



MINUTES OF THE WAINFLEET ELEMENTARY ACCOMMODATION REVIEW ARC/PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday, Sept 19, 2018

Winger Public School
6:00 p.m.

In Attendance: Cam Hathaway, Leigh Ann Sauer, Lesley Stratford, Chris McInnis, Sherry Gaylord, Cheryl Keddy-Scott, Diane Chase, Shawna Marr, Betsy Vandebeld, Simon Vandebeld, Sarah Ivins, Richard and Nancy Dykstra, Angie Naftel, Kelly Morgan-Rauh, Judy Johnson-Abo Nassar, Marlena Morris, Donna Cridland, Katie Traver, Kelly Minor, Yvonne Hessels, Ted Hessels, Marleen Henderson, Pauline and Carl Herbert, Paul and Jodi Wainwright, Steve Rauh

Cam Hathaway introduced himself as the Facilitator for the Wainfleet Elementary Accommodation Review and welcomed everyone to the Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) and public meeting.

Mr. Hathaway explained that all the information pertaining to the ARC is found online. The Initial Staff Report, meeting minutes, questions asked are found online www.dsbni.org/arc. The committee met two times prior to this meeting to review the report and items that had arose. The committee will conduct a meeting to review items and then it will be opened up to speakers or questions.

This evening would not be the last opportunity to voice your opinion. The final staff report will be presented to the Board of Trustees on October 23, 2018 at the Education Centre. The Board meeting commences at 7:00 p.m. There is an opportunity for delegations regarding the Accommodation Review that evening and the community is welcome. The Trustees make the final decision on the Accommodation Review November 27, 2018, two of the Trustees sit on the committee as resources. Anyone wishing to make a delegation on October 23, 2018, this information is found on the Board website as you must register one week prior to the board meeting.

The Accommodation Review Committee then introduced themselves:

Sherry Gaylord – Parent, Winger
Chris McInnis – Principal, Winger
Leigh Ann Sauer – Principal, William E. Brown
Lesley Stratford - Parent, William E. Brown
Cheryl Keddy-Scott – Trustee, Grimsby and Town of Lincoln
Diane Chase – Trustee, West Lincoln and Wainfleet

Mr. Hathaway asked everyone to sign list of attendees and also the speakers list if interested.

Accommodation Review Committee Portion of the Meeting

The minutes were reviewed individually by the committee and there were no questions. Mr. Hathaway then reviewed some of the questions from the May 16, 2018 minutes for those in attendance.

Will they build a new building?

The proposed option is to build a new building on a site in the Village area.

What would community use look like within the proposed school?

St. Elizabeth has a daycare in the school and their site historically, in speaking with a community member before the meeting, has had volleyball leagues. The new school could possibly be part of a community hub in the Town.

What is the enrolment at the Catholic school?

There are approximately 90 students in St. Elizabeth at this time.

The committee agreed to accept the minutes.

Mr. Hathaway then mentioned that there had been one question brought forward by committee member Sherry Gaylord:

Do the recent PC plans to halt the school repairs funding have any impact on this particular review plan for the Wainfleet schools amalgamation?

It was shared there will be no implications on the Accommodation Review due to the announced funding cuts.

Lesley Stratford then shared that she had only heard the following concern from the community:

The community would like to keep the feel of a country school, the rural connection as families moved to the area for that reason; would amalgamation affect that? Has there been any ideas on what would be maintained to keep that country school? Wondering about teachers, are they the same or new?

Mr. Hathaway explained the Board has a process that when schools are amalgamated that staff generally move with the students. If Staff have a preference to move at that time there may be an opportunity for them to do so but generally they stay with the students.

Sherry Gaylord commented that a new school usually means new resources, new things and with a new country school she did not understand the specific worries that they had.

Cheryl Keddy-Scott then explained that whatever decision is made there is always a transition team created for the schools and community to discuss what options would be carried over to the new school. From Cheryl's experience she referenced the Jordan PS closure as the schools were amalgamated one year prior to the new build commencing. There were reservations about this from the parents at that time. Once the students were amalgamated into Vineland PS they found new friends, were able to play on difference sports teams, the transition was very smooth. The teachers moved with the students, they chose a new name for the new building in order for everyone to feel included in the process. Once the new school opened the parents that had reservations in the beginning then mentioned how their child had blossomed with the different opportunities in front of them between sports, activities and the ability to make new friends.

Mr. Hathaway then reviewed the proposed option for the new school as written in the Initial Staff Report: *The proposed option for the Wainfleet Elementary Accommodation Review is to consolidate the schools into a joint-use DSBN-NCDSB school to open for the 2021-22 school year on a site to be determined.* Board staff have met with the Township of Wainfleet and the Niagara Region for their input into the Initial and Final Staff Reports. The Township is supportive of selecting a site in the Village of Wainfleet with the library, arena and other amenities in that location. The William E. Brown PS site is not an option as it is small in size and does not allow opportunity to build while students are still attending.

