



WHITE ROAD COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, April 11, 2017

12:00 pm, School Board Office, Board Room

Committee Members:

Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
Trustee Tim Dunford
Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities
Keven Elder, Superintendent of Schools

Trustee Wayne Hunter
Trustee Nancy Borden

AGENDA

1. Welcome
 2. Review of meeting notes from February 7, 2017
 3. Review results from the Community Open House
 4. Historical Information on site
 5. Next Steps in Consultation
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WHITE ROAD COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, February 7, 2017

12:00 pm, School Board Office, Board Room

Committee Members:

Jason Reid, Secretary Treasurer
Trustee Tim Dunford
Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities

Keven Elder, Superintendent of Schools
Trustee Elsie McMurphy (regrets)
Trustee Nancy Borden

District of Central Saanich Liaison:
Councillor Bob Thompson (regrets)

Meeting Notes

- The committee reviewed and discussed the terms of reference as approved by the Board of Education.
- The committee reviewed and discussed the White Road Consultation Plan. The plan was approved with minor changes.
- The committee discussed the next steps: issuance of letters to neighbours and community partners, signage on the property and activation of the consultation web page.
- At the next meeting the committee will discuss and review the approach to the open house.

Next Meeting: 12:00pm - March 7, 2017

Saanich Schools

BRIEFING NOTE



To: White Road Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Subject: White Road Open House (March 16, 2017)

Date: April 7, 2017

The purpose of this briefing note is to summarize the results of the open house and potential next steps for consideration. A copy of the presentation outlining the format of the evening is attached. During and following the presentation there were a number of comments and questions before focusing on the exercises related to the preliminary planning principles and on idea generation.

These comments and questions (and answers) are summarized below:

- If the property is sold, used for capital expense
- Cost & Risk mainly related to keeping property safe. Why was zoning changed to residential? Great Grandson does not want to see property sold.
 - Answer: We don't know but will follow up. Subsequent discussions with Central Saanich indicate that the property's use as a school predated the existence of zoning and it would have been initially zoned to be consistent with the surrounding neighbourhood. Central Saanich is gathering further information related to this question.
- Is property part of Urban Containment?
 - Answer: No
- Significant historical piece of property. Most people do not know about it.
- Would like property marked as to what it is and the historical significance of it
- Extremely overgrown
- Habitat Acquisition Fund may be available to help maintain property
- Could it be used for student field trips?
- Property has lots of very native plants, wood peckers, owls; everything in a natural place
- CRD have any jurisdiction over the property?
 - Answer: No special jurisdiction
- Are teaching staff involved in the process?

The answer to this question was initially incorrect. The answer should be "Yes" as the property is within the urban containment boundary.

- Answer: Indirectly through our long term capital planning process and we also plan to engage school communities more broadly following this initial open house.
- Partnership with Stelly's to help restore the land - you need to explore this
- Parts of the old foundation in there- so lots of history
- No mention of District honoring Donor
 - Answer: This is reflected within the overall stated question to the community as documented in the consultation plan: "*What should the School Board do with the White Road property so that the educational needs of our students and community are best served and the wishes of the donor are respected?*"
- Communicate using a variety of media: email, local press etc.
- Feel not enough people notified
- Put memo out through school newsletter to get word out about this
- Neighbouring developed property, people did not want it developed
- Don't want it to happen
- If sold, forest would go away and animals never to be seen again
- Kind of coincidental, why sell now when neighbour development moving ahead.
- Why was an appraisal done?
- Put together a list of constraints
- Donor-covenant question
- Desire to let it remain, used as green space, natural garden, outdoor education, keep it historical
- Monument to old school house
- Community does not know who Mr. Turgoose was
- Education looks different now than it did 120 years ago
- Use for Kindergarten in keeping with original wish
- Big concern of increased traffic
- Doing nothing is one of the options
- Include many more people living on neighbouring streets.

Following questions and answers, the first exercise focused on the following preliminary planning principles that will guide the process:

- The pending decision has not been made and the committee commits to be influenced in making a final recommendation within the scope of its terms of reference
- The committee will demonstrate how the consultation process has influenced the final recommendation
- The committee will make every reasonable effort to include the stakeholder groups affected in the consultation process
- The committee will ensure that stakeholders understand the scope of the decision, the decision making process, and any constraints on the Board of Education in approving a final decision

- The committee will provide appropriate time and resources to ensure that those involved can participate in a meaningful way
- The committee will address stakeholder concerns in an honest and forthright way.

The following feedback was received in relation to these planning principles:

- The committee should communicate using a variety of media to include as many stakeholders as possible (email, social media, Peninsula News Review, etc.)
- First principle should say that the committee is committed to hear from stakeholders before making a final recommendation.
- Others commented that they were in general agreement with the principles.

This question was also asked in the community survey (see attached results).

The results of the second exercise focusing on idea generation are attached to this briefing note. Following the open house the survey was distributed on March 17, 2017 to all those who signed in at the open house and to all others who requested the survey. The survey was open until April 5, 2017 and 24 responses were received. A compilation of all responses is included with this briefing note.

Next Steps

Following review of the feedback received from the open house and survey, the committee should consider its next steps in the consultation process.

There were a number of comments during the open house and in the survey asking that we reach further in our consultation. The committee should consider if there is more we should do to reach those who may have an interest in the broader community.

In my view, it would be appropriate to consider how to more broadly represent the various stakeholders, particularly our school communities who were not represented at this open house. At the open house there were a number of suggestions regarding potential alternative educational use related to early learning, agriculture, nature, etc. A logical next step would be to begin exploring the feasibility of such alternative uses and the potential value that would result for our school communities.

Respectfully submitted,



Jason Reid
Secretary-Treasurer

Attachments: Idea Generation Exercise Results
Community Survey Results

Saanich Schools

Memo



Subject: White Road Consultation Open House – Idea Generation Exercise

Open House Date: March 16, 2017

During the open house there was an idea generation exercise focusing on the following three questions:

1. How could the property be used if it were retained by the Board of Education?
2. If the property were sold, what would be the preferred future use of the property?
3. If the property were sold, how should the Board of Education use the proceeds to support the Educational needs of students and the community?

A compilation of the results of that exercise are below:

1. How could the property be used if it were retained by the Board of Education?

- Nature kindergarten land swamp with municipal science education teaching forest
- Agricultural education
- Rebuild original school with Stellys apprenticeship programs – use as a living museum
- Sustainability
 - Invasive species
 - Reclamation
 - Education
- Natural Environment Studies
- Same “as is”
- A counselling and coaching area for students struggling with regular school
- Educational oriented natural green space (Forest) for the use and enjoyment of the whole community Kids – Seniors
- Biology of Science Forest integration of species
- Partnership with Camosun and Stellys for surveying, building pre-fab, sell for sustaining the property
- Natural playground
- Monument in honor of historical schoolhouse
- Collaborative green space supported by SD63, Central Saanich and/or community partners (Habitat Acquisition Trust Rotary Clubs)
- Community green space
- Heritage site
- Preschool and playground designed to incorporate native
- Nature park

- A team of culturists could rehabilitate the property by removing invasive species, and transform it into a food forest and liaise with local schools to ensure student participation as much as people
- Left as community green space/nature park - educational nature appreciation park – historical value
- Physical Ed outdoor activities – high school age
- Nature kindergarten
- Community garden
- Water collection system
- Shade garden
- If retained long term donation to a community organization that will continue some educational programs (public)
- Stellys student project for removal of invasive species
- SD 63 has a high demand at the elementary level for additional out of school care
- District show leadership by initiating partnership with a foundation/organization such as Suzuki Foundation to pilot Environmental Education programs
- Educational green space for children with opportunities to do hands-on environmental projects
 - build and post owl, woodpecker houses
 - plants for bumble bees and butterflies
- Natural playground with accessible wood walkways for disabled, paths lined with nature stations
- Approach Rotary Club, Lions Club to help clean up and maintain property to be a community urban green space
- Keep as an urban green space for children of the future – these spaces are rapidly disappearing
- Native plant only sanctuary
- Archeology site for the farm, ruins for Stellys high school students as Science project
- Green space, Heritage site, community garden

