

Town committee votes against Linbrook plan

by David Lea
Oakville Beaver Staff

The question of whether the former Linbrook Public School site at 1079 Linbrook Rd., will be re-purposed as a private boys' school is headed to Town council Monday for a final discussion.

The Town's Administrative Services Committee gave the proposal for an independent school a thumbs-down Wednesday, but the vote was a close 4-3 decision.

The recommendation not to go with the boys school will now go before all councillors at council.

The majority of the committee members favoured a Town staff-recommended option, which calls for the construction of six lots of detached housing consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood's R01 zoning.

Heritage schoolhouse remains

Under this scenario, the designated heritage schoolhouse on the site would be maintained, the woodlot on the property would be slightly enlarged and a playground would be built.

During the committee meeting, traffic in the vicinity of the former Linbrook Public School was raised repeatedly as an argument against a boys' school.

Oakville Mayor Rob Burton said he and Ward 3 Town and Regional Councillor Keith Bird had fielded numerous complaints from residents about the area's already high traffic volume.

The mayor voiced concerns about the addition of a school compounding the problem.

Boys' school proponent Amber Way said the school would house 180 students and estimated at least 50 per cent of them would have sisters attending nearby St. Mildred's, so the traffic increase would not be that great.

Ward 5 Town and Regional Councillor Jeff Knoll questioned the prediction, stating it appeared to be based on mere gut instinct.

“It has been a school in the past, it maintains the existing use, so the only thing that would be changing would be a decrease in terms of the number of students attending the school.”

Cathy Duddeck
Ward 2 Town councillor

Way said the number came from discussions with St. Mildred's parents who want a near-by school for their sons.

Parents struggle with drop-off

“Part of the reason we have initiated this is because parents and families with girls at St. Mildred's have asked me for years to start a school for boys because they are struggling with this drop-off,” she said.

“Not only are they struggling with driving all over Oakville, which is not convenient for families and bad for the environment, they are struggling with finding a program that works for their kids.”

Having one area where they could take both their sons and daughters would help greatly, said Way.

Way also produced a traffic study undertaken by hired consultants, which stated traffic flow through the area is currently operating at a good level with surplus capacity available.

The report went on to state there would still be surplus capacity even if traffic increased in future and a boys' school were to be built.

Residents disagree

Two area residents who spoke during the meeting disagreed.

“The traffic problem diminished when Linbrook School closed, but it is still a serious problem,” said Peter Trahair, Linbrook Road resident.

“At times, I and my visitors, have trouble getting in and out of my driveway and at these times an ambulance, fire truck

or other emergency vehicle would have real trouble getting through Linbrook Road.”

Another resident said the development that nets the Town, and therefore taxpayers, the most money should be the option that is chosen.

The resident said the most lucrative development would be the residential buildings, but could not offer any documentation to prove it.

While Town staff recommended against the boys' school, they said if the Town did go with the idea, it should lease rather than sell the property.

That would enable the Town to retain an element of control.

Way said she would be willing to consider this option.

Councillors, however, voiced concerns about their ability to enforce things like the 180-student limit.

Worries were also raised about the Town getting stuck with the bill if there turned out to be a major structural problem with the building.

Way said the building had been surveyed and was in great condition and said she would agree to provisions that would fine the boys' school proponents if they strayed from the agreed land use.

However, Way's assurances were not enough for some councillors.

“It doesn't make any sense to me to put more traffic on Linbrook Road when in fact we are at capacity because of the road network we have right now,” said Bird.

Not every councillor felt the same.

“It has been a school in the past, it maintains the existing use so the only thing that would be changing would be a decrease in terms of the number of students attending the school,” said Ward 2 Town and Regional Councillor Cathy Duddeck.

“I can think of no better thing to support than a school use in a community. When I look at all the development applications we have coming across our desk — to me a school application is one of the better ones.”



The Tenth Annual CARSTAR Soaps It Up Cystic Fibrosis National Car Wash was held recently at the CARSTAR on Trafalgar Road. Volunteers from Cystic Fibrosis Canada Oakville, CARSTAR and the Oakville A's Minor Bantam hockey team all pitched in to suds up and scrub up in the annual car wash fundraiser. Here, Greg Muschett does his part.

| photo by Eric Riehl – Oakville Beaver (Follow on Twitter @halton_photog)



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