

MINUTES OF ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE (ARC) Central Whitby

2nd PUBLIC MEETING at Jack Miner P.S.

Wednesday, November 5, 2008 (7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.)

In Attendance:

Joe Hircock (ARC Chair)
David Visser (ARC Secretary)

ARC Central Whitby Members (alphabetical by school):

Monique deVillers (Principal, Capt. M. VandenBos)
Debra Hayes (Non-teaching Rep, Capt. M. VandenBos)
Linda Lyons (Parent Rep, Capt. M. VandenBos)
Carole McLeod (Teacher Rep, Capt. M. VandenBos)
Judy Wityszyn (Parent Rep, Capt. M. VandenBos)
Alana Browne (Teacher Rep, Florence M. Heard)
Chris Montgomery (Parent Rep, Florence M. Heard)
Sharon Murdoch (Parent Rep, Florence M. Heard)
Brigitte Sopher (Principal, Florence M. Heard)
Carol Bell (Teacher Rep, Jack Miner)
Trudy Collins (Principal, Jack Miner)
Cathy Wade (Parent Rep, Jack Miner)
Jacquie Weber (Parent Rep, Jack Miner)
Lynda Darling (Teacher Rep, Leslie McFarlane)
Scott Irwin (Parent Rep, Leslie McFarlane)
Jim Olson (Principal, Leslie McFarlane)
Kirsty Sinclair (Parent Rep, Leslie McFarlane)
Judy Whiteman (Non-teaching Rep, Leslie McFarlane)
Sylvia Land (Parent Rep, Palmerston)
Leilah McBride (Teacher Rep, Palmerston)
Tim Ralph (Principal, Palmerston)
Angie Weiss (Parent Rep, Palmerston)
Joe Hamilton (Non-teaching Rep, Pringle Creek)
Sue Lunn (Principal, Pringle Creek)
Jill MacCharles-Crain (Teacher Rep, Pringle Creek)
Steve Misner (Parent Rep, Pringle Creek)

Facilitator: Lygia Dallip
Daniel Del Bianco (Consultant)

ARC Resource Staff: Carey Trombino
Anne Dobos
Danielle Pépin
Janet Edwards

Absent: Marion Fulcher (Non-teaching Rep, Palmerston)

*Public Members: 175 participants signed in. Refer to Appendix A attached.
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Joe Hircock, Chair, welcomed everyone to the second Public Meeting of ARC Central Whitby. He introduced himself and described the various steps in the ARC process.

He indicated that there would be a Question & Answer period in the latter part of the evening. All attendees were provided with a paper copy of the PowerPoint presentation as well as a copy of the Customized School Valuation Framework. A Question & Comment form was made available for everyone's use.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, spoke of the PowerPoint presentations that will be made on behalf of each of the six schools involved in the ARC.

He then directed everyone's attention to the ARC Resource staff table and introduced them individually. He stated that this meeting will serve to present information as well as to receive public input. He emphasized that no decisions have been made regarding the Accommodation of the students in Central Whitby.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, then commenced the ARC PowerPoint presentation by reviewing the first 9 slides. He mentioned that there may be some slides which will be familiar to those who attended the 1st public meeting. David Visser then expressed the need to understand the positives as well as the needs of the schools. It was important to note that each of the 6 schools was valued by all of the other five schools involved in the process as well as valuing their own school.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, reviewed the timelines of an ARC. The ARC has until February 2009 to complete the report. When it goes forward, a second report will be developed by staff based on the ARC's Report. The Trustees and the Public will have access to the report in March, 2009. After sixty (60) days, in May of 2009, the Board will vote on the recommendations. The Ministry of Education guidelines dictate that the process must take a full year.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, reiterated the importance of keeping informed and reviewed the various communication means available.

The importance and descriptions of the four Public Meetings were presented. At the third Public Meeting, the community will be provided with a look at alternative options being considered by the ARC. David Visser then reviewed the progress the ARC has made to date and mentioned that the completion of the Customized School Valuation Framework for each school was more of a journey to understand the situation at each school.

PowerPoint Presentations by Schools

David Visser, ARC Secretary, then called upon and introduced the various ARC members representing all six schools. Each school presented 5 slides consisting of the four values representative of their school, as designed by the ARC's consolidated Customized School Valuation Framework. This presentation can be found on the ARC Website at www.durham.edu.on.ca.

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The five slides included:

Value to the Student
Value to the Community
Value to the Board
Value to the Local Economy
Conclusion

The schools were presented in alphabetical order.

