

ACCOMMODATION REVIEW COMMITTEE SOUTH SIDE PUPLIC MEETING #1 WESTGATE CVI Thursday, April 7, 2016 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Chair:	Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Superintendent of Education
Moderator:	Sheelagh Hendrick
Trustee:	Vice-Chair George Saarinen
Resource Staff:	David Wright, Superintendent of Business
	Dave Covello, Manager of IT and Corporate Planning
	Heather Harris, Capital Planning Officer
	Bruce Nugent, Communications Officer
	Brenda Barradell, Recorder
Committee Members:	Maureen Abbott, Whitney Lundstrom, Jennifer Muir, Susan Redmann Brodeur, Vicki Shannon, Brooke
	Robinson, Georgine Salmonson, Rodi-Lynn Kinisky, Dave Isherwood, Meghan Smelow, Giselle Little,
	Sharlene Neill-Nugent, Bryce Foster, Coral Charlton, Rich Seeley, Chuck Brown, Delfina Trevisan,
	Tori Antier, Kelly Matyasovszky

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
Welcome and Introductions	 Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Superintendent of Education and Chair of the South Side ARC committee as well as this meeting welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The ARC and Resource staff introduced themselves and the Chair introduced the moderator, Sheelagh Hendrick. 	Chair
Agenda	The Chair briefly outlined the agenda for the Public Meeting.	
Role of the Accommodation Review Committee	The Chair outlined the role of the ARC and explained that the ARC is considered to be a conduit of information between the public and the board. Committee members will listen to community input and	Chair

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	questions at the public meetings. At the working meetings, committee members may bring forward their own thoughts and ideas, as well as the thoughts and ideas of the group that they represent, about the accommodation options presented in the initial staff report. Members will discuss and consolidate what they have heard and will categorize and prioritize the information into categories. They may provide alternative accommodation options with supporting rationale. The information from the ARC will be included in the final staff report and will be considered by trustees when they make the final accommodation decision in October.	
	At public meetings, the role of the ARC is to listen. They may ask questions of clarification through the Chair. At the next working meeting, the committee will discuss the information and feedback that they heard this evening.	
Outline of the Orientation Meeting on March 29, 2016	The Chair explained what transpired at the Orientation Meeting on March 29 and encouraged everyone to read the minutes which are posted on the Lakehead District School Board website at <u>www.lakeheadschools.ca</u> under the Renewal section.	Chair
Pupil Accommodation Review Process	 a) Policy 9010 – Pupil Accommodation Review The Chair explained that this Policy was updated by Trustees in October 2015 so that it would align with the new Ministry of Education Guidelines. The Policy and Procedure are available on the board website. 	Chair
	b) Initial Staff Report The Initial Staff Report was prepared by Board staff and presented to Trustees initially on February 9, 2016. On February 16, 2016, Trustees approved the following motion: "Approve the commencement of two pupil accommodation reviews and establish two Accommodation Review Committees to gather stakeholder input into the North Side and South Side Renewal Plans in accordance with 9010 Pupil Accommodation Review Policy."	Chair

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	The Initial Staff Report provides some background to the establishment of the Pupil Accommodation Review and discusses the current situation of Lakehead District School Board. It shows the enrolment trends and the South Side renewal plan, with analysis and recommendations for both secondary and elementary options. The report outlines the timelines, potential outcomes and school information profiles of all the South Side schools in question. This Initial Staff Report is posted on the Lakehead District School Board website at <u>www.lakeheadschools.ca</u> under the Renewal section.	
	 c) School Information Profiles School Information Profiles were posted for the audience to view and Heather Harris explained how this data (current to October 31, 2015) was gathered. The School Information Profiles are posted on the Lakehead District School Board website at <u>www.lakeheadschools.ca</u> under the Renewal section. 	Heather Harris
Procedure for Providing Comments or asking questions	The Moderator explained the process for providing comments and asking questions at the Public Meeting. This is the first of two public meetings – the second one being on June 6. Questions will be addressed until 9:00 pm. The entire meeting, including questions will be voice recorded and minutes with name identification will be posted on the website. She explained the process for asking questions or making comments by either speaking at the microphone, or by writing a question or comment which Bruce Nugent will bring to the Moderator. Names must be provided if it is to be shared tonight. However, you can also fill out the comment card with a question or comment and it will be reviewed at the Working Meetings. There are two microphones set up, one for elementary school questions, and one for secondary related questions.	Sheelagh Hendrick
	Questions and comments are limited to 2 minutes each. Only one comment should be presented per trip to the microphone. The Moderator will let you know when you have 30 seconds left in your time limit. Everyone is asked to be respectful when making comments and asking questions. Address the questions to the moderator – the Chair and staff will reply. If they don't know the answers, they will research	

