

Vimy Ridge Accommodation Consultation

Notes from Working Group Meeting #2

The meeting commenced at 7 pm with the following people in attendance

Jennifer Jennekens
Kaveeta Ajwani
Ahmed Fawal
Cheryl Sevigney
Genevieve Gauthier King
Kevin McGowan
Emilie Nichols
Lynn Vanasse
Laurie Rogers
Coreena McCallum
Tara Lockhart
Deb Woods
Jeff Griesbach
Reg Lavergne
Karyn Carty Ostafichuk

The meeting began with the introduction of new participants from the Robert Bateman and Roberta Bondar School communities

A recap was given regarding

- The growth in the Findlay Creek Community

- The crowding and outlook for Vimy Ridge Public School given the growth and the accommodation review process the OCDSB is following to receive feedback

- The process for Capital Submissions to the Ministry of Education to support the construction of new school space

- Option discussed for moving the VRPS Grade 7-8 to Steve MacLean PS and the issues therewith;

 - Along with the desire of the Working Group to consider other options

Kaveeta indicated that the VRPS community had launched a petition for a new elementary in the Findlay Creek area on behalf of the community. There was interest on the part of Riverside South and others to support. The petition can be found here:

<https://goldiempp.ca/petition-second-public-elementary-school-in-findlay-creek/>

Alternative Options

Karyn outlined that she had reviewed other options. The possibility of looking at Sawmill Creek or Blossom Park were reexamined and the suitability of these options was in doubt because of both concerns about space and “staying power” as we do not know how long these options will have to remain in effect.

Other earlier options were reexamined as well (involving the movement of more grades, Creation of new catchments, making Ridgemont a 7-12 school: all were found to be Unsustainable or too complex as interim measures

The solution to the crowding at Vimy Ridge Public School is the building of the next required
In Findlay Creek

A new scenario was discussed:

It involves picking a “move-in” date (TBD) for any new students arriving in the Findlay Creek community. After this assigned date, these new students would be directed to Robert Bateman Public School for K-6, and to Roberta Bondar Public School for Grades 7-8. Robert Bateman has good eligible space to accept these students in the interim. Roberta Bondar is well-utilized but would have space for the smaller anticipated number of Grade 7-8 students who would move into the area.(ergo not suggesting that all K-8 students be directed to Roberta Bondar PS off the bat)

Pros/Cons/Issues concerning this option

It does not impact current students or their younger siblings as they would be grandparented at VRPS

While we are concerned with school transitions for students; the transition to Robert Bateman or Roberta Bondar would be necessitated because of the change of address; and it was noted that many new residents of Findlay Creek are actually from the Greenboro Hunt Club Park area (Bateman/Bondar catchments) to begin with so perhaps that lessens disruption.

High School feeding pattern is not disrupted.

Busing availability remains an issue

Questions regarding residents of Findlay Creek who moved into the area prior to this “move in” date but having younger –than-school-aged children; would they be allowed into VRPS (TBD, but the thought was yes)

How early could that “move in” date be set? Again TBD but the thought would be to give a number of months’ notice

The potential to negatively impact the Business Case for the 2nd Findlay Creek School was discussed; always a risk

What happens to these redirected students once the New Findlay Creek School is built? This will depend on the outcome of the boundary-setting exercise that occurs when the school is announced: Vimy Ridge’s boundary will be split. Usually there is a block move of a good number of students required (K-5?) Presumably, current VRPS students will be compelled to move and the presumption would be that redirected Robert Bateman students may be compelled to move into either VRPS or New Findlay Creek PS, depending on address and boundary set.

We would not typically move a child in the last year at a given school (Grade 5 moving into Grade 6, or Grade 7 moving into Grade 8) There may be more flexibility to grandparent students at Robert Bateman; especially if they would, by address, be in the VRPS catchment, but all TBD at the time

What would the impact be to a school like Robert Bateman (in particular) to have numbers bolstered and then have enrolment negatively impacted when students are redirected
Concerns about class sizes with students moving in throughout the year to a school such as Roberta Bondar which is nicely full. Does this mean crowded classrooms? As a response, it was indicated that the Planning Department works with both the school and staffing interests at the Board when we have growth communities. We typically organize with some “ease” in classroom space”. Accepting a number of anticipated children throughout the year is an issue

Next steps

A further Working Group meeting will be held (likely brief) to give time for this new option to be considered by members and to garner feedback (Thursday February 17th 7pm)

Trustee Mark Fisher will be included to represent his Zone's interests

Karyn shared the rumour that a pre-election Capital call may be made by the Ministry. The question was raised about ranking. Again, it was outlined that the system of "ranking" pitted one area against another; and pitted very dissimilar projects against each other. It is not staff's intent to change any submission at this time, but we shall see how it goes.

The public forum needs to be sorted out and a date worked on. It is difficult to have a "Zoom" meeting Potentially hundreds of participants, so scenarios will be worked on to lay out narratives and we'll see if an online information and comment-gathering forum can be developed to reach as many people as possible

Karyn will endeavor to set that date before the next meeting and will circulate these meeting notes prior

Next meeting: Thursday February 17, 2022. 7-9 pm