Captain Michael VandenBos PS

Lynda Lyons, ARC member Parent Representative, and, Carol McLeod, ARC member Teacher Representative, presented on behalf of Captain Michael VandenBos PS.

Following the conclusion of their slides, they remarked that there was a need to stabilize the student population and that the children are 100% the future.

Florence M. Heard PS

Chris Montgomery, ARC member Parent Representative, presented on behalf of Florence M. Heard PS.

He introduced himself as being the father of three children and stressed the importance of providing feedback. During his presentation, he mentioned that FM Heard accommodated grades K-6 only and that there were 6 portables on site. Some of difficulties associated with the school were the walk from the bus loop, the challenge to generate community ties as a result of the large number of students bussed, and the lack of attraction of community groups due to the small size of the gym. He mentioned that to get the school to current standards would cost almost as much as building a new school.

Jack Miner PS

Jacque Weber, ARC member Parent Representative, presented on behalf of Jack Miner PS. She introduced herself as having three children attending Jack Miner PS.

She stated that this was a dual track school and gave examples of the range of activities i.e., math Olympics and dance team. She stated that although this school is designated for 400 students, it currently holds 663 students encompassing 19 classrooms and 10 portables. In conclusion, she remarked that students of Jack Miner PS had already experienced one move and would like to achieve, through the ARC Central Whitby process, a sense of stability.

Leslie McFarlane PS

Scott Irwin, ARC member Parent Representative, presented on behalf of Leslie McFarlane PS. Mr. Irwin went through his presentation as provided in the handout. He made mention that Leslie McFarlane PS was deemed to be a PTR school which would mean that it would be costlier to repair it than to rebuild it.

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Palmerston Avenue PS

Angela Weiss, ARC member Parent Representative, presented on behalf of Palmerston Avenue PS. She introduced herself as being the parent of one child. She stated in her presentation that this school had only one portable on site which was being used for storage purposes. She indicated that the school was in significant need of repairs.

Pringle Creek PS

Jill MacCharles-Crain, ARC member Teacher Representative and Steven Misner, ARC member Parent Representative, presented on behalf of Pringle Creek PS.

In addition to their presentation, they commented that day-care facility providers are able to walk students to the school because of the proximity of the care providers' location to the school.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, thanked the presenters. He then moved on to the Next Steps where he informed the audience that the Board staff would commit themselves to working with the ARC members in order to develop additional options. Public members were then invited to approach the microphone to ask questions or make comments. They were requested to identify themselves and their school affiliations, as well as, spell their name for the record.

Joe Hircock announced that we are in the process of inviting business plans from the community. He stated that public members would need to go through their ARC members in order to bring forward suggestions and alternatives.

The question period commenced.

Bonnie MacFarlane, Captain Michael VandenBos PS - Wondered whether all of the schools had information regarding the capacity of schools, size of the green space, and, the map and location of the schools to each other.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, stated that this information is available to the ARC and, on the Board Website. Also, the audience was invited to refer to the maps posted on the gym walls at all public meetings.

Lyle Clark, Florence M. Heard - Asked if there would be criteria provided to evaluate alternative options.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, stated that the purpose of the next meeting will be to discuss other alternatives. There are certain criteria from the Ministry of Education that must be followed in order to acquire monies.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, reiterated that there is utilization criteria in identifying a catchment area that can be supported by a school. Other accommodation options mean looking at the data, the sustainability of schools, and, looking at communities. Enrolment projections are the best resource available at the moment.

Lyle Clark, Florence M. Heard PS - Remarked on the desire to keep Gifted or FI students as a group. He wondered whether or not program considerations were part of the criteria.

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David Visser, ARC Secretary – Suggested to Mr. Clark to forward his thoughts by email or voicemail for the ARC to review as the group examined alternative options.

Gord Burrows, Palmerston Avenue PS – Referenced section 3.5.1 “What repairs have been done to your facility since the PTR was released in 2003?” of the Customized School Valuation Framework. He asked if the list of repairs had been provided to the ARC and added that considerable repairs had already taken place at Palmerston Avenue PS.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, offered some background information. He indicated that in 2003, the Ministry of Education assessed all schools to determine their physical condition. This assessment was done by a third party using an assessment tool called ReCAPP. Based on Ministry designation, Palmerston Avenue PS was deemed to be Prohibitive To Repair (PTR). While the Board has addressed many of the health and safety issues at the school, the additional needs at Palmerston Avenue continue to increase. This is similar to the necessary repairs we make to our homes as they age.