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	and answer it later. You can also go on line and email questions at to <u>renewal@lakeheadschools.ca</u> . For privacy reasons, no photos or recording of the meeting are allowed.	
Questions from the Public – (7:00 pm)	 Karl Skogstad – Curious about high school utilization – the maximum capacity of Westgate is 1047 and the projection for 2019-2020 for combined Westgate and Churchill is 1256 which puts it at 123% capacity - how is that going to work out? Dave Covello – The "on the ground capacity" (OTG) is based on loading from the Ministry – 21 per class and 9 for special education classes – actual capacity is based on program selection (gym class is not counted in the ministry calculation). To make sure we had enough space, we took current course selections from Churchill and Westgate and we overlaid them based on the projected number. Then if there are changes in enrolment numbers, it could change the capacity of the building but we feel confident and if need be we will renovate. The Ministry just recognizes 100%, not above the value. 	
	 Michelle Perna – If Ministry does not agree to the proposal for a new school, is there a backup plan? David Wright – There is not an unlimited pot of money that the Ministry of Education has, but we will submit a business case after trustees decide. It is dependent on how many proposals the Ministry receives. We feel we have a strong business case, but if it is denied, it would be administration's recommendation that we would use reserve funds or debenture for the money in order to build the new school. 	
	 Brad Holbrough - He outlined the number of student programs that are in operation at Westgate e.g. Aboriginal programs, Student Success Initiatives, credit recovery, credit rescue, conflict room, 	

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	fitness room, weight room etc. With the school amalgamation, will all these programs be transferring? With re-purposing of the space, will some or any of the programs go by the wayside even in the short term to accommodate the transition?	
	The Chair - When the Accommodation Review planning began, one of the Guiding principles stated that students would not have any less than what they currently have in the school they are presently in. It is our goal to ensure that all the programs and services that are currently in place will continue to support students, student learning and student health and emotional growth as well.	
	 Gene Wazinski – Comment: There is a need for a bigger facility at Agnew. Agnew is organized chaos at bus time, but compliments to the staff there who do a wonderful job! He lives across from Churchill High School and wonders what will happen to the facility? The community fought to keep the pool – what will happen to the pool? Will it be a 'super elementary school' with 2000+ kids – he dreads sending his son to a 'super school'. He believes the Minister said no more bricks and mortar funding. 	
	The Chair - It won't be a super school – it will be no larger than current schools like Ecole Gron Morgan and Woodcrest. She knows that with the great staff that we have it would be an outstanding facility in which to educate children.	
	David Wright – The City of Thunder Bay owns and operates the pool – we have divested ourselves of the pool through a long term lease quite some time ago and he understands that the City of Thunder Bay has included the pool in their long term plans so we would be delicate when we demolish Churchill if that is the plan that is approved by trustees in order to maintain the structure of the pool. He cannot speak for the City of Thunder Bay. Regarding the structure and design of the school, to be as economically responsible as possible it is our intention to follow the same design of Woodcrest Public School	

