

**Runnymede Public School Council Meeting Minutes  
Tuesday Jan. 18, 2011**

**Attendees:** Alice Bell, Jessica Bell, Erin Carroll, Sarah Frame, Karen Hanna, Suzanne Gordon, Hilary Inwood, Nora Irwin, Heather Jordan, Joan Lash, Donna Mackay, Tricia McGovern, Tanyss Price, Audrey Robinson, Chris Sheehan, Jess Shulman, Derek Stockley, Jacqueline Sustar, Jerry Tiessen, Kirsten Tenebaum, Jason Thompson, Catherine Willson, Ann Witalis, Jason Witalis, Brian Withnell, Krista Wylie, Roseanne Allen, Kim Thompson, Jenny Winter, Katherine Clark, Cindy Docteur-White, Leslie Robbins-Parmar

**Teachers:** N/A

**School Administration:** Amelia Dennis, Michael Kanalec, Rob Hochberg

**Students (Parliament):** Julia Jolly, Devin Gallagher & Lydia Javor (Teacher Advisor)

**Regrets:** Rob Dunford, Anne Markee

**OVERVIEW OF KEY DECISIONS & MOTIONS AT THIS MEETING**

	<b>Action?</b>
<i><b>Decisions:</b> Based on the dialogue of this meeting, the <u>Communications Committee</u> will liaise with several parents who have backgrounds in political communications and produce a letter for parents at Runnymede and within Ward 7 to be able to easily send to all appropriate parties in order to voice concerns over the state of old buildings in need of repair and renewal AND to express concern over Runnymede's overcapacity and inability to accommodate full-day kindergarten.</i>	
<i><b>Motion:</b> Suzanne Gordon put forward the motion that Runnymede Council, under current public policy, funding formula and accommodation pressures at Runnymede P.S., does <u>NOT</u> support the implementation of full-day kindergarten <u>AT</u> Runnymede P.S.</i>	Passed

**1. Welcome**

Jerry Tiessen welcomed all in attendance and introduced Julia Jolly and Devin Gallagher, members of Student Parliament.

Julia provided a brief overview of the work that Student Parliament does in the school and Council warmly welcomed their attendance at this meeting.

**2. Irene Atkinson, Ward 7 Trustee Dialogue**

As a recap from last meeting, Runnymede Council had obtained feedback from parents to establish the following as priority issues for Runnymede:

**1. Maintenance/Renewal of School Structure**

- Backlog of repairs: Examples: Window replacement (south side), HVAC System,

Accessibility, Paint is peeling on exterior windows, the basement floors have uneven, old floor coverings that represent a safety hazard, broken pavement such as the Kinder Sensory garden stairs remained in a dangerous state for far too long and then were haphazardly repaired.

- Daily maintenance/cleanliness: if you look at the underside of some chairs you will see filth that is uncharacteristic of schools in other Boards, garbage cans often don't have garbage bags in them (are the plastic bins disinfected instead), floors are dirtier than other schools, not enough caretaking staff to keep the school clean
- Renewal of the School structure: cafeteria, expose currently concealed parts of the building in order to improve A) functionality of the building and B) way finding for children and visitors alike
- Can we use the Centennial celebrations as a way to bolster funding for maintenance related issues?

## **2. Overcrowding/School at over capacity/ TDSB Plans**

- a. What are the long term plans, especially in light of exploding population in Ward 7
- b. Board making decisions to ensure its fiscal responsibility can support its responsibilities to maintain school buildings and programs where enrolments are robust: TDSB needs to close the identified schools, just as every other Board has had to do in the province.

