



## **Willowgrove school gets priority**

### **Catholic division amends five-year plan**

**Michelle Martin**

The StarPhoenix

*Tuesday, June 26, 2007*

The Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools board has followed in the footsteps of the public school board by choosing to focus on a new east-side school for the emerging Willowgrove neighbourhood over Arbor Creek.

At a board meeting on Monday, trustees voted unanimously in favour of amending the division's five-year capital and school facility plan to make the top priority the construction of a new Catholic elementary school in Willowgrove. The division's original plan had slated the top priority as building schools in both neighbourhoods -- akin to Saskatoon public school division's original plan.

"This is very unique. I don't think we've ever been asked to change a five-year capital plan," said board chair Jim Carriere before the motion. "It puts Arbor Creek in a situation where we need to look at sustainability."

Carriere asked the trustees if they'd like to put forth a motion to keep Arbor Creek as a priority and was at first met with silence. The board later decided it would not need to take Arbor Creek off the priority list; rather, Willowgrove would be placed above it.

"My frustration is we need a school and the way I see it is that Willowgrove is going to be the best option in the short and long term. We'll need to build a school that will accommodate surrounding schools, and that may include Arbor Creek," trustee Ron Boechler said before the motion.

The amendment was made in the wake of a June 13 letter from Deputy Learning Minister Wynne Young addressed to the board chairs of both divisions that indicated funding for new schools in northeast Saskatoon wouldn't likely become available for "several years." The letter suggested they focus their efforts for new school space on Willowgrove, saying by the time the department is able to address the requests, the pressure for school space would be greater there. It noted that while Arbor Creek is nearly fully developed with a population of about 5,000, Willowgrove is expected to have a population between 8,000 and 9,000 when it is fully developed in 2010.

After receiving the letter, the public school board voted unanimously on June 19 to adjust its five-year plan by changing its top construction priority from schools in both neighbourhoods to a single priority of constructing a pre-kindergarten to Grade 8 school in Willowgrove. However, the original motion was amended at the meeting to include a pledge to continue pursuing the development of a

kindergarten to Grade 5 school in Arbor Creek.

Elementary school students living in Willowgrove bus to schools in Forest Grove, attending either Forest Grove or St. Volodymyr, whereas Arbor Creek students attend schools in Erindale, either Dr. John G. Egnatoff or Father Robinson.

"Both of the (Catholic) schools are crowded, there's no question," said Don Lloyd, the Catholic division's superintendent of administrative services, in an interview following the public school board's decision. "There needs to be a new elementary school to take the pressure off the existing the facilities."

mimartin@sp.canwest.com

© The StarPhoenix (Saskatoon) 2007

**CLOSE WINDOW**

---

Copyright © 2007 CanWest Interactive, a division of CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.