



DUFFERIN PEEL CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Approved Minutes

Accommodation Review Committee

BRAMALEA NORTH REVIEW AREA

Public Meeting #1 – Tuesday, February 5, 2008 – 7:00 p.m.

Location - St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School

Present: Alex Tucciarone, Chairperson, Acting Superintendent of Schools, Brampton Central
Beth Bjarnason, Manager of Planning, DPCDSB
Stephanie Cox, Planner, DPCDSB
Father John Mullins
ARC Members – Mother Mary Ward, Lester B. Pearson, St. Marguerite Bourgeoys and St. Anthony Elementary Schools

Staff: Ann Di Iorio, Recorder – Administrative Assistant - Superintendent of Planning

Alex Tucciarone called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. **Opening Prayer & Introduction**

Alex Tucciarone-Acting Superintendent –Brampton Central – DPCDSB

Alex Tucciarone thanked all for attending the meeting and then called upon Father John Mullins to lead the community in faith with the opening prayer. Father John Mullins also thanked the community for joining together in an evening of journey.

2. **Background Information**

Beth Bjarnason – Manager of Planning Department – DPCDSB

Beth Bjarnason, Manager of Planning, Dufferin-Peel, also thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Beth Bjarnason then established the purpose of the Pupil Accommodation Review (ARC) and described the background information guiding the attendees through the process to create an understanding of tonight's meeting.

Topics reviewed were:

Ministry of Education Guidelines and purpose of these Guidelines

Dufferin-Peel CDSB Pupil Accommodation Review Policy

What is Pupil Accommodation Review?

Why is our school being considered?

Role of Trustees

3. **Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)**
Beth Bjarnason – Manager of Planning Department – DPCDSB

Beth Bjarnason briefed the attendees about the process, outlining the necessary steps to close schools explaining that this process is in accordance with the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board Pupil Accommodation Review regulation. Beth Bjarnason also advised the attendees that this process complies with the Ministry of Education Pupil Accommodation Review Guidelines.

Beth Bjarnason also informed the attendees that there are three areas identified within the Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board. Each of these areas is mandated by the same process. The three areas identified are; Bramalea North, Dixie Shorefront and Central Erin Mills.

Beth Bjarnason then identified the schools in the Bramalea North Accommodation Review Area. In no particular order, the schools the Board identified are: Lester B. Pearson, Mother Mary Ward, St. Anthony and St. Marguerite Bourgeoys Elementary Schools. These schools were shown on a coloured map through a power point presentation and named as the **Bramalea North Accommodation Review Area**.

Beth Bjarnason then proceeded, step by step, through the power point presentation the following facts:

Why is our school being considered?

Criteria

Additional factors which may contribute to a school being part of an Accommodation Review Area.

Accommodation Review Committee (ARC)

Who are we?

When did we meet?

What have we done?

Why are we here?

4. **Neighbourhood Overview**
Stephanie Cox, Planner, Planning Department – DPCDSB

Stephanie Cox then reviewed the accommodation review area again, with reference to the map included in the power point presentation.

Stephanie Cox then proceeded, step by step, through a power point presentation the following facts:

Enrolment and Accommodation Options

Historic and Projected Total Enrolment (chart 1)

Historic and Projected Total Enrolment (chart 2)

Bramalea North Accommodation Review Area –Status Quo-map

Status Quo – (chart)

Status Quo – (breakout)

Status Quo – (breakout chart)

5. **Accommodation Information**

Stephanie Cox – Planner, Planning Department - DPCDSB

(a) **Additional Options**

The ARC, after meeting and review, considered Additional Options. The following additional options were reviewed.

Close Mother Mary Ward and St. Anthony

Move both schools to St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

Close Mother Mary Ward and St. Anthony

Adjust Lester B. Pearson Boundary

All students EAST of Dixie Road to attend St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

All students WEST of Dixie Road to attend Lester B. Pearson

Close Mother Mary Ward

Move to Lester B. Pearson

Close St. Anthony

Move to St. Marguerite Bourgeoys

(b) **Preferred Options**

The following preferred options were then presented.

OPTION “A”

Close Mother Mary Ward and send Areas G and H and I to St. Anthony. Move Area I to Lester B. Pearson, phasing out over time. Existing students in Area I would also have the option of attending Lester B. Pearson.

OPTION “B”

Close St. Marguerite Bourgeoys and Mother Mary Ward

Move all students to St. Anthony and phase out Area B and I to Lester B.

Pearson over time. Existing students from area B and I would have the option of attending Lester P. Pearson.

OPTION “C”

Close Mother Mary Ward and St. Anthony

Move Mother Mary Ward students to Lester B. Pearson and the St. Anthony students to St. Marguerite Bourgeoys.

Each of the preferred options was reviewed in detail by Stephanie Cox through the power point presentation, demonstrating with coloured maps and charts.

6. Comments

Stephanie Cox – Planner, Planning Department - DPCDSB

Comments were shared covering the following areas:

Transportation – will be presented in more detail at the next public meeting

Use of schools after closure

Long Term Capital Plan – will continue to discuss in the next few months

Program issues

Staffing

School, home and church connection

Alex Tucciarone reflected that comments from the ARC meetings suggested that larger schools offer more staffing, extra curricular activities where as, smaller schools in some instances have triple grades with low numbers and that the same teacher could teach a student for two or three years. School support, such as Child and Youth Workers and Social Workers are on a need basis only.

7. Next Steps

Stephanie Cox – Planner, Planning Department - DPCDSB

The next steps to accommodate the timelines mandated by the Ministry of Education are to have future public meetings and also for the ARC members to prepare a report to be presented to the Board at the Fall 2008 Administration and Finance Committee. A decision will then be made by the Board of Trustees.

