

Accommodation Review Committee

PUBLIC INPUT FORM

Please indicate how you would like to provide input:

I wish to present as individual

Individuals may present to the ARC at one of the public input meetings listed above and are allotted up to 5 minutes to speak. Please provide a written summary of your presentation for the ARC.

I wish to present as an individual representing a group

One person representing a group or organization may speak for up to 10 minutes at one of the public input meetings listed above. Please provide a written summary of your presentation for the ARC.

Name of group: Honey Harbour Association

I wish to submit my input in writing (please attach submission)

Individuals and organizations are welcome to submit input to the ARC in writing at any time throughout the process.

Topic: _____

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Please send this Input Form and your written submission to Honey Harbour Public School or Glen Orchard Public School, or to Karen Franke in the Director's Office:

Email: karen.franke@tlds.on.ca

Mail: Trillium Lakelands District School Board, P.O. Box 420, 300 County Road 36, K9V 4S4

Fax: 705-324-4323

For more information please contact Karen Franke in the Director's Office at 1-888-526-5552 ext 22104.

From:  **Larry Hope** February-21-17 10:17:57 AM 
"Peter Koetsier" <pjkoet@rogers.com>
Subject: Fwd: Honey Harbour Public School - Accommodation Review
To:  **Karen Franke**

Attachments:  [ARC Presentation Summary February 21 2017.docx / Uploaded File \(21K\)](#)

Larry Hope

Director of Education
Lindsay Education Centre | Muskoka Education Centre

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----- Original Message -----

Premier Wynne, Minister Hunter, MPP Miller, et al: On this Family Day, I am writing you in regards to the Accommodation Review taking place for the Honey Harbour Public School – part of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.

I would greatly appreciate it if you would take the time to read my attached report, which I will be presenting during my allotted time at tomorrow evening's Public Input Meeting (18:30, February 21st, Baxter Ward Community Centre).

In this presentation, I will argue that due to the unique circumstances of the Honey Harbour Public School, the mandated structure and actual execution of the Accommodation Review is not serving anyone's purposes at all well.

I believe we are faced with a situation where the Province must step in to assist, due to the debatable district boundaries, and allow everyone to achieve what is best for all concerned. Thank you very much.
Peter Koetsier

Presentation Summary – Public Input Meeting – Accommodation Review Committee

Honey Harbour Public School – Tuesday February 21st, 2017 – Baxter Ward Community Centre

Peter Koetsier, President, Honey Harbour Association

Thank you again to the Committee and the Trillium Lakelands District School Board for this opportunity to speak to the proposed closing of the Honey Harbour Public School. Much has been discussed since the December meeting and with this presentation I would like to add to my first presentation.

At that time, I provided fifteen arguments as to why the Honey Harbour School should not be closed. To summarize, the points made included concerns about the ARC process, the serious consequences to the community, and the inappropriateness of Glen Orchard as an alternative school. I concluded by observing how unfair the whole situation and process is to everyone involved. I do not intend to repeat those points, though they remain just as valid and strong as before, are still very important, and I do hope that you will carefully consider all of them as you deliberate the decision in front of you.

Trillium Lakelands presented to us much information about declining enrolments and over capacity in their district and across the Province. But how is any of this relevant to Honey Harbour, which is closer to capacity than any other school, and in an area of growth and increasing enrolment? We also heard about potential savings in overhead costs, without proper consideration that about half those savings would disappear into increased bussing costs, nor the fact that the special needs requirements of many students would only increase farther from home, to say nothing of future costs due to less support now.

However, the more I reflected on the challenges faced by all of us in regards to the future of the Honey Harbour Public School, the more I questioned the whole ARC process. A very significant amount of time and effort, to say nothing of expense (further to the above notes), is being spent on procedure that completely misses the key point. Let us be honest with each other. If Trillium Lakelands decides to close the Honey Harbour Public School, students from this area will not attend Glen Orchard. It is simply too far away. Tay Shores, for example, is much closer. We do not need studies, meetings, committees, and reports to know this. Just look at a map. Please ask the families affected. The transfer of students to Glen Orchard is an unrealistic recommendation.

In other words, while the choice may be presented to you as to whether it is better to teach the children of our area in Honey Harbour versus Glen Orchard, it in fact is not that at all. The choice is in reality whether or not Trillium Lakelands is willing to educate the children of this Township. It is that simple. Either the school in Honey Harbour is kept open, or Trillium Lakelands is electing to abdicate its responsibility to educate our children. If the decision is made to close the school in Honey Harbour, then Trillium Lakelands must transfer our portion of their district to the Simcoe County District School Board (or another willing to educate in our area). They must forego all our education taxes. And they must acknowledge how totally inappropriate it will be for us to continue being represented by a trustee of a school board that is not willing or able to educate a single resident of our Township.

