

Secord School Council Minutes
28th October 2019, 6:30pm
Minutes taken by Rob Wallis

Attendance:

Kathleen Garrett (Parent, Chair + Communication)
Rob Wallis (Parent and Treasurer, Minutes today)
Phil Pothen (Parent at Large / Political Advocate and Overcrowding Committee)

Michelle Aarts (TDSB Trustee)
George Vlahos (Principal)
Aileen (Eleni) Burke (Vice Principal)
Heather Roberts (Teacher and Union steward)
Ian MacPherson (Community worker)
Keisha Cooke (Family Resource Centre Access Alliance)

Bon ? (Parent)
Stella ? (Parent)
AnhTuan Tran (Parent)
Christine Robotham (Parent)
Melissa Hart (Parent)
Brian Wolk (Parent)
Saba Khan (Parent)
Andrew Knox (Parent)
Stephanie Long (Parent)
Amanda Lafontaine-Awerbuck (Parent)
Eden Hagos (Parent)
Ritu Chowdhury (Parent)
Sazeda Ahmed (Parent)
Sayed Tanveer Ahmed (Parent)
Todd Dowell (Parent)
Sandra Anjos – enfmacedo2@gmail.com (Parent)
Herman Markos (Parent)
Fahad Chowdhury (Parent)

Apologies:

Yona Nestel (Parent, Secretary)
Erin Bradford (Parent, Events)
Shelly Alleyne (Parent)

Agenda:

6:30 welcome and intros

6:40 – Michelle Aarts (MA) – presentation of TDSB Capital Project recommendation to the Provincial Govt.

Background

Criteria for 2018 short list of capital projects – TDSB looks at enrolment pressures, needs and age of schools, index for repairs – facility index / repair backlog. This area (and Beaches) are some of the oldest schools in Toronto - Malvern is by far the highest on the index.

They come up with a shortlist of capital projects / repairs / expansion - Province has to fund those projects. TDSB develops a capital project and submit it to province who then decides what they fund. Not an annual process – it's semi-regular. Current govt. delayed last year's request. Last August they asked for proposals from each board – there were 10 proposals in all.

In June 218, the Board approved Secord being added to this whenever the next round came up.

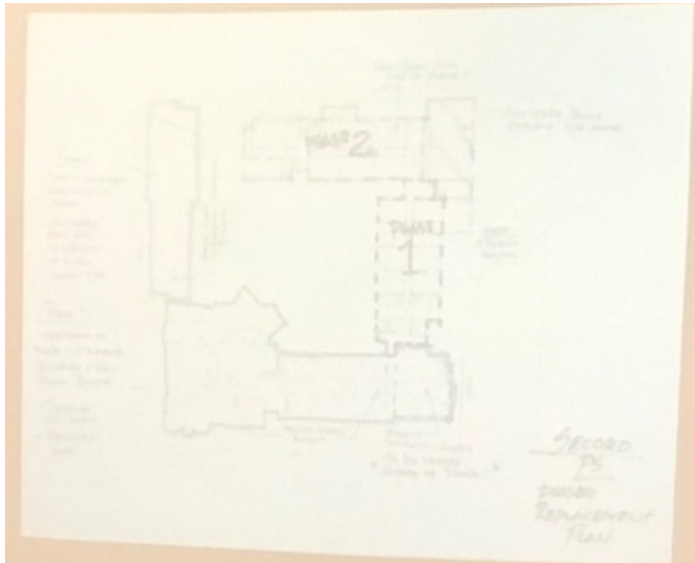
In August, Staff took detailed walkthrough of building – they summarised that the repair backlog for Secord is too high to consider putting a new addition on an old building. Among other things, the physical plant in the building are not sufficient to support an addition.

New Building Proposed

They therefore put forward a proposal to build an entire replacement school. This school not just replaces but takes into account pressures from local area. The new building would accommodate 931 students, and have an expanded childcare facility, and a full sized gymnasium.

The Proposal is therefore a staged build, but no-where do we have capacity to accommodate 650 students while the construction is going on.

Trustee Aarts presented a map of the new building:



One option - Phase1 would be built near parking lot, students would move in while the portapack gets demolished, then phase 2 begins.

Another option - They have reached out to St Bridgits owned by the Catholic Board with a capacity of 350, but they haven't responded favourably to the idea

Funding = not set in stone what it looks like, and they don't expect to hear from province until February. If it gets funding, then more a extensive consultation with the community will take place.

Questions –

What does the additional childcare look like?

Brad Bradford (BB)

From city's point of view – their priority is expanded childcare and more community space. The City has been in contact with Ministry (Province) to encourage them to go forward – the City is interested in co-investing in the site.