2. If the property were sold, what would be the preferred future use of the property?

- Parkland nature sanctuary teaching forest
- Should continue as Parkland so sell to Central Saanich
- Park
- Pocket park and three homes
- Kindergarten would keep the Education capacity Mr. Turgoose left it for
- Preschool program and playground Native style
- To be purchased by Central Saanich and preserved as a forest for community use
- The original transfer document to the School District by Mr. Turgoose stated his condition that it be held forever upon trust to hold and use for Public School purposes – so don't sell it
- We don't want it sold or as a public green space ONLY

- For nothing that will create a lot more traffic!!! Pretty please
- Sell property to municipality for use as a natural park
- The property must still be used for Public education
- Park for the community
- Public use
- No more parks Central Saanich has 32 of them
- Sell only to organization that intends to keep it for “Nature education” purposes
- There is never enough green space! Add more parks
- Sell to the municipality – green space – community garden
- More small Nature parks
- Accessible housing options for young families
- There is plenty of affordable housing – no more cookie cutter developments

3. If the property were sold, how should the Board of Education use the proceeds to support the Educational needs of students and the community?

- Permanent school fixtures
 - eg: playground equipment
 - Technology investments
- I find this option to be offensive
- We don't want #3
- Would not want to sell to a developer for any cost
- Money should be divided equally for the schools to use as they see fit
 - Keating could use upgrades in technology
 - Bayside needs further renovations and new earthquake supplies
 - Stellys needs a new theater
 - Claremont is building a new field
- Capitalize a project after Mr. Turgoose, ensure the community knows the connection to him

White Road Consultation Community Survey Results

Number of Responses: 24

Survey Open: March 17, 2017 to April 6, 2017

| Respondent | 1. Do you agree with the preliminary set of planning principles/values prepared to guide the process? Do you have others to add? |
|------------|---|
| 1 | Yes |
| 2 | <p>Where can I read "the terms of reference" as noted in point one of planning values. Under point two, in the end, the committee will demonstrate how the consultation process has influenced the final recommendation, how is that part of the planning values and principles ?</p> <p>Point three, the committee will make every reasonable effort to include stakeholders. I am disappointed in the efforts to contact family, the only reason I was aware personally was because I call and spoke to Kim Milburn in March of 2016. The only way some of the other family members managed to be there was because I told them. As for the neighboring properties, I had two people at our table that were less than six houses away and they received no indication of what was going on.</p> <p>I also feel that the signs on the property do not meet the normal requirements of any municipal signage for a private landowners intentions.</p> <p>Can you reach out further to the neighboring property holder, at least south down to Stelly's (both sides of road, west up Stelly's (both sides) to Seabrook, North to White and every household inside that area.</p> |
| 3 | somewhat |
| 4 | Yes, I agree with the preliminary set of planning principles/values prepared to guide the process. |
| 5 | No, see below |
| 6 | Yes; no |
| 7 | I believe the values and wishes of the donor need to be kept and that the property should used for something other than a housing development. |
| 8 | The planning principles seem good |
| 9 | Did you say "open House" with school board members/executive |
| 10 | It was all right. |
| 11 | Yes |
| 12 | <p>Basically in agreement, but add:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take steps to ensure key stakeholders are informed of the process. (Many still do not seem aware of what is happening, as of March 29). - When considering input from stakeholders, the committee should consider context: that is, who is the stakeholder and how relevant or important is the stakeholder's interest to the purposes of the consultation. (For example, input from the Turgoose family and from neighbours whose lives will be directly impacted by any changes to the property should be weighed differently than input from developers.) To do this, stakeholders should be asked to identify who they are and what their interest in the property is when they provide input; anonymous online surveys do not accomplish this. |

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| 13 | yes nothing else to add |
| 14 | No i do not agree |
| 15 | No. I feel that you wouldn't be doing this if you hadn't been approached by a developer. |
| 16 | Yes |
| 17 | I believe the notices were very limited to the neighbors across the street, we live one street down and didn't receive a notice, as our land originally was also from the Turgoose property of our ancestors. |
| 18 | I feel that the notifications were very limited to just the surrounding properties. My family's property is one street down which was originally part of the Turgoose property from my ancestors. |
| 19 | No i do not agree, I feel the notices were not handed out correctly and only a limited number of people received the notices .I only heard about the process threw a family member. I am a descendant of The Turgoose family and only was told about this 2 days before the deadline. |
| 20 | yes. nothing to add |
| 21 | yes |
| 22 | Process seems to be fine, I think more research should have been done to further investigate extended descendants fore historical value |
| 23 | The notices for this property were very limited - the consultation should include the whole community, not just neighbours. |
| 24 | Yes I agree with the principles/values with nothing else to add. |

| Respondent | 2. Given the educational mandate of the Board of Education and the wishes of the donor, what do you feel the Board should do with the White Road property? |
|------------|--|
| 1 | Sell the property |
| 2 | <p>I feel that the wishes of the donor should be the first concern and in that regard, if the annual cost of the upkeep and insurance is too high, then I feel a re-donation should be considered. Or a long term (\$1.00 per year lease for 10 or 20 years) to a local group that would guarantee the public school aspect of his wishes. The best idea, in my opinion, last night was for a nature kindergarten.</p> <p>There are three historically significant venues in the Municipality.</p> <p>The Saanich Pioneer Society, the Historical Artifacts Society and the Saanich Fair. Mr. Turgoose was involved in the evolution of the Saanich Fair and the other two came along many years after he passed.</p> <p>I think that the Saanich Pioneer Museum should be contacted to see what if any their interest might be.</p> |
| 3 | leave intact as natural/historical education site |
| 4 | I support the sale of the property, and that money invested into another much needed capital project. I think there should be a 'dedicated' by Mr. Turgoose or made possible by the generous donation of... |
| 5 | Given that the property was donated should imply that the board should not have the right to sell it but perhaps donate it to the Municipality of Central Saanich for green-space/parkland with an educational component. |
| | <p>I feel the board should use their position as leaders in the community to set an example in Education, and inspire upcoming generations, by committing to honouring Mr. Turgoose's wishes and using the property for educational purposes. This should be fulfilled by maintaining the forested green space and partnering with local secondary schools (Stelly's), and potentially with other organizations that promote education and natural land preservation (David Suzuki Fndtn., Habitat Acquisition Trust), to work to restore the land to a natural space. This would involve clearing invasive species, such as the English Ivy which is overrunning the property and endangering the health of mature trees on the property, and restoring native species through replanting efforts. I feel that this could be a fantastic opportunity to educate youth, perhaps earning them credits towards a community involvement course in their curriculum, and providing them a welcome opportunity to learn outside of the four walls of a classroom.</p> |

