



## WHITE ROAD COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 10, 2018

12:00 pm, School Board Office, Board Room

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### **Committee Members:**

Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer

Trustee Tim Dunford - regrets

Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities

Dave Eberwein, Superintendent of Schools -  
regrets

Trustee Wayne Hunter

Trustee Nancy Borden

District of Central Saanich Liaison Bob  
Thompson

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## Agenda

1. Welcome
  2. Review February 6, 2018 committee meeting notes
  3. Correspondence
  4. Results of February 21 Community Open House
  5. Next Steps
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## Meeting Notes

- The committee reviewed the meeting notes from the November 14, 2017 committee meeting.
- ST Reid reported on the status of promotional activities and the results of the consultations to date with school communities.
- The committee discussed the format and approach for the community open house scheduled on February 21, 2018.
- At the next committee meeting on April 10, 2018 the committee will review the results of the open house and consultations to date and consider next steps.

# Agenda Item 4: Results of Community Open House

School District No. 63 (Saanich)

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## Saanich Schools

### BRIEFING NOTE



To: White Road Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid  
Secretary Treasurer

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Subject: Results of Community Open House

Date: April 8, 2018

The purpose of this briefing note is to summarize the results of the Community Open House held on February 21<sup>st</sup>.

Attendance at the meeting was lower than expected with 26 people signing in. At the meeting, the following themes from the School Communities surveys were presented:

1. **Alternative Educational Use of the Property?**
  - Community Education Centre – cultural, Indigenous learning, arts, academic, and/or community use (partnerships)
  - conference/meeting space
  - outdoor learning /agricultural/community farm
  - physical education / trades program
  - student housing (international) or other revenue generation
2. **Should the district continue to hold a vacant property?** – mixed response
3. **If the property were sold, how should the proceeds be used?**
  - legacy fund supporting vulnerable students / learning services equipment
  - outdoor/agricultural learning centres on school sites
  - replace Saanich Schools Education Centre (conference/meeting) / childcare space
  - future projects / invest in schools

The results of the open house idea generation exercise are included in Appendix 1 and the results of the survey following the open house are included in Appendix 2. A number of participants recommended using the site for an early learning program with a nature and/or agricultural based component. Other themes were similar to those identified by school communities and during the first phase of the consultation.

Since the last committee meeting, I have met with a number of educational partners and persons or organizations with an interest in the consultation. In these meetings the following organizations expressed a potential interest in the property:

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- Saanich Teachers Association (STA) – if a multipurpose facility was developed the STA would consider participating by relocating their current office space from the Keating site.
- BC Housing – has expressed an interest in potential development opportunities related to the property to provide housing and/or to support programs.

In March 2017, I was asked if the property was within the Urban Containment Boundary and my answer at that time was that it was not. I have learned that the property is, in fact, within the Urban Containment Boundary. I will correct the materials on the website and document the correction in the April 2018 committee minutes.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Reid  
Secretary Treasurer

Attachments: Appendix 1: Idea Generation Recording Sheet Feedback  
Appendix 2: Results of Community Survey Following Open House

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## Appendix 1 - Idea Generation Recording Sheet Feedback

### White Road Consultation Evening Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

#### How could the property be used for public school purpose?

- Important greenspace. The future options for this property should not be sold off as a cash grab to meet short term needs.
- Nature space – education.
- Early childhood education/preschool “affordable” daycare component. Include agriculture, greenspace and playground equipment.
- Possible theatre space/meeting rooms
- Community cleanup of land (initial and recurring): Reduce risk of land (hazardous trees), clear ivy, restore natural habitats and maintain greenspace with mature forest (Invaluable: once it’s gone, it’s gone).
- Create a family legacy (noting history and donation)
- Take advantage of the centrally located park-like land for children’s use.
- Early learning (outdoor childcare)
- Outdoor learning in forest (not formal garden space)
- Preserve the history (old school house)
- Environmental restoration education in partnership with conservation group such as Habitat Acquisition Trust.
- Put Conservation Covenant on the property
- Child/early learning facility
- Affordable housing for low income families with kids in SD63
- Park land/community space
- Nature Appreciation Park – educational experiences for young children, park play, exercise area for local children to use and enjoy. Bookings could also be made for safe educational use by daycare businesses.
- If a decision was made to build something for KOSC on site, there would be transport costs associated. If KOSC was the “recipient” of the property, what about other local schools after school programs?
- Use for young children, preschool, early education centre with affordable daycare component.
- Partner with a rec centre or a non-profit organization for early education with a strong basis in outdoor agricultural, historical awareness for the next generation.
- See if the government will be willing to give a grant to create a district wide out of school care program.
- Daycare type school with outdoor space
- Daycare with keeping the natural environment as the focus for the program (i.e.: nature kindergarten)
- Daycare plus a playground for the community with trees and some kind of memorial to William Turgoose
- Consult with the municipality regarding partnerships or property trades
- Daycare and nature park for local schools and the community
- See results of March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Open House.

