

Elmdale School Council Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, 18 September 2019, 1800hrs

1. Welcome and Open Meeting

The 1st Elmdale School Council meeting of the 2019/2020 Academic Year was called to order by the Co-Chairs, Jordan and Larry, at 1805 hrs.

In attendance:

See attached.

2. Welcome and open meeting

Jordan thanked everyone for coming and welcomed them to the Fisher Park library where Parent Council meetings will be held while Elmdale is under construction. A large crowd was in attendance as there were representatives from the Ottawa Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) to discuss the Elmdale renovation project. The first hour of this meeting is dedicated exclusively to speaking about the renovations.

Olga Grigoriev – Superintendant of Instruction OCDSB

Karyn Ostafichuk– Manager, Planning Community Use of Schools, Admissions OCDSB

Dan Bradley – Managers of Facilities OCDSB

Erica Braunovan – School Trustee

CBC representative

3. Address by School Board and Representatives

Opening address by Superintendent: The intent of the meeting is to expressed empathy and concern on behalf of the OCDSB, as well as to gather feedback and concerns from those in attendance about how the construction delay will impact Elmdale. This information will be brought back to the Board, and they will take parents' comments into consideration.

Address by Karyn: When discussions first took place, the conversation was always about getting the renovation done in time (i.e. one school year). They needed authorization from the Province in order to proceed. When we broke for the summer break period, things were on schedule, so there was no perceived need to communicate. During the summer, it became clear that there would be delays to the project, since the Authority to Proceed (ATP) from the Province came through just before school resumed in September.

Rumour: “We don’t have enough money to complete the renovation, based on growth of the project.” Not true; although there could be some more issues with soil remediation, the budget is not seen as being compromised at this time.

Rumour: “At the end of the last school year, they thought the 1 yr was adequate; this estimate was inaccurate”. Not true; the initial estimate for time to completion was correct but until the

ATP was received, the timeline couldn't be confirmed. Now that we have the ATP, 2.5 months late, we also have to consider the slippage of greater than 2.5 months due to weather. The Christmas break in 2020 may not be enough time to conduct the move during that break. If there is any way possible to move mid-year, they will do that. They want to be transparent and clear at the onset of this renovation that a move back to Elmdale during Christmas break 2020 will be a challenge.

Soil remediation: the scope of work was expanded slightly during the tender process; the Ministry granted extra funding from the Province for this.

Questions from the floor:

- **Was the application complete when it was submitted to the council, or was there any errors or omissions?** The application was complete and accurate. At the provincial level, the delays were attributable to a cabinet shuffle as well as a moratorium in spending while the new Minister became familiar with the portfolio; this was also compounded by summer vacation by staff at all levels. The Health and Education curriculum caused a lot of stir across the province, so there was a lot of political pressure to complete that announcement. There were daily conversations from between staff at all levels about this project.
- **Why did they proceed with busing kids and causing such disruption before the ATP was received?:** It's standard operating procedure to start the process of moving kids and schools before the ATP. If they had waited for the ATP before getting everything organized for the move, they would never have been able to start the school year as smoothly as they did.
- **Why wasn't the project delayed for a year and started in July 2020?** Because it was deemed to great a risk that the funding wouldn't be available next year.
- **Would an increase in funding to the project enable the construction to be completed more quickly? Could the timeline be accelerated?** Unlikely; efficiency would likely drop off with more crew and more money. Once the schedule is received (in approx 2 weeks), they will critically look at the scheduled and see if any issues can be cut IOT speed up the timeline.
- **Comment:** In fall 2018, many people asked during the mtg about the timeline. The responses given at the time were very confident. People may have thought about it differently if they knew the displacement would have lasted longer. Person felt a bit 'misled' because we were promised a 1 yr disruption and this is turning longer.
- **Why didn't we get more updates during the summer?** There were delays with the Province as well as with the City. Most people didn't hear anything about the delays until Aug by the Principal.
- **Who is the main point of contact for communicating to parents? At the fall town hall, parents had asked for a Liaison Officer but there was never one appointed. Parents don't feel there's sufficient communications about this.** Answer: the Principal will be the main Point of Contact for parents. Dan is the Point of Contact for Site Plan

and Soils, though this will change.