The list of repairs to Palmerston Avenue PS since 2003 has been provided to the ARC members and is available on the ARC’s Website.

Gord Burrows, Palmerston Avenue – Referred to the score at the bottom of the Customized School Valuation Framework and asked what the score was based on.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, identified that the Framework had four succinct areas; Value to the Student, Value to the Community, Value to the Board and Value to the Local Economy. This was based on a Standardized Framework developed by different stakeholders across the Region. He went on to explain that there was a point score for each of the values and that all 6 schools valued and understood each of the schools. This is an important process because as options become available, every school needs to understand the values brought to the table.

Crystal Ionadi, Captain Michael VandenBos PS – Remarked that this school holds 890 students and has 16 portables. Will the students be in same situation if they are moved?

David Visser, ARC Secretary, stated that when boards perform enrolment projections, they closely look at enrolment trends. Not only has there been significant growth in the Town of Whitby, there has also been significant growth in the French Immersion program. It is necessary to look at options that meet the needs of the current situation but also into the future. This requires the Board to present the best cases possible in order to obtain funding. The Board is currently in various stages of building a number of schools that would result in 300 elementary classrooms.

Crystal Ionadi – Shared a concern regarding bussing issues.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, stated that specialized programs required more bussing than regular programs.

Mr. Fred Dixon, Jack Miner – had two questions.

1. He stated that Pringle Creek is currently holding the students who will be attending the new Tormina school. When will this school be built?

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David Visser, ARC Secretary, - informed the group that the Board was currently in the process of building three new schools in Whitby; Olde Winchester and Unnamed Tormina are scheduled to open in September 2009, while the third school, Unnamed Whitby Shores, is scheduled to open in September 2010.

2. Mr. Dixon requested clarification on why the schools under review were selected and how the original Standard School Valuation Framework template was created.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, said the driving force was the Ministry having deemed three schools as being PTR. The Board, after submitting business cases to the Ministry, received approval to begin construction of the Unnamed Tormina school. The construction of Tormina would result in the move of students currently holding at Pringle Creek PS, thereby freeing up space at Pringle Creek. This is one example of the cascading effect that allows for development of options to address the accommodation needs of the students in Central Whitby. There is nothing preventing the consideration of other options.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, added that declining enrolment places pressure in two of the three facilities. Florence M Heard and Palmerston Avenue were also deemed to be PTR.

Karen Liddiard, Jack Miner PS– commented that she felt it was a large adjustment for kids to move and that they needed to fit into a school spirit.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, referenced the move from EA Fairman to Jack Miner. He acknowledged the difficulty of moving and added that teachers will move along with the students. He further acknowledged that everyone involved needed to remain sensitive to the adjustments that the students would be going through.

Danielle Harder-MacIntosh, Jack Miner PS – had a concern should the funding not be in place.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, informed the audience that the Board has received funding for 300 classrooms including Whitby Shores. The process for the ARC involves two levels of funding by the Ministry; 1) planning approval, and, 2) final approval. The Board has not as yet received final approval from the Ministry for the Central Whitby solution as no recommendations have been made by the ARC and consequently, no decisions have been made by the Board.

Anthony Randall, Jack Miner PS - suggested that the Board look at phasing in the Gifted program at a new school and allow the students currently attending Jack Miner to remain at the existing school. He was also concerned about the balance between recognizing the interests of the students and the financial interests.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, stated that everyone is sensitive to change. The matter of phasing in the students would be a possible option through your ARC committee. The Board has to balance its students' interest while being sensitive to the financial impact as a whole.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, reminded everyone that we are into the month of November and that the Board will not be making its final decision until May of 2009. The process of designing and building a school takes two years.

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Denise Chow, Captain Michael VandenBos PS – stated that the Valuation Framework indicates that 50% of students are currently bussed. She felt the numbers to be deceiving as half of the student population lives locally. Kids who currently walk would have to be bussed, adding an additional financial cost to the Board.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, mentioned that the ARC had requested a scattergram to understand the transportation impact.

Kathleen Hutton, Jack Miner PS – stated that there is a percentage of students living north of Taunton Road that are enrolled in the Gifted program as well as the regular stream. Is there a way to ‘grandfather’ the kids attending Jack Miner by implementing a school program north of Taunton Road?

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, said that the Board could not comment at this time as this was an alternative that could be investigated by the ARC. He invited the public to present questions in writing and submit them to the ARC. He added that looking at these school closures is about moving forward so that students sit inside the schools rather than portables.

