

Three alternatives

Proposed closing Erin h.s.

The proposed closing of Erin district high school has provoked a storm of protest and outlining of suggested alternatives.

Public meeting
Citizens of Erin area have taken what they call "drastic action" and set up a public meeting to discuss the possible closing of Erin District High School.

John Root, the PC MPP for the riding has been invited together with the three area trustees on the Wellington County board of education. They are Gordon Gregson, George Day and Jack Gilchrist.

The meeting will be held at the Legion Hall, Erin on Oct. 13 (Today) at 8 p.m.

Dr. James O'Connor has taken the initiative in arranging for the meeting at the request of representation by local citizens.

Last week's meeting
Wellington County board of education decided Monday night of last week to give "serious consideration" to that proposal. Trustees virtually eliminated the other possibilities of building a new education complex at Ospringe or building either a new Erin school, or large additions to Erin schools.

Price tags were put on the three alternatives. A new complex, including all grades from kindergarten to 13, would cost just under \$4 million and also add \$120 more a day to the present transportation bill of \$992.

Trustees didn't even vote on that idea. It was dismissed as being far more than the county could afford and a "Taj Mahal" education ideal.

Second proposal
Second proposal was to bring all accommodation in Erin and Eramosa up to standard by building 18 additional classrooms on elementary schools and at least four new high school rooms in Erin. Cost was estimated at \$1,123,500 plus another \$50 a day in transportation.

Third proposal, which is the one that is going to get "serious consideration", was to convert Erin high school to an elementary school and bring all secondary school students into Guelph where they will have a full range of educational opportunities. This would free 10 classrooms at Erin for elementary use and will require, in about two years, the building of a six-room addition to one of Guelph's secondary schools. Cost was estimated at \$643,000 or less if four rooms can be gained at John F. Ross C.V.I. in conjunction with the new library project. Transportation would cost \$305 more each day, again on top of the present \$992 per day.

Delegation
Shape of opposition to come was revealed by a delegation from Erin and Hillsburgh attending the board meeting. Local councils had written to the board asking it to build a secondary school in the Erin area that would include all phases of classes required for a complete education.

Walk out
Following the board decision, the Erin delegation walked out. Reeve J. G. Mundell snapped, "to say we are most unhappy would be the understatement of the year. We are most concerned about the possible effect this will have on the Erin dropout rate

which we already feel is too high."

Educationally best
Director of Education Alfred Hanwell said educationally the \$4 million complex was the best proposal. However, the idea of bringing the Erin students to Guelph was educationally sound and, in view of present economic conditions and the declining student enrolment, was probably the best possible compromise.

Chairman Dr. Bruce Truscott said that provincially the trustees had been told that because of the decline in population it was not likely that any new high schools would be built "in our lifetimes".

Second thoughts
Vice-chairman Jack Gilchrist said the Eramosa council was now having second thoughts about its earlier support for a school at Erin.

"The whole thing is a turmoil," said Mr. Gilchrist. Rather than see the board make a wrong decision he suggested a year's "hoist" for all proposals. When that suggestion failed he moved again unsuccessfully, that it be left over until November, pointing out that a similar delay in 1969 had allowed the Elora high school closure to go through smoothly and well.

To enable the board to give "serious consideration" the officials will be asked to provide specific information on the effect of the change and the building needs involved. It was noted that the chosen alternative gave the board the maximum amount of freedom for future action at the least possible immediate cost.

Previous meeting
Twenty-six elected representatives, Hillsburgh, Eden Mills and Rockwood met with the Wellington County Board of Education subsequently. Object of the joint session, held at Ospringe school, was to discuss proposals for school accommodation for children in the Erin-Eramosa area.

Favor Erin
Consensus was that the elected representatives favored the building of a new secondary school in Erin, instead of at Ospringe, but with Eramosa keeping its Grades 7 and 8 in present schools.

Board vice-chairman Jack Gilchrist warned however that unless a new viable school was built at Ospringe the present facilities in the area would simply remain and areas would "opt out" of an Erin arrangement.

Board chairman Dr. Bruce Truscott revealed he hoped trustees would be making a decision on the matter soon.