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| 6 | <p>In addition, Mr. Turgoose's legacy should be honoured and acknowledged. What a fantastic piece of local history we are so fortunate to have in our neighbourhood! Who would have known that this unique forested piece of land holds such rich history. I would chance that many local residents would be surprised to learn of this history and would be thrilled to have the opportunity to contribute in one way or another to the restoration of this historical and significant treasure. If this history were shared more widely through the community, I feel that there would be no shortage of support for the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the land.</p> <p>As an Early Childhood Educator, and as you in the Education System know very well, spending time outdoors is crucial to young children's development. I plan to open and operate a childcare centre in the neighborhood and would be thrilled to have a green space that we could safely visit (without having to cross busy arteries such as Stelly's Cross Road).</p> <p>What an opportunity the district has to preserve this land that can contribute to the well-being of our community from birth through old age.</p> |
| 7 | <p>Donate it to a heritage society. Do NOT sell to a developer for housing.</p> |
| 8 | <p>I don't feel that anything needs to be done with it so suggest that it be kept as is for now. While this property costs a token amount of operating dollars to upkeep each year, it remains a place that kids play, daily, and has become an important wild green space in the neighborhood. Perhaps, the upkeep could become part of an educational program within the schools in the area? I suggest talking to the SD and teachers about what classes could perhaps get involved in some sort of periodic maintenance. It may also be worth talking to post-secondary to see if there would be any use for a horticultural program.</p> <p>One request I would have would be to remove the old car that has been sitting on the property for over 20 years. I have become a little concerned about kids playing in and around it and think that's really the only true liability risk for the SD with the property.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Retain ownership and find how an outdoor area like this be used for educational purposes.</p> |
| 10 | <p>Keep it. Can't get new property.</p> |
| 11 | <p>I would like to see the Board work with the CRD and the municipality to use this property as a park.</p> |

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| 12 | <p>The Consultation Paper states that the donor wanted the property 1) to be held, and 2) that it be used for public school purposes in the district. It also indicates that provincial funding is typically not provided for outdoor educational spaces such as outdoor classrooms and gardens.</p> <p>The property in question should be kept. It would be very appropriate for use in outdoor education or to develop into gardens, and using it in this way would honour both of the donor’s wishes. The property could, for instance, be used for elementary school nature studies – such as creating and studying habitats for bumblebees or owls, or for a nature kindergarten. Or, for older students, it could be used to learn vocational or life skills relating to restoring ecosystems or developing native, drought-tolerant gardens. In a bigger-picture way, working on the property would impart to students the importance of small green spaces and forests to our expanding urban environment – in itself a valuable educational purpose that cannot be fulfilled by simply taking a day trip to a local park (where, for example, digging, planting or putting up bumblebee houses are not allowed). Plantings by students would themselves become legacies, which the students could return to later in life to enjoy and take pride in.</p> <p>It would be very inspiring to see the Board take a leadership role in developing a pilot educational program involving the use of a small green space such as the White Road property. Perhaps such a program could be developed in partnership with an organization that has a relevant mandate. The David Suzuki Foundation, for example, has recently started a Butterfly Ranger initiative and may be interested in supporting other nature-based initiatives in BC. I would be extremely proud to read about our local School District leading the way in developing an exciting environmental project for children!</p> |
| 13 | Keep the property and enlist students and community to meet the wishes of the donor. |
| 14 | since this is where one of the original schools in the area was it should be kept forever as you do not know what the future will bring and a piece of property like this cannot be replaced |
| 15 | Either keep it, make a historic site or nature education site out of it or donate to a nature group who would preserve it, but not sell it to a developer. |

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| 16 | I feel the board of education should honour the donor's wishes to both hold the property and use the property for public school purposes. This property could be used in an environmental education capacity. It is in close proximity to Stellys High School and could be incorporated into their curriculum. |
| 17 | As a descendant of the Turgoose family, I feel if the property isn't going to be used for school use as the Turgoose family intended than my preference would be for a Park, whether its done by the school or Municipality or handed back to the Turgoose family in trust to make that happen. |
| 18 | It appears that the board of education does not plan to use the property for a school as the Turgoose family had intended. As a descendent I would like to see the land used for a park or left as green space. Wether this is taken on by the school board, the municipality or with farther input form the Turgoose family. |
| 19 | i am a descendant of the turgoose family and in the original agreement with the family and the school board it was to be used for educational reasons or given back to the turgoose family. I would be fine with it becoming a park for generations to enjoy or it should be returned to the family to choose what they would like to do with it. |
| 20 | Keep the property. there are so many educational opportunities that can meet the request of the donor. |
| 21 | keep it for the future |
| 22 | Give it or donate it or sell it to central saanich for one dollar for park use whether a passive or interpretive park |
| 23 | As a descendant of the Turgoose family, I feel at the very least, this property should be used for a public service/public educational facility, such as park land, nature sanctuary, community gardens. |
| 24 | I think the property should be sold and proceeds used/invested in the school district. |

| Respondent | 3. Are there potential alternative uses for this property by the School District that would be consistent with the educational mandate of the Board of Education and the wishes of the donor? |
|------------|---|
| 1 | Kindergarden or a child care facility, both of which have an educational aspect. |
| 2 | I think it was made abundantly clear that the school district has no intent on spending money on this property, unless of course it could pay its own way. |
| 3 | donate to organizatoion capable of preserving its educational/historical value |
| 4 | I think trying to keep the property burdens the school district and I am of the position that the donor wanted the property to be used for the betterment of education and that is not entirely specific, therefore the school Board must make the decision keeping the current needs of the school district in mind. |
| 5 | Park like setting with designated paths, educational information/signage on surrounding vegetation along with the history of the property as well as the donor family. |
| 6 | See above. |
| 7 | These were discussed at the meeting. The space should be preserved as much as possible. A park in honour of the donor; a nature kindergarten, a dog park/run. NO HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS. |
| 8 | See my answer to #2: - educational use for horticultural programs; community outreach programs; etc., that are already in place in our schools (K-12 or post-secondary). |
| 9 | Maintaining some kind of educational use of the property since that is what it was donated for, perhaps a heritage designation with the donor's name. |
| 10 | It seems that an open space would be best. |
| 11 | I would like to see this property used as a park for the use of the families in the district. I would like it to be a nature sanctuary such as Gore Park is currently designated. We have lost somewhere in the neighbourhood of 50 trees from this area with the development of 7410 Veyaness and the property that was the right of way for White Rd. We have a diverse colony of bird life in the area and they have lost a huge area for habitat. Preserving this property would serve ecological and heritage needs of the district. This property was the site of one of the first schools in the area. |

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| 12 | A natural play area would be a very appropriate addition to this area of the community. A growing number of young families with children have been moving here recently. The closest playground for them is across Stelly's Cross Road, and accessing this means crossing a busy and dangerous stretch of road with no crosswalk or light. Such a play area could perhaps incorporate a demonstration native garden, and have boardwalks that could be used to improve access for handicapped individuals. Older students could develop and maintain the garden; alternatively, perhaps seniors could be involved through a horticultural course developed and offered by Panorama Rec Centre. |
| 13 | Maintain it as a natural greenspace, educate and enlist school groups to maintain and expand natural plants and flowers. Turn it into a outdoor 'gym' ie students run or walk to this area and climb ropes or engage in other fitness activities. Turn it into a historical site commemorating the school that was there. Leave it as is - donor certainly didn't express a wish to have it turned into a subdivision. |
| 14 | yes it could become a nature learning centre for the children with a monument telling about its past or possibly a day care centre |
| 15 | Make a educational nature site out of it. |
| 16 | It could be used as a informative park with details on the history of the land including the school house on placards. It could also have informative boards stating facts about the local flora and fauna found in that location. |
| 17 | Some kind of a park, possibly a nature sanctuary, where a trail through the property would let young kids could go on nature walks and learn about the plants and trees local to our area. |
| 18 | So an alternative use for the property would be a educational based park or nature sanctuary. |
| 19 | use an an educational park , with displays and history of the family the local area and the habitat of central saanich, trails and discovery center format. |
| 20 | An educational greenspace would be a terrific opportunity. place to foster growth of endangered flora species. could include an histoical reference to the school that used to be there. outdoor gym. |
| 21 | yes |
| 22 | Same as number two answer |
| 23 | A park/community garden/nature sanctuary with an educational component |
| 24 | Not that I can think of. |

