



**HASTINGS AND PRINCE EDWARD DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
STUDENT ENROLMENT/SCHOOL CAPACITY COMMITTEE
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES
April 8, 2009**

Present: M. Brant, S. Clements, C. Cotton, T. Goodfellow, M. Hall, D. Inch, H. Marissen, C. Pitman, M. Walker, J. Williams

Resource: J. Montgomery, J. Rogers, K. Soule, D. Tregenza

Minutes: S. Smith

The meeting was held at North Hastings Senior Elementary School.

Call to order

Chair Goodfellow called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Approval of agenda

Moved: M. Walker

Seconded M. Hall

That the agenda be approved.

Carried

Approval of minutes

Moved: C. Pitman

Seconded: H. Marissen

That the minutes of March 30, 2009 be approved.

Carried

Business arising from the minutes

None

Recommendations

None

Information

The purpose of the meeting was reviewed: to receive public input regarding the report and recommendation from senior administration concerning the North Hastings accommodation review. Following public input, senior administration may revise the report and recommendation that will go forward to the Board meeting on May 25, 2009. Board members will vote on the final recommendation for the North Hastings and West Belleville accommodation review at that time.

Input was heard from nine representatives. A copy of each presentation is included with these minutes.

Anita Bertucca, Parent

Anita spoke on behalf of a group of parents and presented a petition in support of Scenario 003b, creating a JK to Grade 8 school at the current North Hasting Senior Elementary School site. Concerned with the final recommendation of the ARC supporting Scenario 003a, Anita did some research in the community to determine how parents felt. Over 300 signatures were collected from parents indicating that creating a JK to Grade 8 School is the best option for their children.

Jim Clayton, North Hastings Economic Development Committee

Jim Clayton thanked all parties for their passion and commitment to the ARC process. He referenced the deliberations by the committee and the cost differentials between Scenario 003a and 003b. He spoke of the impact that declining enrolment will have on North Hastings High School in the future and the potential for community partnerships and shared services to keep the high school viable. Taking all considerations presented into account, the North Hastings Economic Development Committee believes the solution presented by senior administration, Scenario 003b, to be a workable solution for North Hastings.

Kate Cockburn, North Hastings High School

Kate Cockburn, Student Success teacher and member of the community, spoke in support of North Hastings High School and the many benefits and opportunities available for the Grade 7 and 8 students if they were to be accommodated at the high school. Kate expressed concern regarding the future of the high school facility with the declining enrolment as well as the negative perception associated with the high school. She spoke of the excellent programs and initiatives taking place at the school and suggested that creative ways be sought to pool resources, maximize facility use and inspire learning for the benefit of all children and the community.

Judy Edgar, Bancroft Public School Accommodation Review Committee

Judy Edgar spoke on behalf the Bancroft Public School ARC in support of Scenario 003a, the recommendation that received the majority vote by the ARC. Judy spoke of the special programs, benefits and opportunities that would be available to the Grade 7 and 8 students at the high school as well as program and space challenges that might be experienced in the proposed JK to Grade 8 school due to the combined student population. The Bancroft Public School ARC suggested that the cost for Scenario 003a could be reduced if an additional gym and library were not included, as was presented to the ARC earlier in the process. The addition of the Grade 7 and 8 students at the high school would contribute to increased plant funding and help protect and preserve the programs unique to North Hastings High School.

Leslie Jenkins, Families First

Leslie Jenkins spoke on behalf of Families First, advocating for families who did not have the opportunity to have their voice heard at this meeting. Leslie spoke of the importance of keeping community schools open and how schools have become the hub of the community in many areas. She referenced a recent study that spoke of the importance of the transition years and the crucial role that Grade 7 and 8 have on a student's personal development. Families First supports Scenario 003b, a scenario that affords children the opportunity to reap the benefits of elementary school as long as possible.

Brenda Martin, Ontario Early Years Centre Advisory Committee

The Ontario Early Years Centre represents a large geographical area with a mandate to advise and advocate on behalf of children's services. Brenda spoke on behalf of the advisory committee advocating that resources and supports such as the Best Start program continue to operate. Schools have become the hub of the community and provide the best place for early learning.

Dawn Mau, Bancroft Public School staff

Speaking on behalf of the staff of Bancroft Public School, Dawn expressed support for Scenario 003a. Dawn spoke of the benefits for Grade 7 and 8 students, North Hastings High School and the proposed JK to Grade 6 elementary school if this scenario was implemented. Trustees were asked to respect the vote of the accommodation review committee and support Scenario 003a. The staff also suggested that Bancroft Public School retain its current Ministry Identification Number and that the recommendation from senior administration read that Bancroft Public School be relocated to 132 Newkirk Boulevard and the North Hastings Senior Elementary School be declared surplus.

Larry McTaggart, Town of Bancroft

Larry McTaggart, Deputy Mayor for the Town of Bancroft spoke on behalf of Council in support of Scenario 003b. He explained that closing a school and relocating students is never an easy decision and although children adapt, they do need to be kept in the forefront. Both accommodation scenarios presented had their merits but it is the decision of the Council to support the recommendation proposed by senior administration, Scenario 003b.

Don Taylor, Community member

Don Taylor welcomed everyone in attendance to North Hastings, a community of extraordinary students, top notch staff and super school families. He spoke of the challenges the ARC faced in order to come up with a recommendation that would meet the needs of North Hastings given the procedural limitations and the range of options presented. Scenario 003a, recommended by the ARC, was based on the premise that a distinct school within school, offering every benefit that students now enjoy, would be built. It is based on this premise and the fiscal responsibilities noted by senior administration that he supports Scenario 003b. Don also challenged the community to band together to support the future of the high school.

Board members were provided with an opportunity to ask questions of the presenters. Clarification was provided by senior administration regarding high speed internet services to North Hastings schools, the role of the Integration Committee and the Board in naming of a school, funding and enrolment grants and the potential impact of declining enrolment on the high school facilities. Director Soule explained that regardless of the decision the board will work closely with schools, parents and the community to find solutions to keep the high school in North Hastings viable.

Board members thanked the public and the community for their input and participation in the accommodation review process.

The Director also expressed appreciation to the North Hastings community, members of the ARC and staff for their support, dedication and commitment throughout the North Hastings accommodation review. A special thank you was conveyed to all school communities for hosting the ARC meetings, to the North Hasting Senior Elementary School community for hosting the Student Enrolment/School Capacity Committee meetings and to the North Hastings High School PLP (Practical Learning Program) class for their catering support.

Correspondence

None

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned 6:40pm.