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## **If a suitable public school purpose is not found, what should the Board of Education do with the property?**

- Development as an adjacent property will “overload” the neighbourhood in many ways. If the School District can’t manage it let it be greenspace for the municipality.
- It is paramount not to sell the property, although it is obvious that a cleanup to the area is needed.
- Partner with CRD or lease to CRD to use as a park (naturally developed and forested)
- Partner with a conservation group for greenspace.
- Sell part to Central Saanich for a park and part to an affordable housing group (e.g.: Greater Victoria Housing Society) for teachers or families with kids, or group home for persons with disabilities, or women escaping abuse. (In all scenarios, ensure that as much greenspace be left as possible and improve road safety.)
- Partner/sell to a non-profit housing society to develop low income housing for families with kids and market housing for teachers.
- Hold the property as per the wishes of Mr. Turgoose however, keep neighbours in mind with site safety and upkeep the property. This could be done in partnership with CRD and they could clean it up and maintain it. Honour the family by calling Turgoose Park.
- CRD could rent the property and maintain it but have SD63 still own it. It might not be used for educational purposes, but it teaches our children that we are honouring our community.
- Paramount that SD63 not sell the property. A purpose could still be found. In the meantime, have a cleanup work party. IEOA picks projects every year.
- Sell it and use the money to help out the high schools in the district with their projects.
  - Stelly’s theatre
  - Parkland track
  - Claremont fieldhouse/astro turf
- Please do not sell for density of housing.
- Retain the property as a park – partner with Habitat Trust
- Partner with heritage societies to preserve this historic site.
- Community park – work with municipality
- Neighbourhood park – Call the park “Turgoose School Park”
- Sell for school use of proceeds
- The School Board should give the property back to the Turgoose family.

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## Appendix 2: Results of Community Survey Following Open House

Response	1. Considering the results of the consultation to date, how could the property be used for public school purpose?	2. If a suitable public school purpose is not found, what should the Board of Education do with the property?	3. Do you have any further advice for the Board of Education?
1	An invaluable and rare opportunity for a nature school within an increasingly urban environment.	Work harder to find an educational use for the property. Simply stating that a suitable public school use "cannot be found" indicates a lack of creativity in envisioning uses for an amazing property asset, and I hope that the school district has the vision to ensure that the property is not simply sold, as this would be highly regrettable in future.	Have the biological assets of the property assessed by a qualified ecologist, who can help elucidate the value of the natural assets of the property. See how these assets align with curricula, and determine best steps forward for creating a unique, vibrant, and rare ecological educational asset.
2	Nature preserve, use it for biological and environmental studies.	The property has sat the way it is for so long with no problems whatsoever. Why change it? Leave it how it is, it's a beautiful space to have in the community the way it is. If it ends up being sold, it should be on an as-is condition to avoid development.	It would be such a shame to see this beautiful green space taken from the community.
3	It is a perfect ecological location for education-look at the MYSEEK and SEEK programs in SD64 Southern Gulf Islands!!!and the Outdoor Kindergarten programs in Sooke and Victoria...you could also set up an early years program-outdoor Strong Start?	This is not possible-be creative and think out side of the box -where the new world demand we go now is understanding our selves and each other our side of the overly structured and sterile indoor school environments.	Do not sell this perfect place -it is the right of all the future generations of students who will have this space to discover themselves the way they were meant to be -in touch and in step with nature.

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	<p>Nature education/restoration/active learning The setting aside of this area for the betterment and sustainability of green space for nature and nurture is education in action. What better way for children today and in the future to learn.</p>	<p>The district does not have the authority to simply sell it off to the highest bidder and spend the cash. This was not the intent from the original donor and the family of this donor does not support this liquidation approach. This green space should stay green. It could go to the district or back to the family or to a conservancy group if the board can't make use of it. The property should have a conservation covenant registered to restrict subdivision and keep it green regardless of where ownership goes. This, of course reduces the speculative value of the property from a developer and real estate perspective - and begs the question what is the true value of this small patch of trees. The community value and value to our district is in a different currency.</p>	<p>This property has high value as green space in a time when we are losing much of our greenspace incrementally. This may not be an issue for the board directly linked to the narrow education mandate but in a more broad context, greenspace and the health/well being and education of our children is definitely linked to this. It is an educational opportunity for this and future generations of district children (and adults). The district has a role to play and confidence is low simply because of the distasteful development that has been allowed on the adjacent lot and at some other locations in the district. Its a tough spot to be in.</p>
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5	<p>Outdoor education related: could be nature pre-school/kindergarten, science studies for elementary level, or environmental restoration/horticulture training. Simply going to public spaces, such as parks, to study nature-related topics is limited in what it offers as students cannot do hands-on activities the way they could on property actually owned by the district.</p>	<p>Such purposes are there; one need only decide which is the best. Keep the property until this decision is made if the best path to take is not immediately clear. After owning the property for so long, why is there this sudden need to do something with it?</p>	<p>Many school boards in our world would do anything to have such a piece of natural land they could use to enrich their students' learning. As green spaces and urban habitats becomes rarer, the White Road property's value from an educational perspective will only increase. Do not sell; keep in mind the message this would send to potential, future donors and to the students themselves: that you think it is quite ok to dump a precious, irreplaceable gift in order to get your hands on money. Do not clear cut the trees and other vegetation in exchange for concrete and asphalt. That type of building or development can be done on land already environmentally decimated, whereas forested areas, like this property, are not being made. Any use for the property should be consistent with, and acceptable to, the surrounding community, whose lives will be directly impacted by any changes.</p>
6	<p>I feel that it is best used as a natural green space to educate children about local flora and fauna, whether formally as a class or informally by visiting with friends and family. More time spent in the outdoors creates an appreciation for the environment which is essential for children to develop. The site should also have a plaque to acknowledge the history of the site (Turgoose and school house).</p>	<p>Gift or sell it to the municipality or another organization to be turned into a natural park.</p>	<p>Please do not sell this land to a developer as it is essential to preserve this historical and beautiful property as a public space to connect children with nature.</p>