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	which is our most resent elementary build.	
	 Gene Wazinski – It is sad to see schools that are left behind (like Oliver Road). I'm hopeful there will a plan in these proposals to address schools that are just left. 	
	 Rajesh Talpade – With the accommodation process, how will the IB program at Churchill be affected and will there be any changes? 	
	The Chair - It is the intention that the IB plan will move in its entirety from Churchill to Westgate, if the plan is approved, so you should see no changes other than the location of where it will be housed.	
	 Chris Dedura – Pending closures and re-locations, if the board does go down to two highs schools will French Immersion be offered on the south side? 	
	The Chair – The French Immersion program will be offered on the south side in the new build on the Churchill site and will be continuing in Ecole Gron Morgan and Claude Garton. French Immersion for Secondary will be in whichever site is chosen on the North side.	
	 Karl Skogstad – How did we get to this point? He produced old enrolment data comparing Public and Catholic boards, saying the share of the Public school enrolment has gone from 63% to 53%. Do we perceive that to fall even further? Are we thinking ahead and when we are making these projections, are we factoring in that we are losing shares here? 	
	The Chair - we anticipate our enrolment to stabilize by 2020 – and our market share has stabilized over the last few years. We anticipate that our projections are quite reliable.	

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	 Karl Skogstad – Is there any way we can think about being more proactive to get the numbers up again? 	
	Bruce Nugent – A marketing strategy will begin soon. This should be up and running in the very near future.	
	 Brad Holbrough – With regard to school athletics, since we will be going from four to two public high schools, is the board looking at expanding the SSSAA athletics program with just two schools? Can we keep the same # of kids involved in athletics subsequent to amalgamation that there is now? 	
	The Chair – We recognize that athletics (and other co-curricular activities) are extremely important to develop leadership, friendships, etc. Superior Secondary School Athletic Association (SSSAA) is in the process of surveying parents and athletes right now to find out what is important to them. Even though there will be fewer high schools, there will be an opportunity to perhaps offer more and different sports and opportunities in athletics for students when we have larger schools. This is under review and recommendations will be forthcoming soon from SSSAA.	
	 Michelle Umelli – In the new design plan is there consideration to the green spaces and will there be opportunities to have a nature based playground? Literature suggests the addition of greenspace improves social cohesion etc. 	
	David Wright – With 100% certainty we will be seeking stakeholder input in the design of any new facility and that will likely be a very common input and we will certainly be prepared to listen.	
	 Ken Ranta – Mr. Ranta has 2 children - one who has graduated from Churchill and one that is now in grade 10. This child will not 	

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	 graduate from the same school that she started her high school at. His family is very invested in the school community. They are proud of careers at school. He suggests that they would like to graduate as Churchill Trojans. He supports the change but considers the implementation time. Can they not progress through their graduating years? He suggests a phase out of one of the schools and a phase in time at the new location. The Chair - We welcome all suggestions and certainly after a decision is made by Trustees in October, there will be a transition committee to look at these suggestions. 	
	 Nick Perna – He is curious as to the plan for new construction. Things aren't even finalized yet and he can't see how this can be done by 2018. He's been in construction for 20 years and delays are not unheard of in today's environment with all the red tape. 	
	David Wright – There is nobody at the school board who would deny that this is an ambitious timeline, but we had consultants and architects who say it is feasible. Ambitious yes, impossible, no. Churchill is a big property. We have several options in terms of building on the property. We recognize that there can be delays and we do have some contingencies i.e. plan Bs. It is not our intention to do anything with any of the facilities that we will be phasing out of if Trustees do approve the plan, so we will have options if the construction plan doesn't go according to our time lines.	
	 Laura Pattison – Given popularity of the French Immersion program at Agnew and given that the projections continue to increase in the south side schools, what considerations were given if any when addressing the French Immersion needs going forward? She shared concerns: after school concerns for south side populations i.e. affecting after school commitments, both extra- curricular and personal (jobs); long bus rides etc. Is it just a capacity issue? Will there be a south side FI program given 	