He outlined three alternatives. First was to bus all Erin and Eramosa pupils to Guelph for secondary school education. A small secondary school addition would be needed in Guelph and home economics and shop facilities for Grade 7 and 8 would be provided at Erin.

Second proposal was to keep the present schools in Erin and Eramosa but build replacements for existing portables and sub-standard accommodation.

Ospringe complex?
Third alternative was to build a complex either in or near Ospringe, as the geographical centre, to take all classes from grades 7 to 13.

To the editor:

Did you see the expression of the players in the 10-6-71 edition of the Free Press? If not, get a paper and take a good look at it. Sure it's only the winning teams, but your child probably competed in one of these sports.

The younger generation who participated in these sports are proud to be part of these organizations and have had many fun hours in playing these sports.

In the Sept. 22, 1971 edition of the Press you read the headlines, "Request for baseball lights sparks new park discussion." Many comments were passed in this write-up, not entirely justified, not because they were not thought out but because they do not understand our present position as A.M.B.A.

Let's justify it. No. 1, to provide entertainment for the younger generations so that they can have something to do during the long summer months.

No. 2 to have sportsmanship competition within the various towns which creates excitement and new friends.

No. 3 to have parents who are proud of their children who could possibly bring back the first place trophy.

This is a sports town. Not only the A.M.B.A. has done this, but other organizations have had the same effect.

For example the A.M.B.A. executed their field day to end the season Oct. 4 with great success. How did we do it? Thanks to our

OUR READERS WRITE:

sponsor, donors and all the people who purchased tickets on our \$100 draw.

We have approached the Acton Parks and Recreation committee for financial assistance, not a handout, in the installation of lights for a hardball diamond in Prospect Park.

The committee cannot, at this time, see their way clear to granting us permission to install the lights because:

1. We don't think we should have another diamond down there with a set of lights; we don't want to clutter up the park.

2. A.M.B.A. were not utilizing the diamonds to the best of their advantage on weekends.

3. We can't plant trees in the centre of the park.

4. Parks and recreation committee are under the impression we want a handout and do not work hard for something worthwhile.

5. Development of Sir Donald Mann park or a new park which may go into the new subdivision.

Before I continue I would like to thank Mr. H. D. Patterson for his letter of explanation, Mr. Peter Marks and others for their support and Mr. Harold Speaker for his letter to the editor in 10-29-71 edition.

In answer:

1. I do not understand what you mean by "clutter."

2. Acton, Milton and Georgetown set up schedules for five days a week with the exception of rained out or playoff games. This is a ridiculous statement. Most of us

have to work five days a week with the exception of those who work afternoons or midnights. If you had to rush home, grab a bite, play till dark as well as meet once or twice a month, wouldn't you like to have weekends free with your family?

3. Planting trees in the centre of the park would blot out most of the recreation which the park was designed for in the first place. A tree trunk does not take up any more room than a light pole.

Sir Donald Mann park is perhaps a better place to plant trees, since the park is not yet developed.

4. A.M.B.A. has approached the arena manager on several occasions to have ball diamonds fixed. We were told they would look after things. Tiring of promises, A.M.B.A. had donated to them by a rural industry sufficient material to cover both diamonds at Prospect Park as well as Sir Donald Mann park. The arena manager then had the material properly dispersed.

5. Sir Donald Mann park would be a great place to plant trees and have a small recreation centre with a minimum amount of cost and supervision. The ball park there is great for children 5 to 7, but not large enough for older age groups. As for a new park in "the" subdivision when will this happen?

A.M.B.A. has a bright outlook to the future after this successful year. All teams playing ball this year have won their divisions bringing home the trophies. This is something to be proud of.

A.M.B.A. carried teams from Novice to Midget for 1971. We hope to carry teams for next year from Novice to Juvenile (boys) and Junior to Seniors (girls). However, to do this we must expand by going out of town and joining leagues such as Halton County Baseball etc. This involves playing under a lighted hardball and softball diamond. We can partially accomplish this because of the now existing lighted softball diamond. We do not want to see the ball players denied the right to go out of town to play ball when some of these towns have lighted ball parks, but cannot ask them to play at ours.