| Respondent | 4. If the site is not sold and an alternative educational use is not found, should the property be held as a vacant site indefinitely? |
|------------|--|
| 1 | No. |
| 2 | I think that the District can either donate it to an organization that maintains the donors wish, and if that org. doesn't exist, then, yes the SD should keep it. |
| 3 | yes |
| 4 | No |
| 5 | No, it should be donated to the municipality of Central Saanich for green-space/parkland. |
| 6 | <p>I worry that if the site is held indefinitely as vacant, the invasive species and minimal allocated maintenance-budget for the property would lead to a state of deterioration over the years, resulting in large future expenses to deal with site hazards (dangerous/dead trees due to Ivy), and potentially increasing the risk of the district needing to sell the financially burdensome lot.</p> <p>With very minimal upfront investment by the district to pursue educational uses of the lot, while also honouring the donors wishes, the district holds an opportunity to become provincial leaders in native land stewardship and to create and foster educational partnerships.</p> <p>Leaving the lot vacant could lead to large investments down the road, as the lot continues to become an ever-increasing risk.</p> |
| 7 | YES. There are fewer and fewer green spaces in the peninsula due to growth. Leave the site for the neighbourhood to enjoy the plants and trees that grow there and the animals that inhabit it. Plenty of the neighbours walk through there with our families and pets. |
| 8 | Yes |
| 9 | It should be held indefinitely but not necessarily vacant. |
| 10 | It could be classified as a carbon sink |
| 11 | Yes and cared for as park space. |

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| 12 | <p>Yes, absolutely, continue holding it and actively seek an appropriate educational use. I do not think the Board of Education would find this “indefinite” period to last another century. There are many cutting-edge educational ideas emerging these days, and an interesting outdoor educational use may well arise if it becomes known that this School District is interested. It is also not unthinkable that a donor might step forward to help fund an educational purpose, but this will not happen if the sale of the property is perceived to be the District’s real agenda.</p> <p>Given the rapid speed with which small urban forests and neighbourhood green spaces are being destroyed in the Greater Victoria area, the School District will likely find, within a decade, that it has an irreplaceable treasure – the envy of other districts - to use in fulfilling an outdoor or science education mandate. The current Board’s disposing of it for cash could well be something future Boards would look at with tremendous regret.</p> <p>I have learned the hard way that there is much to be said for deferring a decision when it is not absolutely clear what the right one is.</p> |
| 13 | Yes!!!! |
| 14 | yes it should be held indefinitely but there should be a small monument describing its past history |
| 15 | Yes or donated to someone who would preserve the site. |
| 16 | Yes. This vacant site is an asset to this community. The green space is not developed, but it is used by residents as an informal trail network. It would be a shame to sell this property only to have it developed. We need green spaces such as this one for generations to come. There are many things learned from spending time in forested areas such as White rd. |
| 17 | Yes or Park land |
| 18 | Yes or park land |
| 19 | yes or park land |
| 20 | emphatically yes. recruit local volunteers to maintain the site as a green space. I have a landscaping company and you could count on my support (Habitat Gardencare.) |
| 21 | yes it could be used for nature programs for kids or a kindergarden or set it up as a park |
| 22 | Yes until a proper use can be found. Not for sale for developers |
| 23 | Yes, or converted to park land. |
| 24 | I think the costs and risks with holding this property are to the detriment of the district. |

| Respondent | 5. If the Board were to sell the White Road property, how should the proceeds be used? |
|------------|--|
| 1 | The Board can best answer that question. |
| 2 | I don't think that the SD selling this property and spending it on another apparent educational (what ever), in no way meets the original donors wishes. His intent was very well expressed in the "forever Upon trust To hold and use the same for Public School purposes" document. |
| 3 | give the money back to the surviving family members of the original donor |
| 4 | Capitalize a worthy, long-term capital project that would be a legacy to the school district and allow for the proper acknowledgment of the donor. |
| 5 | The board should not be allowed to sell donated property. |
| 6 | <p>If selling is the only option that the board sees as feasible, please consider selling or leasing to Central Saanich, in order to pursue park/educational uses. It really would be a shame to dishonour Mr. Turgoose's wishes, and quite frankly would be utterly disrespectful of his very generous donation of land, with the intentions he set out for it.</p> <p>Please, for the future of our children, think twice before considering selling this lot.</p> |
| 7 | I am completely against the selling of this property. I have been involved in PACs and know there are plenty of ways to raise funds for schools in the district. |
| 8 | They should be restricted for use within the district for other educational purposes that would create a new legacy for Mr Turgoose. |
| 9 | Fine Arts in the schools with a dedicated building. The money should not be used for regular budget items. It needs to be special that a donor could put his name on, as an example for others. |
| 10 | Capital improvements in this area. A theatre at Stelly's |
| 11 | I do not want this property to be sold, unless it is to the municipality and/or the CRD. |

| | |
|----|--|
| 12 | <p>The Board should be honouring the donor’s very clearly stated wish to hold the property and not be contemplating selling it. The School District has held the property for a century and should be prepared to actively seek or wait for, if necessary, a suitable educational purpose.</p> <p>The Consultation Paper says that, “if the property is to be held, and the property is not suitable for public school purposes, then compliance with both conditions may not be possible.” On the face of it, it looks as if the Board is looking for any way it can to get out of holding the property – even if it means pointing to the “and” in the phrase above. The Paper seems to imply that, since the School District isn’t complying with the second condition (i.e., using the property for a public school purpose), then it shouldn’t have to comply with the first condition (i.e., hold the property). If I understand correctly, the Paper is saying that it is OK to sell the property now because the District hasn’t been using it like it should have been for the last century. This is not a particularly logical or moral argument and, unfortunately, looks like an excuse to dispose of the property at a convenient and lucrative time.</p> <p>The property is, indeed, suitable for many different possible public education purposes; the Board simply needs to apply some vision, will and expertise to make one of them happen.</p> |
| 13 | Don't sell it. |
| 14 | first off it should not be sold as it will go to development and that is not the wishes of the family |
| 15 | It shouldn't be sold! |
| 16 | It should not be sold. |
| 17 | I disagree with the property being sold when it was donated with specific instructions for education or return it in trust to the descendents to make that happen. |
| 18 | In my opinion the property should not be sold because it was not the wishes or the doner. I feel that if the only option is to sell there should be further discussion with the Turgoose family. |
| 19 | the board should not sell it as per the Original agreement with the turgoose family , if they do not want it used for a school or educational it should be returned to the trust or estate of the turgoose family or their descendants to choose what would be best for the property |
| 20 | Do not sell this please. it deviates from the intent of the donor and it has a dramatic impact on the complexion of the community. |
| 21 | it should not be sold |
| 22 | Not for sale |

| | |
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| 23 | I disagree with the property being sold. It was donated with instructions to be used for educational purposes. If it cannot be used by the school board in a traditional school capacity, it should think beyond the current scope and use the property of other educational purposes for the community. Failing that, return it in trust to the descendants, so they may put the land to use as it was intended. |
| 24 | Information technology and equipment in the schools to allow more individualized learning, better collaboration and productivity. |