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	that Agnew's FI population has grown?	
	The Chair - We have not considered locating the French Immersion program at the secondary level on the south side of the city. When we did look at the two schools one north and one south, we have 2 specialized city-wide programs – the International Baccalaureate Program and the French Immersion Program. It's important to note at the secondary level that you need 10 credits to get a 'Francais Certificate' on your diploma and that we have enough students taking these courses. We are looking at French Immersion (FI) as a consolidated group and the increased numbers that are coming through the early primary at the moment, to be able to offer additional FI courses so the students have more choices and selection. If it is split apart, they wouldn't be able to have as many choices and it would continue to be difficult for them to get those 10 credits. We plan to keep it together and we do plan to keep it together on the North side of the city the way that it is. Superior is approximately 5 blocks from where Hammarskjold currently is and Dave Covello will address your transportation concerns.	
	Dave Covello – Regardless of the choice made, the impact on transportation will be minimal – riding times will be similar. We will be adding more buses. Extra bus ride time will be very minimal – it shouldn't change.	
	 Margie O'Brien – Only knowledge about what is going on has been through the media so she is encouraged to hear the information tonight. She was concerned to see students holding rallies which appear to be pitting one student against the other. Just a word of concern that she hopes decisions will be economic and logical and not that students will be winners or losers. 	
	 Jason Freeburn – If the design for the elementary school will duplicate that of Woodcrest, has anything been learned with reference to the deficiencies at Woodcrest? More specifically are you planning 	

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	to have before and after school care in the new building?	
	The Chair – We have had the opportunity to learn from Woodcrest. As to the design, there was a committee that had input into the design. We have made a few changes over time as that area continues to expand. It is our plan to have child care in each and every one of our elementary schools. The majority currently have, if not full day care at least before and after school care for JK and up students. We will continue to pursue that with the Ministry of Education and as we work in concert with the District Social Services Administration Board who assign child care in the city.	
	 Heather Lewis – Heather is a student at Churchill. She noted that each school has history and pride. Her family attended Churchill as did many of her friends' families. She commented on the time capsule at Churchill which is also part of its history. One of her concerns is for her amazing teachers. She will feel extremely upset if any of them lose their jobs or their standing. Will the teachers at Churchill be losing their jobs? Another concern was that she is planning on looking for after school work close to Churchill. She fears the change of schools will affect her ability to get a job within walking distance. Will she be able to get a bus to work after school? The Chair replied that she understands that students and families feel passionate about their schools and their history. However, she said we need to look to the future to create new histories. We must capture the history of each school. It is an important part of our community and each school has a special area in their school where their history is recognized. Regarding the time capsule, in the past these have been moved with a celebration to accommodate it. The transition committee would discuss all the things that are important to the school and the community and what has to be done to ensure all needs are addressed for them to come together in a single place. 	

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	Dave Covello – Due to the proximity of the schools, impact on busing times will be minimal. If the students request to move earlier (this year), we have committed to accommodate them with transportation as well. We cannot provide transportation after school for work.	
	The Chair noted that the number of teachers in LDSB is determined by the number of students, regardless of the number of buildings that they are in. There is a process in the teachers' collective agreements that determine where they work and which jobs they hold. We don't anticipate significant job loss as a result of the accommodation.	
	Adam Ryan – • Adam is a student at Westgate and asked if it is true that LDSB might change the name of Westgate if this goes through.	
	The Chair stated that it has been a suggestion that has been brought forward in the FAQs and through a variety of venues. At this time there hasn't been a decision made about that but there is a policy on the LDSB's website that determines how naming of schools occurs.	
	 Laura Curien – What is the rationale behind deciding to merge with Westgate and not Churchill. 	
	David Wright – Quite simply it's the nature and state of the facilities that left us with no other option than to make the recommendation we did. We talked about the Facility Condition Index which is a mathematical relationship between the cost of repairs of a school vs the benchmark replacement cost of the school. Churchill is just in a state that doesn't leave it feasible to maintain in the long term. Westgate is in much better shape.	
	 Gene Wazinski – This process seems so fast, he was wondering when this process actually started. He just heard about it in February. He felt he should have known earlier. Why did it take so long for the parents to be hear about it? 	