Trillium Lakelands staff knows this is the actual choice, as evidenced by option a) in their October report. In that first option they note they have discussed this matter with Simcoe, and that they believe that Simcoe is willing to accommodate the students of Honey Harbour at their Tay Shores school in Victoria Harbour. But this begs the question - why does the ARC process include a parent from and information about Glen Orchard, but not from Tay Shores? Why is the Tay Shore option not being actively presented and carefully considered by this process? Why is no one from Tay Shores, or from the Simcoe board, at this meeting? Why is this being left as a huge cloud of uncertainty hanging over our community?

What about the Township of Georgian Bay? Why were they not invited to be an active participant in this exercise? They are the ones who collect the education taxes. They are the ones who understand the serious consequences of not having a school in our area. They are the ones who are keen to find a solution that works for everyone. Why are they not playing a key role in these discussions? At least they are in attendance, and allowed to present, demonstrating their concern over this very serious matter.

And where is the Province in all this? Surely it should be the responsibility of Trillium Lakelands to inform the Ministry of Education that they are considering a decision which would mean they would no longer be serving the students of south east Georgian Bay. Which would mean the residents would no longer have any representation at the Board that is actually accepting the responsibility of educating the children of Georgian Bay. If the staff at Trillium Lakelands knows that Glen Orchard is not a viable choice, then surely they must have a responsibility, a duty, to explain to the Ministry of Education that the mandated ARC process is not appropriate under these unusual circumstances. Why is no one from the Province in attendance this evening? Why are they not part of these discussions, that by geography and practicality, must extend beyond the boundaries of Trillium Lakelands?

This whole process is failing the students of our area. Procedure is allowing you, no - encouraging you, to ignore the obvious. This is not right! The question before us is bigger than Trillium Lakelands. It must include Simcoe, and the Province, as well as the Township, in order to properly consider all the alternatives. But it does not. This should not be tolerated by anyone here. Nor by all those not here...

So what are the options? The best choice is to keep the Honey Harbour Public School open. Recognize its importance to the community. Accept that the region is growing, that the student count will increase not only because of all the housing being built between the school and Port Severn, but also because Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School will most likely be closing this summer. Utilize that facility to accommodate the future growth. Work with the community. Live up to your obligations and oaths to educate our children. It is so clearly the right thing to do. It is so clearly what will be best for everyone.

The second choice would be to honestly state that Trillium Lakelands no longer wants to include our area in its district, and to transfer the Honey Harbour Public School, including staff with their seniority, along with our tax dollars, to the Simcoe County District School Board. To accept the fact that Georgian Bay is not part of Muskoka. That Trillium Lakelands is not well placed to serve our area. That our high school students will never attend its schools, especially now given that the high school in Gravenhurst – the one closest to us – will most likely be soon closed. Give the transfer to Simcoe your full co-operation and support, and let us part on a friendly basis.

The worst choice is to decide to close the Honey Harbour school, and to pretend that the children will attend Glen Orchard. To be dishonest with all of us, including yourselves. To pay no heed to your duty to educate the children of the Township of Georgian Bay. To ignore the fact that the proposal put in front of you is not only totally unacceptable to all that is reasonable, fair, logical, or decent, but also does not appear to actually have the full support of the staff who made the recommendation. To put it very simply, the recommendation in front of you is not in any way worthy of your support.

We, the citizens of Ontario, the residents of our District, too often forget that our elected officials, of all stripes and levels, and all our civil servants, in every government office, are in their positions to serve all of us. To improve and protect everyone's lives as much as possible. That is why we have them, why we have laws, why we have programs, why we have reviews. That is why we pay our taxes. Well, in this case, I think we are being failed by all that we have put into place. If the current Accommodation Review is not able to consider all the relevant factors, all the options, and all the consequences, around the possible closing of the Honey Harbour Public School, then it must be expanded to encompass all this very relevant information. Otherwise, it fails all of us – a waste of time, effort, and money.

The Trustees of the Trillium Lakelands District School Board have no choice but to vote down the recommendation in front of them. They cannot close the Honey Harbour Public School, as there is far too much that has not been presented to them. Far too much that has been overlooked. Far too much that has not been properly considered. So please do what you know is the right thing - to allow our children to learn close to home. Do not support the report and recommendation in front of you.

Keep the Honey Harbour Public School open.

Thank you.