



Thornhill Elementary Schools - Accommodation Review Committee

Minutes of ARC Working Meeting #14 held June 4, 2009, 7:00 p.m., St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School 135 Green Lane, Thornhill.

In attendance:

ARC Chair: Patricia Preston, Associate Director: Leading Learning
ARC Secretary: Andy Di Sebastiano, Superintendent of Education: School Leadership

Members:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| Norbert Koehl | CSC Chair | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| Sam Cuda | Parent | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| Maureen Hurley | Parent | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| Tony Patriarca | Non-Teaching | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| Amanda Butters | Teacher | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| June Buick | Principal | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| Joe Wigglesworth | CSC Chair | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Trixie Sorrell-Santiago | Parent | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Dayna Fitzpatrick | Teacher | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Melodie Curran | Non-Teaching | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Louie Gavros | Parent | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Luisa Busato | Principal | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| Diane Scaini | Parent | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Tracy O'Connor-Lauzon | CSC Chair | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Angie DellaRovere | Non-Teaching | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Father William Burns | Parish | St. Luke Parish, Thornhill |
| Lisa Thalassinou | Parish | Good Shepherd Parish, Thornhill |

ARC Facilitators: Dan Del Bianco, Watson & Associates

ARC Resource Staff:

Bryce Eldridge, York Catholic – Superintendent of Plant
Dan McCowell, York Catholic - Senior Manager, Administrative Services
Tom Pechkovsky, York Catholic - Manager of Planning Services
Christine Hyde, York Catholic - Planner

Recording Secretary: Wendy Cosentino

Public Observers Signed In:

There were 26 community visitors signed in. Refer to Appendix A attached.

Absent (With Notice):

| | | |
|--------------|----------------|---|
| Paul Wilkie | Parent | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Lisa Falconi | Teaching | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Gord Lovgren | Principal | St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School |
| Carol Cotton | School Trustee | Markham, Area 1, Wards 1,2,3,6 |

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The meeting was held in the St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School Library and was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Patricia Preston, ARC Chair, welcomed everyone to Working Meeting #14.

2. PRAYER

The ARC Chair led the group in prayer.

3. APPROVAL OF JUNE 4, 2009, ARC WORKING MEETING #14 AGENDA

In response to an inquiry from the CSC Chair from St. Anthony, the ARC Secretary clarified that new information had been received just prior to Working Meeting #14, copies of which had been included with the agenda for discussion, specifically:

- *Revised Cost Estimates for Alternative Accommodation Options*
- *Letter from Upper Canada Child Care Centre*
- *School Accommodation Review Committee - Assumptions*

The agenda of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Working Meeting #14 of June 4, 2009, was approved as distributed.

4. APPROVAL OF MAY 25, 2009, ARC WORKING MEETING #13 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Working Meeting # 13 of May 25, 2009, were approved.

5. APPROVAL OF MAY 28, 2009, ARC PUBLIC MEETING #4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Thornhill Elementary Schools Accommodation Review Committee (ARC) Public Meeting #4 of May 28, 2009, were approved with the following comments and/or amendments:

Question #9:

An ARC member from the St. Michael community commented on Question #9; in support of the response given, it is important for the community to understand that the ARC does receive all information/feedback from the community before each meeting in order to review, and if there is new information or that pertinent for discussion, members will bring it forward at the meeting table for further discussion. The information and the opinions of the community are valuable to the ARC.

Question #21:

Upon review, Question #21 was recognized as a comment made by a community member that did not require a response. The minutes will be amended to show that the response given was intended for and should be recorded under Question #19.

Question #26:

The minutes will be amended to indicate that St. Anthony comments have been *articulated* by the school chair.

Question #32:

A request was made that the response to Question #32 be revised to include a reference to the figure of \$9,000,000 announced by the Superintendent of Plant while addressing the community on the PTR designations. The Superintendent of Plant clarified that this information is contained in the Recapp Report prepared by the Ministry of Education on the conditions of St. Anthony, St. Michael and St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke. The Recapp Report indicates that the Ministry had identified \$9,000,000 for St. Anthony *over a 30 year period* to meet improvements that would be needed to components in the school during the life expectancy of the building. The minutes will be amended to include this reference at the request of the CSC Chair from St. Anthony.

Question #43:

The response to Question #43 will be revised. The intent of the response was to reassure that although the school (St. Anthony) has been deemed PTR, in terms of the site being considered for an alternate purpose, the building is still a safe environment.

The Minutes of Public Meeting #4 were approved as amended.