The final staff report will be available online Friday, October 19, 2018 for the public and will be presented to Trustees at the October 23, 2018 Board Meeting. Mr. Hathaway mentioned that in the past the committee has met one additional time to review what their input will be for the final staff report. The date of October 2, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at Winger PS was chosen for the committee's last meeting.

Public Portion of the Meeting

What will happen to Winger PS building if the new school is built in the Town?

The Board has a process to follow to declare DSBN property surplus. The DSBN will continue to maintain the school during this time.

Discussion among the public and committee occurred next on the following items:

- Concern about the 400 students that would be in the proposed school. Families moved to the country so their kids didn't attend larger schools. The building of new homes that will occur there will be too many students for the school. They left the big city life to live in the country where there are less people.
- The Initial Staff Report contains all the information pertaining to the Wainfleet population and that it has shifted. The working and child bearing age that used to live in this area has shifted and it has become a haven for people to retire, downsize in a more relaxed atmosphere. There has been a decline in students in these schools over the last 10 years. In discussions with the municipalities they do not forecast development in this area.

- An example was provided that when the Beamsville fairgrounds were redeveloped with approximately a thousand homes there were only approximately 62 students that ended up attending DSBN schools. That subdivision generated students that attend all school boards in the area, not just DSBN.
- The graduating class at Winger PS last year had 13 students in it.
- The Wainfleet area is primarily agricultural with limited areas for the population to grow. It is a rural community and intended to stay a rural community.
- Parent attended a small elementary school and was very involved in athletics and other activities at that time being able to join everything she wanted because of the small population. She didn't think that a big school you would have the same opportunities. In the real world you have to work with people that you don't want to just as kids in a small school have the same kids in their classes year after year.
- Reference was made to the the East and South Lincoln Accommodation Review where the four schools were amalgamated at Twenty Valley PS and the positive response afterwards from the parents. It was realized by the parents that they were more apprehensive than the students and the new modern building was positive for everyone.

Is the accommodation review moving forward if the Catholic Board does not agree?

Mr. Hathaway explained that there is a moratorium on school closures at this time and the only accommodation reviews that can take place are ones that involve two or more co-terminous boards consolidating in the same building. In previous accommodation reviews there would be approximately 3 to 4 options for the schools but in this review there is only one option.

Is this accommodation review a done deal?

The Trustees make the final decision on the accommodation review. The final staff report will be presented to Trustees on October 23, 2018.

Further discussions between the public and the committee were as follows:

- There were currently no triple grade splits at St. Elizabeth CS.
- There has not been very much opposition to this review so far.
- The final report and all information on the review will be provided to the Trustees who make the decision if this is a viable option.
- Winger PS has the largest property of the DSBN properties.
- In previous years children in Wainfleet played sports together and know each other even if they did not attend the same school. The assumption was made that this is still the case. It was mentioned that in some cases this is true but if they don't play hockey or do activities this is not the case.
- It was mentioned again that families moved to this area to get away from the larger cities where they grew up.
- In the smaller schools when the students attend high school it can be overwhelming because of the larger school. The smaller school is not preparing them well transitioning to a high school population quite a bit larger.
- A larger elementary school would have different opportunities to meet new people.
- Due to work schedules some families had to drive to Welland to participate in activities.
- A larger school does not necessarily mean larger class sizes. It was confirmed that there are guidelines of 20 primary students in a class and 26 junior or intermediate students. Class sizes are set provincially.
- Smaller schools may not have a full time Learning Resource Teacher (LRT). The more students in a school the additional LRT time that will be allotted for students.
- It was mentioned that a family with 4 children who attended William E Brown and the youngest stayed with the same teacher for 3 years. When she was going into Grade 6 she was the only girl so they decided to attend St. Elizabeth CS and there were 5 girls and 2 boys in her class. The difference between her oldest daughter graduating William E. Brown was that there were 22 in her graduating class 8 years earlier.
- It was mentioned that the enrolment at both schools has gone up and there are 28 students in the graduating class this year.
- The enrolment at Winger PS increased from 162 to 211 this year. They had a few families come over from the Catholic board.

Mr. Hathaway then asked if there were any additional questions/comments. There were none.

All questions, comments and input are included in the minutes and will be reflected in the final staff report. All information pertaining to the Accommodation Review is on the website at www.dsbm.org/arc. The final report will be presented at the Board meeting on October 23, 2018 and delegations will also occur that evening. It was explained that delegations for the board meeting must be requested to the Director's Office one week prior to the board meeting.

Karen Bellamy, Executive Assistant (karen.bellamy@dsbn.org) before 12:00 noon one week prior to the board meeting you wish to attend. (See DSBM website www.dsbm.org; About; Board Meetings) The final decision will occur on November 27, 2018.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m.

Questions that have arisen during the public input portion of the meeting can be found at www.dsbm.org/arc under Questions Asked

Appendix A: Correspondence Received

Appendix B: Questions Asked