Patricia Liang, Jack Miner PS - expressed concern that she has one child attending Jack Miner and another attending Captain Michael VandenBos, yet her backyard backs on to the new Tormina school. She asked what the current proposal was.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, reminded everyone that the current scenario is under investigation only and that no decisions have been made. However, the current scenario being looked at would include the building of a new school on the Leslie McFarlane site for French Immersion purposes, program moves and closures for schools that are PTR. The Board is also reviewing the possibility of moving French Immersion students living north of Taunton Road and currently attending Captain Michael VandenBos to Brooklin Village for September 2009.

Jim Spridgeon, Jack Miner PS – has two children at Jack Miner (Gifted and regular track). They moved to this area in order to keep their children together in the same school. Under the current proposal, this would require his children to attend two different schools. What consideration is there for keeping siblings together?

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, reminded the audience that other alternatives will be looked at. There does not exist a policy at the Board regarding siblings and it must be understood that there are circumstances which would cause family members to be separated.

Laurie Carson, Captain Michael VandenBos PS – had two remarks.

- 1) She sought clarification to slide # 32 of the evening’s PowerPoint presentation regarding the subsidization of staff at Palmerston Avenue PS.
- 2) She stated that her family had been involved with previous moves and that the change was not as traumatic as people may believe. She felt that the Board had done a very good job in maintaining a sense of community for the students.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, explained that the Province’s funding formula to school boards is based on the number of students. Where a school has low enrolment, in order to avoid a triple-*Minutes, ARC 2nd Public Meeting, November 5, 2008 pg 8*

grade class, some classes are provided with a 0.3 or 0.4 staff subsidy in order to minimize the number of split grades.

Virginia Maggs, Jack Miner PS – commented that they had already experienced one change and how many more changes would take place based on the fact that Gifted programs are increasing by one class per year. She would like to see consistency and longevity.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, commented that once the ARC’s recommendations have been provided to the Board and the Board makes its decision, there would be a period of time before

construction can be completed. It is possible that the students, currently in the Gifted program, may not be affected by the time the move takes place.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, stated that the sustainability of growth is based on enrolment projections. This year, the Board submitted six business cases and received funding for six. He went on to inform the public that although the Board runs both Gifted and French Immersion programs, the provision of these programs, according to the Ministry of Education, are not mandatory.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, added that it may be necessary, if the program grows, to adjust the attendance boundaries. He, once again, suggested alternative options be put forth in writing to the ARC.

Tyler Tompsett, Student, Leslie McFarlane – asked what would happen to the awards, etc., if their school were to close?

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, stated that the historical flavour of any school is never lost. The flags, etc., would be carried on to the new site.

Gord Burrows, Palmerston Avenue - sought clarification as to when the reports would go to the Trustees, and, who was involved in producing the staff report.

David Visser, ARC Secretary, referred to slide #4 of the evening's PowerPoint presentation and, once again, reviewed the timeline. The reports would be presented to Board in March of 2009 for consideration, however, no decision would be reached until May, 2009. The staff report would be developed by the planning department, facilities services and Superintendent Hircock. It is hoped that both reports will be similar in nature.

Caroline Christensen, Jack Miner PS – sought clarification from Chair Hircock as to whether or not he had stated that the bottom line, the financial aspects, was more important than the students. She stated that as far as she was concerned, children are the bottom line.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, and, David Visser, ARC Secretary, corrected her misunderstanding by indicating that the Board fully understands and is sensitive to the needs of its students, however, the Board has a responsibility to address the needs of the students within the fiscal realities of the Board.

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Michele Jenkins, Captain Michael VandenBos – commented that there did not exist an actual timeline in the Captain Michael VandenBos proposal.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, stated that until the Board receives the ARC's report containing its recommendations, the Board cannot make a decision. Once the Board has made a decision, then it will address the timelines.

Elisa Paoluzzi – has two children in two separate schools making it difficult to support both schools and coordinate them. There is concern that sports and extra curricular activities would cease should the teachers running these programs be relocated.

Joe Hircock, ARC Chair, remarked that there exist many special education classes where parents have opted to bus their children for these programs. There will be an impact. Special Education teachers have the option to move with their program. He went on to say that schools are always affected by staff changes, for example, retirement. There are no guarantees that teachers will remain in one place.

Joe thanked everyone for attending the 2nd Public Meeting.

The next Public Meeting will explore alternative options, and will take place on December 10th, 2008 at Captain Michael VandenBos PS.

The meeting ended at 9:00 p.m.

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