6. UPDATES TO ARC BINDER

ARC members were provided with **A Summary of Supporting Documentation Distributed with Revised Table of Contents for Working Meeting #14, June 4, 2009.**

7. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE COMMUNITY & PROPOSED RESPONSES

Questions Received from the Community & Proposed Responses were reviewed with the following recommendations made by the ARC:

Page 1, Question #1

The proposed response to Question #1 should be amended to emphasize that in accordance with the *ARC Draft School Valuation Report, Item 5*, under *Additional Considerations* (Page 23) Proposed Accommodation Option #7 will include:

- recommended enhancement to include an enlarged gymnasium (larger than single gym)
- school within walking distance - closer to the parish (proximity to parish)
- full-day care program available at St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke.

Page 2, Question #4

The Board Resource team shared a proposed response for Question 4 indicating that in a study of student data available from 2003-2004 statistics showed that of the number of students at St. Luke at the time of school closure, 80% of the students were retained 1 year later. It is known that of the 102 students, 82 remained in the system, 10 students left graduating from Grade 8, and 10 left the system; however, it cannot be determined whether the 10% left the system as a result of the school closure or due to other needs (moved out of area).

A response to Question 4 will be included in the Questions & Proposed Responses from the Community and will indicate that ***the study of St. Luke was not an ARC process; and, that the Board estimates a potential 10% of students left the system with reason for departure unknown.***

Page 3, Question #7:

The Superintendent of Plant was present at the meeting and spoke to a summary prepared and distributed on the *Revised Cost Estimates for Alternative Accommodation Options*. The summary provided background information, including an overview of Ministry formulas and a breakdown of estimated costs for each proposed option that had been considered in the review process. The document will be posted as an addendum on the ARC website as supporting documentation for response to Question #7.

Variables in cost estimates resulted from formula driven allocations and reduced dollar amounts for new construction based on recent tenders, which reduced particular portions of funding. There were also significant reductions in costs for those options where an addition to an existing building was being recommended (i.e. no new construction for gym, library – already available in existing school).

The CSC Chair of St. Anthony ARC member made the request during discussion to have Option 2 explained by the Superintendent of Plant. The Council Chair has requested the following be placed in the minutes: that the costing was for repairing all three schools and not the two PTR schools.

It was noted that funding for enhanced programs is not included in PTR funding; this would be for consideration under Ministry grants. The ARC Chair indicated that this would be a separate process that would require a proposal made to trustees.

Page 3, Question #8:

From discussion it was noted that the binder referred to in Question 8 was one organized and created by the St. Michael Catholic School Council and school community in context of a presentation the group made to the Board of Trustees

The response to Question #8 and Question #9 will be amended to include a qualifying statement that ***the binder prepared by the St. Michael community and subsequent presentation to the Board was not part of an accommodation review and did not initiate PTR funding from the Ministry.***

Responses will be amended as requested and posted on the ARC website accordingly.

8. QUESTIONS RECEIVED FROM THE ARC & PROPOSED RESPONSES

Questions received from the ARC & Proposed Responses prepared for Working Meeting #14 were reviewed and approved.

At the request of the ARC, the approved responses posted to the ARC website will include statistical data pertaining to the number of school properties identified as adjacent to a parish and/or neighbouring parish within 1 km from school site.

9. INPUT RECEIVED FROM THE ARC

Input received from the ARC was presented for consideration, with the following noted:

Assumptions:

A list of questions prepared by the ARC member recognized from the St. Luke Parish was distributed for discussion. The exercise afforded the ARC an opportunity to review and discuss the assumptions which were considered in reaching decisions on the proposed accommodation options. Questions were of a true or false nature and the following represents a point form summary from ARC and resource staff discussions on Questions 1-10.

Question 1: The Board is deciding not if, but when and to where, the PACE program will move?

- The Board will be studying all the PACE programs within the system for possible relocation as data supports a review; however, no decision has been made and will be dependent on the completion of the ARC process.
- The Committee did discuss the possibility of keeping the PACE program, however, it was not included in the accommodation option based on the number of students in the Thornhill area attending the program (3 SAY, 6 from Thornhill area) and the fact that the ARC had already clearly voted on *not* recommending a dual track school.
- It was felt that it may not be prudent to work on the assumption that PACE students would be included in the accommodation option with concern over sustainability due to lower enrolment, if a decision was made to move the PACE program out of the Thornhill area.

Question 2: The status quo is not an option. The declining enrolments make the schools less than viable in terms of programs. This refers to St. Anthony and St. Rene Goupil/St. Luke?

- Funds are given to address the PTR designation based on Ministry study – the funds are intended for a new school.
- The difficulty with identifying 2 schools *for renovation* would be that the funding designated would not be sufficient to cover the costs (too costly to bring facilities up to code).
- The decision made by the Board is subject to Ministry approval; it was determined that with provincially declining enrolment the Ministry would not give funding to renovate 2 schools because there would not be enough enrolment to sustain 2 schools.
- There was discussion regarding the merits of program enhancements however, considering *long term sustainability* it would not change declining enrolment. Enhanced programs provide an opportunity to *renew* a school where a school has the facilities to engage in the programs.