To Parks and Recreation committee we are not satisfied with your decision and hopefully you will reconsider and come up with a better and more promising outlook.

To the people of the town who are interested in sports, if we are wrong, call us, correct us but don't neglect us.

Respectfully,
Jim S. Mitchell,
Vice-president,
A.M.B.A.

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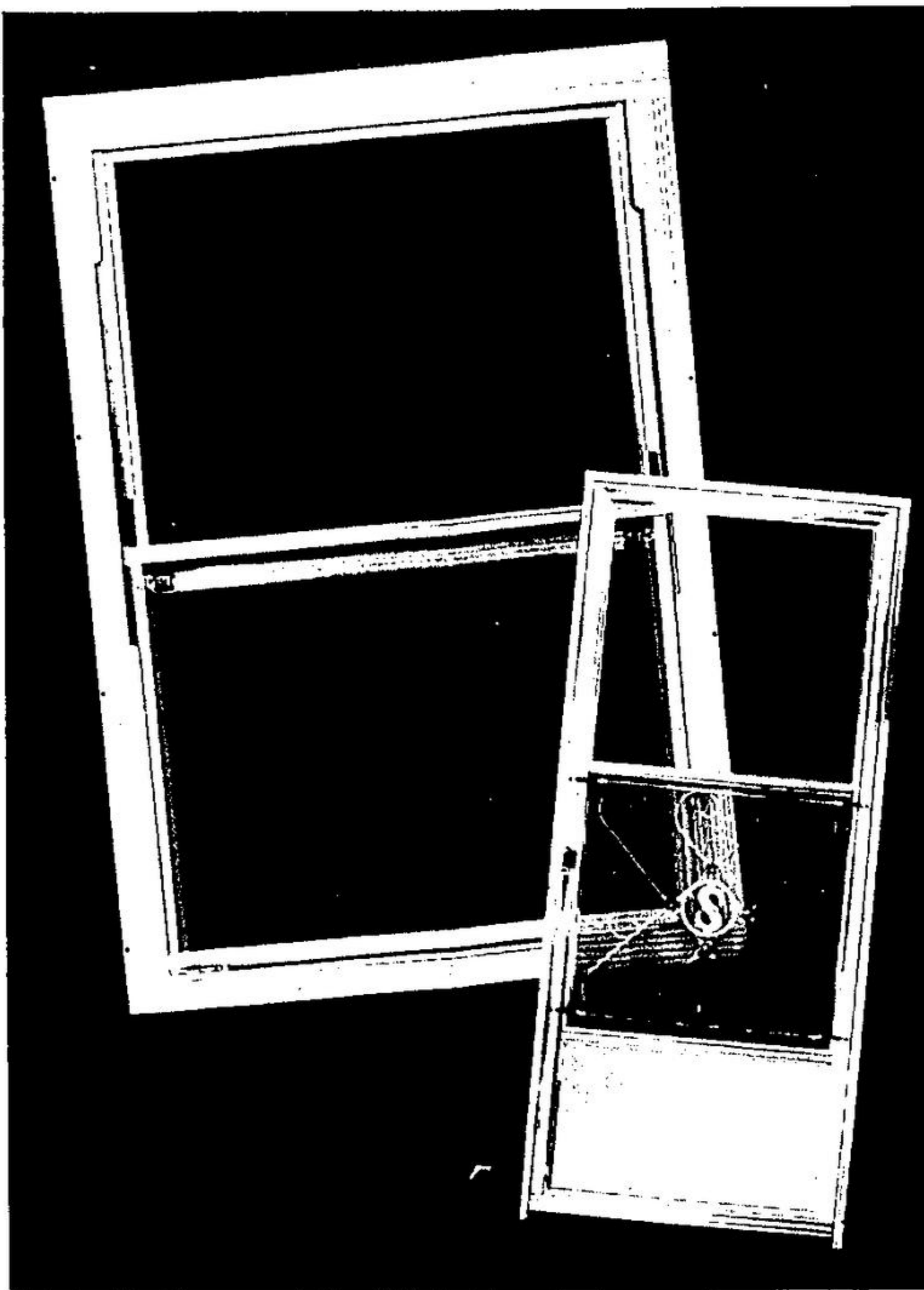
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