| Respondent | 6. If the Board were to sell the White Road property, what future use would you like to see for this property? |
|------------|---|
| 1 | Child care facility. |
| 2 | All ready covered, I do Believe. |
| 3 | build a rsource center on how to avoid moral civic and enviromental mistakes |
| 4 | Land is a precious commodity in the district, with 65% of the current land being locked into ALR, then another 15% dedicated to a rural classification. Central Saanich suffers from a lack of demographic diversity and young families have a hard time accessing this community. Townhomes would be an effective use to meet future growth as outlined the OCP and give young families access to lower priced housing. |
| 5 | See answer to 5 |
| 6 | See above. |
| 7 | Again, a park, a heritage site, a dog run. NO HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS. |
| 8 | I'm open to ideas on how it should be used. I like the idea of a park or use by schools for programming. The neighborhood is extremely sensitive to development and would be appalled if this property were to follow the path of 7410 Veyaness which was approved with literally NO support from the neighbors. So what I don't want to see is high density housing on this property. |
| 9 | A nature park |
| 10 | Gardens. |
| 11 | A park. |
| 12 | The Board should be honouring the donor's very clearly stated wish and not be contemplating selling the property. |
| 13 | Don't sell it. |
| 14 | well first off there was a developer present at the public meeting with the sole intention to wanting to purchase it for a subdivision and i say this because i know him and i was talking to him at the meeting . So if you sell it it would be developed . As a family member living on turgoose land it should be offered to the family first to buy it back as our family is trying real hard to retain all the family lands for the next generatians |
| 15 | Not to be developed into housing development!! |
| 16 | I would like it to become a park for the enjoyment of all residents. It is great to have a green space on the White Rd side of Stellys. |
| 17 | Natural Park land, a heritage site left in the wild, with access by trails, sign boards explaining the pioneers that left it for education. |
| 18 | Park land or green space |
| 19 | it should not be sold it should be returned to the family as per the agreement, and it should be used for some sort of heritage preservation in the for m of trails ,educations displays etc. |

| | |
|----|---|
| 20 | I do not support selling this property. |
| 21 | doesn,t matter what we think or want if you sell it it will be developed |
| 22 | Sold to district of CS for park/green space |
| 23 | See above answer. |
| 24 | The area is suitable for development of a small lot subdivision to provide affordable housing for families in the area. |

| Respondent | 7. Do you have any further advice for the Board of Education? |
|------------|--|
| 1 | I was at the Open House last night, and it seemed that a lot of the participants had already made up their minds, leave it as it is. |
| 2 | <p>Notices out to more neighbours. Donate or long term lease to some group that can and will maintain it as some sort of public education purpose.</p> <p>Are these responses going to be shared with the people who attended last night, or do you plan on compiling them in some sort of fashion. I personally would like to read them all.</p> <p>thanx for the opportunity to share</p> <p>Rick Michell</p> |
| 3 | no |
| 4 | Don't cave in to the no growth minority. This land is to be used for the betterment of education within the district and what was needed 100 years ago, if different than what is needed now. |
| 5 | The board needs to follow the wishes of the donor family. |
| 6 | <p>I do hope that you will pause and take pulse of the neighbourhoods' feelings on this important historical lot. We care - not just because the lot is in our community - but because of it's historical significance, the legacy of the land and Mr. Turgoose, and the potential that this land holds as an educational tool, community opportunity. Show us that you are listening! Our children and their children need forested space to enjoy!</p> <p>Once it is gone, it is gone forever.</p> |
| 7 | Listen to the majority of the people who care about this property and do the right thing. Not the thing that will line your pockets. |
| 8 | <p>It was quite clear at the community meeting that the family of the donor do not wish the current use of the property to change - they do not want to see it sold. The family's wishes should be the highest priority of the board in making a decision on what to do with the property.</p> <p>Secondary to that, is this property is next to agricultural farm land and any decisions to sell or change use must consider the impacts to the highly active farm next door. As that neighbor, I would ask that I be kept well informed of the discussions on the future use, and be consulted as to the impacts to my protected farm space.</p> |
| 9 | I don't like it when a donor's trust in his words can be twisted so that the property can be sold off and the benefits possibly used less wisely. |

The optics of selling the property at this juncture in time, after so many years of holding it, are extremely bad. Additionally, and in spite of the draft planning principles, the Consultation Paper presents the sale of the property almost as a given – and certainly as a key starting point in the discussion – creating the impression that the Board is already biased in favour of selling the property. This makes it very disheartening for those of us who oppose its sale, and is discouraging some from participating in the consultation process – after all, if the outcome is predetermined, as it seems to be, why bother taking the time to speak up? I fully understand the great temptation to cash in on the current exorbitant property prices; however, we have all seen how money – even a very large amount – disappears quickly, with little, if anything, left to show for it. I would urge the Board to resist the idea of cashing in, and to look at the long term picture. Property, unlike money, is as "forever" as "forever" can be. By keeping the property and leaving its forest relatively intact, you will have an irreplaceable, enduring resource for many future generations of children, rather than just meeting the educational needs of the current ones. I would also like to caution the Board that selling this property would send the message to future, potential donors that any gift given to the School District could ultimately end up being dumped for cash if it becomes convenient or profitable to do so, regardless of the intentions of the donor. Putting myself in Mr. Turgoose's shoes, I cannot help but feel that if he had wanted the District to have money for education purposes, he would have made a gift of cash - not an enduring legacy of property - and that he would find the Board's current line of thinking highly objectionable.

Given the enormous amount of money to be made, it is obvious that developers will line up and do or say almost anything to purchase this property. It is also obvious how they will lay waste to this beautiful, historic mini-forest that is Mr. Turgoose's legacy – under the falsely compassionate guise of creating "affordable", "accessible" housing for families. I live near the White Road property and have tremendous anxiety about the potential, negative impacts that major changes to the property, such as a residential development, would have on those who live here now: the many families and children, neighbouring farm, the people of every age group who stroll/run/cycle/skateboard/walk their babies and dogs in the neighbourhood, and the many migratory birds and other wildlife that rely on the property. We are already experiencing some very noticeably negative changes because of the development currently taking place on the Veyaness property adjacent to yours, and some of the young families who have moved here – as well as our family – are deeply distressed by what is happening. Further development of this type would greatly compromise the health, safety and harmony of our existing community. I hope the Board will give this

| | |
|----|---|
| 13 | <p>This property is zoned residential. When and how did this get changed as this opens the door for easy development which goes against the donor's wishes. There needs to be more effort put into communication to enlist the community to participate. The small sign advising of the March 16 meeting placed on the property could not be read unless someone was walking by. In addition to the (minimal) letters mailed out, there should have been communication from the local schools to all students/families, as well as notices posted on the mail boxes and a notice in the local newspapers. Engage honestly in the discussion - if the Board has an agenda and this exercise is just to say at the end that they explored all options but the best plan is to sell it, don't waste everyone's time.</p> |
| 14 | <p>because our family has a long history here on the peninsula and we are still here we feel you should have had some consultation with us about it. I don't see that this property is really costing you very much and I know if you talked to us about it we would be willing to help with some of the maintenance of property to help keep the costs down for the school board</p> |
| 15 | <p>Listen to the heirs of the donor and the concerned neighbours & not the developer next door!!</p> |
| 16 | <p>If the property is sold, I will be very upset with the lack of action by the school board to follow the donor's wishes. This will set a very bad example to all potential future donors who have any interest in donating to the school board (the school board does not follow the wishes of the donor).</p> <p>This property should be looked at as being an asset to the local schools and they should create programs to use this space (physical education, environmental education, general sciences).</p> |
| 17 | <p>Please respect the descendants that would like it to remain for education use even if that is in the form of a nature park for educational purposes.</p> |
| 18 | <p>They should respect the original owners wishes for the property and to involve the descendants in the decision of the future outcome of the property.</p> |
| 19 | <p>the board should respect the original agreement with the Turgoose family and use it for educational reasons or return it to the family trust.</p> |
| 20 | <p>Don't operate this terrific resource in a silo. Seek community support to help keep this terrific space intact. You can always replace a house. You can never replace a forest.</p> |
| 21 | <p>give it back to the family in trust and let them turn it into a park</p> |

| | |
|----|---|
| 22 | Be very cautious before any sale. Many developers are waiting for this prime piece of land to be sold \$\$\$\$\$\$ |
| 23 | Please be respectful of the intentions of the family that donated this property and consider options for educational use for the community. |
| 24 | Should the property be sold and developed perhaps a partnership with the builder and trades programs at Stelly's could be considered. |

Saanich Schools

BRIEFING NOTE



To: White Road Committee

Prepared By: Jason Reid
Secretary Treasurer

Subject: **White Road Property Historical Research**

Date: April 7, 2017

Following the open house, an ancestor of the donor asked that I contact Brad Morrison. Brad Morrison is the Archives Manager at the Sidney Museum and Archives and he is also a great-grandson of the donor William Turgoose. I discussed the process with him and provided the consultation materials to date and a link to the online survey. As Mr. Morrison is very knowledgeable about the history of the Saanich Peninsula, I also asked if he would conduct historical research related to the property to inform the consultation process. Mr. Morrison was pleased to help us in this regard.