## **3. Provincial funding/ equity amongst School Boards**

- a. TDSB does not appear to have the same resources as other Boards i.e. smart boards, disability assessments, special education resources/funding
- b. Curriculum does not appear to be standard across the Province i.e. French Immersion system
- c. Funding of catholic school board and whether there would be savings if the two amalgamated
- d. French Immersion (little or no special education resources, "all or nothing" system, does it take into account the best interests of the entire school system)

**Irene Atkinson presented the following documents to Council:**

### **1. Runnymede P.S. – January 2011 – an Overview**

#### Enrolment/Capacity

Enrolment: 1,101

Capacity: 866

Overcapacity by 235 students or 127% capacity

#### Enrolment reduction possibilities:

- Change boundary → reduce by 55 students who would subsequently go to Annette
- Howard Grade 7/8 Students to Fern → reduce by 100 students who would subsequently go to Fern

These possibilities would reduce enrolment to 946 → still 155 students overcapacity or 109% capacity

#### Accommodation pressure:

- 3 additional kindergarten classes for a total of 7 to accommodate all-day kindergarten

program

- Probably a loss of specialty rooms (\*\* **Amelia Dennis:** commented that this is commonly misunderstood – that Runnymede, in fact, does not have specialty rooms that are vacant for a large portion of the day since they are integrated into Senior rotation so this solution does not provide any real space)

#### Renewal Maintenance Backlog

Runnymede Renewal Maintenance Backlog: \$4 million  
TDSB Renewal Maintenance Backlog: \$3 BILLION

Other Ward 7 Schools:

Visit: <http://www.rebuildourschools.org/FindYourSchool/php/index.php>

And enter various schools into the search engine to find the \$ amount of renewal maintenance for other TDSB schools

Western Tech needs \$34 million

#### Why Such a Backlog?

- TDSB did not receive New pupil Places funding
- TDSB did not receive Enrolment Pressures Grants
- TDSB receives no capital funding

#### What is TDSB DOING ABOUT THIS?

- In 2007, the TDSB established the Toronto Lands Corporation as an independent body to maximize revenues from lease, sale, and development of TDSB surplus properties.
  - To date, TLD has netted about \$95 million in sales with a further \$39 million pending.
  - Redevelopment projects and sales over the next 5 years will bring an additional \$222 Million
  - We are exploring Capital funding alternatives such as local levy on property taxes, Section 37 of the Planning Act monies, public private partnerships such as the redevelopment model for the new North Toronto C.I., generate revenues through the governments Feed In Tariff programs. Energy generated is sold back to the OPG at a rate of \$0.713/kw
  - Encouraging parents to approach the Minister of Infrastructure and/or the Premier with respect to the inclusion of school capital and school renewal in the forthcoming Ontario 10-Year Infrastructure plan

According to Irene Atkinson's document presented, "We need capital infrastructure funding of \$500 million annually for 15 years." And "We are doing what we can to ensure students have proper, safe learning environments but it is not enough – we need your help – please write or call your MPP and the Premier"

**Irene Atkinson also presented the following document to parents in attendance, which is a subset of a paper prepared by Sheila Penny, Director, Strategic Building and Renewal for TDSB Budget Committee, January 17, 2011:**

#### **Board Motion of November 10, 2010**

*Facilities division to articulate the Board's school renewal needs to the Ministry of Education by November 30, 2010, so as to ensure those needs are fully understood by the*

*province and may be addressed through a new school renewal funding program replacing Good Places to Learn in the 2011 Ontario Budget, or at a point subsequent to the Budget in 2011*