- **Can we have an option of going back in Sept 2020? What work will be done by then?** Superintendent very open to another approach of consultation; also very open to ideas from the floor. Nothing firm is known regarding the timeline for work because the contractor hasn't yet provided the schedule.
- **Who is the contractor?** Toffcon Construction. They only recently got awarded this contract so the schedule is not yet available. Parents would like to know this schedule asap. Dan explained that this is a \$13.7M project, so there are a lot of things that need to go in the planning process before the actual construction starts.
- **Could we have a Working Group (WG) that would represent parents in this project, instead of Isabelle communicating all the info to parents?** She is doing a great job and the parents have tremendous appreciation and respect for her, but it's unfair for her to be the conduit for the vast number of emails and questions parents have. There are a lot of motivated parents who would be happy to help with this and alleviate some of Isabelle's responsibility. Answer from superintendent: there is definitely a roll for a WG, but this would need to be in conjunction with an employee of the OCDSB which is Isabelle. Informal WG idea was informally voted on: large majority favored this idea. Superintendent did not committed to the structure of the WG, but appreciated the idea and agreed that more will follow about this.
- **Is there anything parents can do – letter writing, advocacy, and resources within the parent community; if we knew where the problem was, we could do something.** Answer from Erica – there wasn't a single point of failure within the Ministry; a letter writing campaign wouldn't necessarily have helped, as this project wasn't delayed compared to others; instead there was a moratorium on all similar spending projects.
- **Will work be going on past 1500hrs?** Yes. Perhaps neighbors should be made aware that the project will be longer than anticipated as a different community was invited to the mtg last fall.
- **Will Dan be the POC for facilities until the end of this project?** No, Dave is the project manager for this particular project. He has 30 years of project management with the contractor. Dan (here tonight) is the one for all the OCDSB.
- **Is this the first project of its nature with this type of renovations?** If not, why haven't there been more lessons learnt from the other projects so the OCDSB could anticipate and proactively answer our questions? Answer from Erica: each project is a bit different, and timelines are all different based on the school. She did live through the Devonshire renovation and all the questions heard tonight are different than those from the other project.
- **Comment:** Elmdale school community wanted to move as a group in order to preserve, as much as possible, the community feel of the school while displaced. Although this is hugely inconvenient, some parents weren't particularly surprised that there was a delay.

The new facility is very nice, the kids are safe, happy and in their school family/ community.

4. Review of Previous Minutes

Natasha moved to accept the Minutes from May 2019; Holly seconded the motion. Motion was carried.

5. Elections

It is mandated that school councils conduct their elections within the first 30 days of the year. Larry reviewed all the positions, in accordance with the Constitution. The following was discussed:

- Chairperson: Jordan volunteered himself and Larry for as a second year
- Treasurer: Jessica volunteered for a second year, with Vanessa as an Assistant Treasurer
- Internal Communications: Carolyne volunteered for this position again
- External communications: Alyson volunteered for this position again
- Healthy Earth: Kim volunteered for this position again, and Ashley will assist her
- OCAS rep: Caroline volunteered for this position again, noting she cannot always make the mtg.
- Arts: Natasha and Erin volunteered for this position again
- Community Representative: Susie volunteered for this position again
- Safe travel: Tracy volunteered for this position again, but this will have renewed focus given that all the kids will be bussed to school
- Volunteer coordinator: Tracy volunteered for this position
- Education: no volunteer yet
- Fundraising: no volunteer yet

Members at large:

1. Kelly Gray
2. Jean-Phillippe Lefebvre
3. Lindsay Wild
4. Rob Near
5. Andrea Anastassiades
6. Christie McInnes
7. Holly Kardish
8. Kaireen Patton
9. Rebecaa Irwin
10. Chantal McIntyre
11. Kelly Koroluk
12. Catherine Rossiter
13. Bryce Crossman

Kelly moved to accept all the individuals who volunteered for the above-mentioned executive positions. Amanda seconded the motion. The motion was carried. The total number of Executive positions is 11+2 (committee members plus co-chairs); additionally, there are 13 Members at

Large, for a total of 25 Council members.

6. Treasurer's report:

See attached for the Treasurer's report.

Highlights: we have changed to a new system for Hot Lunches (no longer using PayPal); 67K opening balance; 61K closing balance.

Healthy Earth would like to carry forward their balance from 2018/2019. All other residual amounts from last year will be carried forward into the general account, for reallocation in 2019/2020. Erin moved to accept the Treasurer's report; Caroline seconded the motion. The motion was carried.

7. Principal report

- Very smooth settling-in process so far; kids seem very happy at Century
- Older students have been very helpful to the younger kids
- School 'feels' different because there are so much fewer pick-ups and drops-offs and not Mothercraft at the school
- There will not be an Art Calendar this year, but the school website is being maintained with some student art
- Tryouts for cross country and soccer have begun
- Terry Fox Run, Picture Day and Orange Shirt Day will be taking place soon
- The kids are settling in well, as are the teachers

8. Open Floor Discussion and Close Meeting

Questions from the floor:

- Will there be a plan among parents for when buses are cancelled due to weather? To be discussed next meeting.
- Are phones allowed on the bus? Some kids on some buses are using them. Principal to investigate this.

Action item: Need to send email to all parents to ask if anyone would like to join the School Council (there are two vacant positions or as non-voting member).

The meeting was adjourned at 2013 hrs.

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 16th at 1800 hrs in the Fisher Park library.