The results of his research are included with this briefing note. I would advise readers that the language contained within the referenced historical articles are a reflection of those times.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Reid', written in a cursive style.

Jason Reid
Secretary-Treasurer

Attached: South Saanich School – A Brief History of “Old School Hill” by Brad Morrison

South Saanich School – A Brief History of “Old School Hill”¹

The Government Gazette of August 31, 1872 contained a notice that a new school district had been created. South Saanich School District, and that the boundaries were: “All that district known as South Saanich and such portion of North Saanich as lies between a straight line drawn from Saanich Arm to Bazan Bay, along the centre of the road crossing the District at Brown’s farm, and the boundary of South Saanich.”² In the First Annual Report on Public Schools,³ it was reported that the School house and teacher’s residence located in South Saanich off of Mt. Newton Cross Road was in a much-needed repair.⁴ Also, that there were 42 children of school age in the Southern portion of the District, and some of them were far too distant from the school to attend. It was stated in the Report that the “School house should be moved, or a new one erected so as to accommodate all as equally as possible.”⁵

In the beginning of March 1873, it was reported that Mr. William Turgoose, had donated two acres of land, at the corner of his farm adjoining his brother-in-law’s land, (John D. Bryant,) for the purpose of erecting a public school house.⁶ The actual conveyance of the land did not occur until April 7: “... unto the Trustees of the South Saanich School District ... and their Successors forever Upon Trust To hold and use the same for Public School purposes in the said District.”⁷

Even though the official land transfer was not complete, a tender for the erection of the school was advertised in the local Victoria newspapers on March 18.⁸ The contract was awarded to Mr. Charles Alexander, for the amount of \$390 at the end of the month.⁹ The work on clearing and building the school house began shortly later, and by June 12, the newspapers reported that it was almost completed, and that school classes had begun on June 1, under the care of Mr. George Wilson,¹⁰ who received a salary of \$60 per month.¹¹

John Jessop, the Superintendent of Education in his annual report, wrote the following concerning the school when he inspected it and its pupils on July 31: “A very commodious school house has recently been erected in this district, as near the territorial centre as possible; the beneficial effects

¹ The original school was known as the “Old School Hill” by the early students that attended it. “Old South Saanich School, Geo. Michell Only Surviving Member of 1878 Class,” Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands Review, February 3, 1954, Page 1.

² Victoria Daily Standard, Monday, September 2, 1972, Page 3. The North Saanich School District was created in February 1873.

³ First Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia For the Year Ending July 31st, 1872, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Page 4.

⁴ For the history of the first school, see: <https://www2.viu.ca/homeroom/content/Schools/Public/ssaan.htm>

⁵ First Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia For the Year Ending July 31st, 1872, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Page 4.

⁶ Victoria Daily Standard, Saturday, March 8, 1873, Page 3. There seemed to be some confusion on who donated the land for the school in the Annual Reports On The Public Schools. In the Sixth Annual Report, 1876-77, wherein the first reference was found it states “Two acres donated by Mr. J. D. Bryant for public school purposes.” It wasn’t until the Tenth Annual Report, 1880-81, that it was corrected to be William Turgoose.

⁷ South Saanich School – Conveyance No. 2 – School site South Saanich. Registered title 787A dated 9th of April 1973. Deed issued by W. Turgoose, Section 8, Range 3 East, South Saanich.

⁸ Victoria Daily Standard, Tuesday, March 18, 1873, Page 3.

⁹ Victoria Daily Standard, Monday, March 31, 1873, Page 3.

¹⁰ Victoria Daily Standard, Thursday, June 12, 1873, Page 3. George Wilson was a graduate of Aberdeen (M.A) and was appointed as the teacher for South Saanich School on July 23, 1872.

¹¹ First Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia For the Year Ending July 31st, 1872, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Page 4.

of which has already been made apparent by more than double the former attendance. The school is efficiently conducted by Mr. George Wilson. Attention to duty, aptitude for teaching, and long experience have ensured him marked success in the school, and the almost unanimous approbation of Trustees and people.¹²

Six Hundred dollars was expended on building and fitting up of the school house and furniture. There were 53 pupils attending, (38 boys and 15 girls) between the ages of 5 and 16. There were 6 children in the district that were recorded as not attending the school. The Trustees of the School District were Edwin John, John D. Bryant, (Secretary and Treasurer,) and Thomas Michell.¹³

The remaining work on the school house was done by Mr. Bailey of Victoria, wherein he was awarded the contract to plaster the interior of the school, and the bricking a chimney hearth, for the sum of \$200. This work was completed before the end of August.¹⁴ According to the 12th Annual School Report, the finished school house was built of wood and measured 25 feet by 50.¹⁵

The erection of a teacher's residence near the school building was completed during the 1875-76 school year. Apparently the new structure was constructed from the materials of the old school and dwelling house that were dismantled during the fall of 1875. "This comfortable four-room dwelling cost only about \$400" reported the School Superintendent Jessop.¹⁶ Also during the year, the school was furnished with desks and blackboards.¹⁷

According to the Eighth Public School Report, 1878-79, the Trustees reported that the school required painting, and a small portion of the grounds was cleared, but not fenced. The school also was used as a Sunday School and for Divine Worship.¹⁸

In 1882, the school house was enlarged. A contract was made with Charles T. Penwell on July 11, to take down and remove the partition in the school room; to lay a new floor; to remove the siding from the front of the building and construct a covered porch and stairs; and to paint the exterior and interior of the new addition. This work was to be completed by August 10 at a cost of \$303.¹⁹

¹² Second Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia For the Year Ending July 31st, 1873, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Page 4.

¹³ Second Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia For the Year Ending July 31st, 1873, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Pages 16, 17, 18, 19 and 21.

¹⁴ Victoria Daily Standard, Saturday, August 16, 1873, Page 3. The tender for the work was advertised in the issue of July 31 of the same newspaper.

¹⁵ Twelfth Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia 1882-1883, C. C. Mackenzie, Superintendent of Education, Page 124. Other annual reports state that the size was 30 ft x 60 and also 20 ft x 60 ft in size.

¹⁶ Fifth Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia 1875-1876, John Jessop, Superintendent of Education, Page 101.

¹⁷ Ibid., Page 101.

¹⁸ Eighth Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia 1878-1879, C. C. Mackenzie, Superintendent of Education, Page 195.

¹⁹ South Saanich School Repairs – C. T. Penwell, July 11, 1882, British Columbia Archives, GR-0080.3.56 British Columbia, Dept. of Lands and Works (1871-1908); Morrison Fond, Sidney Archives, SED047.

The last reference to this school building was made in the Thirty Fourth Annual Report, 1904-05, and that it was in “Fair condition” and that the property had an estimated value of \$1000.²⁰ According to oral history, the building was sold to George Harrison, who demolished it, and used the material for other purposes.²¹

In the Thirty Fifth Annual Report, 1905-06, it was stated that “a well designed school-house; no water supply on grounds or within easy reach”²² were now being used. There was no description of the school house or property from this time onward in the Annual Reports. Oral reports state that this school house was two-rooms, wherein, the first was a single-room. Shortly later, a new teacher’s residence was built, and both these buildings were used as such until June 1913.²³ This can be confirmed as the Forty Third Annual Report, 1913-14, there was no mention of the South Saanich School or teacher’s residence at all. The reason for this was that two new schools had just been built to replace the South Saanich School. These were the Saanichton School, and the Keatings School, both built in 1913.