## **TDSB CAPITAL NEEDS: Rebuilding our Schools Sustainably**

### State of our buildings

- Over 120 schools are more than 60 years old
- By the end of this decade, that number will swell to 305 schools
- Without adequate funds for repair the backlog has become very large – a total of \$3 billion in backlog of maintenance in TDSB schools (includes the funds needed for the replacement of buildings systems such as structural, mechanical, electrical and civil – it does NOT include funds needed for program changes and code-compliance)
- There is field evidence that the cost of the backlog increases exponentially since unrepaired small equipment and building failures with small repair costs eventually evolve into larger equipment and building failures resulting in damage to infrastructure that did not need repair. Then cost of repair balloon → the TDSB's backlog data follows an exponential curve.
- The infrastructure is aging
  - To keep schools open, we have largely dealt with building systems like roofs, windows and boilers – leaving few resources available to carry out important cosmetic work like painting
  - We can't fix underlying infrastructure issues without significant investment
  - Sooner or later, infrastructure must be upgraded – “later” means fewer real options exist for where the money can be spent
- Emergency repairs and health and safety projects have increased by over 15 times from \$2 million in 2000 to over \$35 million/year today
- As the backlog gets bigger, we move further and further away from being able to invest in cutting edge learning environments (i.e. before we invest in upgrading a science lab or arts suite, we have to keep the heat on and the water running)
- Capital budgets for planned school renewal projects are being eroded by emergency repairs and health/safety projects so the ability to be proactive and plan is being similarly eroded
- The Facilities Condition Index (FCI) is a percentage of the repair cost relative to the replacement cost of the building. i.e. a backlog repair of \$4 million for a \$20 million building is  $4/20 = 25\%$ . The greater the percentage, the worse the condition of the building and the greater the urgency for repair.

### Goals of rebuilding our schools

- Several Board documents and committees inform the design of retrofits for our schools:
  - Vision of Hope
  - Broadening Choices
  - Better Schools, Brighter Futures
  - Go Green: A Climate Change Action Plan
- Goals of rebuilding our schools are:
  - Create 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environments
  - Provide safe and healthy schools
  - Make all school facilities sustainable and energy efficient
  - Reduce operations and maintenance costs
- Given the state of TDSB buildings, the strategy that makes most sense is to consider a DEEP RETROFIT for all schools within the system phased over 15 years

- A deep retrofit would serve multiple purposes by resolving several issues at the same time – it has 3 components:
  - Takes care of deferred maintenance and infrastructure deficiencies (backlog)
  - Updates the school with respect to its program spaces as assessed by the school board (Program upgrades)
  - Addresses safety and accessibility (code compliance)
- Estimate of total cost to deep retrofit all our schools in 2011 dollars:
  - Elementary: \$4.84 Billion
  - Secondary: \$3.38 Billion
  - Note: this total projected cost of \$8.1 Billion in today's dollars does not include:
    - Cost of emergency repairs and Health/Safety projects over the next 15 years to keep schools open
    - Inflation
    - Risk of rising energy prices
    - Potential increased costs arising from shortage of human and natural resources due to competing infrastructure projects
    - Unanticipated costs resulting from changes in the building code
    - Post-occupancy evaluations to ensure best practices are learned and deepened

### **Parent Question & Answer Period**

1. What can parents do to help move these issues forward?

Irene Atkinson: Ward 7 is unusual in that it is overcrowded and the proliferation of condo developments is going to create a real crisis – if parent councils can urge parents to write to the minister and write to the premier; to call a press conference to highlight the maintenance renewal issues rampant within our schools. There is a provincial election schedule for October 6, 2011 so this year can be a time to effect change.

2. What solutions are being put forward by TDSB?

Irene Atkinson: Many creative solutions are being proposed to the Ontario Government such a funding a debenture (mortgage) to provide the required \$500 million per year, which would cost ministry \$12 mill per year in mortgage payments.

### **Irene Atkinson also brought Dan Rath from RebuildOurSchools to present to Council**

Please visit [www.rebuildourschools.org](http://www.rebuildourschools.org) to find a lot of great information from this advocacy group who has been working closely with trustees, parents and other stakeholders to raise awareness of the need for capital infusions to our schools.

With the termination of the Good Places to Learn funding by the Ontario government in March 2010, the TDSB, which used to receiving SOME funding for capital renewal projects, has been thrown into a state of chaos.

There are many health and safety threats posed to students and teachers who work in schools in the TDSB.

State of the schools in Toronto is a DECISIVE ELECTION ISSUE.

The aim of this organization is to explore and present options to the Ontario Government that range from: Public-private partnerships to mortgages and debentures as possible solutions to finding funding for capital renewal needed within TDSB schools.

