



Politicians anxious for final approvals for new public school in south west Rockwood

Three hundred and eight Rockwood public elementary school students should start the next school year in a brand new \$6.5-million public school in the south-west end of the village, west of the Mill Run neighbourhood.

Planner Bernie Hermesen told Guelph/Eramosa Township Council that all three Planning Act applications for the facility are beyond the appeal period. "It's very close," Hermesen said when asked about final approval by the Upper Grand District School Board, but added he doesn't believe the Board has actually bought the land. "I think we're at a point that we're very close to a Site Plan approval...and then the school board can get on with making their building permit applications," Hermesen said on Tuesday.

Plans call for a two-storey, 33,964-square-foot facility with 13 classrooms, three Kindergarten classrooms, two seminar rooms, a room for design technology, a gymnasium, library and offices on rezoned land off MacLennan Street near Wheeler Court. Hermesen said the school board is waiting for a final confirmation letter from the Ministry of Natural Resources to remove the school site from a 1973 Aggregate Resour-

ces Act license.

The Site Plan details play areas, garbage control, pedestrian access, landscaping, lighting, parking, bus routes and site entrance and exit, snow removal, among other conditions.

While it is "early days," negotiations continue with a property owner for a proposed \$6-million Catholic elementary school on eight acres in north Rockwood, according to Guelph/Eramosa Township Mayor Chris White.

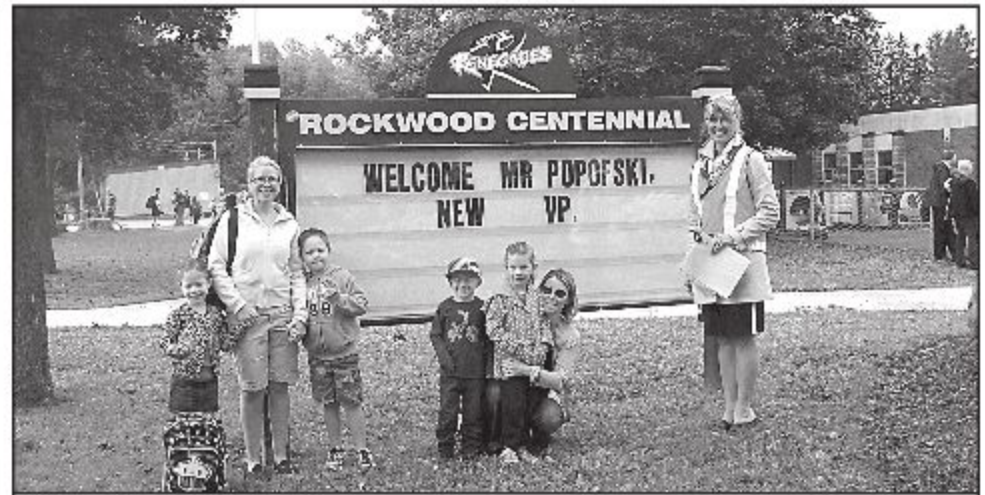
He said the Township wants the Upper Grand

Catholic District School Board to build a shared use facility on, or near Township parkland north of the Rockwood library.

"They're going to have a gym, so what we're trying to do is work out an arrangement where we kick in a few more dollars - we'd get a better, shared use facility," White said, adding nothing has been signed, but talks are on-going and everyone is interested in trying to come to a solution to school Rockwood Catholic students in the village.



SECOND CROSSWALK: Concerned about student safety along Highway 7, Guelph/Eramosa Township agreed to spend \$15,000 to pay for a portion of a second crosswalk - this one across from Lions Waterside Park - for this school year. Temporary guard Pat Cernick helped Centennial Public School students Ryan, Jordan and Logan get across the busy highway Tuesday morning. - Marie Shadbolt photo



WELCOME BACK: Rockwood Centennial School Principal Kate Creery greeted twins Mia (left) and Jacob, with mom Claudette Pope, and Bowen and Lily, with mom Jessica Downey, on Tuesday morning before the bell rang in the new school year. - Marie Shadbolt photo

Celebrating student learning at Centennial

Getting to Centennial Public School was a long walk for some Rockwood students on Tuesday as approximately 200 students no longer can ride courtesy busses, cost-shared between the Upper Grand District School Board and Guelph/Eramosa Township to improve pedestrian safety during the recent reconstruction of Highway 7 through the village. The school board's policy provides bussing to JK and Grade students who live 1.6-kilometres from the school, 2.4-km for Grade two to Grade six students and 3.2-km for Grade seven and eight - some of the longest distances in the province.

The \$15,000 the Township had earmarked for bussing has been diverted to pay for and staff a second school crossing of Highway 7 - this one across from Lion's Waterside Park. Centennial Principal Kate Creery said the proposed second public school for Rockwood - projected to open next September - will resolve bussing issues.

"If we divide into two schools - this is our last year as a whole school community, so we want to celebrate that," Creery said last Thursday, adding they are full with approximately 650 students, some in portables. "We're a big school, but it still feels a bit small, she said, adding she feels lucky to be starting her fourth year at Rockwood.

Creery said she is looking forward to further joint environmental

projects with the Grand River Conservation Area, and developing the Colours teams - cross-grade/cross-age groups of students who meet for 40-minutes at the end of each day of the first week for pep rallies, games and get-to-know-you activities. "We found them it very affective actually in

Centennial welcomed Vice-Principal Chris Popofski, who Creery said brings "tons of excitement and enthusiasm and expertise in technology." There are 35 teachers - eight of them new - 3.5 Educational Assistants - one who is new - at Centennial, bolstered by a strong and dedicated parent council.

Centennial adopted the school board's new BYOD - Bring Your Own Device - policy this school with a team of staff members offering after-school in-services on the newest technology. The school "strongly suggests" parents and students make a cooperative decision about students bringing expensive iPods, cell phones and MP3 players to school.

Centennial's open house is Tuesday, September 17 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Guelph /Eramosa Township Mayor Chris White, who has walked the route to Centennial from Rockwood south, sympathizes with parents worried about their children's safety to and from school. "You've got really young children walking a long way to school. I'll support the parent council trying to shorten some of those distances," White said on Friday, adding safety for all pedestrians, not just students, fuelled the Township pushing the province for sidewalks during highway reconstruction, for two crosswalks, and a traffic light in Rockwood south.



Creery

All-Starz
THURSDAY NIGHT
Basketball Program
 At Rockwood Centennial P.S.
 A developmental program emphasizing individual skills, team play & fun!
 7-9 year olds (co-ed) 6:00-7:30 p.m.
 10-13 year olds (co-ed) 7:30-9:00 p.m.
 October 17, 2013 - March 27, 2014
 To register or for further information
 Call 519-856-4491

Kids are back to School
PLEASE DRIVE SAFE