An interesting article appeared in the *The Sidney and Gulf Islands Review* in September 1913, giving the following information concerning the South Saanich School, although at first one may be excused for thinking that it referred to the one of the two new schools:

"The new school house is now opened. The two acres of land on which it is built cost \$1200 and the building at least \$2000, whilst the school house only recently erected is abandoned except for one day in the week when it will be utilized as a manual training school and the other building alongside it will remain unused absolutely. Surely this is wanton waste of money. It is not possible for the trustees to invent some means to utilising these two buildings erected at great cost. Here we have no library, and no public place, except for school children, to study. The bar of the Prairie tavern is the only educational institution open for the young men of Saanichton. At small expense a small library of standard works could be installed and the clergy of the various districts might be induced to enlighten us with a lecture once a week during winter. Such an institution would raise the tone of the whole district. Perhaps the 'Ladies' Guild' could assist in this; they have done wonders in improving the church buildings, but all religion has relation to life, and there is such a thing as ecclesiolatry. An educational institute would increase the value of property and in a thousand ways improve our social conditions."²⁴

The reference referring to the school being used as a manual training school is confirmed by oral accounts that state: “This old School was then used for Manual Training for a number of years. Three Finger Leonard Campbell was the Teacher and he hauled the boys from the different Schools in his Veile Car with children in it and all over it.”²⁵

There is only one further contemporary reference that this researcher has located at this time pertaining to the South Saanich School and the teacher’s residence:

²⁰ Thirty-Fourth Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia 1904-1905, Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education, Page A lxxxiii.

²¹ Old South Saanich School, Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands Review, February 3, 1954, Pages 1 and 3.

²² Thirty-Fifth Annual Report On The Public Schools In The Province of British Columbia 1905-1906, Alexander Robinson, Superintendent of Education, Page A 27.

²³ Old School Site To Be Dedicated, Victoria Daily Times, Friday, July 12, 1968, Page 16.

²⁴ Sidney and Gulf Islands Review, Friday, September 12, 1913, Page 1.

²⁵ Introduction to School Union in 1968, believed to have been spoken by L. Hafer, Chairman of the Committee. See Morrison Fond, Sidney Archives, SED038.

“Fire At Saanichton - Midnight Blaze Destroys Unoccupied Old Dwelling House.

A spectacular midnight blaze was witnessed by very few people last Thursday night at Saanichton when the dwelling beside the old school house on the East Road was consumed. The building was originally meant as a residence for the teacher, but has not been used for that purpose for some time. Last year it was occupied by a Chinaman and since then has been more or less of a hotel for penniless wanderers. It is assumed that the carelessness of one of these was the cause of the blaze which destroyed the house on Thursday night.

The fire began under the front steps of the school. This portion was extinguished by men who came from nearby houses, but in the meantime the chicken house caught fire and from there the sparks spread to the old teacher's dwelling and there was no chance to save it. The little frame structure went up very quickly and created an exceedingly pretty blaze, those say who saw the fire.

No loss is felt by the community as the building was of no use to anybody on account of its age and state of dilapidation. The school is outgrown and is merely used as a manual training centre on certain days when the instructor calls.”²⁶

The South Saanich School (built in 1905-06,) according to oral reports, was “finally torn down in 1933 by Frank and Art Sanders²⁷ and they used a lot of the lumber to build their house just up the road.”²⁸

One final note: periodic enquiries concerning the property were made by prospective purchasers, the same answer was always given “it is the property of the school district and cannot be sold.” In May 1958, the question concerning the land became known to the Saanich School District Trustees. They claimed to have had no knowledge of the property reported *The Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands Review*.

The Review continued to state: “Investigation proved that title to the land was conveyed from the defunct South Saanich School District in 1917 to the Board of School Trustees of Saanich, the municipal school district then governing school affairs in Saanich Municipality.

When Central Saanich seceded from the parent municipality the land was transferred to the new district, but the title was not registered. The title still lies in Saanich, although since 1947 the school district has administered a larger area than was the case in 1917. The school trustees are now required to see the title transferred to Central Saanich before it can be registered in the name of the school district. Central Saanich municipality has been invited to make the necessary move in this direction.

Inadequate?

The trustees last week agreed that they had no knowledge of any legal means whereby the property could be disposed of. It was also agreed that in the present time it is unlikely that a school would be required in that location or that two acres would be adequate for the erection of a modern school building and recreational facilities.”²⁹

Brad R. Morrison,
6858 Patricia Bay Highway,
Victoria, British Columbia, V8Y 1V1
250-882-2554

²⁶ Sidney and Gulf Islands Review, February 25, 1915, Page 1.

²⁷ It may be pointed out that the year 1933 may be incorrect, as Frank and Art Sanders do not appear in the area directories until 1940. See, British Columbia and Yukon Directory, 1940, Sun Directories Limited, Vancouver, B.C., Page 329.

²⁸ Introduction to School Union in 1968, believed to have been given by L. Hafer, Chairman of the Committee. See Morrison Fond, Sidney Archives, SED038.

²⁹ An 85-Year-Old Legacy, Saanich Peninsula and Gulf Islands Review, May 14, 1958, Pages 1, 11.

PENINSULA FARM

by

WILLARD MICHELL

(Dary's grandfather)
GRANDSON TO WILLIAM
TURGOOSE

I was born eighty-three years ago in the family home, Brynmore Farm on the Saanich Peninsula, and for all these many years, the Peninsula on the southern tip of Vancouver Island has been home to me.

It was in 1862 that my grandfather, Thomas Michell, set sail from Liverpool, England, with his wife, Margaret, and their first-born son, bound for the New World.

They travelled aboard the sailing ship, Sylistra, and I'm told that they journey to Vancouver Island which took them around Cape Horn, took them exactly seventeen weeks and five days. My grandfather was born in Cornwall, though he later lived in Wales. The family was of Huguenot stock and had fled from France to southern England during the religious persecution which had troubled France in the 16th and 17th centuries.

When Grandfather Michell and his family arrived in Esquimalt it wasn't the end of their journey. They still had to get to Victoria, and to do that they had to wait for two days for the Emily Harris, and on that boat they completed their travels. In those days, you know, there were really no roads outside the Fort of Victoria, and a boat was the only means of travel between Esquimalt and the Fort.

The reason for this roundabout route was that the Sylistra was too large and of too heavy draft to be taken into Victoria harbour with safety.

My grandfather was by no means penniless when he arrived here, and his first business venture was to open a grocery store on Johnson Street, Three years later he headed for the Cariboo gold fields, leaving his wife to run the store. He was luck in his

search for gold. He found it, so I've been told, by digging in the earth right beside his cabin.

With his gold, Grandfather returned to Victoria where he gave up the grocery store in order to open a hotel on Yates Street which now is occupied by the Dominion Hotel. I believe the What Cheer prospered, but I think Granddad always hankered for land, and in 1867 he bought that land out on the Saanich Peninsula. He bought it from a man named Estes, and in interesting receipt dated March 26, 1968 shows that "Thomas Michell bought of Howard Estes, 21 head of cattle, big and small, 18 pigs, 24 chickens and turkeys, 1 wagon and harness, 1 plow, milking pans, etc for the sum of \$650.00. So began the farming story of our family on the Saanich Peninsula.