Question 4: Schools that operate at less than capacity drain on financial operating resources of the Board?

- Ministry gives funding based on a per pupil based formula - this was considered when accommodation options were discussed.

Question 5: Money allocated for this project would not be available for repairs at St. Anthony or St. Michael?

- Funding was based on 2 schools put together – if we had population less than 570 we would have received less.

Question 6: While St. René Goupil/St. Luke is a small school it was not an option to tear down?

- The main criteria for not vacating St. René Goupil/St. Luke was that the school was not designated PTR; and further, consideration was given to the students of St. Luke who had already gone through an amalgamation with St. René Goupil/St. Luke.

Question 7: Amount of money presently available is based on the present enrolment at St. Michael and St. Anthony. If there was no Music and Art programs or PACE, then the money would be less?

- Funding is based on total number of students based on total capacity; if the PACE program was removed do not think it would have an affect because would probably receive same number of students in.

Question 8: It is good for faith development of students to be in a Catholic School which is related to a parish where they attend Sunday worship?"

- Not appropriate to make any assumption on faith of a student and/or family. There are some instances where a number of students in schools attend a number of different parishes outside of the school community for a number of different reasons.
- Although some families within the school community may not attend the local parish, the parish does keep connected by holding a number of school celebrations to include everyone in the school community.

Question 9: Just as parents bus their children for PACE programs and Music and Arts programs they will also bus them so that they will experience their education in a Catholic school?

- Some parents are willing to drive their children to a program. Cannot make assumptions – too many different opinions on this. This is a personal decision.

Page 13, Draft School Valuation Report, Item 3.3, Proposed ARC Accommodation Options:

A request made by the ARC member representing the St. Anthony community that Item 3.3 of the Draft School Valuation Report be amended to include a notation that the ARC was aware of initial costs when developing the proposed accommodation options and that they were considered in deliberations.

Page 16, Draft School Valuation Report – Item 4.0, Recommendation, Proximity to Parish:

A request was made by the ARC member representing the Good Shepherd Parish to include a comment on the opportunities open to students at the parish due to the close proximity of the school to the church; the request was approved for inclusion under Section 4.0 of the Draft School Valuation Report.

10. FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM THE COMMUNITY

The Feedback Received from the Community presented for consideration at Working Meeting #14 was received. An addendum with additional comments received after the June 1 deadline was also distributed at this time for consideration.

In light of feedback received from the community, the ARC Secretary clarified that there is nothing in the Board Policy that prevents a trustee from participating in an accommodation review process. *Policy 703, Section 2.2, Composition of the ARC*, clearly states that an ARC has the authority to co-opt additional members. The trustee on this ARC represents all 3 of the Thornhill schools under review, which should be considered as unique to the process. The ARC Secretary indicated that the reference made at the Public Meeting with respect to the legal opinion obtained by the Dufferin Peel Board is specific to that board and does not apply or represent the actions of the York Catholic District School Board; however, the Board will be reviewing its policy and in terms of future processes, the question or conflict of interest will be considered.

11. MINORITY REPORT PRESENTATION

The St. Anthony CSC Chair member of the ARC addressed the group announcing that as provided under *Board Policy 713*, he will bring a Minority Report forward to the Board. The Report, at present is in draft form and will request that the Board consider the importance of keeping a viable school open to provide for the community in Thornhill Ward 1. The report will ask, if costs are within funding available that the Board give consideration to maintaining all 3 Thornhill schools and develop new programs for students. If the consideration does not meet cost parameters, the Minority report will request consideration of a proposed Accommodation similar to that of Option 5A which would include renovations to St. Anthony (keeping PACE program) and the Arts program accommodated at St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke.

The CSC Chair from St. Anthony asked the ARC to consider not moving forward with the majority report at this time. He further proposed that the committee revisit all the accommodation options and approach the Board to request an extension of the review process to provide proper time for further review and discussion in light of revised estimated costs.

After a full discussion of the implications, and the timelines and requirements of the policy, the request was withdrawn. The ARC member from St. Anthony indicated that a copy of the minority report would be shared with the group prior to being submitted to the Director on June 19, 2009.

12. SCHOOL VALUATION REPORT

The ARC Facilitator reviewed the revised Draft School Valuation Report distributed. Revisions have been made to encompass feedback received from Public Meeting #4.

The reference to “traffic patterns” was deleted from the School Valuation Report as requested and discussed at the Public Meeting.

A copy of a letter dated June 2, 2009, to the Associate Director and ARC Chair from the General Manager of the Upper Canada Child Care Centre was shared for discussion. The letter was recognized for the commitment made by the Upper Canada Child Care to continue at St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke and with the understanding that given the proposed addition the school, they will work with the Board to accommodate their program in a stand alone facility on the property. The CSC Chair for St. Rene Goupil-St. Luke indicated that centre staff had also spoken with her regarding their interest in staying at the school; she further clarified that Upper Canada provides a full daycare for pre-school children in addition to the before and after program for students.