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		<p>I would find it quite appalling, and I believe many others would too, if the Board is unable to find a suitable public school purpose for the property.</p> <p>However, if the Board decides that they cannot manage the property, the only other option that I see as moderately appropriate would be to donate the land to Central Saanich to be maintained as a forested park, or see if a group such as the HAT (as mentioned above), CRD, TLC, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Wilderness Committee, Sierra Club, Rainforest Conservation, etc., would be interested in managing the land.</p>	<p>Please save our green space. We love playing there, and others do too. Plus, my toddler says that this park has the best sticks. EVER.</p>
7	[Response copied below due to size]		

### Response #7 to Question 1

Benefiting the children of the local public school catchment by maintaining a unique outdoor forested space.

This space could be used outside of school hours by school-aged children, their friends, and families, as a space to develop motor, social, emotional, and linguistic skills that may not be achievable during the school day or the confines of a traditional school playground and field. This would also allow children to have an extended sense of community, as they may engage with fellow students whom they wouldn't regularly engage with during school hours, as well as members of the neighbourhood.

The space could be used during school hours as a destination for school-aged children to have occasional out-trips, as a wonderful (and rare) opportunity to develop crucial knowledge about our local eco-system, including: flora, fauna, native vs. non-native species, the complex interrelationships that exist in forested areas, how we can protect and restore habitats such as these, and bigger picture concepts such as Bee colony collapse and how bees rely on spaces such as these to nest (in twigs, logs, and soil; such as on the forest floor), and to sustain themselves through diverse, local flora.

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Maintaining the land as a forested space would also allow children, through school-based initiatives and independent exploration, as well as the broader community, to have access to an incredible part of local history. What curiosities this may spark, and what better way to learn than when motivated by one's own interest and curiosity. Children and community members alike would benefit from learning about Mr. Turgoose's contribution of this land to the school district. A meaningful monument/historical placard that respect the donor and the land would be an ideal addition (perhaps in one of the existing open-areas).

The issue of dumping refuse that sadly occurs regularly on this lot would likely be remedied by the litterers seeing that the land is in fact well-loved, used, and maintained. After all, in my personal experience I have seen very little littering in local playgrounds, green spaces, and parks; never mind dumping of refuse.

There was overwhelming support and resources offered at both community consultation meetings regarding the issue of property maintenance, such as the invasive ivy causing concerns regarding tree-safety, and property clean up. It seems that the community would be more than willing to help bring the property back to it's former natural-forested-state, and that there are many resources (such as the Mitchel's offering their equipment), at least for a large initial clean up. The local school's (Stelly's, Bayside), could also contribute to the initial (and subsequent) clean up(s) as part of a community project, and could be incorporated into curriculum through follow-up reports, etc.

In all honesty, it would be quite obvious that the district simply "gave up" on the lot if they chose to do anything but keep it. There are so many opportunities for the district to keep this low-cost lot (and potentially through partnering with local groups such as the Habitat Acquisition Trust, etc.: no-cost lot), and for the lot to serve the purpose of the district. Failure to see this would be failure to open ones eyes.

The public, parents, family of Mr. Turgoose, and most importantly, the children, will be greatly impacted and learn immensely from the districts' decision. Choosing to sell the lot, specifically with the purpose of de-forestation (for whatever alternative purpose), sends a clear message to the children of our community that our land and resources, and our local heritage and history, are of virtually no importance.

Those who know children know how significant a role community plays in a child's life, how crucial time spent in nature is for children, and how exciting history can be to young, curious minds.

While I'm sure there are many competing priorities and factors affecting this matter, please consider this decision thoroughly, and most importantly the