Stephanie Cox advised that all information meetings pertaining to the Accommodation Review Process including minutes from the previous ARC meetings and this evening's power point presentation and minutes are posted on the Boards website: www.dpcdsb.org

8 Question and Comment Period

Parents, students and community members were encouraged to fill out the pink question and comment sheets made available to them and to put them in the box at the back of the cafeteria. Alex Tucciarone advised that they would review the questions and comments and go forward with responses at the next Public Meeting to be held on Thursday, March 27, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. This meeting will be held at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School. Parents, students and community members had the opportunity to express their concerns and ask questions of the panel. The panel responded to the questions and concerns to the best of their knowledge and advised that they would review the additional questions in preparation for the next Public Meeting.

The parents and community members from each of the schools in the Bramalea North Review Area expressed their individual concerns of their school potentially closing and expressed the advantages of a small school population within their own individual areas.

1. An attendee from the Mother Mary Ward area questioned that they were not informed of the process and that no letters had been sent out or information established in their neighbourhood. Also references were made as why wasn't there a fourth option and why not transfer everyone else's kids to Mother Mary Ward?

Beth Bjarnason clarified that the information was advertised in the Brampton Guardian two weeks ago (January 25, 2008) and notices had been sent out to homes and business' within five hundred feet of the school. The notice in the Brampton Guardian will continue to be posted for this and all future public meetings. Beth Bjarnason also advised that all information had been posted on the board's website.

Stephanie Cox clarified that one of the original options was to keep Mother Mary Ward open, but due to various constraints was not a preferred option.

2. A parent suggested that the direction of taxes be stopped and that the Minister of Education should be attending these meetings. She also requested a list of Trustees and copies of transcripts (minutes) be made public.

Alex Tucciarone clarified the process outlined was that of the Minister of Education, Kathleen Wynne. He also advised that a list of Trustees is posted on the website as well as minutes.

3. A parent from Mother Mary Ward advised that inaccurate information recorded in the "Value of Schools" and that it should be updated.

Alex Tucciarone advised that we would look at that information and update the framework accordingly.

4. A parent raised the question of mould in the portables and the possible health issues generated from the mould at St. Anthony School.

Stephanie Cox informed the committee that in 1999 teacher concerns over Health issues were investigated. The Board's Health and Safety Department, a medical representative with the Ministry of Labour Health and Safety and Board Consultants did soil and groundwater testing and conducted an indoor environmental assessment. Also a review was done on whether the school was built on a dumpsite. In conclusion by the Ministry of Labour and Health and Safety, they were unable to detect any pattern that contributed to work place exposure which was responsible for adverse health affects in the workplace. There was no evidence that indicated the school was built on a dump site.

In 2006, additional concerns were raised with respect to mould in the port-a-pak. Once again, tests were conducted with a conclusion that the levels of spore counts were at or below ambient outdoor air levels and the vapor barrier was preventing migration of spores into classrooms or corridors. In the end the port-a-pak was torn down, but this was due to extensive structural damage to the floors, which was the subject investigation identified in the first place.

The general consensus of the discussion was that the ARC wants to do what is best for the “kids” and to follow the motto “Children First” of our Board. Committee members must think about the value they are putting on certain decision making factors. The Board of Trustees will make the final decisions and the final report from the ARC should include the decisions that are best for the community as a whole.

5. A parent from St. Marguerite Bourgeouys raised the question as to now what happens to the teachers.

Alex Tucciarone clarified that the Teacher Federation would be the contact for the teachers for these decisions.

6. A parent raised the question of open access in our Secondary Schools and why not in the Elementary Schools?

Alex Tucciarone advised that open access is beyond our control and that this topic was recently reviewed under the Education Act. These are Ministry regulations and responded that we do not have a choice.

7. A parent questioned as to why wasn't the City of Brampton represented at the meeting?

Beth Bjarnason advised that the City of Brampton were invited however they had chosen not to participate to date. The Planning Staff from Dufferin-Peel is working on a daily basis with the City of Brampton. Beth also advised that the Board does have a flexible boundary policy. A parent can approach the Principal and request a flex boundary; however transportation would have to be provided by the parent.

8. A parent enquired as to what has the Board done to attract outside families to attend our schools, especially since enrolment is dropping and the statistics trend is the City of Brampton is one of the fastest growing communities and as a Health Professional they expressed that the population is going up by 10%.

Beth Bjarnason clarified that the Board is putting forth various plans to attract Catholic students. The JK registration is now being offered and advertised in different languages. The Board of Trustees assessing alternative programs such as a French Emersion Program which would start in JK as opposed to the current Extended French Program which starts in Grade 5. The Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board has lost some students to the Public Board due to the French Emersion Program which they currently offer.

Most community members had concerns about their particular school being closed and that they preferred a “small school setting” instead of a larger school. Some thought that their children were being “split up” and divorced from each other.

Stephanie Cox advised that the children would be moved as a unit and that the intentions are not to split up the existing communities.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion Alex Tucciarone advised the attendees that there will always be pros and cons for each path, however the committee report should be reflective of our Board motto “Children First” and what is best for the Bramalea North Community as a whole. Alex Tucciarone asked the committee to continue and share their questions and concerns with staff and thanked all for attending the meeting and for their efforts and continued support.

Approximately 240 parents and residents and 40 students were in attendance of the Public Meeting #1.

A petition was received from the Mother Mary Ward parents and community members.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Next Public Meeting:

Thursday, March 27, 2008 – 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.
St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School
25 Corporation Drive
Brampton Ontario

Attendance at this meeting was calculated according to the count on the sign-in-sheets provided at the meeting, as follows:

Lester B. Pearson	=	4
Mother Mary Ward	=	112
St. Anthony	=	9
St. Marguerite Bourgeys	=	<u>41</u>
TOTAL	=	<u>166</u>