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	David Wright – Administratively we have been working on the plan for about a year. It was made public in February 2016 when the initial staff report was brought to Trustees. No decisions have been made yet. A final staff report will be brought to Trustees for them to vote on in October. The process came about for several reasons that we have already discussed (because of Ministry's change to funding model, declining enrolment and the opportunity to enhance programming for students) but the process extends far enough that everyone who wants to have an opportunity will have an opportunity to have input. It is the nature of the decision we are faced with that the timing needs to go forward as it is. Trustees have approved the Accommodation Review Policy and Procedure which is based on the Ministry guidelines and all school boards in the province will have similar time lines when they enter into an accommodation review. So, you heard about it just after the Trustees in February.	
	 Gene Wazinski – It seems like a very solid, organized plan, but I feel it is lacking some community input. It seems like it is solidified already. 	
	 Cory Keeler – I do have some concern about this marketing plan that is sort of in place or will be in the near future and myself and other people hope that this is by an outside marketing firm that is qualified and experienced in dealing with this type of situation, so we can spin it in a positive manner because we have been going down this slope for a while. 	
	Bruce Nugent – We are working on a plan right now and we are hoping to get input from stakeholders. We don't think we will need to work with an outside firm to be spending money on developing a plan. We know our community and our stakeholders and we know how to communicate with them and we will continue to do that.	
	 Karl Skogstad – What are the benefits of a new larger elementary school? 	

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	The Chair explained that we don't anticipate smaller classes because class size is regulated by the Ministry of Education. However, we do think there will be fewer split classes particularly on the English side. At Agnew, the English population is not as large as it used to be. When we combine that with the English population from Edgewater that should eliminate many of the split grades. Also in a brand new facility you will have access to newer technology and newer resources for students to learn. There are many benefits to the new build.	
	 Ken Ranta – Please clarify the role of the Accommodation Review Committee and the collection of input from this meeting and the meeting at Churchill in June relative to what's happening on the north side of town. On the north side of town there appear to be options and from the feedback, the Trustees will make the choice. On the south side, is the option yes or no, or are there accommodation influences that would be thought through and presented to Trustees as options so they could be considered when making their decision or vote. 	
	The Chair explained that part of the role of the ARC was to listen to all questions and comments tonight. Following this meeting they will reflect on the themes that come from students and parents and they have already discussed how to engage student voice. They will also bring forward ideas from their own school communities. At the end, they will consolidate all the concerns and information, and all information will be included in the final staff report to Trustees for them to consider before making their decision. One option which they have as well is that they may provide alternative accommodation options if they have a program and business case to support it.	
	 Cory Keeler – Cory mentioned that Mr. MacRae told some teachers in some meetings that there was an outside firm that is handling some marketing, whether it is social media or not but he wasn't privy to that information. 	

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	 When Churchill comes to Westgate, are there any concrete plans for facility builds as additions such as auditoriums? We don't have the stuff that attracts new students or get old kids back to us – we are potentially losing students due to what's going on in the north ward. I'm not against the whole move, I just want it done right. 	
	Bruce Nugent – We did work with a company to develop a social media strategy because social media was so new to all of us. We hope to emulate that strategy with our ARC strategy.	
	David Wright – Part of the plan is to be able to direct resources into facilities that are long term, viable facilities for the school board. We are going to renew and refresh our facilities. Amalgamating students from Churchill to Westgate will be an opportunity to invest in its facility. We can't tell you we will build an auditorium in Westgate, but we can tell you that we will do our best with the facility we have and invest resources to make it absolutely the best high school on the south side of the city.	
	 Margie O'Brien – This is a marketing question as well. How many students do you anticipate losing during the rebuild of the school and how will that impact what will ultimately happen? 	
	Dave Covello – We see our enrolment stabilizing around 2020 and we are hoping that through this renewal plan this will be embraced and it will increase our number of students. Once people see the end results, it will be an opportunity for us to do marketing on top of our current program delivery and it will include some additional investments in technology etc. in our schools. At the end of the day we hope to maintain and possibly attract more students.	
	 Gene Wazinski – Regarding changes in the funding, he finds it interesting that LDSB is making all these changes but the Catholic Board Superintendent indicated that there would be no school 	

