in the past finding new opportunities during this type of review. If the Province chooses not to fund the outcome of this process, TDSB will not change anything and will try again with its proposal.

Trustee Tonks asked the parent to talk to him after the meeting about her concerns and he will follow this case to ensure that her concerns will be addressed. The same assurance was given by Superintendent Branco.

Q5: A parent whose children currently attend Dennis Ave and Rockcliffe schools is very disappointed that Dennis Ave School will not have buses. Her childcare worker will not walk her kids over to the before and after school to the childcare location. She would like to know what would be her before and after school childcare options?

Superintendent Branco explained that there is an annual process to determine a need for before and after school childcare. The TDSB conducts a survey and if the need is determined, the school requires 25 students to apply for such a program. The Ministry is

very supportive of such programs. A new school would allow for the potential incorporation of a childcare space for children from infants to 12 years old. The City of Toronto already indicated their interest in increasing child care spaces in this area of the city. The provincial government changed the rules around the before and after program requirements and as of September 2017 the school boards will be required to provide before and after school childcare unless the school can show there is not sufficient demand. This will be a great opportunity to improve the availability of such childcare in the area. There are no details as to how this will be accomplished yet.

Q6: We are planning to close Cordella and Rockcliffe but both schools have solar panels that have been installed recently. That will be waste of the taxpayers' money. Additionally, since people are poor in this area, how will they get to Dennis Ave school since the TDSB is closing Cordella? In his opinion, this area is the poorest in the city and people cannot afford childcare.

Trustee Tonks responded that the solar panels were not paid for by the TDSB. The TDSB has a contract with a private company for the company to use the roof space in return for repairing the roof and there are rules for situations when a school is sold or demolished. If another school board wishes to pick up a surplus school then there is a potential for the solar panels to remain in place. If the school is closed but not sold, the panels can remain in place. That is a whole new process that is not covered by this meeting.

Trustee Tonks understands that sometimes busing is convenient but all of the schools will be within 1.6km radius so families can walk to school. This is the policy of the TDSB. If people want to drive that is their choice but they have free option to walk. He also understands that not all families have cars.

Q7: Will the attendance boundary changes affect the French Immersion program?

Staff responded that the French Immersion program and attendance boundaries are more fluid but the number of spots in French programs are not proposed to decrease through this process. The annual French placement process is driven by the number of applications submitted each year. The Board is required to place all applicants in the program. Currently, in this area most applicants to French Immersion are placed at George Syme. If we have more applications than there are spaces, the TDSB will locate another site to accommodate all these applications; however, we are not in this situation and all students can be accommodated at George Syme.

Q8: What is the contingency plan if funding falls through and we have many schools with a high FCI? The next year is an election year and the government can change.

Staff indicated that if funding for the proposed recommendation does not materialize, the TDSB will still have to address all these facility issues through their regular funding.

Q9: A community member would like to know how the TDSB will address the lack of drop off areas around some of its schools. He lives near Lambton Community School and there are a number of problems with people dropping off their children. People drop off their kids in front of his driveway. They also park their cars blocking his driveway while they walk their kids to school. Sometimes, the entire street is blocked off. Some of these problems are caused by the accumulation of leaves on the school's parking lot reducing available parking spaces. He would like to know if the school is planning to turn the streets near the schools that experience this type of problem into one way streets?

Trustee Tonks indicated that the City and the TDSB conducts traffic studies that can lead to changing the street direction in various areas of the city where schools experience similar complaints. The actual changes would require a broader community conversation because not everybody might want a one way street. The TDSB needs to work with the City of Toronto to review and alleviate these situations. Trustee Tonks will follow up on this issue with the Lambton Park principal. They will consult with the City and all relevant parties to attempt to resolve this issue.

Q10: The relocation of the Cordella school population to the Rockcliffe site will split the school population. Why not keep children in Rockcliffe and save taxpayers' money and keep this school in the community? The Rockcliffe school has a large lot which extends to Jane St. This move would save money for soap and locks for the washroom stalls.

Trustee Tonks corrected that it is not Cordella but Dennis Ave that is proposed to be relocated to the Rockcliffe site, and that the proposal is for the school as a whole, without splitting any students up. The recommendation of the status quo will not yield any new funding and it will make it harder to renovate underutilized schools. The selection of the most appropriate site for the new school was influenced by many factors such as: the suitability of the lot, closeness to transportation and the potential for an increase in future enrolment. The Dennis Ave site was the best option. The lot is not located on the flood plain as is the Rockcliffe site and it is close to the future LRT line for better access. Additionally, most of the schools in the area are old and they need a huge

investment in the regular maintenance. The TDSB has an opportunity for a new build which would reduce maintenance cost.

Q11: Why is so cold here tonight?

Staff explained that the school's boiler went down and is being repaired.

Q12: Participant who asked the previous question continued to insist that since TDSB wants to build a new school, it is taking the approach like a kid who wants a new cell phone. If the kid cannot get money for the new phone because the old one is still working, he will break his phone and say that now it does not work so let's get a new one. Perhaps if we cannot get funding for all repairs we could try to get funding for half since our kids will be cold here tomorrow? She also expressed the opinion that having middle schools is better for children's education and safety than schools from JK to Grade 8.

Trustee Tonks responded that the issue of repairing a boiler is an operational one and it will be resolved before the kids come back to school tomorrow.

Trustee Tonks indicated that in his experience schools that serve JK to Grade 8 are better for the educational outcome for our children as they offer better opportunities for older children to show leadership and mentoring capacity and minimize transitions. The size of the school also allows for variety of programs that require a larger number of students. There are no indications that younger children are at risk in these schools. A new school will provide a better learning environment for kids and will significantly reduce maintenance costs.

One of the other parents indicated that JK to Grade 8 schools offers better contact for siblings and allows for better integration of student body.

Q13: A question was asked if Rockcliffe can be used for a daycare once the school is closed?

The Staff responded that the future of the surplus schools will be determined by a separate process in which the public will have a full participation.

A parent shared a story about the drop off area around Karen Kain school and how the problem was solved.

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| | <p>Q14: A participant’s daughter is at George Syme school and for the last three years there has been construction around the school. The construction has limited parking spaces and access to the school for parents dropping kids off. That situation creates chaos so how will you handle school construction?</p> <p>Trustee Tonks clarified that once a decision is made to accept the recommendation of this PARC and the funding is obtained, the individual schools will have their own design teams that will deal with everything from the renovations to the drop off areas and the transition period. These teams will include teachers, principals, parents and support staff.</p> <p>Q15: What is the process for notification for these meetings as I am a member of the community but I don’t have children in the school? She lives across the street from the school and she is very involved in the community but there were many events that she would like to participate in but did not receive any communication.</p> <p>Staff explained that they had Canada Post drop unaddressed mail to about 20,000 members of the community. This is the notification process for the PARC meetings, but many school events have other notification methods. Staff noted that all present should fill out the sign in sheet, as notices are also distributed via email blasts.</p> | |
| Next Public Meeting | April 6, 2017 | |
| Adjournment | The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 PM | |