

Board of School Trustees
School District No. 57 (Prince George)

PUBLIC CONSULTATION MEETING

KING GEORGE V ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

February 24, 2003

MINUTES

Present:

Bill Christie, Chairperson
Lyn Hall Vice-Chairperson
Michelle Marrelli, Trustee
Fred McLeod, Trustee
John Rustad, Trustee
Patricia Wick Thibault, Trustee

Dick Chambers, Superintendent of Schools
Bryan Mix, Secretary-Treasurer
Wendy De Marsh, Executive Assistant (Recorder)
Lori MacIver, School Operations Officer

Absent: Carlene Keddie, Trustee

Approximately 50 people in the audience.

1. Opening Remarks

Mr. Christie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., reviewed the agenda and the rules of order for the meeting and then gave a brief overview of the district's budget and enrolment situation.

2. Board Presentation

Mr. Chambers gave a presentation comprised of information about:

- the consultation process
- the decline in the district's enrolment
- the district's budget shortfall
- the components of the budget solution
- the savings to be achieved by closing King George V Elementary School
- the reasons for selecting King George V Elementary School for proposed closure
- a summary of written submissions received to date
- when the decision about closing the school would be made

3. King George V Elementary School Parent Advisory Council Presentation

Carmel Kachkowski expressed concerns about the needs of inner-city children and her fears that Harwin Elementary would become too large to meet those needs adequately. She noted that for some students, school is the only constant in their lives.

4. Speakers' List

Shawn Baekhave spoke about his satisfaction with the school and his concerns about student safety.

Ray Wong spoke about the school's history and its value as a historical site. He suggested that the district could raise money by selling advertising on a sign that could be located on a wall of the school.

Doug Jeffery read a letter from Miles Thomas raising a number of concerns about the process being followed in closing schools

Kaitlin Thomas spoke about the quality of the building and its suitability as a fine arts school.

Kyle Thomas asked that the school be kept open and made into a fine arts school.

Mr. Jeffery read a letter from Marta Gregor that noted the school's ideal location for recreational programs and describing the many programs offered there by the community association.

Mr. Jeffery read a letter from Mark Nelson that noted the ideal location of the school, the quality of the building and the value of a fine arts school and expressed concern about children's safety walking to neighbouring schools.

Carmen Steblin spoke about the importance of heritage and the quality of the building.

Vic Steblin spoke about the unpleasantness of the school closure process and expressed his hope that the Board would do the reasonable and democratic best thing for the future.

Mr. Wong and Mr. Jeffery gave a presentation highlighting the history of the school, the community's support for a fine arts school, students' feelings about the school and safety issues for students walking to neighbouring schools.

5. Other Speakers

Mr. Christie opened the floor to anyone who wished to speak. No one expressed interest in doing so.

6. Closing Remarks

Trustees commented on the district's declining enrolment, the difficulty of making decisions to close schools and their concern about safety issues related to school closures. They noted that the district could not afford to keep all its schools open and that the money saved by closing schools would increase the resources available to all schools and students.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.