Following discussion, the following amendments were approved:

| Page No. | Item | Amendment / Comment |
|----------------|----------------|--|
| Page 12 | 3.3 | The Minutes will reflect opposition from an ARC member from the St. Anthony community (<i>see Feedback from the ARC</i>) that the comment that the ARC “was directed to proceed with the development of options without costing being the determining factor in decision making” did not clearly reflect the fact that the Committee did consider the figures provided to them. Based on this, Item 3.3 will be revised to indicate that <i>during the ARC process cost estimates were revised</i> . |
| Page 16 | 4.0 | A description of opportunities and activities available for students at the parish will be included under Item 4.0, <i>Proximity to Parish</i> (see Input Received from the ARC, June 4, 2009). |
| Page 18 | 4.0 (f) | Health & Safety – identify need to have 7 portables removed. |

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|--|
| Page 18 | 4.0 (f) | Address recommendation for larger gym under extensive upgrades. Program enhancements to gym and library should be considerations. |
| Page 19 | 4.0(h) | Costing in the report will be updated to reflect the figures provided in the <i>Revised Cost Estimates for Alternative Accommodation Options</i> . |
| Page 20 | 4.0(l) | Delete reference to relocate program from St. Luke |
| Page 24 | 5.0 | Replace terminology "Kiss N'Ride" with <i>Student Pick-Up/Drop-Off</i> as described under Additional Considerations |

Clarifications were made for the St. Anthony CSC Chair - ARC member with respect to guidelines and policy regarding the sale of a property (Item 4.0(t), and, the appointment of the Integration Committee after Board decision is made on the accommodation option (*Policy 703, Item 4.0, 4.1*).

13. INVITATION TO ARC MEMBERS -
PROVIDE FEEDBACK TO THE PROCESS IN THE FALL

The ARC Secretary confirmed that that the majority and minority report will be appendixes to the staff report that will go to Trustees in the Fall. A delegation(s) from the community are welcome to attend the Board meeting at that time. Dates of public meetings will be shared with the community by letter through their community school as well as posted to the ARC website.

Reports and up-to-date information will continue to be shared through email and a copy of the final School Valuation Report will be forwarded prior to the Board meeting. The ARC website will remain available during the remainder of the accommodation review process. With working meetings now complete, it was agreed that any questions received through the ARC email and/or voice-mail cannot be answered after June 4, 2009. The ARC Secretary indicated that a response will be provided with direction to visit the ARC website for updates.

14. MINUTES OF WORKING MEETING #14

It was agreed that the Minutes of Meeting #14, being the last working meeting of the ARC, will be forwarded to members electronically as soon as possible for review and approval for posting to the ARC website.

15. CLOSING COMMENTS

ARC Chair Patricia Preston thanked all the members of the ARC for their commitment and dedication to the review process, and their passion and insight into developing accommodation solutions to meet the needs of students. CSC Chairs, parents, teaching, non-teaching, principals and community reps from the parishes of Good Shepherd and St. Luke, and school trustee for Ward 1, were all recognized for their selfless efforts.

Ms. Preston also thanked ARC Secretary, Andy Di Sebastiano, along with ARC Resource staff from the Board and ARC Facilitator from Watson & Associates, for their continual hard work and unwavering commitment to the needs of the committee.

The ARC secretary acknowledged the excellent work of the Administrative Assistant in preparing all materials and minutes for the ARC meetings.

16. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

APPENDIX A

Thornhill Elementary Schools – Accommodation Review Committee
 Working Meeting #14 – June 4, 2009
 St. René Goupil-St. Luke Catholic Elementary School

Community Sign-In

| | Name | Affiliation (Area School) |
|-----|---------------|--|
| 1. | C. Von Zueben | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| 2. | E. Clancy | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 3. | D. Moser | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 4. | L. Naccarato | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 5. | E. Sirianni | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 6. | B. Vottero | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| 7. | R. Cece | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 8. | S. Koth | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 9. | S. Koth | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 10. | C. Sten | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 11. | A. Matzo | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 12. | C. Mason | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 13. | J. Simile | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 14. | R. Pileci | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 15. | N. Pileci | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 16. | C. Banwell | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 17. | B. Dermody | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 18. | K. Galatiano | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 19. | P. Vettese | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 20. | T. Mohar | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 21. | A. Vyn | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 22. | Victor Ng | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| 23. | E. Ellison | Ward Thornhill Residents Association |
| 24. | B. Bernard | St. Michael Catholic Academy |
| 25. | A. Wong | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |
| 26. | E. Pannikar | St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School |