

Potential northeast high school back up for Council talks November 22

By Brock Weir

The clock is counting down on a 30 day deferral on Council spurring dialogue between residents and the York Region District School Board on making a new high school in northeast Aurora a reality.

But, after a 30 day delay which was intended to gather more information and get the Board to the table for talks, Council members are no further ahead as they plan to tackle the issue once again at the next Council meeting on Tuesday night, November 22.

Last month, Council chambers were filled with parents campaigning to have the Board take action on their plan, currently on the backburner, to transform land on Bayview Avenue at Borealis into a new secondary school.

Citing reasons ranging from the changing demographics of Aurora where the majority of incoming high school students currently in the Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School catchment area come from the northeast quadrant of Bayview and Wellington and the challenges faced every day by students and parents alike commuting from their neighbourhood to the Dunning Avenue school.

Everything, however, has a ripple effect and Council members and Aurora-King Trustee Pete Adams-Luchowski cautioned a new high school could result in the closure of Williams.

The 30 day deferral was intended to allow talks to take place between the Town, residents, and the Board but, so far, it is unlikely that those conversations will take place before the 30 days run out.

?I have been trying to make contact with the local school board and so far they have given me a date of November 25 for a meeting to begin the discussion,? Aurora CAO Doug Nadorozny told Councillors last week. ?In the absence of any other activity, we're not going to have a meeting with the Trustee within that 30 day timeframe if they're not going to meet me until November 25 to even talk about it. The only thing I would suggest is we simply put it on the next Council agenda.?

The news that no talks were scheduled to take place before November 25 did not sit well with Councillor Mrakas, who said Council made a commitment to the northeast residents to make their views known within 30 days and they will have to follow through.

?While I appreciate they have made contact, we did set a timeline of 30 days,? said Councillor Mrakas. ?I think it would be imperative for us to have that issue back in front of us within 30 days because I think all the residents are expecting us to make some decision in that 30 days. Regardless of whether they decide to come forward or not, I think it is our duty to make a decision.?