## **Parent Questions**

1. What can we do to help?

Irene Atkinson:

- Work started on Jan. 17, 2011 at the school board to work out a strategy
- Current MPP is committed to finding more funding for capital renewal (Cheri di Novo)
- Rather than having one school calling one week....trying to arrange for having one week where ALL TDSB parents call/contact politicians
- Calling a press conference
- There are three major presentations to the government scheduled and then the chair and director will be making a separate presentation complete with press coverage.

2. How do we consolidate our voice?

Irene Atkinson: Have our ward 7 reps bring ideas to council – open to ideas of press coverage and mass rally.

3. Comment: Part of the story is the juxtaposition of being on a brand new field in a suburban school – compared to the old buildings in which TDSB students learn. We need to make this inequity a broader issue and the electoral model is not going to solve this inequity.

4. Why are we expanding all-day kindergarten if it cannot be funded? Peele Board of Education has said they will only provide all-day kindergarten that is FUNDED.

Irene Atkinson: Runnymede would be in the last year of roll-out of all-day kindergarten since no space and there is a possibility that the school could refuse to roll out this program.

5. Can we stop condo development?

Irene Atkinson: With every new condo development, developers are told that there is no capacity for resident children to attend schools closeby but they continue to move forward despite there being no schools for kids to go. All new condos within this neighbourhood are being sold with a caution to all purchasers that school accommodation cannot be approved in this area.

There is some possibility of an expansion to Keele St. school.

6. How do the schools in the Separate school manage to fund capital renewal?

Irene Atkinson: They do get capital funding since they are a growth school board vs. TDSB, which is a shrinking school board.

7. Comment: the TDSB cannot use public funds to generate MORE funds... so the school board cannot run ads with photos of crumbling schools etc. to raise awareness of this issue so it behooves all of us to help raise awareness.

8. Comment: How to generate press – especially since Runnymede P.S.'s backlog of \$4 million of renewal maintenance is relatively small compared to other schools within Ward 7? Perhaps it is

the angle that there is simply no room for full-day kindergarten – perhaps create some visual to highlight the overcapacity of schools such as Runnymede?

9. Comment: The current government is very sensitive to well-organized grassroots groups so if we can organize 500 e-mails + 50 letters there is a chance of effecting change.
10. Comment: Now is the time to raise awareness and create a fuss since in March, the budget is over. NOW is the time to write letters, e-mails.

**Action:**

*Based on all the dialogue of this meeting, the Communications Committee will liaise with several parents who have backgrounds in political communications and produce a letter for parents at Runnymede and within Ward 7 to be able to easily send to all appropriate parties in order to voice concerns over the state of old buildings in need of repair and renewal AND to express concern over Runnymede's overcapacity and inability to accommodate full-day kindergarten.*

**Motion:**

*→ Suzanne Gordon put forward the motion that Runnymede Council, under current public policy, funding formula and accommodation pressures at Runnymede P.S., does NOT support the implementation of full-day kindergarten AT Runnymede P.S.*

*→ Seconded by Chris Sheehan*

*Motion carried*

- Noted that Jessica Bell, Ward 7 Rep, will present this motion at the next Ward 7 Council Meeting, which pertains to the rollout of full-day kindergarten in Ward 7.

**3. Receive Previous Meeting's Minutes (Nov. 23, 2010)**

This item was postponed to February meeting.

**4. Receive Correspondence**

This item was postponed to February meeting.

**6. Administration Report**

**Amelia Dennis, Principal reported on the following items:**

**a) Thank-you from Mrs. McLeod**

- A formal thank-you was given to Council for the money provided by Council to purchase/refurbish instruments.

**6. Treasurer's Report / Update**

This item was postponed to February meeting.

**7. Committee Reports**

All committee updates were postponed to February meeting.

## **11. Other Business**

Next meeting is on Wednesday, February 16<sup>th</sup>.

– Motion to Adjourn