

September 2016

Keep To The Original Plan – Expand Elgin Avenue Public School

As I have been lead to believe, this flip of your decision to close West Lynn is about money, and which option is the least disruptive to students. If emotion is removed from the equation, financially Elgin being open makes the most long-term sense. The actual costs are known and reasonable. Engineering studies exist. A lot of time and money has been spent on this option, and it it well-thought-out.

Elgin has no future issues with drainage, green space, has room for expansion, and is centrally located for the town of Simcoe.

Busing is a huge cost in running a school board. A burden will be placed forever on current and future school boards in regards to relocating a population of students who currently walk. In total, only three students from our catchment area take buses to Elgin. This proposal is to take an entire school of kids, who cost almost nothing for transportation, and place them on a bus to a school on the edge of town, with a already has a large bus ridership.

We also come from the lowest socio-economic area of Simcoe. The financial burden imposed on parents without vehicles excludes them from being a part of their children's education. It may be prohibitively expensive for some parents when they had to pick up their children at West Lynn in cases of sickness or emergencies, parent meetings, etc. Access to participate in education should not only be for the elite of Norfolk.

We also have had things presented as fact but are hearsay and conjecture. One example is the Norfolk General Hospital using the property. There is a process and a line of other entities that get first rights to this property. This assumes the hospital has the money or interest. A part time employee at the hospital is not an expert on the hospital's plans.

Elgin has good bones and it is known what needs to be done and the costs. West Lynn is a big mystery in costs to expand, and future operating costs.

With regards to relocation during construction, no one has asked Elgin parents if we have any issues with it. Most would agree that short term disruption is worth it for the long term gain.

At the end of the day you have an obligation to the stakeholders and voters in Grand Erie to be transparent on the factual costs of your decision. In reality this decision has an emotional aspect for everyone. Elgin may not have been the loudest voice, but that does not mean we don't care about our school or the future of Norfolk schools.

Corrie Sloom