The City would be directing growth from transport hub at Main and Danforth – the lease is coming up on community centre – so there's an opportunity to develop it. One of recommendations is for a community and services study for this area – childcare recreation and looking at capital projects.

MA - If this gets approved in this new round of proposals (February), it will affect kids in the 2023 school year, if all other problems were not there (funding, where to put the students) then this would happen.

The new Board (TDSB) mandate is to pro-actively work with city / investors etc.

Questions

Andrew Knox (AK)

Is the timeline the main motivation?

MA – unsure of timeline as not approved

AK - Is it not possible to have kids here? Would be very inconvenient to have students all over the place...

No – major construction so can't have students here.

Todd Dowell (TD)

North Toronto -e.g. fund by using a developer – can we do that?

BB – no – not such an intense area as N Toronto

TD - Could we think about traffic and drop off areas?

MA – this will all come into consideration during the consultation with community

George Vlahos (GV)

Barrington section – was built in 60s

Various things built 80s, 90s, then late 90s portables

We don't have North South flow of traffic so flow is a problem.

Would be great to rebuild.

Kathleen Garrett (KG)-

Why 931?

MA - Projected population to 2030

KG - Seems low.

AK -

Community Centre investment is separate to this investment – why can't we combine it.

MA - Michelle reached out to city for this.

BB –

Objective is to get the Province to buy in to this project.

This has been through 8 different iterations in the last week.

The City doesn't like services coming off line – they want to find services nearby.

EH - Is free programming at risk?

BB – no – services would continue to be provided

PP – community centre currently conjoined – will this continue?

MA – yes, this is possible – it is not the ideal to demolish community centre

For the Davisville Public school re-build recently, the Province said they wouldn't fund 84 classrooms - they'll fund 79 to be built. The City also came in and built small gym and aquatic centre in exchange for TDSB the incorporating parking.

BB – needs strong support for this project to move forward – their objective is to take 10 capital projects and make sure this one hits.

MA - Of 10 projects, it is not a hierarchy – 6 on the list that are older and are already underway.

MA – plan for full community consult later in year.

MA – wants us to have a conversation as a school and have questions lined up. This could be funded in February – however, projects on the list are sometimes in the same year (next) year, sometimes the following year – However, TELL M AARTS WHAT ARE OUR PRIORITIES

7:10 – Keisha Cooke - Access Alliance – they have an Early On centre on site at access alliance – this complements the other early on centre here that's open Monday and Tuesday in the afternoons and Thursday mornings. Flyers have been distributed in the Secord mailblast. They also have parenting workshops, events, summer, march break. E.g. Halloween dress up day Thursday. They can refer 0-6yr olds for other services.

7:15 - Heather Roberts – union steward – our parents are awesome – stood by us and with us – fighting for our kids, and building the education they deserve. If anyone needs information on how to get involved contact her. E.g. June there was a 'walk in' – on October 10th – there was a Province wide walk in – 750 schools involved – they want the best education, spec ed. supports, special resource people etc. They appreciate the support, and Heather is always around, or ask

any teachers. THEY ARE LOOKING OUT FOR OUR KIDS – (and appreciates being able to speak at these meetings.)

7:16 - George Vlahos (GV) – there are 4 unions here – CUPE – OSSTF (autism) - ETFO etc. – dynamic school. They are parents just like us – incredible start to year. Disruption with CUPE means they’ve managed to get some planning done – the mood has been positive – staff is A1 – test he uses is - would he put his child her and yes he would. Son Volunteers at the school. Daughter goes to early on centre. Doors are always open – approachable etc. He has 2 great VPs, and Ian – a great community support worker – active in council meetings, planning etc.

There might be some disruptions this year . George is not part of a union – he’s here all the time. His responsibility is that the children are learning and that the children are safe.

7:21 – GV – site improvements – this is a big school with 670 students, 100 adults, 80 of which are TDSB. They also have Annies place, the Boys and Girls club, Early On.

- This year they have a Brand new PA system – thousands of dollars.
- They put in a New Fire Alarm System – extended to washrooms stairways and corridors – it’s working and it’s loud! The VPs can reset it at any time, which they couldn’t do before.
- They have a new system for Clocks that’s connected together.
- For the Portables – the board invested \$100,000 in them over the summer – they ripped out the 30 yr old plywood and tiles and carpet. Kids are inspired and the teachers enthusiastic. Rooms look great.
- They also have new A.C. in the gym. Graduation etc was really hot – now good.

7:25 – EQAO – Eleni Tsakmakis – looking at data – school improvement planning – we don’t go to grade 6 – this one at Secord, everyone counts, not just the ones that wrote it.