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	closures and almost all schools are getting outdoor equipment, so he's wondering if perhaps LDSB is doing something differently.	
	David Wright – Thirty years ago our school board had about 30,000 students and we built schools that were very large – to accommodate 400 – 500 students. We are now faced with the reality of the population of Thunder Bay that no longer supports maintaining schools that size. The Catholic School Board built smaller schools (200 student range) to start with. They too are faced with a declining enrolment and the same funding model. We are in a different position in terms of the number and size of the facilities that we have. The Catholic School Board has 18 elementary schools, we have 26. They will go through a similar process soon, I'm sure. They are running a higher capacity because they have smaller schools than we do.	
	 Kevan Holroyd – Are there any considerations to upgrading the outside sports facilities? We will soon have many students vying for position on fewer sports teams so many kids may not get to play. Is there any consideration being given to going to outlying areas like Dryden, Fort Frances, Kenora to set up something with them to increase the competition? High schools in southern Ontario have outstanding facilities. 	
	The Chair noted that SSSAA teams do play in the Region. LDSB competes with the Catholic Board, the French Board and Dennis Cromarty. Also they compete in NOASA. SSSAA is also considering expanding to different sports and opportunities so students are not all vying for the same spots on the same teams. The investigation survey that is being done by SSSAA will be available soon.	
	David Wright – Several years ago both school boards invested heavily in the Legion track for the benefit of students to the tune of about one half million dollars and at that time a decision was made to continue to support that facility financially. We haven't put a lot of money into our outdoor facilities – minimal maintenance. That is a policy decision that	

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	we haven't made any determination on at this time.	
	 Karl Skogstad – Considering the state of this facility (Westgate) and Churchill, should we think of this as an opportunity to build a new high school on the south side of the city? Why don't we take this opportunity to prepare a business plan for a new elementary and secondary school on the south side of the city? 	
	David Wright – We did investigate building a new school. Unfortunately we couldn't build a business case that was financially supportive of investing 30+ million dollars when we do have a facility that could accommodate all of the students on the south side of the city. The Facility Condition Index for Westgate is less than 40%, so in the grand scheme of buildings in the province of Ontario, it is in pretty good shape and the ministry would never support this financially. We probably wouldn't get permission from the school board even if we could afford to build another facility.	
	 Karl Skogstad – Can you help me understand why/how the Superior case went through when there was a facility (PACI) that could have accommodated the students on the north side – why then and not now? 	
	David Wright – He can't answer that as he wasn't employed with LDSB at the time. However, it should be noted that Lakehead University has put probably close to \$10 million into renovations at PACI for the Law School, something the school board likely wouldn't have been able to afford do. Those were different times, different circumstances – political and financial. There was a need for the school board when we built Superior and it was built with the best information that we had at the time. The buildings we moved out of had a very high Facility Condition Index and it would have been throwing good money after bad to repair them. It was the government's policy decision to not support repairs. They had Capital Consolidation money then to build that school.	

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	With no other questions from the floor, the moderator encouraged the audience to write questions and send them in via the website. She noted that the Accommodation Review Committee members have been actively taking notes throughout the meeting. She encouraged the audience to share questions and concerns with them as well so they could bring them to their working meetings.	
	Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Superintendent of Education and Chair of this public meeting thanked everyone for coming and asking good, thought provoking questions. She reminded them to send any other questions to <u>renewal@lakeheadschools.ca</u> at any time. The website is always available and the Frequently Asked Questions are updated regularly.	
	The ARC members can also be approached with questions which they will bring to committee working meetings.	
	The next South side public meeting will take place on June 6 at Churchill from 6:30 – 9:00 pm and everyone is encouraged to attend to bring forward new questions or concerns.	
Next Meeting:	Public Meeting at Churchill CVI – June 6, 2016 – 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm	
Adjournment:	The meeting adjourned at 8 pm	

• The recorder apologizes for any misspelled names of those who asked questions during the public meetings.