To start a farm in the early days meant a lot of hard work, for tools were few and very simple. Usually the land was covered with trees, as was most of Saanich, and before any farming could be done, the land had to be cleared. Before modern machinery came along, those trees had to be taken out by hand, and to do this, the tree would be felled by axe about three feet from the ground. Then the stump itself had to be removed.

This meant digging around the stump to cut the roots. Then a fire would be kindled underneath to burn it out. After this, chains were fastened around the burned stump and it was pulled clear - either by horse or oxen, for oxen were widely used in the early days of farming here.

Trees weren't the only hazards for a new farmer, for often the ground would be found to be very stony, and some of the stones were really fair sized rocks. All of these had to be cleared off before the land could be cultivated. For that reason, one of the most useful early farm implements on the Island was a thing called a "stone boat". This consisted of two sturdy round logs which acted as runners, and to the top sides of these would be nailed a floor made of boards. Shafts or chains were attached to one end so that the "stone boat" could be dragged along, and the stones would be tossed onto the boat and hauled away.

Harvesting in those early days was done by cutting the grain by hand, and for this a scythe was used. The cut grain was tied into bundles which were then stood upright, six to eight bundles together in a tent-like style so that the grain and the straw could dry out. This setting up of the grain bundles or sheaves was known as "stooking" and was mainly done by the women who helped in the fields too.

Later, of course, when it was dry enough, the grain had to be threshed, and for this, the sheaves would be opened and spread on the barn floor where the threshing was done by hand with a flail.

The flail is one of the simplest of tools, and was used as far back as Biblical times and even earlier. It consists of two lengths of wood attached to each other by a piece of leather, making a sort of movable joint between the two. One piece was the handle, and the other - usually heavier - was known as the "swipple". And with this simple tool the farmer literally threshed the grain from the straw. Sometimes, too, in very early times, the grain might be ground into flour by a treadmill operated by oxen.

My grandfather, though, was a very progressive man who was all for saving time and labour. He was the first man to introduce the reaper and binder to the Island. This was a horse drawn machine which not only cut the grain but bundled and tied it as well. He also brought the first steam engine and threshing machine to this part of the world, and of the two which came here in 1882, one is still operating and can be seen around the Peninsula, while I believe the other is in a museum up near Duncan.

Of course, with the importation of Grandfather's new gadgets, the use of the flail became a thing of the past, and the threshing machine powered by the steam engine, went the rounds, doing the work in a quarter of the time. This was usually a fall or winter activity and a combined effort, and the threshing tackle would move from farm to farm, and the farmers would get together to help each other.

This same sort of co-operation would also occur when a building was to be put up, and it was known then as "barn raising". The necessary materials would be assembled, and quite often some pre-construction took place. Then, on a given day, the farmers gathered together, and up went the barn. The women would also get together to prepare the food to serve the hungry men. It was quite a competition with the ladies to see who could lay on the best meal.

Of course, by the time I was a young boy, the use of oxen for farm work had given way to horses - just as horses have now given way to tractors. But many of the old tools still were in service. A lot of the harvesting was still being done by hand on some farms, and there was quite a knack in learning how to swing the heavy scythe. You had to learn the rhythm of it.

The life of a pioneer woman was no easy lot either. I remember my Grandmother Margaret with a lot of pride and love. Always working hard, yet always ready to go to a friend or neighbour in distress. There were no proper roads when the Michells first settled on the Peninsula - just trails through the bush. But that never stopped my Grandmother, for as soon as she heard of sickness or need, she would get on her horse and ride to help. As a result she became known as The Lady of the Valley, for no sick person ever called in vain while she was around to lend a hand. She had six children of her own to care for too, beside the many chores which were the lot of a pioneer farm woman.

Of course, with no roads, women as well as men were used to riding everywhere, and Grandmother Michell, who always rode side-saddle, thought nothing of riding the long wagon trail to Victoria once a week to sell her excess produce such as butter, eggs and cheese. When one remembers that in those days, Victoria stretched north only as far as Pembroke Street, and Indians were sometimes less friendly than they are today, then I haven't a doubt that Grandmother was not only kind and caring, but had plenty of spunk as well.

One interesting bit I always like to remember is that one of her sons, my uncle, George Thomas Michell, married a girl whose father was the man who introduced skylarks to the Saanich Peninsula. Her name was Eliza McGraw.

My other grandparents were the Turgooses. Grandfather Turgoose and his family left England from Lincolnshire at about the same time as the Michells, but they didn't make the long voyage around Cape Horn. Instead, they crossed America by covered wagon, and at last, after a sea voyage up the Pacific coast, they reached the Island and bought land out on the Saanich Peninsula. The land they bought adjoined our farm.

Grandfather William Turgoose was like my Michell grandfather in that he liked machinery for farm use. But he was also very interested in education, and because of this he gave the land on which the first school was built in our part of the world. His daughter, Annie, attended that school, as did my father, William. Later, they married each other, and in my turn I attended the same school.

The school room had forty or fifty children in it by the time I attended. They were divided into different classes all under the one teacher, and I well remember that one form of punishment was to be made to sit with a member of the opposite sex. (Most of the desks were built to accommodate two pupils, and of course, we boys thought it was somehow degrading to be made to sit with a girl).

In those days all children had chores to do before and after school, which made for early rising in the morning, followed by a walk of anywhere from two to five miles to school, whatever the weather. One thing for sure was the fact that with long walks to and from school, added to the endless chores, boys didn't get into trouble the way they do nowadays.

Young ones need a chance to spend their energy, and if too much is done for them - such as bussing to and from school, and no home chores to be done - then they sometimes seem to turn to vandalism as a way of using their energy.

Though in the 1860's and 1870's, the Saanich Peninsula was pioneer country, yet it proved good farming country and it wasn't long before the farmers of the district got together to form an agricultural society. Among those present at that first meeting were both my grandfathers and they, together with eight friends, formed the North and South Saanich Agricultural Society with the

plan of having an annual farm gathering. That gathering, known as the Saanich Fair, has been held annually since 1868, and our two families have been connected with the running of it almost continuously since that time.

Although in the very early days, there were just two wagon trails leading from Victoria up the Peninsula, gradually roads began to appear and in 1893 the Victoria and Sidney railway came into operation, and this made a great difference to ease of travel. However, I can remember the days when we used to load up a wagon with hay to be taken to Victoria. We would do that loading in the afternoon so as to get an early start the next morning. That trip into Victoria was a long one by horse and wagon, and it used to take us all day to get there and back, and even then we wouldn't get home till late at night.

The old V & S railway went out of service around 1923 when better roads and motor cars came along. And when I married my first wife, I built our farmhouse beside what is now Veyaness Road, which used to be part of the old railroad bed. I built our home with the help of a carpenter, and the total cost was two thousand, five hundred dollars. Some years ago we did some renovating, but otherwise it is all the original material and still a good, sturdy house.

Over the years, farming methods have changed, and during World War II when help was difficult to obtain, I started changing over from horse drawn implements to power machines, and since these were very costly to buy, I used to take them to different farms, hiring out to help pay for them.

Back in 1870 a Pioneers Society had been formed, and though at one time interest in it waned, it was brought to life again and in 1932 a log cabin was built on the Fair Grounds in which to keep relics of the old days. Then in 1954, with a son and grandson to follow in my footsteps, I decided to quit milking cows and such, and instead turned my interests to collecting old farm pieces to form an agricultural museum. In 1969 the Artifacts Society was formed and its volunteer members have worked hard to maintain the museum, and to open the new project on the Pat Bay Highway.

Nowadays, owing to ill health, my activities are somewhat limited, as during the week I live in the Saanichton Hospital, going home only at weekends. I still manage to take in the Fair though, and of late I have taken up painting, and some of my pictures have won prizes at the Fair.

Life on the Peninsula has changed a lot since I was a boy, but I can still look out of my hospital window and see my young grandson riding the tractor on our land.

MICHELL