Here we have 4 ISP classes – data including these shows

Reading – gone up 10

Writing – gone up 3

Math gone up 5

Looking at kids that actually wrote it

70% at level 3 or 4, - board average = 76. Province average = 72

Reading – 78% at level 3 and 4 vs board 79% province 77%

Math – 59% at level 3 or 4 . Board = 64% Province = 60%

Teachers are focussing on Math – use data to drive what they need to do.

GV – encouraging – last 3 years – increases every year.

7:29 GV – Spirit Wear – they’ve ordered 1000 T-Shirts for the kids. The school wants to sell them for \$5 – hopefully every kid will get a T Shirt. Black and Gold. Showing Pride in the school. More info next week.

Upcoming – Halloween Howl

2 components –

9:30 – kids down to gym – decorated. –

This year – trying to increase the profile of Secord – past Political Campaign – portables are a disgrace – Reached out to Board to see if we can get some good PR. CP24 will be here at 7:30am – inviting parents to email and have Gym ‘B’ as staging area – families to come in smaller groups.

Wednesday at 12:30 they will be in gym putting it together. Also in evening. Then during the day class will visit the Halloween Howl.

Here are the media links that I have so far:

[Toronto school gears up for Halloween fun](#)

CTV (October 31)

[Schoolkids have a scary good time at Halloween haunted house](#)

City News (October 31)

[Kelly checks out the Halloween Howl](#)

CP24 (October 31)

P & VP tea is next Wednesday – nurse coming in this week

Nov 5th – Indigenous education presentation – Aqua – 1.5 hrs and staff presentation

7:37 – Ian – I.C.C. (committee) - Model Schools were founded through that – trying to get parents out to it – 5050 Yonge street 9am on November 14th – please attend if you can. Michelle Aarts is running that committee.

7:39 – PP – presents a draft letter – BB and MA presentation is the result of long line of effort going back to a similar letter that was agreed with the previous Councillor Janet Davis . We want to renew request initially set to Coun Davis.

May 2018 – this school development was approved and to put on the improvements list.

Coun. Davis also put on a list to have the community centre developed at the same time. On 15th October – Coun. Bradford advised that there was not a separate process from TDSB for a separate stream process to get approval at same time we get approval from Province, for a school building. The understanding was that he was well disposed to combine the 2 projects .

Tomorrow coun. Bradford is putting a motion reference to Main Square community Centre, but there is no mention of Secord community centre. This letter is requesting that Main Square is done at the same time as this community centre.

Would like to authorise sending out the letter.

Motion – would this council support? Show of hands

YES - Vast majority of hands

PP - Specifically to this evening's presentation and our chances of success getting a new school built - When we were number 7 on the list, it wasn't hopeful then – now we are number 10 (and last year's number 10 has fallen off the list).

Turns out the TDSB does have a priority – The Province can or doesn't have to put them as priority. The others on list – for example Davisville public school – was already approved – there was a scope shift to adjust number of classrooms – but that got put on as a new, separate project and knocked others lower down the list, off it.

The things that are ahead of us are schools that will be closed while the others are built.

We need to advocate on the criteria they use to prioritise.

e.g. PP believes LOI should be used to prioritise funding.

We should push for LOI ranking be used rather than school closure be used.

Can't take it for granted that this is going ahead and don't take it for granted that it will happen.

Todd – we don't necessarily want to tie to new community centre rather than school. The tax base is growing in leaps and bounds.

PP – we had burst of development in 70s – and haven't caught up to that – we've been playing catch up from then.

MPP Rima Berns-McGown is meeting with Stephen Lecce – we can make a pitch sheet for their meeting.

GV - he comes at it from an a-political standpoint, being Principal. Wants the best for his students.

Keisha – opportunity for others to be part of it?

Eden Hagos - Community Centre = vital – resources for low income families.

School Council is not representative of the school – we need the community centre and resources.

7:55 - Kathleen – this room is full of passionate people who are committed.

We need designated people for roles on School Council but we work as a team

Kathleen has collected all expressions of interest:

Rob Wallis– Treasurer - passed – SHOW OF HANDS VOTE - unanimous

Erin Bradford – Maunique Jacklin – events – passed - SHOW OF HANDS VOTE - unanimous

Phil Pothen – Political Advocacy co-ordinator – passed - SHOW OF HANDS VOTE - unanimous

Stephanie – in school communication co-ordinator – passed - SHOW OF HANDS VOTE - unanimous

Saba – electronic communication – including parent engagement with Ian– passed - SHOW OF HANDS VOTE - unanimous

Yona – wants a position – only Chair is open.

Eden Hagos – interested in Secretary.

Todd would like a role - Send Todd roles!

Chair needs to be filled

- main job is Forms and co-ordinating meetings

NEXT MEETING – decided to have 2 before the end of the year as this was so late –

Next meetings therefore

- Monday, November 18, 2019
- Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Meeting Adjourned 8:15pm